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Highlands' Newspaper

FREE

Volume 2, Number 5

Locally Owned & Operated

Friday, Feb. 6, 2004

The week of Feb. 6-12

Feb. 7

▪ **FREE MUSIC** – Arthur & Katie will be performing at Buck's Coffee Cafe on Main Street from 8-11 p.m.

▪ **HIKING AROUND** – The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a strenuous 7-mile hike (with car shuttle) from Bee Gum Gap to the top of Rabun Bald and down to Hale Ridge Road. There will be a long uphill climb and a steep descent (elevation gain: about 1,500 feet.) Call leader Joe Gatins, 706-782-9944, for reservations, information, or weather info.

Feb. 8

▪ **HONORING BOY SCOUTS** – It's Boy Scout Sunday and Highlands United Methodist Church sponsors Cub Scout Pack 207 and will be honoring current and former scouts in worship that day at 11 a.m. All Boy Scouts are welcome to attend. Active scouts are invited to participate in worship that day. Please call the church office at 526-3376 if you plan to participate.

▪ **HIKING AROUND** – The Nantahala Hiking Club will take two hikes – an easy 1.5 mile hike, mostly level, over old roads and fields of the historic Tessentee farm in Macon County. There is a nice birding area along the creeks. Call leader, Kay Coriell, 369-6820, for reservations, information, or weather info. Hike two – is an easy 3-mile hike to the historic Russell House and Nicholson Tracts along the Chattooga River and its West Fork. Call leader Joe Gatins, 706-782-9944, for reservations, information, or weather info.

Feb. 13

▪ **CHILDREN'S BIBLE STUDY** – On Friday afternoons, beginning Friday, Feb. 13, Highlands United Methodist Church will have an after school opportunity for children in grades 1st through 6th. There will be two six-week sessions that will include the God and Country series and a Beth Moore Bible Study for children called Jesus, the One and Only. A snack and transportation from school will be provided. It will finish at 4:30 p.m. All children are invited. For more information or to register, call Kim Ingram at the church at 526-3376.

Master sidewalk plan amended & adopted

By Kim Lewicki

The planning board's time-consuming task of delineating sidewalks in the commercial district of Highlands is finally over.

At the Feb. 4 Town Board meeting, commissioners adopted the amended master sidewalk plan and new sidewalk specifications.

The area dubbed "commercial" has

expanded somewhat – mainly from South to Main along Fifth Street; from Fourth to Second along Spring Street; and from South Street to the ballfield

▪ See **SIDEWALK** pg 2

Talk about extremes ...

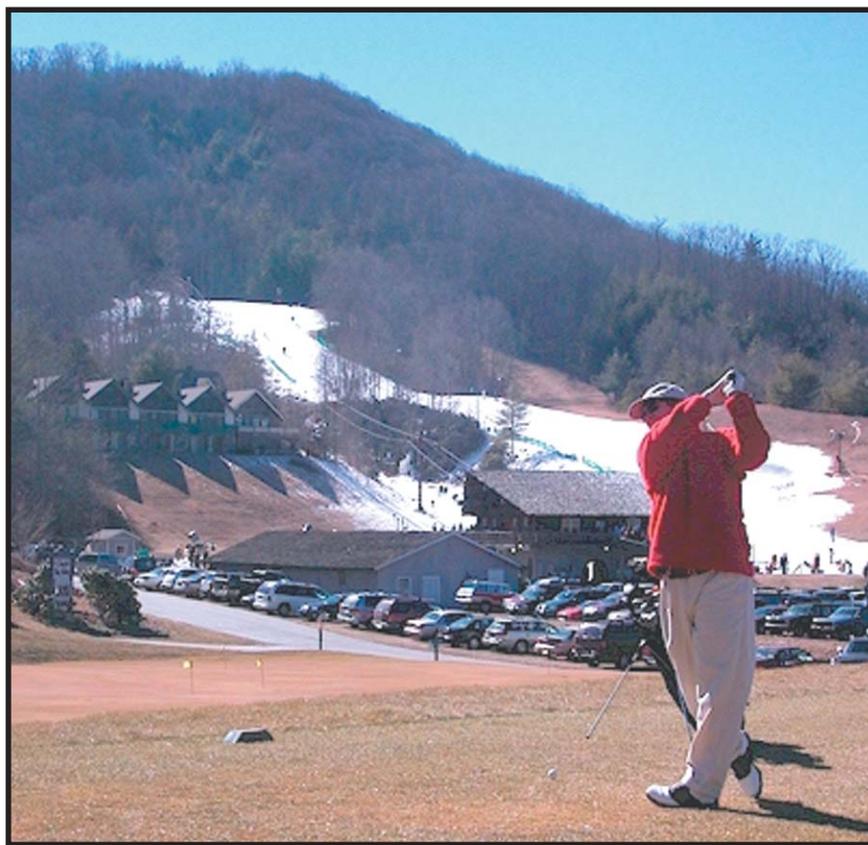


Photo by Jim Lewicki

The sky was blue, the sun was shining, golfers were swinging and skiers were hitting the slopes all at the same time at Sky Valley. Weather forecasters said it would be a winter of extremes and they weren't kidding. As long as temperatures hover around the 30s, snow is being made at Scaly for tubing and Sky Valley for skiing, 12 miles south of Highlands – and the golf course is open, too.

Cable lines under scrutiny

By Kim Lewicki

Between weekly scrutiny by Highlands Cable Group, the town's effort to audit its poles and clearances and Northland Cable's desire to correct any infraction, the town's system of 2,500 utility poles will get straight-

ened out, eventually.

"But it could take up to two years," said Town Engineer Lamar Nix. "This can't be fixed over night."

To leave room for future cable and high-speed Internet competition, at

▪ See **CABLE** pg 2

1-to-1 ratio changes plans at OEI

By Kim Lewicki

It looks like the McCulley's/Hiker building is coming down.

That's the word from General Manager Manuel de Juan following the continued Jan. 27 Zoning Board meeting where Old Edward's Inn's (OEI) requested Special Use Permit (SUP) for an extension on the building was denied.

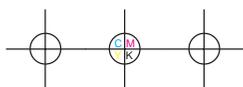
"They said we could build whatever we want, as long as it complies with all the zoning regulations, doesn't exceed a total of 7,434 sq. ft., or 35 feet in height and meets the 1-to-1 ratio," said de Juan. "But we can't swap out the square footage."

Originally, Old Edward's Inn wanted to swap basement and covered parking square footage at the McCulley's building to meet the 1-to-1 ratio and build an extension off the back. Representatives were working on the premise that the basement and parking areas had been open to the public over the years, and as such could be considered part of the overall square footage for swapping purposes. Under the new plans the basement and parking areas would be inaccessible to the public.

Though only the appearance committee saw those plans at its December meeting, OEI purchased the building in the fall and designed renovations under the premise that the swap could take place and the extension be built.

They purchased the building,

▪ See **OEI** page 15



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... SIDEWALK continued from page 1

along Fourth Street.

What that means is developers of commercial lots within those areas will be required to construct sidewalks along their lots, even if a sidewalk exists across the street.

It's all part of the planning board's aim to make Highlands "pedestrian friendly," said board members.

Board members hope the town will step in and construct sidewalks along its property, too.

"Some of these sidewalks can be done down the road as funds become available," said planning board chair, Linda Clark.

Board member John Cleaveland said there are a lot of factors involved. "In some cases, you have to decide if you want trees along the streets or sidewalks," he said. "Or, do you want to take away parking to get a sidewalk?"

Eric Pierson, also on the board, said the geography of Highlands presents problems. "Some areas will require blasting and re-culverting."

Richard Betz, town administrator, said the town has \$50,000-\$100,000 budgeted for sidewalks and this year most of that will go repairs.

The sidewalks on both sides of Pine Street are deteriorating and will be replaced with brick. Sidewalks along Fifth up to Carolina Way are also in need of repair as are Fourth Street to Foreman Road.

All members agreed it would be nice to have a sidewalk to the ball-field on U.S. 64 east so pedestrians won't have to leave the sidewalk on the Chandler Inn side and cross busy U.S. 64 to get to the field.

"The lot from Chestnut to the Hickory is commercial so whoever develops it will have to construct a sidewalk," said Betz.

Sidewalk specifications were adopted for concrete walks six feet wide along some roads; for brick sidewalks seven feet wide with concrete curbing along others; and for repairs made to either brick or concrete walks.

Slipping and sliding on Monday



Photo by Jim Lewicki

At all the "bends" leading into Highlands, motorists were sliding out of control Monday, Feb. 2. Black ice covered the roads and caused corridors into Highlands to be closed for most of the morning. The bend before Mitchell's Lodge on N.C. 28 where a utility pole was knocked down, the bend near the old "Smokehouse" on U.S. 64 west and the bend around Little Bear Pen on U.S. 64 east were sites of several accidents that day. Luckily, injuries were minor. Police officer Jimmy McCall was hit by a car that slid out of control at Little Bear Pen as he was helping a motorist out of a car. He sustained minor injuries.

... CABLE continued from page 1

the Jan. 21 Town Board meeting, commissioners agreed to ask Northland and Verizon to maintain a 52-inch clearance from power attachments on poles rather than the 40-inch required by the National Electric Safety Code. "Where feasible without changing out a pole and if it doesn't cost extra money," said Town Administrator Richard Betz.

At the Feb. 4 Town Board meeting, commissioners agreed to make their request "legal" by amending the pole attachment ordinance. Staley said unless the town amends its ordinance, cable companies are only bound to the 40-inch rule.

Meanwhile, Nin Bond, owner of Highlands Cable, has taken it upon himself to document every pole in town where Northland and Verizon lines are out of compliance. "I'm going to stay on this until something is done," said Bond. "There are many pole violations resulting in serious safety conditions throughout Northland's system," he said.

Request for proposals from independent agencies to audit the town's poles section by section went out last week. Betz said he expects proposals to be approved by commissioners in March.

"After the inventory of poles is completed, the plan is to notify Verizon and Northland of non-compli-

ance and give them a reasonable time to comply," said Betz.

Bill Staley, with Northland, said his company has every intention of complying. "Northland considers safety one of its primary concerns and has been proactive in monitoring pole attachments and correcting issues as they are identified," he said. So far, Northland has spent about \$8,000 making adjustments and changing out poles. "Northland is the only company in town to voluntarily remove cable where attachments couldn't meet NESC standards," he said.

Staley suggested Northland, Verizon and the town get together as a team to identify problems and allocate cost accordingly. "We should meet regularly, track the system section by section and get it cleaned up," he said.

He said Northland can't bring some of its lines into compliance until Verizon moves its lines and he's having a hard time getting in touch with them.

Wednesday night, commissioners also learned that Highlands Cable Group has cable on one pole within the town limits at Hicks and Billy Cabin roads. They told Betz to send Bond a letter demanding the line be taken down.

• LETTERS TO THE EDITOR •

Hard work appreciated

Dear Editor:

We just wanted to say thank you to all those people who worked so hard in the cold and ice to restore power during the recent ice storm.

We lost power about 7 p.m. Sunday and were awakened by a chain saw about 2 a.m. The Town crew was outside the house sawing fallen limbs off some of the wires! So we know some of those folks were working all night to make our lives more comfortable. And by 3:30 a.m. our power was restored.

Thanks again everyone!

Kay & Edwin Poole
Highlands, NC

Dear Editor:

We would like to express our thanks to all who labored long and hard to return power to our home and many more during the recent ice storm.

The next night with extremely cold temperatures and wind chill factors, the town crew came out when the top of a pine tree on our property blew out leaving our neighbors in the dark. Once the call was received, power was quickly restored.

We are most appreciative.

Jim and Rene Ramsdell
Highlands

LETTER-TO-THE-EDITOR POLICY

We welcome letters from our readers. All letters are subject to editing. We reserve the right to reject letters. Anonymous letters will not be accepted. Letters bearing identification and phone numbers can arrive by post or email. Published letters do not necessarily represent opinions of Highlands' Newspaper. Letter deadline: Monday prior to publication.

RBC Centura announces "Tribute to Teachers" campaign through February

What does it take to be a leader? For the ACC, leadership comes through academic excellence, legendary athletic success and a commitment to educate and enrich our future. RBC Centura, official corporate Partner of the ACC, shares in this commitment to leadership and overall excellence.

Teachers – those outstanding individuals dedicated to enriching students and supplying them with the tools to help build a better future for everyone.

Nominate an elementary or middle school teacher in your community by telling why your teacher (or your children's) teacher is a leader in the classroom and in the community.

RBC Centura wants to reward these teachers for their outstanding leadership. RBC Centura teams in

the Southeast region will determine the twenty (20) winners based on these nominations for community contribution with demonstrated commitment to educational excellence and enrichment.

Winning Nomination Prizes: Twenty special teachers from the Southeast region will be selected as community leaders from the nominations received through Feb. 22 and each will be awarded \$500 "Classroom Cash" to be used on learning tools for their classrooms.

At the conclusion of the program, RBC Centura's website will salute and congratulate the winning teachers.

Go to www.RBCcentura.com, click on "Tribute to Teachers" on the right side and click on "Tribute to Teachers" Nomination at the bottom.

Congress hopeful addresses democrats



On Saturday, Jan. 31, Patsy Kever, Democratic candidate for Congress in District 11 addressed a full house at Angel Hospital. She was invited by the Democratic Men's Club with women guests. To learn more about Kever, visit her website at www.keeverforcongress.com

• AT RUBY CINEMA •

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2 & 4:30 Sat. & Sun. Matinees

– **CATCH THAT KID**
rated PG –
7:05 & 9:05 Nightly
4:05 Tues. & Thurs. Matinee
2:05 & 4:05 Sat. & Sun.
Matinees

– **MYSTIC RIVER** –
rated R (Final Week)
9:15 Nightly
4:15 Tues. & Thurs. Matinee
4:15 Sat. & Sun. Matinee

– **ALONG CAME POLLY** –
rated PG-13 (Final Week)
7:15 Nightly
2:15 Sat. & Sun. Matinees

– **BIG FISH** rated PG-13
– (Final Week)
7 & 9:20 Nightly
2 p.m. Saturday & Sunday
Matinee

– **COLD MOUNTAIN** –
rated R (Final Week)
4:10 Tues. & Thurs. Matinee
4:10 Saturday & Sunday
Matinee

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America's Cover Miss and Cover Boy USA Baby Contest set for Feb. 12

The preliminary pageant is at the Dillard Community Building, Thursday, Feb. 12 at 7 p.m. Registration is at 6 p.m.

At the preliminary pageant, there are age divisions for boys ages birth to five and eight age divisions for girls birth to 25 years.

The top five in each age division will continue to State finals in Lake Lanier, to compete for \$60,000 in scholarship, cash and prizes. Just dress your child with a smile, and

the Sunday best.

America's Cover Miss and Cover Boy USA awards more than two million dollars in cash and prizes yearly in more than 40 states.

For more information on entering the pageant, call (850-747-0980 or go to www.georgiacovermiss.com. Registration forms are also available at the Dillard City Hall and the Rabun County Chamber of Commerce.

• LIFE UNDER CONSTRUCTION •

Are you passionate about life?

A woman I respect once gave me her book and wrote the following inscription: "To one of the most passionate women I know! I love your spirit!"

During the past few days, I have been reading a bit and picked up her book. I started to think about what she wrote and wondered if she would still think that. I hope so, but I believe being passionate about life is a conscious commitment.

In the book, "LIFE Launch, A Passionate Guide to the Rest of Your Life," Frederic M. Hudson & Pamela D. McLean talk about six adult passions.

- Personal Power: Claiming Yourself
- Achievement: Proving Yourself
- Intimacy: Sharing Yourself
- Play & Creativity: Expressing Yourself
- Search For Meaning: Integrating Yourself
- Compassion & Contribution: Giving Yourself

Your passion changes with your age or at least needs some renovating and reconstructing at times. What you want in life at 40 is seldom what you wanted at 20, and at 50 or 60 you have different passions and goals. Your priorities change.

The question that is important to ask might be the following: "Are you taking time to examine your current passions because yesterday's passions might not serve your present or future goals?"

Moving to the mountains of Western North Carolina to live was



Dr. Maryellen Lipinski

a passion of mine. Building my post & beam home helped me fulfill one of my dreams. And even while I am living and breathing this time in my life, I am looking forward to another dream. My life in my 50s tends to focus on developing more

inner-driven behaviors (I hope I have not lost you yet) an ease to enjoy many things.

Looking for an inner contentment with life. I am working to create a simpler and more fulfilling time schedule.

Looking out my window and enjoying the view of the mountains does my soul good. Hiking the mountains does my spirit even better. My move from California to the mountains came with many life adjustments and required some changes in my work life but when one is passionate about where they live, it all seems to fall into place.

I think I am in good company in my 50s, and by the way, younger than Paul McCartney, Aretha Franklin, Bob Dylan, and Raquel Welch just to name a few.

Complete this phrase. "My purpose, for the next chapter of my life, is to..."

So, how did it sound to you? Is it doable? Are you heading in the right direction? Are you passionate about it?

"Life shrink or expands in proportion to one's courage."

Anais Nin

"Until you make peace with who you are, you'll never be content with what you have." Doris Mortman

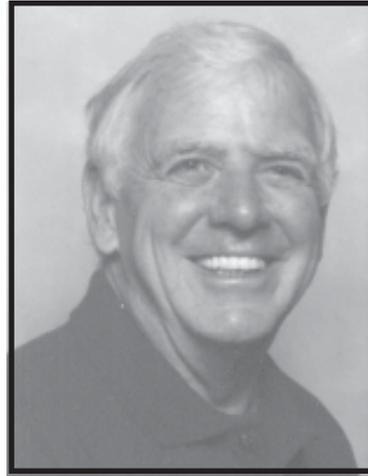
Have you picked up your copy of Life Under Construction? Stop by Chapter 2 in Cashiers or Cyrano's Bookshop in Highlands or email melspeaks@aol.com. Dr. Maryellen Lipinski is a psychologist by profession and an international professional speaker by design. Currently, she coaches individuals to obtain their goals in life and works as a Realtor at Village Realty of Sapphire Valley. www.ilovemountainrealestate.com. Her first book, *Random Thoughts and Mine Always Are. Conscious Detours to Creative Power* will make you laugh, cry, and think! www.maryellenlipinski.com

• LAUGHING AT LIFE •

Getting rid of 'undesirables'

Dear Fred:

We have a beautiful young daughter still living with us who brings home the dirtiest and sleaziest boyfriends I have ever seen. Our Donna is just finishing college and plans to become a veterinarian. Her current boyfriend, Anthony, is an unemployed high school dropout who doesn't work and is just a bum. Anthony hangs around our home all day, eats our food and has made himself a part of our family. We don't want him around but we don't want to hurt Donna's feelings. Please, what are we to do?



Fred Wooldridge

Down On Anthony, from Auburn

Dear D.O.A. from Highlands:

You have contacted the right person for your dilemma as I am an expert at getting rid of boyfriends. I also have a beautiful, kinda young daughter who has since married. Amazingly, I still get hate mail from her ex-boyfriends, but that's another story.

Your letter also brings back old times for me because it's exactly like the one my mother-in-law wrote to Ann Landers when my wife brought me home for the first time. Nah, only kidding. She actually liked me if you can believe that.

The good news is your daughter will eventually move out of your home and take Anthony, the dirt bag, with her. Since trying to break them up will only drive them closer together and since you really can't do anything about Anthony anyway, here is what I suggest as an interim plan.

Limburger cheese is the solution to your problem. Lots and lots of Limburger cheese. Unless he is of Belgium descent, he probably won't like this stuff. Leave a large slab of this smelly concoction on the

kitchen table. When Anthony ask what's for lunch, shove the cheese under his nose. You will find, not only will Anthony reject your lunch offer, he will continuously be checking the soles of his shoes. You can actually eat this stuff if your take two cigarette filters and shove them up your nostrils before you clamp your teeth around a Limburger and pickle sandwich. But don't tell Anthony that.

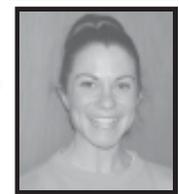
For dinner, Limburger lasagna and heavy on the garlic. Have you ever smelled a combination of Limburger and garlic mixed together, simmering in the oven? It's worse than Saddam's breath. Forty minutes of that in the oven and Anthony will be reeling, looking for the door. Remember, the way to Anthony's exit is though his nose and eventually his stomach.

Next, wait until Anthony takes his nap in your favorite easy chair and then sneak outside and slap another slab of Limburger on the exhaust manifold of his car. He won't be back for days because he'll be afraid to start his car. While he's away, buy a Rottweiler who doesn't like anyone, especially Anthony.

Problem solved.

Want to have some fun this winter? Our very own Contributor/Columnist Fred Wooldridge is ready to answer your questions about Highlands with tongue in cheek – in ASK FRED. The sky's the limit. All published questions are anonymous and, of course, don't expect a straight answer. E-mail us at askfredanything@aol.com. Put "Dear Fred" in memo line. We reserve the right to edit questions.

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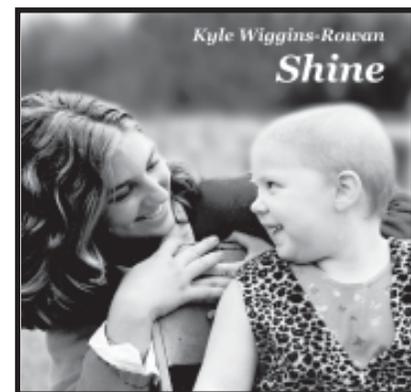
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A CD of songs for Madison

Kyle Wiggins-Rowan, a junior at Rabun Gap Nacoochee School, initiated a fundraising effort to benefit Madison Schandolph, a four-year-old girl who has Leukemia. She has produced a CD of songs which can be purchased by sending an email request to pwiggins_rowan@yahoo.com. Additional contributions may be sent to: The Madison Fund c/o Marlene Alvarez, 1536 Franklin Road, Highlands, NC 28741.



Historical Society fundraiser



The Highlands Historical Society has pewter plates to sell to raise much needed funds to help complete the Highlands Historical Village on Fourth Street. The society hopes to open the Village to the public this year. Paving the driveway and sidewalks will lead to

landscaping and final finishing touches. Volunteers will be needed to staff the Prince House and a curator will be needed for the Library. Plates are \$75 and are available by contacting any Highlands Historical Society board member.

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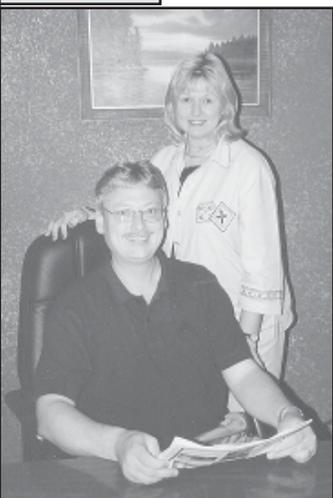
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• Book review by Katie Brugger •

The Appalachian Forest, by Chris Bolgiano (974 B)

A friend of mine owns 54 acres surrounded by National Forest land. She has an agricultural exemption for her property, which means she has to cut down some trees from time to time. She doesn't want to log and has been putting it off, but it looks like this year is it.

Recently as I walked through her woods I was thinking of the imminent cutting and my eyes fell on a couple of standing dead trees pierced with woodpecker holes. As I looked at them it occurred to me that our tax system puts no value on wild land. If these woods are logged the owner gets a land-use exemption. If the valley is farmed she gets an agricultural exemption. If the land is subdivided and houses constructed, the owners of those houses get mortgage deductions. But leaving the land wild, as it is, means the owner pays the full weight of taxes.

If the land were given over to any of those uses, there would be no dead trees for the woodpeckers. There would be no profusion of wildflowers and brambles that have made this valley a birdwatcher's paradise. This valley ties together two large tracts of National Forest and leaving it wild must be beneficial to many animals, particularly the large ones like bears and bobcats who can roam safely between them. And yet the way we calculate land value in our society says this wild state has no value. The tax system actually encourages the conversion of wild land into one of the forms that humans find valuable: logging, agriculture, or housing.

Thinking of all of these things led me to this book, which I had read a few years ago and remembered fondly. Ms. Bolgiano has a deep love for the forests of Appalachia and (both times) reading her book increases my affection for these woods. This is a history of Appalachia told from the point of view

of the forests and its creatures: the primeval forest that existed when the Europeans arrived, the wholesale destruction of the great trees through logging and chestnut blight, and the slow recovery of the forest in the last century due to national park and forest protection. The book is a wonderful blend of research, travel, interviews with a wide range of people from environmental activists to forest service personnel to hunters, and personal experience (Ms. Bolgiano lives in Virginia on the edge of George Washington National Forest, and owns land in West Virginia).

The descriptions of the original forest will make you sad. "The Great Forest was full of behemoths. In 1770, George Washington was impressed by a sycamore along the Kanawha River measuring two inches short of forty-five feet

"...old growth, but they had become islands of woodlots in a sea of change. Shopping malls, housing developments, and golf courses on surrounding private land, and clear-cutting on adjacent national forest, had sliced up the landscape."

— Chris Bolgiano

in circumference. Such huge sycamores were often hollow, and some early explorers used them as homes for months at a time." Chestnuts were 4-10 feet in diameter, white oaks six feet, yellow poplars eight, hemlocks seven. I climbed the mountain behind my house this week and the largest living tree I could find was a tulip poplar nine feet in circumference. I found a couple of fallen trees that were both about 12 feet in circumference, and they seemed like giants compared to the majority of trees that were, on average for the largest, about 45 feet in circumference.

The National Forest system was created in the early 1900s because the forests across the whole country were being devastated by lumber companies that would come into an area, log all the commercially valuable trees and leave the land in ruins to erode. The National Forests were created to ensure that there would be forests in the future

• See BOOK REVIEW pg 12

• MOVIE PIX •

**Video Guy
Presents:**

October Sky

1999, PG film, directed by Joe Johnston, screenplay by Lewis Colick, starring Jake Gyllenhaal and Laura Dern.

In 1957, two seemingly unrelated events occurred. The Soviets launched Sputnik, and Homer Hickam went to high school.

Not much happens in Coalwood, West Virginia – most young men will end up working in the coal mines, but Homer wants something different, although it's unlikely he'll get it.

Thus starts the compelling true story of Homer Hickam (played by Jake Gyllenhaal), a young kid from a coal mining town who has a fascination for rockets and space. With a little help from his friends and the support of a dedicated teacher, Miss Riley (Laura Dern), they build a series of mostly failed rockets and cause a not insignificant amount of destruction (which is hilarious) but gradually learn a bit about what they are doing (which is inspiring).

A very cool '50s sound track accompany this often funny, often grim, often tear-jerking true story, it not only tells the tale of Hickam



Stuart Armor

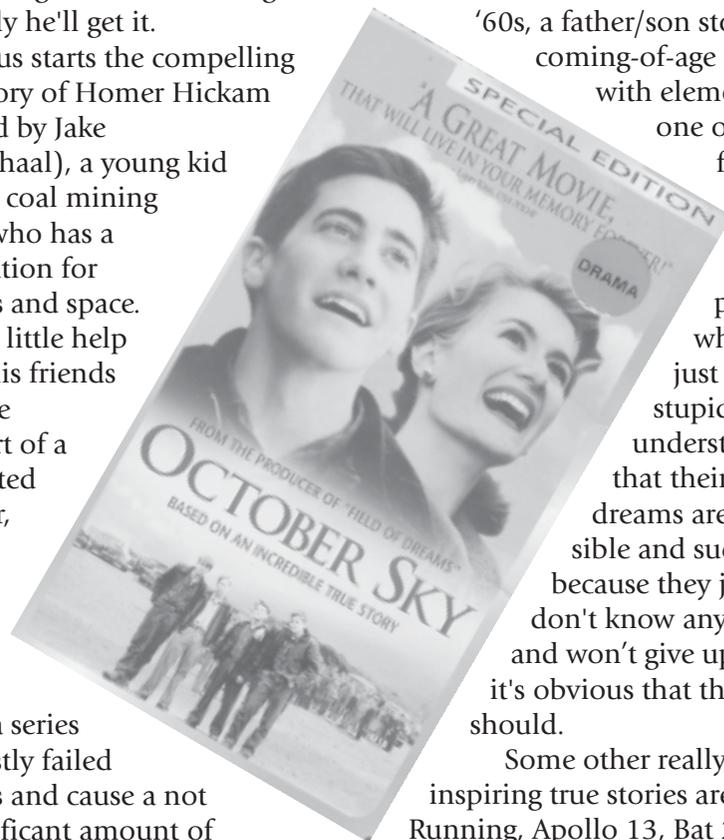
(who, I hope everybody already knows, went on to become a NASA engineer, and a lesser known fact, a well respected author).

It's also a story of the decline of coal towns in the '50s and '60s, a father/son story, a coming-of-age story,

with elements of one of my favorite themes "Stories of people who are just to darn stupid to understand that their dreams are impossible and succeed because they just don't know any better and won't give up when it's obvious that they should.

Some other really terrific, inspiring true stories are Cool Running, Apollo 13, Bat 21, Chariots of Fire, A Civil Action, Erin Brockovitch, Remember the Titans, and My Left Foot.

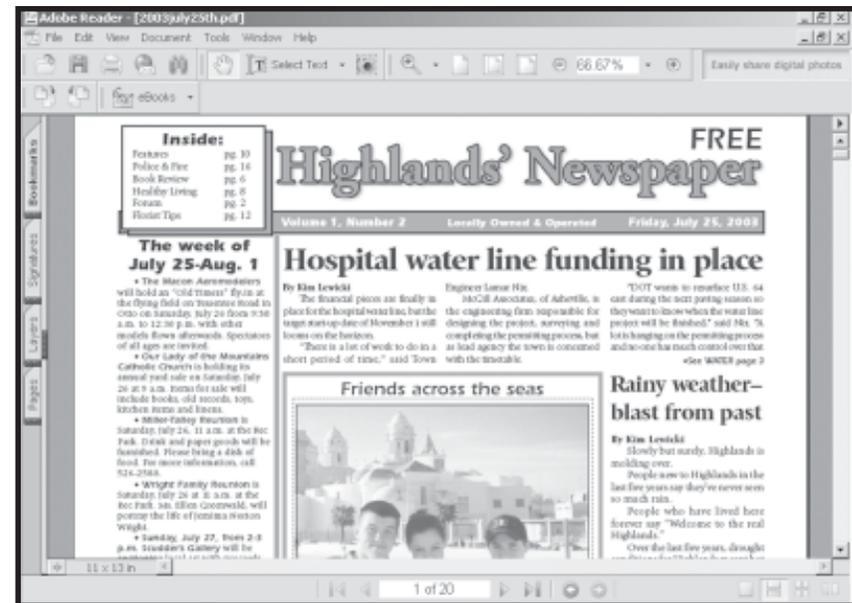
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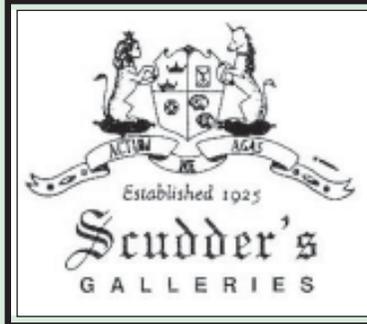


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Rain water doubles for

By Barbara Lawrence
Contributor

With the recent weather conditions, it's easy to forget how much we depend on rain on the plateau, but we always have to consider water supplies in our mountains. Some of us have wells, some rely on springs, others are on town water. Now there is another way – an innovative and natural cistern system that a Highlands couple depends on for its water supply. When several attempts to find an adequate and reliable water supply failed, Gerry and Avary Doubleday decided to put a new rain water collection system they found on the Texas A&M University website to the test.

In 1998 the Doubledays made Highlands their home. Like many, they fell in love with the beauty and freshness of the area. At that time, they still had business interests in Atlanta, so Highlands was the perfect spot for a second home. But it didn't take long for the charm and community spirit in the area to lure them here full time.

After building their home on top of a hill just outside of Highlands, they discovered that their well was, well not enough! They

were faced with the dreaded 'dry well' syndrome.

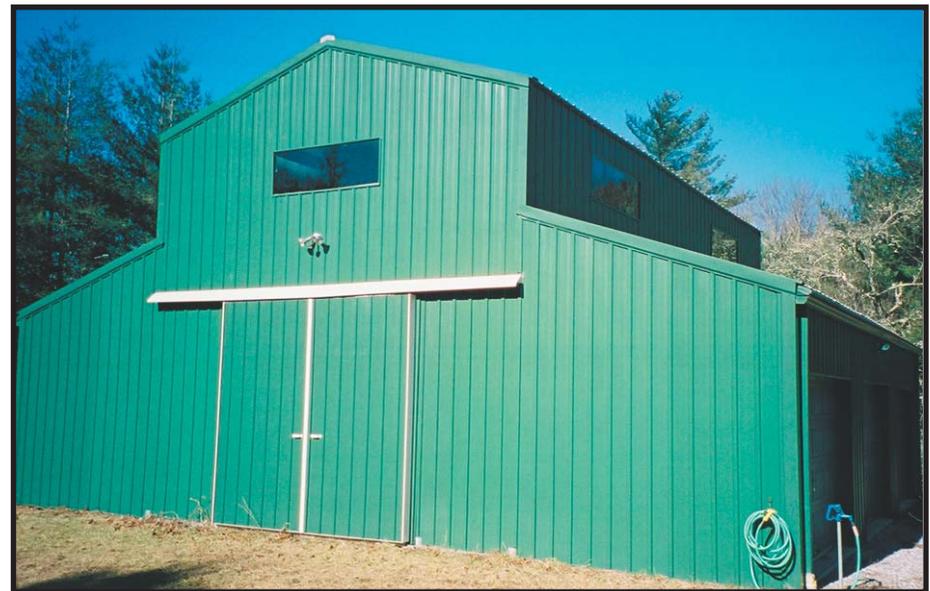
The first step in solving the problem was to have another well dug with different ideas and advice given regarding location, by diviners and well digging companies.

The second well provided five gallons a minute, which was a problem especially when friends and family came to visit. The last straw was one New Year's Eve when there wasn't enough water for the visiting family to shower.

Reluctantly, the Doubledays resorted to drilling a third well. But before actually starting the project, Gerry decided to look on the Internet for alternative methods for obtaining water. "I looked on Texas websites because that's a state familiar with water shortages," he said. He hit paydirt on the Texas A&M's website. "Finally, there was light (and water) at the end of the tunnel."

The website suggested a filtering cistern which filters and collects rainwater. Rainwater drains off the roof of his barn. "It's been a great success and easily provides an average 100 gallons a day, needed for a family of four," said Gerry.

It takes three inches of rain per



Having a plentiful, consistent supply of water depends on the rain and also on the square footage on the barn roof, The Doubleday's "collection area" is 1,500 sq. feet

s for Doubledays

day to produce 100 gallons of water a day. Even during a drought year of only 60 inches of rain, this system provides 60,000 gallons of water a year. "The lowest the cistern has ever been during a drought is one-third full," said Gerry.

Just one inch of rain falling on the 1,500 square-foot roof of their barn, collects 1,000 gallons of water. The cistern consists of a small tank, which filters the water before it travels to a larger settling tank then to a large tank which holds 3,000 gallons of water. A small pump is used to send the water to the house, and an overflow line empties into the woods. The final step involves an ultraviolet light system to sanitize the water before it enters the house.

This system has proved economical as well as consistent. The installation of the cistern was \$9,000 and the annual cost averages \$100 – "mainly for replacing the ultra-violet light filter," said Gerry.

Gerry particularly likes the system because he can take long showers, but Avary likes it because it is environmentally friendly. "I like the fact that the water retains its natural cycle, and it returns to the earth after it is used," she said. "The problem with minerals and silt in well water has also been eliminated."

For those who are having problems with water supply, Gerry and Avary Doubleday recommend their solution – an innovative idea for a safe clean water system that is inexpensive, efficient and unobtrusive and best of all consistent. "An ideal solution for the Highlands area," they said.



Avary and Gerry Doubleday enjoy their water – clean, plentiful and environmentally friendly.



To the left is the Primary Tank – the first stop after the water drains from the roof. It is pumped to a settling tank and on to the house where it ends up in the ultraviolet light system which further purifies the water prior to drinking.

– Photos by Barbara Lawrence



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• SPORTS PICKS •

Answers to nagging questions

Riddle me this, riddle me that, what in the heck is the answer to that?

I have decided that this week, in my infinite knowledge as a member of the sports writing profession, that I am going to answer some of the questions that cloud fans' minds on a daily, (well more like weekly, um actually it's probably more like bi-monthly...you know like those insurance bills you get...all right all right ALL RIGHT. Nobody cares about these questions. Are you happy now?)

1. Is Bob Knight certifiably insane?

Well, the answer of course is yes. He's still a great coach, but between advertising on his sweaters, his Howard Deanesque public outbursts and his Hannibal Lecter personality you have to say he has gone off the deep end. Which doesn't change his coaching ability, but it does make him more likely to be the first coach institutionalized.

2. What is wrong with Mike Martz?

I have it on good authority with a St. Louis physician that Martz has a rare condition known as pressuris rectalis which causes his sizeable cranium to actually enter his rear end during high pressure, high stakes situations. Other coaches who suffer from this syndrome - Andy Reid, Grady Little, Roy Williams, Ron Zook and thousands upon thousands of youth league coaches.

3. Which is the least imposing major college mascot?

This is an easy one. It is definitely the Stanford Tree. I mean seriously, since when does a tree strike fear into the hearts of man? I personally have never, ever been walking through the forest, saw a tree, and been compelled to run in another direction with browned pants. On the other hand, if the tree had a bee's nest in it, I would definitely be opening up a can of haul-tail.

4. Which is the worst coach hairstyle? Tubby Smith's chia head, Quin Snyder's corner the market on mousse look, or the reigning champion, Gene Keady's hair helmet.



Ryan Potts

This is still an easy one. It's like Rick Majerus versus Christina Aguilera in an eating contest. Gene Keady in a landslide.

5. Who is the most overrated player of all time?

Another softball. The collegiate Michael Jordan is easily the most overrated player of all time. Why is it simply impossible for intelligent people to understand that Jordan's greatness as a pro came AFTER his college career? He was a very good college player, good enough to win Player of the Year, but Joe Forte was Player of the Year, too, and he is currently flipping burgers at Jack in the Box. Jordan isn't even Top 5 among CAROLINA players - much less in college history. I can name five better Tarheels than Jordan, easily. Don't believe me? Charlie Scott, Phil Ford, James Worthy, Antwaan Jamison, and Len Rosenbluth. And I'm a DUKE fan! Give it a rest people, Jordan was very very good in college, but that's it. Repeat after me, NBA Legend, College very good. NBA legend, College very good.

6. Does Coach Smart have enough assistant coaches?

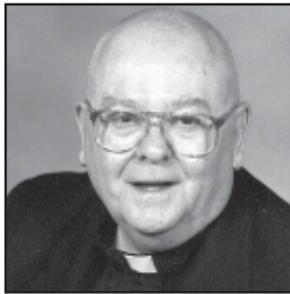
Absolutely not! In fact, I think he could use another on the sideline to round out his already fine college of coaches. Although a bench with myself, Dooley, Josh, Brett and Casey might be a scary thought for most people, we would make one heckuva starting five.

7. Is Osama Bin Laden still alive?

I have it on good authority that him and Martha Stewart are sharing a nice flat in London. Martha has spruced the place up real nice, and is currently making plans to run with

Lord, I want to see

The crowds in Mark's gospel story heard Bartimaeus, the blind beggar, shouting to Jesus and they ordered him to shut



Rev. Bill Evans
Our Lady of the Mountains

when it was restored, he followed Jesus on the way.

Now I ask myself, "Whom do I ignore because of my spiritual blindness?"

up. He only cried out louder.

Hearing the man, Jesus told the crowd to call him. Suddenly their attitude toward Bartimaeus changed. "Take courage, get up, Jesus is calling you," they said.

Somehow conversion happened.

Perhaps St. Mark, the story teller, was showing his community how they must change to approach the poor as Jesus did. Perhaps hearing the story, they were now able to see him through the eyes of Jesus.

Mark's message to his community is a message about discipleship. His message to us today, 21 centuries later, is the same. The community of Mark knew that Jericho was the last stop on the way to Jerusalem, and they knew what happened to Jesus in Jerusalem.

Yet Mark told them on the way to his suffering and death, Jesus stopped to meet a blind beggar.

Bartimaeus, whose name means "son of the unclean," began to shout as soon as he heard that Jesus was passing by. When Bartimaeus heard Jesus call to him, he threw aside his cloak and sprang up. By throwing away his means of supporting himself – beggars spread their cloaks around themselves to

collect alms – Bartimaeus threw aside his only possession. He met Jesus, asked for his sight, and

Until I am reminded of Jesus' stance that all are welcome, whom do I not welcome?"

We are all this way. Every one of us who calls ourselves Christians are this way.

Mark reminds us that the forgotten, overlooked, and nameless often respond faithfully to Jesus' call to become disciples. We are often blinded and unable to see the ones like Bartimaeus who freely follow Jesus.

My world lets me be blind to immigrants who pick crops or clean hotel rooms. My paths insulate me from the under-educated tolling in dead-end jobs or fast food chains and the underpaid who can't make ends meet to support a family on minimum wage. I walk right by the divorced and the remarried in and outside my church, unwelcome at the Eucharistic table. My eyes and heart fail to recognize my sisters and brothers who are worlds apart from me. My blindness is great and my lack of vision blinding.

Why can't I see like Jesus sees?

"Lord, I want to see." Like Bartimaeus, I ask for help in this conversion. I come to Jesus for healing. It is Jesus who will help me to open my eyes and heart to those whom I miss and dismiss.

It is only through my relationship with the Lord that I will be healed of my blindness and have my sight restored.

• PLACES OF WORSHIP ON THE PLATEAU •

Blue Valley Baptist Church

Rev. Oliver Rice, Pastor (706) 782-3965
Sundays: School – 10 a.m., Worship – 11 a.m.
Sunday night services every second and fourth Sunday at 7 p.m.
Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting – 7 p.m.

Buck Creek Baptist Church

Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11 a.m.
First Saturday: Singing at 7:30 p.m.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

NC 28 N. and Pine Ridge Rd., (828) 369-8329
Rai Cammack, Branch President, (828) 369-1627
Sundays: Worship – 10 a.m.; school & primary classes – 11 a.m.; Women's & Men's Org. – noon
Tues: Women's Org. – 6:30 p.m.; Library – 6-8
Wednesdays: Boy Scouts of America mtg. – 6:30 p.m.; Young women's activities – 6:30 p.m.

Christ Anglican Church 743-3319

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Holy Communion at most services.

Clear Creek Baptist Church

Pastor Everett Wilson, (828) 743-3379
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11 a.m.;
Prayer – 6:30 p.m.
Evening Service – 7 p.m.

Community Bible Church

(Evangelical Presbyterian Church
Steven E. Kerhoulas, Pastor, 526-4685
3645 U.S. 64 east
Sundays: School – 9:30 a.m.; Worship – 10:45 a.m.
Tuesdays: Women's Bible Study – 9:45 a.m.
Wed: Supper – 5:30 p.m.; Bible Study – 6:30
Thursdays: Guys Sr. High Discipleship – 6 p.m.

Episcopal Church of the Incarnation

Interim Priest: Stephen Hines, 526-2968
Sundays: Choir – 9 a.m.; Bible Study & Book Study classes – 9:15 a.m.; Holy Eucharist – 10:30 a.m.; Children's – 10:30 a.m.
Mondays: Search Committee – 11 a.m.; Women's Cursillo Group (Library) – 4 p.m.;
Tuesdays: Men's Cursillo in Jones Hall – 8 a.m.; Pastoral Care – 9:30 a.m.; Outreach – 4 p.m.
Wednesdays: Vestry Mtg – 4 p.m.; Supper and Program in Jones Hall – 6 p.m.
Thursdays: Holy Eucharist – 10 a.m.
The Sunday Service is telecast on cable channel 14

First Baptist Church

Dr. Daniel D. Robinson, 526-4153
Sundays: Worship – 8:15 a.m., 10:45 a.m., 6:30 p.m.; School – 9:30 a.m.; Youth – 6:30 p.m.; Choir – 7:15
Wednesdays: Dinner – 5:30 p.m.; Team Kids – 6 p.m.; Prayer – 6:15 p.m., Choir – 7:30

First Presbyterian Church

Rev. J. Hunter Coleman, Pastor, 526-3175
Sundays: Worship – 11 a.m. (child care at 11 a.m.); School – 9:30 & 9:45.
Wednesdays: Children's Devotions – 9:30 a.m.; Supper – 6 p.m.; Choir – 7 p.m.
Thursdays: Bible Study – 10 a.m.

Sat: Adventistas del Septimo Dia – 10 a.m. & 5

Highlands Assembly of God

Rev. Scott Holland, 524-6026, Sixth Street
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11 a.m.
Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study – 7 p.m.

Highlands Seventh-Day Adventist Church

Wednesday evening prayer & Bible Study
Call Lloyd Kidder at 526-9474

Highlands United Methodist Church

Pastors Eddie & Kim Ingram, 526-3376
Sundays: School – 9:30 & 9:45 a.m.; Worship – 11
Wednesdays: Supper – 5:30 p.m.; Bible Study & activities – 6 p.m.

Lutheran Church of the Holy Family – ELCA

Rev. Pam Mitcham, Pastor,
2152 Dillard Road – 526-9741
Sundays: Worship/Communion – 10:30 a.m.

Macedonia Baptist Church

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Pastor Rusty Wolfrey, (706) 782-8130
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11 a.m.;
Choir – 6 p.m.
Wed: Bible Study and Youth Mtg. – 7 p.m.

Mountain Synagogue

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Rev. William M Evans, Priest
Parish office, 526-2418
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Sundays: Mass – 11 a.m.

Scaly Mountain Baptist Church

Rev. Clifford Willis
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11 a.m. & 7
Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg. – 7 p.m.

Scaly Mountain Church of God

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Alfred Sizemore
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 10:45 a.m.;
Evening Worship – 6 p.m.
Wed: Adult Bible Study & Youth – 7 p.m.
For more information call 526-3212.

Shortoff Baptist Church

Pastor Rev. Baker Crane
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11 a.m.
Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study – 7 p.m.

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Franklin ■ 526-9769

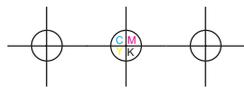
Rev. Maureen Killoran (part-time)
Sundays: Worship – 11 a.m.

Westside Baptist Church

Interim Pastor, Terry Dixon
Services in the basement of the Peggy Crosby
Sundays: Fellowship & Worship – 11 a.m.;

Whiteside Presbyterian Church in America

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By the 1960s, "the remarkable resurgence of Appalachian forests—shrunken and distorted in every dimension from the original, but full of potential timber trees—was well under way. The Forest Service had taken the least productive lands plagued with the most destructive abuses and through dedicated care had made the land productive again."

The threat to the forests of Appalachia today is mainly fragmentation, the splitting of forests by development. Ms. Bolgiano tells us that bird populations are a good indicator of forest health. She describes research by Jane Holt at the Highlands Biological Station: "The woods around Highlands are mostly second-growth hemlock and hardwood forests with a few stands of older trees. Highlands is the only

place in Appalachia that rivals the Smoky Mountains for wetness, and succession progressed quickly after the Forest Service purchased some of the land. [40 percent of Macon County is Forest Service land.] In one plot, an earlier researcher had found 227 pairs of neotropical migrant birds per 100 acres in 1947. Jane found 258 in 1960, probably reflecting the increasing attraction that the maturing stand had for birds of the deep forest. But in 1972 she found only 186 pairs per 100 acres. In 1994, her most recent survey, the number was down to 139...Her study plots remained undisturbed in their continuing development toward old growth, but they had become islands of woodlots in a sea of change. Shopping malls, housing developments, and golf courses on surrounding private land, and clear-cutting on adjacent national forest, had sliced up the landscape." (Do you recognize Highlands in this description?)

She goes on to say, "The cumulation of many studies shows that bigger is better when it comes to forests. The larger the forest, the more species of birds that are likely to succeed there. One researcher estimates that a minimum size of 7,000 acres was necessary to retain all species of forest-breeding birds in the mid-Atlantic states."

Ms. Bolgiano never editorializes; she lets her message come through the facts of her research and the words of her interviewees. And the message is: in order to have maximum biodiversity, we need mature connected forests.

My concern for those woodpecker-friendly dead trees was borne out in her discussions of the elements of a mature forest. "One of the most crucial habitat components [in old-growth forests] is standing and downed deadwood. Dams made of trunks and large fallen branches form pools for fish and catch

nutrients that would otherwise pass through, carried away by rushing water. Soil is so shielded from erosion by layers of fallen leaves and twigs that streams draining ancient woods are among the purest waters ever tested. Large downed logs harbor the small mammals that eat and disperse a group of fungi, the mycorrhizae, that grow around root tips and help trees take up nutrients...Downed logs remain damp enough through droughts to serve as refuges for amphibians, which are crucial to the food chain. In late fall, black bears look for trees big and old enough to have hollow spaces for denning 50 feet up or higher, accommodations that take centuries to produce."

Ms Bolgiano quotes Bob Zahner, professor emeritus of natural resources at Clemson University

"The Great Forest was full of behemoths. In 1770, George Washington was impressed by a sycamore along the Kanawha River measuring two inches short of forty-five feet in circumference. Such huge sycamores were often hollow, and some early explorers used them as homes for months at a time."

and the University of Michigan (and Highlands resident), as an old-growth expert. For a depressing version of the destruction of the "Primeval Forest" of the Highlands Plateau read Mr. Zahner's book *The Mountain at the End of the Trail*, his ode to Whiteside.

The Sierra Club has called for an end to all logging in the National Forests. Ms Bolgiano states that "the question that has become increasingly insistent is what exactly should the

national forests produce? All this talk about the national forests of Appalachia shouldn't obscure the fact that they manage less than 20 percent of the region's forested land and supply only about 10 percent of its timber harvest." Not to mention that the Forest Service loses money on every logging operation.

This book was published in 1998, well before the Bush administration assault on our National Forests: attempting to overturn the roadless rule that had emerged from 10 years of study, and the ridiculously named "Healthy Forests Initiative," which used the fear of forest fires to justify increased logging.

Maybe it is time to envision another role for our national forests. Perhaps now, on the 100-year anniversary of the establishment of the national forest system we can change their mission to one that is more relevant to the needs of today: reservoirs of biodiversity. We could let our national forest become old-growth. Ms Bolgiano tells us that "given time and left alone, even a recovering forest will grow old. In the moistest, richest Appalachian coves, a stand of trees may begin to develop the structural complexities of old growth in 100 years, although the appropriate amount of dead and downed wood will be seriously deficient for perhaps another century."

If you love these mountains you'll enjoy this book.

— Chris Bolgiano



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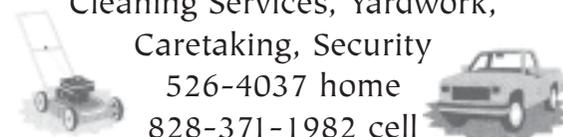


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• BY OWNER •

BY OWNER TERMS

By Owner sales or rentals for homes, merchandise or vehicles. Ad phone number must match owner.

BY OWNER/HELP WANTED PRICES
\$5 for first 20 words, \$2 for each 10-word increment.

Email to:
highlandseditor@aol.com
slug: By Owner OR Want Ads
OR call 526-0782.

Send check to Highlands Newspaper, P.O. Box 2703, Highlands, N.C. 28741 or put in HIGHLANDS NEWSPAPER DROP BOX at Highlands Vacation Rentals/CCP office at Mtn. Fresh Ctr.

Apartment For Rent. In Town. Fully furnished, 2-bedroom, 2 1/2 bath, garage, indoor hot tub. Call (404) 226-5415.

Green plaid sleeper sofa, glass/wood coffee table, separately, BEST OFFER for both. Free chair (needs reupholstering) with purchase. 526-5558.

For Sale by Owner. Commercial and residential building 4,200 sq. ft In-town. Call (404) 226-5415.

Log cabin, new, reassembled on your site, 31'x26', 1-1/2 story, hand-hewn white pine logs and timberframe, half-dovetail notches, covered front porch. Asking \$49,500. 828-526-1301 or 526-5834

• HELP WANTED •

Highlands-Cashiers Hospital (EOE) RNs: Four full-time positions. Prefer ACLS, TNCC, ENPC, or PALS with E.R. and cardiac background. Also, R.N. in the O.R. CNA: Monday-Thursday, full-time. Competitive pay and an excellent benefit package. Pre-employment substance screening. For details call: Mary Osmar, Human Resources, 828-526-1301.

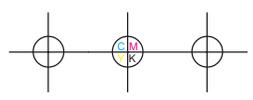
New LPN salary scale! Do what you love, and love what you do. We are looking for excellent nurses to work 7 p.m. – 7 a.m., full time, great benefits. Can-

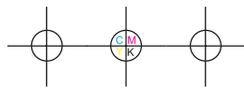
didates must be compassionate, dependable, and possess above-average supervisory skills. Apply now, Fidelia Eckerd Living Center at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, an EOE. Pre-employment substance screening. For details call: Mary Osmar, Human Resources, 828-526-1301.

Highlands-Cashiers Hospital (EOE): Staff Physical Therapist; MLT in Lab; Housekeepers (3). Competitive pay. Excellent benefit package for full-time positions. Pre-employment substance screening. For

details call: Mary Osmar, Human Resources, 828-526-1301.

Executive Director needed for the Jackson-Macon Conservation Alliance, a nonprofit organization based in Highlands. Part time \$1,000/month. Apply by March 1 to Cynthia Strain, Chair, JMCA, 348 S. Fifth St., Highlands, NC 28741; 828-526-9227 or JMCA@dnet.net for more info.





HCCDC challenges community to match Eckerd grant

The Highlands Community Child Development Center (HCCDC) has received a \$200,000 challenge grant from The Eckerd Family Foundation

The grant will match HCCDC pledges and contributions received in 2004 from the community dollar-for-dollar.

The Eckerd Family Foundation formed by Ruth and Jack Eckerd, long-time residents and benefactors of the Highlands community, supports community-based efforts that provide innovative educational, preventative therapeutic and rehabilitative programs for youth and their families. Helping the preschool children of Highlands build their new center once again brings

the Eckerd's support home to the families in our mountain communities.

The capital fundraising goal for the new facilities on Fifth and Church Streets in Highlands is \$1.75 million. The community campaign started last year has reached 60 percent of the goal with this grant, but additional help is still needed.

Kay Craig, a mother with two children in the current program, local business owner and a Director of the HCCDC, states, "The Eckerd Family Foundation grant is really appreciated. It comes at a time when the challenge issued to the community will really help us achieve our goal."

The center is under construction and scheduled to open later this year. "We have received great support from the community so far," said Craig. "Now we need the rest of the businesses and our friends in the community to join this challenge to put the campaign over the top."

In addition to the building program, HCCDC is seeking contributions for an endowment to underwrite the financial stability of the center's long-term operations.

Pledges for the endowment have reached 30 percent of the one million dollar endowment goal.

You can request an information packet and pledge card by calling (828)526-9938, Extension 560.

Pledges may be distributed over three years, if desired. Contributions or requests for additional information may be mailed to HCCDC, P. O. Box 648, Highlands, NC 28741.

Highlands Community Child Development Center, Inc., is a registered North Carolina nonprofit corporation, EIN 47-0891422, and a qualified 501(c)(3) organization operating as a charitable, tax exempt organization under the Internal Revenue Code.

Financial information about this organization and a copy of its license are available from the State Solicitation Licensing Branch at (919)807-2214. The license is not an endorsement by the State.

The Athlete's Foot collects cans for care net



Pictured is Fred Stiles, manager of The Athlete's Foot, with some of the canned goods they collected over the holidays for Care Net.

The Athlete's Foot and WNC SportsZone collected several 100 cans of food for Care Net during their promotion in December. Both stores offered merchandise discounts to customers who brought in canned goods. Care Net is a non-profit organization that provides food to needy families in Macon County.

Macon County 'Habitat for Humanity' looking for recipients

Macon County Habitat for Humanity will hold an orientation meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 16 at the Highlands Conference Center.

The purpose of the meeting is to take applications for a Habitat House that will be built this year in Highlands.

To qualify, a family must be currently living in a substandard house, have the ability to repay and have a willingness to partner with Habitat and meet income guidelines. Interested people should be prepared to fill out an application at the meeting. Habitat representatives will be present to explain the qualifications and rules.

Eleven Habitat homes have been built in Macon County since the early 1990s. Habitat offers a hand up, not a hand out, to qualified persons who are seeking to improve their living conditions

and who want to own their home.

Responsibilities of the Habitat homeowner include maintenance (when things go wrong you have to fix it), and making timely mortgage payments on the interest-free mortgage held by Habitat. Failure to pay the mortgage or maintain the property may constitute foreclosure proceedings.

Habitat houses are built by volunteers and the prospective homeowners must agree to put in 450 hours of "sweat equity." This can be done on their Habitat home or other Habitat houses or by working in the Habitat Resale Store in Franklin. The required hours can be filled by the homeowners or their friends and relatives.

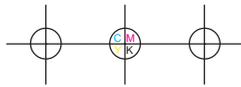
If you are interested in a Habitat house, or know of someone who is, then plan to attend the meeting, Feb. 16 or call the Habitat office at 369-3716.

Highlands' Newspaper Internet Directory

In 2003, more than 1/4-million visitors averaging 5 minutes per view visited the directory at

www.highlandsinfo.com





• POLICE & FIRE REPORT •

The following are the Highlands Police Department log entries for the week of Jan. 29-Feb. 4. The only names are of public officials and/or people who were arrested.

Jan. 28

- At 9:30 a.m., a motorist at Fourth Street and Satulah Road was cited for failing to yield the right of way.

Jan. 30

- At 6:15 p.m., officers issued a trespassing warning to a resident told to stay off the Farmers Market/Exxon property.
- At 11:30 a.m., officers responded to an alarm at the Antique Gallery. All was secure.

Feb. 1

- At 3 p.m., officers responded to an accident at Sixth Street and Cook Road.
- At 3 p.m., officers responded to an accident on Wilson Gap Road. The motorist was cited for exceeding a safe speed.
- At 6 p.m., a motorist was cited for driving with an expired inspection sticker at N.C. 106 and Spring Street.

Feb. 2

- At 2:30 a.m., a motorist was cited for driving without a license or insurance at N.C. 106 and Cobb Rd.
- At 6:35 a.m., officers responded to an accident on Holt Knob Road where a motorist slid out of control.
- At 7 a.m., officers responded to two accidents on U.S. 64 east and Little Bear Pen where several motorists slid into each other. There were minor injuries.

Feb. 3

- At 4:30 p.m., a resident at 3 R Lane and Cullasaja reported a motorist had slid into his trash can pen and damaged it.

The following are the Highlands Fire & Rescue Department log entries for the week of Jan. 28-Feb. 4.

Jan. 28

- The dept. responded to an alarm at a residence on VZ-Top. It was set off by workers.

Jan. 30

- The dept. provided mutual aid to Franklin Fire Dept. when that dept. had to respond to a woods fire.
- The dept. provided mutual aid to Scaly Fire Dept. when that dept. had to respond to a structure fire.

Feb. 1

- The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Moonlight Lane.

Feb. 2

- From 6:40 a.m. to 1 p.m., 21 men from the dept. responded to various accidents on the four roads into Highlands – U.S. 64 east, U.S. 64 west, N.C. 28 and N.C. 106 – which were the sites of several accidents.

C of C chili cook-off set for March 6

The annual Chili Cook Off and Salsa Contest will be held on Saturday, March 6 at the Highlands Conference Center. Festivities will begin at 7 p.m. It is sponsored by the Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Laurel Magazine.

Cost for the evening which includes music by Hurricane Creek is \$20. There is no cost to enter a pot of chili or a dish of salsa. The price of the ticket includes the tasting of the entries and accompanying refreshments.

This year prizes will be awarded in several categories: Best Overall Chili; Best Traditional Chili; Best Non-Traditional Chili; Hottest Chili; Best Overall Salsa; Best Fruit Based Salsa; Most Unusual Salsa; Best Presentation; and Best Dressed Chef.

"This year we have added some new twists to make it even more fun," said Chairperson Marjorie Owens

For an application to enter or to purchase tickets, please contact the Chamber office at 526-5841.

... SPORTS continued from page 10

Hilary Clinton in 2008 under the Women's Initiative To Cripple the Homeland party.

8. If you could punch one person in the face with no repercussions, who would it be?

There are so many nominees for this category that I cannot list them all. Honorable mentions go to Billy Packer, Joe Morgan, any overbearing youth sports coach, Michael Jackson (just to see if it would cave in and then reconstruct, like in the Terminator.), Warren Sapp, Al Sharpton, a Klan Member, any member of PETA, most members of the ACLU...well, you get the picture. However, my

winner for this category is Jim Rome who is the single most obnoxious sports personality (if you can call it that) on the planet. Rome is an idiot who spews venom in every direction, propping up morals and values while showing none himself. I wish that Jim Everett could have gotten a good shot in on him a few years back, but I would like nothing more than to shut him up, if only for one day.

9. Is this column ever going to end?

See #10

10. Yes, just follow the instructions in #9.

... OEI continued from page 1

bought out tenant leases, paid for lost rent revenue, architectural drawings and fees for a total of \$3.75 million and then learned the square footage swap was in jeopardy.

The confusion revolved around a 1995 SUP issued for an addition to the McCulley's building which Zoning Administrator Larry Gantenbein said he only learned of recently.

In 1995, the McCulley's building and the addition met the 1-to-1 ratio because the attic and basement weren't included in the calculation.

Previous owner Mary Wheaton verified that over the years on occasion, the public was allowed access to the basement. But technically, such an action would have been illegal, officials said.

"If the basement wasn't included in the 1-to-1 calculation in 1995, it can't be included now," said Deputy Zoning Administrator Richard Betz. Furthermore, officials said they couldn't very well grandfather something that was illegal.

At the Jan. 14 Zoning Board meeting, members also said before an SUP could even be considered they needed more detailed plans including complete square footage and floor plans. The meeting was continued until Jan. 27.

Present at both the Jan. 14 meeting and the Jan. 27 meeting were OEI lawyer Doug Wilson and a court stenographer provided by OEI.

Wilson cited several legal cases to verify his claim that at this late point in the game, the town couldn't deny the SUP for the extension. He said OEI had a vested right to land use pertaining to the McCulley's parcel.

"Under North Carolina common law, parties have vested right if they have made a substantial expenditure, demonstrated good faith reliance, had valid governmental approval and if the result is the party's deterrent delay and loss of a great deal of money," said Wilson. "It's true the swapping wasn't permitted, but the zoning administrator indicated it would be OK."

Under sworn testimony taken on Jan. 14, Gantenbein said he told OEI representatives he thought the swappage could be worked out but it was ultimately up to the zoning board. "I suggested they purchase the building contingent upon the zoning board's approval," said Gantenbein.

The zoning board saw the plans for the first time Jan. 14 long after the building was purchased.

The new building planned for the parcel will likely use all of the allowed 7,434 square footage which includes 5,449 on the street level floor, and 1,985 easement areas around the perimeter of the building not covered by structures.

De Juan said OEI isn't considering court action, instead will mark the experience up to a "very costly mistake."

"This will delay the opening of that part of the spa until December and we will not be able to apply for "World Class Spa" status right now," he said. "It will still be very nice, but it will be a day spa for now."

He said it will take four to six weeks to design the new building which will include a locker room, sauna and a light café on the street level and a solarium upstairs, with a connector to the adjacent service building.



● UPCOMING EVENTS ●

On-Going

- New After-Work Aerobics Class at the Highlands Rec Park with Sandy Trevathan, certified in AFAA and ACE training. Classes are at 5:15 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays. Call 526-5852.

- Daisies, Brownies and Junior Girl Scouts meet 6:30 p.m. every Tuesday at Highlands United Methodist Church. Come join them.

- Highlands School is still collecting used ink cartridges. The staff just sent in 150 and they're ready for more. Please take used ink cartridges to the main office at Highlands School. It means money to the school.

- Every Friday and Saturday night, Cy Timmons sings and plays his guitar at Highlands Wine & Cheese from 7-11 p.m. It's free.

- Every Saturday night there is live music at Buck's Coffee Cafe on Main Street.

- The Mountain View group of Alcoholics Anonymous now meets in the remodeled basement meeting room of the First Presbyterian Church sanctuary, in Highlands. It's accessible from both Main and Church streets. Meeting times remain the same: Mondays at 8 p.m.; Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. (women only); Wednesdays and Fridays at noon. For further information, call (800) 524-0465.

Feb. 7

- Arthur & Katie will be performing at Buck's Coffee Cafe on Main Street from 8-11 p.m.

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a strenuous 7-mile hike (with car shuttle) from Bee Gum Gap to the top of Rabun Bald and down to Hale Ridge Road. There will be a long uphill climb and a steep descent (elevation gain: about 1,500 feet.) Meet at the Highlands Bank of America at 9 a.m. Bring a drink, lunch, rain gear, and wear hiking boots. Drive 25 miles round trip, returning late in the day. Call leader Joe Gatins, 706-782-9944, for reservations, information, or weather info.

Feb. 8

- Boy Scout Sunday is Sunday, Feb. 8. Highlands United Methodist Church sponsors Cub Scout Pack 207 and will be honoring current and former scouts in worship that day at 11 a.m. All Boy Scouts are welcome to attend. Active scouts are invited to participate in worship that day. Please call the church office at 526-3376 if you plan to participate.

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 1.5 mile hike, mostly level, over old roads and fields of the historic Tessentee farm in Macon County. There is a nice

birding area along the creeks. Meet at 2 p.m. at the River Road picnic area just north of Otto on Hwy. 441. Drive 3 miles round trip. Call leader, Kay Coriell, 369-6820, for reservations, information, or weather info.

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 3-mile hike to the historic Russell House and Nicholson Tracts along the Chattooga River and its West Fork. Meet at 1 p.m. at the intersection of Hwy. 28 (the Wahalla Road) and Warwoman Road in Rabun County, Georgia, about 12 miles south of Highlands. Call leader Joe Gatins, 706-782-9944, for reservations, information, or weather info.

Feb. 13

4:30 p.m. All children are invited. For more information or to register, call Kim Ingram at the church at 526-3376.

Feb. 16

- Macon County Habitat for Humanity will hold an orientation meeting at 6:30 p.m. at the Highlands Conference Center. Applications will be for the recipient of the Habitat for Humanity home that will be built this year. For more information, call 369-3716.

- Highlands Little League Baseball Registration is Feb. 16 through March 1. Boys and girls who are five by Aug. 1 of 2004 are eligible to play. Cost is \$30 for first child and \$25 for each sibling, thereafter. Forms are at Highlands School and the Rec Park. Forms should be returned to the Rec Park. Call 526-3879.

Feb. 17

- Whiskey Galore, a great comedy from the British film industry starring Basil Radford, Joan Greenwood, Gordon Jackson will be presented Tuesday at 7 p.m. at PAC. It's free, but donations are accepted.

Feb. 20

- Mountain Top Rotary breakfast meetings at 7:30 a.m. in the back of the Baptist Church. Ann Greenlee head of the laboratory at the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital will talk about relevant local clinical capacity and issues.

Feb. 21

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an 8-mile strenuous hike from Coweeta Lab up the Ridge Trail to Dyke's Gap and down by the Cunningham Creek road. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin (opposite Burger King) at 10 a.m. Call Gail Lehman, 524-5298, for reservations, information, or weather info.

- A training workshop will be held at the Nature Center in Highlands to organize a local monitoring project. Dr. John Pickering of the University of Georgia, who will provide training, is in the process of creating a web site for submitting HWA reports. For more information, call JMCA at 526-9938 ext. 320 or e-mail JMCA@dnet.net.

Feb. 22

- Highlands Community Ecumenical Worship Service is at 10:45 a.m. at the Community Bible Church on the Cashiers Road. Rev. Dan Robinson of First Baptist Church will be preaching and Holy Communion will be celebrated.

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 1.5-mile loop hike to Patton Springs on woods trails with a couple of short, steep climbs. Meet at 2 p.m. in Franklin at Westgate Plaza opposite Burger King. Call leader Kay Coriell, 369-6820, for information.

Cowboy Envy blows audience away



Photo by Jim Lewicki

Over the weekend of Jan. 30, Highlanders were treated to a fun couple of nights at the Performing Arts Center. Cowboy Envy, called the "best country western band" around entertained with boot stompin', whip crackin', harmonies. The group of four sported an accordion, two guitars and outrageous voices. It wasn't your typical cowboy music show, it was full of humor, energy, color and songs depicting a lost era. If you missed the show last weekend, don't despair. The Instant Theater Company is bringing them back the weekend of July 2.

- Mountain Top Rotary breakfast meetings at 7:30 a.m. in the back of the Baptist Church. Mountain Top Rotary Club Assembly

- On Friday afternoons, beginning Friday, Feb. 13, Highlands United Methodist Church will have an after school opportunity for children in grades 1st through 6th. There will be two six-week sessions that will include the God and Country series and a Beth Moore Bible study for children called Jesus, the One and Only. A snack and transportation from school will be provided. It will finish at

