

Highlands Newspaper

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Thurs., Feb. 26, 2015

What to do about moves on the old hydro plant?

Like the song says, "You don't know what you've got until it's gone."

That exemplifies the feelings about the hydroelectric plant below the Lake Sequoyah Dam on the Cullasaja River which the town abandoned in 1969 when

it opted to purchase power from Nantahala Power & Light.

With the plant abandoned and the town's Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license allowed to expire in 1996, Highlands basically relinquished "ownership" of the structure and

its environs.

According to Mayor Pat Taylor, the town can't find any record of ever owning the plant property but understands it was given permission by the USFS to use the property to build both the Lake Sequoyah Dam and the

hydroelectric plant in 1925.

"They basically said, 'It's yours as long as you use it,'" he said.

Highlands forefathers had a quick claim deed drawn up to ensure clear title to the Sequoyah

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Lowered lake reveals a lost slice of history

By Ran Shaffner

A unique part of Highlands history has emerged from the floor of Lake Sequoyah, which was drained recently for repair work on the dam and water intake. On February 13th, while walking the banks of the lake, Chip Wisdom discovered an old boat half buried in the sand and clay. He rightly concluded it belonged to Joe Webb's stepson and partner Furman Vinson, who lost it eighty-five years ago during an accident on the lake.

Peggy Watkins related the unfortunate event in her 1995 book on Webbmont. Kenyon Zahner had hired Joe Webb and Furman Vinson in 1930 to build a cabin on the edge of the new Lake Sequoyah west of the Big Creek bridge. In describing a boat landing that was constructed underneath the house, Watkins



Chip Wisdom with Furman Vinson's canoe.

Photo by Hank Ross

said, "Furman Vinson had built a boat which was used for removing the dirt from this space; but one day there was a slight mishap. A little tomfoolery, and overestimating the capacity of the boat, slowed the progress of dirt removal considerably. Guess

where the boat is today!? Still at the bottom of the lake – shovels, picks and all!"

Chip Wisdom's discovery confirms the story of Furman Vinson's boat, which still holds the dirt that sank it and presumably the

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How much is/could/should Macon County invest(ing) in education?

It's budget time – that time of year when representatives across the county try to figure out how much money they and their subsidiaries will need for the next fiscal year.

For years now, the Macon County Board of Education (BOE) has struggled to meet operational costs while the county has diligently worked to ensure the school district's capital and other needs are met – as required by state law.

Technically, under North Carolina's school finance system, born more than eight decades ago, it is the state's responsibility to pay for instructional expenses (including personnel) while county governments pay for capital expenses (buildings and maintenance).

Over time, however, the lines drawn in the 1933 and 1975 laws have become blurred, and the local role in funding school operations has increased.

In 2012-13, counties spent

\$2.98 billion to fund instructional expenses, accounting for 25 percent of the combined federal, state, and local total. Counties provided funding for 1,003 principals and assistant principals (18.7 percent of the total), 6,296 teachers (6.4 percent of the total), 2,222 teacher assistants (8.8 percent of the total), and 2,932 professional instructional support personnel (19.6 percent of the total).

How much is enough and how does Macon County compare statewide?

The 2014 Local School Finance Study focuses not only on the amount that counties spend on schools, but also on each county's investment in the context of that county's taxable resources.

Obviously, wealthier counties are able to spend more on schools with less taxing effort. Because wealthier counties have

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Any way you cut it, utilities are high in the winter



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

I paid a \$650 electric bill to the Town of Highlands in January. No, not this January, but back in 2000. Sallie and I had just moved to Highlands and found our dream house on Pinecrest.

The winter seems to always be "the season of our discontent," especially when it comes to electric bills. I could have said the town was price gouging us on electricity. I hear some folks are making that claim on Facebook now. But that was 15 years ago and the town was tapped into that dirt cheap Nantahala Power hydro electricity instead of buying from Duke as done now. When Duke bought Nantahala the town eventually saw a 22% wholesale rate increase back in 2012.

The truth is that back in the summer of 1999 we had bought an old seasonal home that needed work. Prior to our first valiant winter stay in our new home, it had been winterized and closed every year no later than the end of October. The water drainage system was an engineering marvel that I have yet to fully understand to this day.

Our German chalet house had vintage 1960 style electric baseboard heaters. Furthermore, being a seasonal home it was outfitted with single pane, aluminum clad windows including a big sliding glass door. Above the sliding glass door was a 10'x10' picture window also with single pane glass. There was 3 1/2 inch thick fiberglass insulation in the walls.

Instead of sheet rock, the interior walls had 1/4 inch fake wood paneling attached loosely to the studs with 3/4 inch brads. There was absolutely no insulation in the cathedral ceiling, so heat moved easily through the 3/4 inch thick tongue and groove roof. The former homeowners did not worry about energy efficiency, a fireplace and electric baseboard heaters would do just fine for the cool fall and spring nights. They probably thought someone would have to be crazy to try to live in the house during winter.

Us crazy folks discovered that whether cranking up the heaters to high, or burning the fireplace to maximum efficiency, or both, we were never able to get our house above 52 degrees that first winter. We huddled around a roaring fire many nights to keep warm. I burned every piece of wood I could find. To add insult to our shivering cold, was a \$650 electric bill for heating a mere 800 square feet of living space to only 52 degrees! Our downstairs basement remained closed. We were always on the verge of freezing, but nevertheless loved being in Highlands.

As soon as winter ended, I installed double pane, high efficiency windows and doors. We also bought new high efficiency baseboard heaters. Our electric bills that second winter went down to about \$500 a month.

The following year we purchased a used Black Bart fireplace stove insert with

a motorized Heatilator. I could buy a pick-up truck load of oak flooring waste pieces from Nantahala Lumber Company for a mere \$20. Oh my, instead of 52 degrees of that first year, we could now heat the house to 80 degrees for only \$20 every two weeks. Our electricity usage diminished significantly, but our health issues during that winter increased proportionally with our reliance on dry, wood heat.

Several years later we remodeled our house. Electric base boards were replaced with a central heating system fueled with propane. The 1/4 inch paneling was replaced with Sheetrock. Insulation was placed in the ceiling. The chronic winter health problems went away, as did those high electric bills. Our propane gas bills went up, so there was somewhat of a trade off. Anyway you cut it, energy costs in the winter can be high when you live in Highlands, an area that has a planting zone rating to that of upstate New York.

So where am I going with this story? When heating with electricity in the winter in Highlands, bills can be high. That is especially true if you have an old home with poor insulation. Also, if you are using a heat pump, the same holds true once the temperature hits freezing. When it is single digits or below like last week all bets on saving energy are off.

Propane costs can be high, too. Some tell me Highlands could solve this problem

by piping in that cheap, fracked gas up here to the plateau. On the other hand, by the time we pay for the pipeline and distribution system, that natural gas may not be any cheaper than propane or electricity.

I had to make a substantial investment in renovation to get those \$650 a month electric bills down. Nothing comes without a cost on the plateau, especially energy.

Yes, in the winter there are high electric heating bills in Highlands, as well as high gas heating bills. While usage and bills are high, our electric rates are still some of the lowest in the state. Our service response time is outstanding, and I will put it up against any utility in the state. Last week an outage on our line to Horse Cove was called in. The electric crew had the power restored in about 30 minutes. Town staff even called people back to make sure the power was back on. Duke would have responded in a matter of a few hours.

With all this said, at the upcoming retreat the staff and board will be reviewing our electric and other utility policies, fees, billing and methods for payment. For the past several years the staff has been studying how other utilities address these issues and have applied standard and best practices to our system. They continue to look for ways to improve service to customers and to enhance the operation of the system.

• LETTERS •

Too bad private interests over public good prevail

Dear Editor,

My family has had a home in Highlands since before I was born in 1936. As a child we drove from Memphis, Tennessee to Highlands every summer. We stayed at Cabin Ben on Mirror Lake. One activity we

wanted to do each year was to go to Satulah mountain top. The best times were when we had a picnic, and saw the sunset.

I am sorry to learn that private interests have prevailed over the public good by blocking access to the summit, which is for the use and enjoyment of all of the people of Highlands forever.

I am not a physical resident of Highlands, but the town resides in my heart and my memory as one of the places where I have been the happiest. I support the Greenway project. Highlands without access to Satulah is a sad place.

Wain Poole
Memphis, TN

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Letter Policy:

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Kenyon B. Zahner House on Lake Sequoyah

(Courtesy of Bob Zahner)

tools he lost on that fateful day.

Of the thirty-six log cabins attributed to Joe Webb, the Zahner house was among the first dozen built and one of the most remarkable for its rustic design. Unfortunately the house, which was used as a summer home, burned in 1971 so that the only artifact associated with it today is

Vinson's boat in the mire of the drained lake.

Plans are being made to retrieve the boat before the lake is refilled. The Highlands Historical Society has expressed an interest in preserving it as an integral part of Joe Webb lore and early Highlands history.

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more taxable resources, they can keep taxes low while still generating significant revenues. Conversely, counties with fewer taxable resources need to make greater taxing effort to support their schools at comparable levels.

Mountain and coastal areas, along with high-growth parts of the Piedmont, account for most of the counties above the state average.

Of the state's 100 counties, Macon County is in the Top Quartile based on real estate wealth available per student.

The 2012-13 spending per student in Macon County was \$1,660.93 and the state average is \$1,462.

The report ranked counties based on Property Value Rank - Adjusted Property Tax Base per Average Daily Membership (ADM); Actual Effort Rank - Total Current Spending per ADM; Actual Effort Rank per ADM with Low Wealth and Small County Funding; and Ability to Pay Rank - Revenue per ADM; and Effort Rank - Current spending as percentage of Revenue per student

Given its property values, on face value it looks like Macon County could budget more per child yet its rankings per category vary greatly.

Property Value Rank (Adjusted Property Tax Base per ADM) Macon County

ranks 8th in the state;

Actual Effort Rank (Total Current Spending per ADM) Macon County ranks 24th in the state;

Actual Effort Rank per ADM with Low Wealth and Small County Funding Macon County ranks 59th in the state;

Ability to Pay Rank (Revenue per ADM) Macon County ranks 9th in the state; and

Effort Rank (Current spending as percentage of Revenue per student) Macon County ranks 93rd in the state.

But according to MC Schools Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin, face value figures and percentages are only part of the story.

"Macon County faces several unique challenges with regard to school funding. As the School Finance Study points out, Macon County is one of the wealthiest counties in North Carolina in terms of property values. Therefore, we have some room to increase revenue in support of schools. However, this report fails to point out that Macon County is also a Tier I county, which means it has a high poverty rate. It is also important to note that property value rather than our county's poverty impacts the amount of state funding that we receive for schools," he said.

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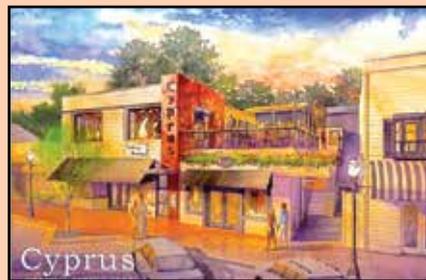
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MC Commission Vice Chair Jim Tate agrees.

“According to the study, the state says we could be providing more funds to our schools based upon availability, but according to the Dept. of Commerce, Macon County is deemed a ‘Tier 1’ county meaning it is one of the most economically distressed in the state with almost 20% of our residents classified as meeting the federal poverty level. It sounds like the state needs to cross communicate better,” said Tate.

According to MC Chair Kevin Corbin property values skew the equation.

“Ability to pay’ is basically the tax valuation divided by the number of students. We have a relatively high valuation (largely due to Highlands properties) and at the same time a relatively small number of students. Those factors make us a ‘high ability to pay’ county but don’t take into

account the income levels or other economic factors,” said Corbin.

Over time the delineations proscribed by the School Machinery Acts of 1933 and the School Budget and Fiscal Control Act of 1975 have given way to increased local investment in instructional expenses.

“Fortunately, for our students, our county commissioners have provided our schools with funding that exceeds the state average in per-pupil funding. And while our local per-pupil funding is outstanding, our total per-pupil funding is lower than many of the other districts in our region and state due to our inability to qualify for Low Wealth Funds and Small School Funds. This puts our students at a disadvantage,” said Baldwin.

In 1991, the state enacted supplemental funds for low-wealth and small counties, in part to address the limited capacity that some counties have to raise revenues

through taxation because of their limited local resources and size.

In 2012-13 the General Assembly provided an appropriation of \$213 million for 68 low-wealth counties (78 districts) and \$43 million for 27 small counties.

Low-wealth supplemental funding is provided to systems whose ability to generate local revenue per student is below the state average.

Small county supplemental funding was provided in 2012-13 to those county school systems with ADM less than 3,175 or to county school systems with ADM between 3,175 and 4,000 whose county adjusted property tax base per student was below the state adjusted property tax base per student.

“Due to Macon County’s property values, our school system does not qualify for or receive Low Wealth funding from the state,” said Baldwin. “Additionally, while Macon County has two small K-12 schools

our district’s total enrollment exceeds the maximum number that would qualify us for Small Schools funding.”

With his dual role as a parent of Macon County School children and a MC Commissioner and therefore a steward of the county’s coffers, Tate is torn.

“As a parent of two Macon county students, I am very proud of the level of funds that we have been able to provide our schools without raising taxes, but at the same time, I am very aware that our schools could use more funds. So, I have been researching alternative means of increasing the school revenue without raising property taxes, such as by increasing our sales tax by 1/4%,” said Tate. “This balancing situation of providing the best for our kids while not being an overburden to our citizens’ pocket books is a very tough and complex issue. We as commissioners study this problem diligently (and it haunts my mind daily) with the hopes of

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Dam property, but unfortunately nothing was done to protect the powerhouse property.

Since 1969 the plant has sat abandoned and around 1970 the turbine was removed and sold to a company in north Georgia where it is said to be in use even today.

Now with green energy the hot topic, Advanced Hydropower, a company from Peachtree City, GA (originally from Clovis, CA) applied for and late 2014 received permission to pursue a FERC license to resurrect the plant for the purposes of selling the ¾ megawatts of energy it could generate back to the Duke Power grid to the tune of \$225,000 to \$250,000 a year.

In 2013 the town considered resurrecting the plant for the same reason – with the profits going to the town – but learned it would take \$4-\$5 million to get it up and running and likely 20 years to service and pay off the loan before a clear profit was realized.

Last November, when the Town Board learned of Advanced Hydropower’s plans, commissioners were taken by surprise. On one hand they said they didn’t know if they wanted to make the long-term investment themselves, but on the other hand, they weren’t too keen on the idea of an “outsider” coming into town and reaping the benefits.

So now camps are lining up behind resurrecting the hydroelectric plant below Bridal Veil Falls; investing the town’s money elsewhere; or jumping the hurdles to make the plant an historic/educational/recreation site.

Though Advanced Hydropower’s

FERC application was accepted, the town of Highlands and about 22 other organizations are stakeholders in the project and will all have a say along the five-year trek prior to Advance Hydropower’s project coming to fruition.

There is also the chance that after submitting all the required permits and completing the required studies, Advanced Hydropower may decide not to proceed.

Mayor Taylor said if the town sought a FERC license at this point, it would look like the town was trying to block Advanced Hydropower’s move and so for the town’s application to be considered it would have to be serious about investing millions and demonstrate those intentions quickly.

“The town could have intervened if it was committed to applying for and rebuilding the plant. But given the short notice before FERC gave Advanced Hydropower clearance to apply for the license, the town didn’t have a chance to consider it. Still, I don’t see the board wanting to get in the hydro business after 50 years,” said Mayor Taylor.

Now the question is should the town pursue the historical angle and if so, would it affect the FERC process in the works?

Mayor Taylor said he believes the Town Board would be supportive of the effort if the Historical Society wanted to pursue it.

“But, I am not sure how that would impact the status of the FERC application at this point in time,” he said.

According to Ran Shaffner, Highlands resident historian, it might take a year to get the plant on the National Register but being on the National Register wouldn’t pro-

tect the plant unless the town designates it protected by ordinance; otherwise, being on the National Register is only an honor.

“I believe the strategy at the moment is to delay Advanced Hydropower’s application through the environmental hoops for five or six years until it decides another

site is more accessible with fewer battles to fight. US 64 west is already a scenic byway with many legitimate environmental concerns to address,” said Shaffner.

Shaffner said If the town wants to put the plant on the National Register, a

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providing the best balancing act that we can.”

Superintendent Baldwin says the school board has been grappling with budget issues for years – it is currently worrying about paying this year’s bills while readying to work on the 2015-’16 budget.

“We have been dealing with these funding issues for a long time. Macon County teachers and students have always been asked to do more with less due to the challenges that are unique to our county. They have always risen to the challenge and today we have a school system that we can all be proud of. As we continue to face significant changes

to the way our schools are funded by the state we have to realize that there comes a point when we begin to do less with less for our students. I am sure that no one in our county wishes to reach that point,” he said.

Tate said unfortunately the 2014 Local School Funding Report doesn’t take into account the money the county has invested in the school system’s capital needs over the years – something it is required to do by law.

“Since 2008 the county has spent \$148 million in capital expenses improving the schools and will have funded the staffing of school resource officers in each school as of 2015,” he said.

Baldwin said there is another component to the Macon County Schools scenario and that’s geography which is an important factor in school funding since geographical barriers play a significant role in inflating the district’s per-pupil funding.

“No other district in the state has Wayah Mountain and the Cullasaja Gorge separating two communities from the county seat,” he said. “Nantahala and Highlands are two excellent schools and are very important to their communities and to Macon County. But, in other counties, without the geographical barriers, these two small K-12 schools would be quickly consolidated into the larger schools. This would result in a considerable savings of state and local funds. These geographical barriers are a stark reality in Macon County, and the state does not recognize this challenge in any meaningful way in terms of funding.”

At Monday night’s School Board meeting, Dr. Bald-

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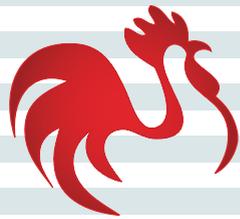
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FRIDAY: WILD CAUGHT FRIED SHRIMP, BAKED POTATOES, HUSH PUPPIES AND COLESLAW
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HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS

Ongoing

• Church of the Incarnation and the First Presbyterian Church are collecting food items for the Highlands Emergency Council and the Food Pantry. Drop off boxes are in the Ravenel Room at First Presbyterian and in the downstairs lobby at the Church of the Incarnation. Monetary donations also accepted. Make checks out to Highlands Mountain Top Rotary.

Thurs.-Sun.

• Movies at the Playhouse: Thurs-Sunday, 2, 5 & 8 p.m. Call 526-2685 for weekly movie.

Monday

• Shortoff Baptist Church hosts a non-denominational Men's Meeting the first Monday night of each month at 7 pm and all men are invited to attend.

First Tuesdays

• FAMILY and Caregiver Support Group Meets: for Individuals that have a friend, family member or loved one living with mental illness. Learn how peers deal with stress and emotional overload. First Tuesday of Every Month 7-8 pm. Call Ann for more info (828) 369-7385

Tuesdays

• Reading dog "Beebles" will be at Hudson Library every Tuesday at 3:30pm. Please call (828)526-3031 to register.

• Free Community Table Dinner at the Community Bldg. at 6p.

• Zumba at the Rec Park at 8:05a. \$5.

Starting Tues., Feb. 24

• 12-week NAMI Program to educate families dealing with mental illness, 6:30 to 8:30p. The course has the dual focus of education, and understanding the experience of living with mental illness. Confidentiality is maintained. Class size is limited and pre-registration required. Contact: Ann 369-7385 or Linda 369-9838

Mon., Wed., Fri.

• Heart Healthy Exercise Class Monday, Wednesday and Friday 8:30am-9:30am

• Aerobics with Tina Rogers 8-9a.

• Zumba at the Rec Park at 9:05a. \$5

Wednesdays

• First Baptist Church is happy to present a new season of X-treme Games at the Highlands Rec. Park. The games will be held Wednesday nights from 6 to 7:15 pm. For more information or to pre-register your k - 6th grade child, please call 526-4153.

1st Wednesdays

• Family Movies at the Hudson Library at 3:30pm. Call 828-526-3031 for titles.

3rd Wednesdays

• General Audience Movies at Hudson Library at 2pm. Call 828-526-3031 for titles.

Thursdays

• Yoga at the Rec Park 8:15 a.m. \$6 per class.

• Storytimes with Miss Carol at Hudson Li-

brary 10:40am. Open to the public.

• Highlands Writers' Group meets every Thursday from 1-3:30 pm at Hudson Library. Writers of all genres welcome. For info call 526-8009 or 526-2295.

• NAMI Support Group for individuals dealing with mental illness: depression, bipolar, schizophrenia, etc. and the family members of individuals dealing with these challenges from 7 - 8:15 pm. Call Donita for more info (828) 526-9510.

2nd Thursdays

• Sapphire Valley Needlepoint Guild meets at the Highlands Rec Park at 10 a.m. Newcomers welcomed.

Last Fri. of each month

• Weight Watchers support group meets every Thursday at 6pm at the Cashiers Community Center. Questions? Call Lisa 828-506-3555.

• Community Coffee with Mayor Pat Taylor from 11a to noon at The Hudson Library.

Sundays

• At the Mountain Laurel Tennis Club at 4:30 pm. Multi-denominational, Interactive Bible Study and Fellowship. **Through**

Thurs.-Sun., Feb 27-March 1

• HCP's "Murder Not Prohibited" at PAC. 6:15 p.m. and 1:15 p.m. Sunday matinees. Come eat, laugh, and test their powers of deduction—all for the bargain price of \$22.85! Tickets are available online, highlandscashiersplayers.org, and at the HCP box office, 526-8084.

Through March 2

• Canned food drive at the Eckerd Center. Drop off boxes will be located in the ELC Activities Room, the Lobby Area and the Staff Break Room

Sun, March 1

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 4-mile hike, elevation change 900 ft, on the Bartram Trail from Wallace Branch to William's Pulpit with view of Albert Mtn. and surrounding mountains. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin at 2 pm, drive 6 miles round trip. Call leader Mary Stone, 828-369-7352. Visitors, well behaved children and dogs are welcome.

Mon., March 2

• Greenway Hearing: from 4- 5:30 p.m. at the Civic Center, the Highlands Plateau Greenway will hold a public hearing about its proposal to create a Greenway Trail to the top of Satulah Mountain.

Fri., Feb. 27

• Coffee with the Mayor, at Hudson Library 11a to noon. Subject: Recreation Director Lester Norris to discuss recreation programming and projects.

Sat., Feb. 28

• The Highlands Plateau Greenway will conduct its monthly work day this Saturday. If you are interested in participating, please email Ran Shaffner at highlandsgreenway@nctv.com or leave a message at 828-526-5622. We'll meet at the large upper parking lot (near the pool entrance) behind the Recreation Center at 9 AM for a brief orientation session. You will be furnished with the

necessary tools and safety equipment. We usually finish around noon.

Wednesdays March 4-25

• Marriage Tuneup. 7 p.m. at Church of the Valley in Cashiers. Call 743-5470.

Wed., March 4

• Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Day with the mobile medical/rescue vehicle, the H.E.A.R.T. of North Carolina. Please note: appointments must be made in advance. Call the shelter at 828-743-5752 to make an appointment or for more information.

...EDUCATION

continued from page 6

win said he and school board member Fred Goldsmith met with Senator Jim Davis and Representative Mark West last Saturday to discuss the funding for Small Schools.

"They said they feel we are all on the same page and I hope that Davis and West will introduce legislation to promote this agenda," said Baldwin.

The two K-12 schools in Macon County - Nantahala and Highlands schools - effect the funding for Macon County.

"We are just above the cut-off for small schools funding, yet we have two of the smallest schools in NC. So we are paying for more teachers than what the state is willing to pay for and that makes our local expenditures higher than in other counties," he said.

MC Commissioner Gary Shields, retired Franklin High School principal and past BOE member said the current political mindset is responsible for the monetary woes in the state's school systems.

"I do think there is a disparity of monies between counties which is obviously due to rural, urban and industrial/business opportunities. I feel the political mood at the state level is that since NC is providing funds above the national average, local schools and local government have to bear the burden by increasing their percentages by means to be determined locally," he said. "We have entered a different political mindset - the NC Constitution has not changed in that people have a right to the 'privilege' of education, and it is the duty of the State 'to guard and maintain that right.'"

He said the state and local governments will continue to work in partnership because when all is said, the education of the state's youth is of the utmost importance to the state's economic growth.

- Kim Lewicki



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...HYDRO continued from page 5



Above, shows the workmanship in the mortared blocks; Left, the Westinghouse generator at the old hydroelectric plant on the Cullasaja River.

Photos by Pat Taylor

nomination could be created – 25 to 30 pages with photographs and textual history designating it as a historic site. The primary hurdle would be proving that Highlands' power plant was unique among power plants in North Carolina, which would involve comparisons and contrasts with others in the state.

"It took 13 years to get the Highlands Northern District on the National Register, but it involved many homes, rather than a single site. But agency delays and hoops could extend the power plant nomination to more than one year. And, Advanced Hydropower's application might take precedence, since it was filed first," he said.

According to Annie Laurie McDonald, Preservation Specialist with the State Historic Preservation Office in Asheville, which is part of the NC Department of Cultural Resources, both the Lake Sequoyah Dam and the hydroelectric plant on the Cullasaja River have been in the National Registry's sights.

"In 1989 both the dam and the powerplant were put on the National Register study list which is the first step in getting listed on the National Register," she said. "In 1990, it was determined that both structures were potentially – not formally – but potentially eligible for National Register status."

However, she also said if Advanced Hydropower isn't going to change the structure in any way then listing on the National Register may not hinder its plans

particularly if it isn't going to impact an historical resource.

"If it's a project that requires federal permits and if they are going to change the structure in an adverse way, we can mitigate the impact," she said. "That procedure doesn't absolutely protect the structure but it ensures an accounting of the impact on the resource."

Mayor Taylor, Ran Shaffner and Sam Green visited the site recently and were impressed with the workmanship that went into the structure – even the stone steps leading to the site from US 64 west.

"Back in the 1920s, the dam and the powerplant represented very advanced technology for the time. It speaks to the foresight of Highlands' forefathers who knew if they could offer water and light people would come and it's why Highlands had an electric utility so early on," said Taylor.

Sam Green, a retired electrical engineer was impressed with the plant as a whole.

"The building proper was built with solid cut granite blocks, each weighing several hundred pounds – the building proper will be there a thousand years from now," he said. "The roof of course was wooden, and needs to be replaced, as does all the glass in the window panes but this is a very historic building. The Westinghouse Generator that furnished the Town of Highlands with electricity from 1927 to 1968 – for over 40 years – is still sitting there in place!"

– Kim Lewicki

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• **SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING** •

The Gospel; its essence and history

By Sam Forrester
Whiteside Presbyterian Church

Asking what the essence of the gospel is may seem to be a silly question. Most everyone would immediately say its essence is salvation but that is not what its basic nature is. Matthew 4:23 gives the basic nature of the gospel.

"Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people." The essence, that is the basic nature of the gospel, is the goodness of the kingdom, which does contain salvation. You could also say it the way Luke does in Acts 20:24 "However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace." The gospel is an invitation into the kingdom of God. It only begins to show the wonders planned for you by God's grace. The basic nature, then of the gospel, is God's goodness to you in preparing your salvation and a way and place you can enjoy that salvation.

Matthew 4:23 shows that Christ was a busy man going through the land preaching the gospel of the kingdom. This is the gospel of heaven. It is the grace and glory of God. It is the kingdom that came to earth with him to be the believer's home. The gospel is the charter of this kingdom. It contains the oath used by the king at his coronation. In that oath, he promises to all who will hear and believe on him as the King of kings and Lord of lords salvation, entrance into this great kingdom. Membership in this kingdom is the essence of the gospel. It is because of this kingdom connection that the unsaved cannot comprehend the gospel.

II Corinthians 4:3: "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing."

Those who have no invitation to join the kingdom cannot understand this glorious kingdom that is coming. This is why some fail to stay on course with the teaching of Scripture, because they see salvation not as a guide into the glory of heaven but as a free pass with no need for diligence. They fail to understand salvation is a process that brings one to the gates of heaven with the purpose of them becoming a part of this great kingdom. Salvation without the kingdom would be worthless.

I run across people every now and then who seem to think the gospel was new with Jesus. They see it as something God had to do because man wouldn't cooperate with him. This is really tragic because God doesn't make mistakes and the redemption of a people for himself has been in his heart for all eternity.

In Genesis 3:15 when God was dealing with Adam and Eve about their sin, he makes a promise. He makes it to mankind through his charge to the serpent. He says, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head and you will strike his heel." In Galatians 4:4 we are shown who this seed of the woman is:

"But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law." It says the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent and the serpent will strike the heel of the seed. A head wound is considered in most cases to be a fatal wound. A heel wound is not. Satan nailed Jesus to the cross and killed his body but he could not kill his spirit and thus Jesus' body was raised from the grave.

Hebrews 2:14 talks about Satan's wound. "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by

• See **SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING** page 11

Proverbs 3:5

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Rev. Oliver Rice, Pastor (706) 782-3965
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Tues. Guys study 8am, Gals 10am.

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HIGHLANDS
828-526-4153 • www.fbchighlands.org
Dr. Mark Ford, Pastor
220 Main Street, Highlands NC 28741
Sun.: Worship 10:45 am; Sun.: Bible Study 9:30 am
Wed.: Men's Bible Study 8:30 am; Prayer Mtg 6:15 pm;
Choir 5 pm

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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John 3:16

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Wednesday: Prayer Service, 6:30 p.

HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

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Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study: 7

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• POLICE REPORT •

The Highlands Police log entries from Feb. 2 Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.

Feb. 2

• At 10:44 p.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on Cobb Road.

Feb. 4

• At 4:29 p.m. officers responded to a report of a simple assault where male friends were fighting a friends residence on US. 64 west.

Feb. 5

• At 1:45 p.m., officers received a report of a breaking and entering and larceny from a residence on Bowery Road where a chainsaw was taken.

Feb. 9

• At 8:45 a.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on NC 106.

Feb. 11

• At 9:25 a.m., Katherine Joan Maps, 66, of Highlands was arrested for DWI when pulled over on NC 106 near the Post Office.

Feb. 11

• At 2:15 p.m. officers responded to a one-vehicle accident in Highlands Plaza.

...SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING from page 10

his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death— that is, the devil...” Jesus through his resurrection brings the work of Satan to an end and on that last great day, he will cast Satan into the pit of fire where he can never again harm men. This shows that the gospel was in the heart of God for all eternity and was part of his plan from before the beginning of time. Ephesians 1:4 says, “For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.”

The prophet when shown what was to come in this world declares. “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths. The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:3). This is a look at the gospel coming into the world through Jesus.

He also says in Isaiah 29:18: “In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll, and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see.” This is a clear reference to the coming gospel as Paul shows in II Corinthians 4:4 “The god of this age has blinded the minds of

unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

The gospel is the answer to this blindness and this has been declared from the very beginning.

It was prophesied that a Messiah would come and deliver his people from the power of sin, Satan and death. Listen to the words Jesus opened his ministry with from Isaiah 61:1, “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release for the prisoners.” This gospel of God’s grace is the foundation of the Bible, Old Testament and New Testament. There is no separation in God’s plan. He foreordained all that has happened and everything had a purpose to prepare men and the world for the coming of Jesus Christ and this wonderful redemption he brought. The essence of this gospel is to bring a people unto God so they might live with him forever. The only way into this goodness of the kingdom of Heaven is through faith in Jesus Christ.

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Murder Not

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By Patty Arnold

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Murder Mystery Dinner Theater



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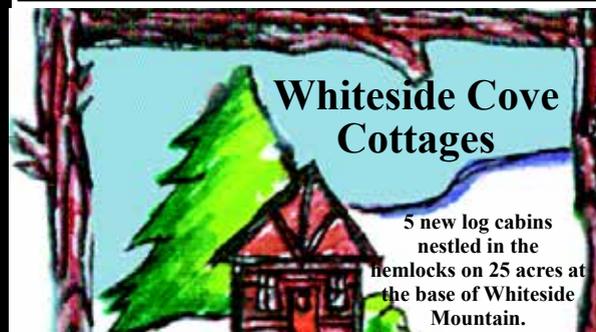
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The Life of a Real Estate Broker

I have been asked many times why I became a real estate broker and am willing to work so hard. I rarely have time to sit and ponder this but will share my thoughts with you in regards to what it really takes to be successful in this highly competitive business.

Few jobs are as time intensive as the job of being a real estate broker. It's somewhat like being an executive in an office, a luxury salesperson, a delivery driver and a psychologist all in one. I (and my wonderful brokers) have to handle all the tasks of running a business (phone calls, meetings, etc.) while also learning everything we can about neighborhoods, HOAs, club memberships and dues, zoning restrictions, etc. We also have to be on call and ready to show properties at any given time of day or evening if that's the only time a buyer is available. Being in a tourist town gives us a very small window of opportunity indeed. The weather adds another variable in itself. Sometimes trips by buyers get cancelled after brokers have arranged access to sellers' homes. Home inspections are cancelled due to snow and icy roads (this happened last week) so MANY phone calls are made and rescheduling is necessary.

Market trends, home features, neighborhood features, buyer preferences – there are hundreds of things of which I must keep track. I either need a fantastic memory or a detailed note system. I have been known to pull the car over and write on the back of a grocery receipt many times when I have received calls!

I'm frequently asked to do a CMA – comparative market analysis- for sellers who never call back and will list with someone else who gives them an unrealistic sales price. Each morning I start my day researching our MLS system to see what is new on the market, what has sold, what is pending and what is in due diligence. This allows me to guide buyers and sellers with up to date, accurate and reasonable market values.

I network with colleagues to learn what is coming on the market and to make them aware of my listings and any changes that are forthcoming. I create flyers and email blasts to do the same. Flyers are time consuming to say the least. I schedule professional type photos –an iphone just doesn't do justice to a home! I write a detailed description for each of my listings that verbally creates a vision that invites you to come and see the house.

I have "dreaded" deadlines for ads in both newspapers, WHLC radio, the Buyer's



Pat Allen
Broker-in-charge
Cell: 828-200-9179
Office: 828-526-8784

Guide, The Laurel, and other magazines. I also advertise on the online version of the Highlander newspaper. Our website must be consistently updated and hundreds of other websites must be checked for accuracy. The list goes on and on!

My weekends are rarely free since weekends are when most buyers come to town. Also, sellers who live out of state usually schedule listing appointments on Saturdays or Sundays. I work many holidays since potential buyers are in town then.

With all this said –I LOVE my job. I meet so many nice people and the fact that they allow me to help with such an important decision in their lives is very rewarding. I make lifelong friendships with clients-we often share meals, struggles, joys and goals with each other. People are fascinating to me and the fact that I can help those with serious health problems sell their home quickly or help prevent a foreclosure by dealing with banks for 4 years (yes, this has happened!) is my motivation to continue. The best closing is a "win-win" for both buyers and sellers and that is what I strive to achieve.

So I have concluded that the real estate industry in Highlands and Cashiers is as much a part of the hospitality industry as it is a sales profession. Success at the job requires a hospitable attitude, self-discipline, flexibility as well as a bit of tenacity. If those characteristics come naturally to you, then you are already ahead and could potentially rise to the top.

Pat Allen is owner and Broker-in-Charge of Pat Allen Realty Group located at 295 Dillard Road. Contact phone is 828-526-8784 or visit patallenrealtygroup.com

...LETTERS

continued from page 2

Come to the Greenway Trail hearing

Dear Editor,

On Monday, March 2nd, from 4 – 5:30 p.m. at the Civic Center, the Highlands Plateau Greenway will hold a hearing about its proposal to create a Greenway Trail to the top of Satulah Mountain. The public is invited to attend and express opinions about the project, which the Greenway hopes will prove worthy of community support.

Ran Shaffner, President
Highlands Plateau Greenway

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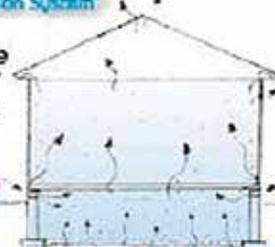
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- Provide an organized, systematized office environment – including team support, filing, answering phones, responding to email, and managing a busy calendar

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- Perpetual positive attitude and enthusiasm;
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- Excellent verbal and written communication skills;
- Excellent computer/keyboarding skills;
- Extremely detailed oriented;
- Reliable and dependable;
- Ability to work independently, but are also a team player with a “roll up your sleeves” mentality and a “do whatever it takes” attitude;
- Strong desire to work in a fast-paced environment;
- Ability to learn quickly;
- Marketing and desktop publishing skills a plus

Hours for this position are from 2-5pm, M-F and all day on Saturdays. Additional hours may be added, if desired. Compensation commensurate with experience. Please email your resume and cover letter to susie@WhiteOakRG.com. Interview candidates will be notified by March 5th. Short-list candidates will take two, online assessments to determine compatibility with job requirements (these are fun to take and are life changing!). No phone inquiries, please. (2/26)

CHEF NEEDED FOR CREEKSIDE RESTAURANT IN HIGHLANDS. Experience, creativity and enthusiasm are necessary. Call Bob for an interview, 828-526-9822. (st. 2/26)

MOUNTAIN FRESH GROCERY is accepting applications for full-time positions as a coffee/ barista server. Contact Don at 828-526-2400.

MANAGER & SALES ASSOCIATES NEEDED FOR BARDO, a retail furniture and home accessory store. Full and part time positions in our Cashiers & Highlands locations are available. Send resume Bardo49nc@gmail.com (828) 482-2410. (st. 2/12)

WOLFGANG'S RESTAURANT now hiring experienced waitstaff and line cook. Please call Jacque at 828.526.3807 (st. 2/29)

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LOCAL CHURCH SEEKS FINANCIAL MANAGER/BOOKKEEPER – Community Bible Church is hiring a full-time financial manager and bookkeeper. Interested parties can submit resumes to CBCFinanceResumes@gmail.com Job responsibilities will include accounts payable and receivable, budget tracking, payroll, financial reports, banking, insurance management, and asset tracking. Full and working knowledge of QuickBooks and Excel is required. Awareness of specific accounting and reporting requirements for churches is a plus. Salary determined by level of experience. (st. 2/15)

THE HIGHLANDS PLAYHOUSE is accepting applications for part-time concession and ticket help. Night and weekend availability. Good math and computer skills necessary. Email Joel at highlandisplayhouse@yahoo.com for more information. (st. 2/5)

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HOME FOR RENT: Three Bedroom home, 3 miles from town. Beautiful terrace and yard, pond and mountain views. Available seasonally or year round. Call 828-421-4681 (st. 2/29)

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GREAT, 2 BEDROOM APARTMENT, Main Street Highlands. Central heat/air, full kitchen, high ceilings, laundry and more. Call John Dotson at (828) 526-5587 (st. 1/15)

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DOWNTOWN, 2nd floor, washer/dryer, unfurnished. \$725 plus utilities. (828) 526-9227. (st. 10/30)

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LOTS/LAND FOR SALE

LAND FOR SALE IN CLEAR CREEK: 2.18 acre parcel has road frontage on Mack Wilson Rd. \$17,000. Any reasonable offers will be considered. Call 828-526-2874. (st. 10/23)

FOR SALE BY OWNER – 3 building lots in the gated community of Rustic Falls. Macon County tax records value at \$51,000 each. Must sell due to health reasons. Asking \$15,000 each. Call owner at 803-640-6004. (St. 5/1)

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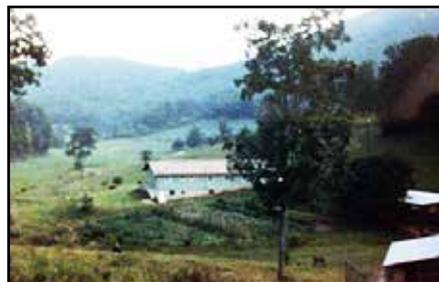
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SAMSUNG 55" FLAT SCREEN TV W/50" STAND, \$400. In Otto. 828-349-1453. (12/18).

PIANOS FOR SALE - 2 consoles, 1 spinet, 1 upright, 1 electric organ, \$150 each, all 5 for \$500. Call 526 4818 (st. 10/23)

WORMY CHESTNUT FOR SALE: Approximately 300 square feet of 3/4" wormy chestnut wainscot milled and finished. Board length 36"; width varies from 4" to 8". \$2800 lot price. 404-944-5298 (st. 3/20)

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2BR/1BA HOME. Clear Creek Road. New exterior paint, inside paint, Brand new appliances, new flooring throughout. \$165,000. (828) 526 2288/ (828)482-2385. (st. 9/25)

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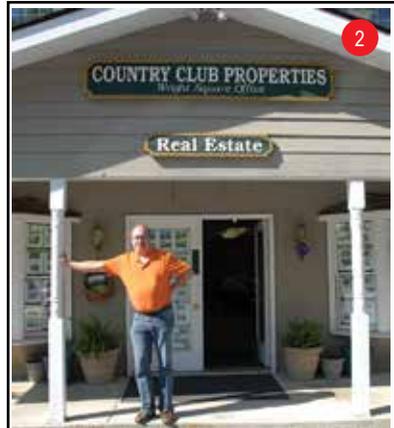
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