A year wait on Werder rezoning
By Erin Brown
highlandserin@aol.com

It looks like everyone, loose eyes on the rezoning of the 4.72-acre tract of land bordered by U.S. 64 east, Hickory and Chestnut streets, commonly called the Werder property. Citizens for it, against it and those whose own projects could be determined on the basis of the “Werder” outcome, came out in droves to hear what would become of this piece of property.

Initially it was thought that another motion to rezone the Werder property would be discussed at the July 6 Town Board meeting, but Town Attorney Bill Coward alerted commissioners that under Robert’s Rules of Order the issue couldn’t be revisited for another 12 months.

Coward said a motion to reconsider rezoning — in this case R-2 rather than the denied R-3 request — may only be made on the day the vote was taken or the following.

•See REZONING page 6

Flamingos help fight cancer

This flock of flamingos lighted at Amanda Stewart’s home on Maple Street in celebration of her 21st birthday. They flew away after Amanda paid the American Cancer Society $50 as part of the Mountaintop Relay for Life’s fundraising campaign to fight cancer. This year’s Relay is in Highlands at the Rec Park, Aug. 26 & 27. See more about the Mountaintop Relay for Life on page 22.

Photo by Jim Lewicki

Buffers to surround multi-family
By Erin Brown
highlandserin@aol.com

It looks like the Town Board is only listening to one person when it comes to vegetative buffers and that’s Commissioner Hank Ross.

Regardless of the planning board’s suggestion to limit opaque vegetative buffers to 20 feet, the Town Board followed Ross’s lead to require a 40-foot buffer around the perimeter of all multi-family property regardless of lot size or its topography.

Zoning Administrator Larry Gantenbein argued it “was not possible to draft a workable buffer ordinance that could be applied in cookie cutter fashion.”

•See BUFFERS page 7

Clustering in B3 put to test
By Kim Lewicki
highlandsseditor@aol.com

About a year ago, commissioners amended the zoning ordinance to allow clustering in the B-3 zone with setback changes.

The change was initiated by a developer who wanted to develop the old miniature golf course property next to Nick’s Restaurant into a cluster development in B-3 rather than a development of 12 single-family homes.

Single family homes had always been allowed in the B-3 zone, but not clustering.

To maintain green space and lessen the environmental impact to the property.

•See CLUSTERING page 11
Wicked weather coming this way

Macon County residents should pay particular attention to the weather forecasts for the next couple of days due to the approach of Tropical Storms Cindy and Dennis.

The projected path of Cindy as of 5 p.m. July 5 could bring an estimated 4-5 inches of rain to the area along with gusty winds. The path of Tropical Storm Dennis could also affect the area later in the week or early next week.

Residents in flood-prone areas should follow local forecasts and stay tuned to local media for updates as they become available.

Possible town ‘green area’ in the works

Dear Editor,

The old post office property, .36 acres on the corner of Fifth and Pine streets, has come available. It was under contract, but that contract has been withdrawn. There are other offers on the table, so the window of opportunity is narrow.

Briefly, several groups have been eyeing the property for several years as a key piece in the Pine Street Public Recreation Project. It is mentioned specifically in the new proposed land use plan as desirable green space for a centrally located Town Commons in the downtown area. The first piece of the project is the gazebo and green space across Pine Street which Macon Bank is offering for public use as part of their new landscaping plan. The second piece would be the old post office site which, if we can secure it and would provide much sought-after green space, which would allow for general public recreation, as well as outdoor concerts, square dances, and other community activities, such as the town tree-lighting ceremony on Thanksgiving weekend. It might also be considered as a site for the future Highlands Visitor’s Center and/or offices for the Highlands Chamber of Commerce, both of which are in need of permanent space.

The point is, a lot of money is going to have to be raised, or at least committed, in a short period of time. We are looking for a way to put together a coalition of resources including: the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust, the Town of Highlands, the Chamber of Commerce, the area Rotary Clubs, some major private donors, and a grass-roots group of everybody in Highlands who would like to see this happen. A lot of people are interested in this project, and it would help us if we had an idea of what kind of support we might expect from your group. If you or your group are interested, please get back to us quickly. Time is of the essence if we are to secure this property!

Please call us at any of the following numbers: King Young, 526-3443; Janet Young (Custom House) 526-2665; Ginger Slaughter, 526-8517; Bill Bassham (Chamber of Commerce) 526-5841.

Thank you for your interest in this project, and for your prompt response.

King Young
Highlands

Secrets behind the speech

Dear Editor,

I ask Mr. Bush: Why did you choose a military base with a military audience to perform your speech? And why did you choose to constantly reference 9-11 when you know that Iraq had nothing to do with 9-11? Was this another manipulation appealing to my sympathy for those fighting your war while maintaining my proper level of fear?

Your policy remains hidden behind closed doors and secret files. Still no exit plans or strategy were discussed, only the message of “we stay because I say so, there are reasons, plans would only help the enemy, have faith.” Have faith in you and your policies? How can I have faith in someone who has not been honest about the reasons and actions that led to this war?

Mr. Bush, I think you have some explaining to do.

Karen Hawk
Highlands

Highlands’ cultural menu is expanding

Dear Editor,

I am so excited about Highlands’ newest venue – The Instant Theatre Company, a year-round, ongoing theater workshop and performing troupe dedicated to enhancing the Highlands community’s cultural environment.

Having attended for the first time this week, I can honestly say that it is a very good time. Not only is it colorful and artsy, it was created with a lot of love and care by some very gifted local talent — talent that has been “in the woods,” so to speak, in this area for quite some time.

Many of the faces are familiar but didn’t have a stage for their art before now, and some were simply a little ahead of their time. The Instant Theatre Company and their studio on Main Street is the perfect holding space for vibrant artistic souls who have been looking for artistic community. Their Evening of Little Entertainments on Friday nights is a celebration of the creative spirit and very entertaining.

I am so excited that something like this exists in Highlands. It has quelled my longing for Asheville or Atlanta, or even San Francisco, Miami and Tucson where I used to live. Highlands now has its own “colorful” stage for those of us whose passion is creative expression.

Thea Stacey
Highlands
**BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT**

Ashlynn Faith Wilson

Ashlynn Faith Wilson was born June 28 at 11:58 a.m. to Margie Potts at Harris Regional Hospital in Sylva. She weighed five pounds 14 ounces and was 18 inches long.

**Brice Jenkins tapped by Duke**

The Duke University Talent Identification Program annually conducts the Seventh Grade Talent Search for Mathematically and Verbally Talented Students. Brice Jenkins from Highlands School participated in January 2005 taking the SAT at Franklin High School. Brice received an invitation to the 2005 North Carolina Recognition Ceremony honoring students in the 7th Grade Talent Search with high SAT or ACT scores. Right: Brice Jenkins with his State Recognition award.

**Work on school gym progressing slowly**

By Kim Lewicki  
highlandseditor@aol.com

It’s hard to get a firm answer as to why the Highlands School gymnasium is still not open. But the contractor hasn’t gotten paid since March of 2005.

“We’ve withheld payment of $86,000 because there hasn’t been any progress since March,” said Macon County Schools Superintendent Dr. Rodney Shotwell.

An inspection the last week of June revealed “a lot of little things” still need to be done. “The maintenance superintendent has faxed the list to the architect and the contractor and we’re waiting for the work to be completed,” said Macon County School Board Vice Chair Donnie Edwards.

A temporary Certificate of Occupancy was issued for the Feb. 23 basketball conference game with the understanding that a “punch list” would be completed, but progress has been slow.

The latest halt was due to the absence of a road around the back of the building to accommodate fire trucks. Hoses extended from a truck parked at both ends of the building still lacked about 100-feet of coverage. “That’s why they needed a road, but that issue has been resolved,” said officials at the June 23 school board meeting.

Edwards said the main problem is the contractor drives from Asheville each day with a crew he pays about $11 an hour.

Shotwell said he is willing to go out on a limb and say the building will be ready for occupancy when school opens in August.
Here is my take on where everyone should stick their waste (Ha). No, this is not another column on how Macon County has walked all over us on the sewage treatment plant issue. Done that. This is about lots of people in Highlands, including visitors, wondering what in tarnation is going on with the other waste. You know, all the other stuff that doesn’t flow down the river.

Highlands folks seem to always be in a snit about either sewage waste or where to put garbage, old bricks, mortar, car batteries, paint cans, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. (From the King & I.) I guess when people are not confronted with murders and rapes, they tend to get upset with the issue of dumping waste. This is a good thing. Tourists, living just outside of Highlands’ garbage pickup areas, ride around for days with garbage in the trunks of their cars, not knowing where to put it. Places to put garbage in Highlands are more scarce than motorcycles parked outside the Highlands Country Club. Finally, frustrated with the smell of fish heads emanating from their trunks, visitors fling their trash into the woods. The bears are elated but the milk cartons won’t disintegrate for 15 years.

Long ago, Macon County provided public garbage bins which were scattered around town, like right in front of OEI. Then, the county decided we had it too good up here and cut us off, (sound familiar)! removing the bins. Highlands should have picked up that service, realizing that visitors without garbage pickup are not going to drive to Buck Creek Rd. to get rid of their tomato cans. How would you like to drive all the way out there only to find the place has closed? What did you do on your vacation? “We drove to the dump a lot.” Come on, get real.

Highlands is the wealthiest town in Macon County. Actually, per capita, we just may be the wealthiest in North Carolina if you consider our surrounding region. While we are no longer PO-dunk, we are PO-dump.

*See WOOLDRIDGE page 8*

I've seen this movie several times and I like it more and more each time. I'm not a real big fan of Shirley MacLaine, but in this, she does a great job. It's a comedy, cats and dogs story and a buddy movie, with a little suspense near the end.

The Storyline: Special Agent Chesnick (Cage, in one of his less manic roles) is on guard duty for former first lady Tess Carlyle (MacLaine). He is a by-the-book agent who would rather be on a “real” assignment and chafes at being a heavily armed butler, she balks at the restrictions involved and couldn't care less about the rules. Natch, they get along as well as oil and vinegar. Chesnick tries to get out of his detail, but she won’t let him (the phone calls from the President are hilarious, I assume it’s supposed to be George Bush, Sr.). Despite annoying the daylights out of each other, they form some real respect and friendship.

The suspense part comes in when Tess is kidnapped, and her team scrambles to rescue her. A bit of trivia, director Hugh Wilson does the voice of the president, and it’s great.

OK, it's a bit contrived, but it is a funny and cute story. The humor delivered by both Cage and MacLaine is dry and dead pan, making it all the more funny. The principals work well together, and although the story is essentially Cage and MacLaine, the rest of the cast has some fun bits, too.

Cage is one of my favorite actors, and some of his best are Raising Arizona, Vampires Kiss, Moonstruck, and Amos and Andrew. Some of MacLaine’s best are Used People, Steel Magnolias, Terms of Endearment, and Being There.

Some more Presidential movies are Dave, American President, Primary Colors, Wag the Dog, and Air Force One. These and about 5000 other titles are available on VHS or DVD at Movie Stop on by and give them a look.

Ruby Cinemas
Franklin, NC
Adult — $6, Child — $4
Matinee (Before 5 p.m.)
Adult — $5, Child — $4
July 8-14
FANTASTIC 4
rated PG-13
Weekdays: (4:10), 7, 9:10
Sat & Sun: (2), (4:10), 7, 9:10
WAR OF THE WORLDS
rated PG-13
Weekdays: (4:20), 7:10, 9:20
Sat & Sun:(2:10), (4:20), 7, 9:20
HERBIE FULLY LOADED
rated G
Weekdays: (4:15), 7:05, 9:15
Sat & Sun:(2:05), (4:15), 7:05, 9:15
BATMAN BEGINS
rated PG-13
Weekdays:(4:30), 7, 9:30
Sat & Sun:(2), (4:30), 7, 9:30
FREE KIDS’ MOVIES
Our summer kid’s movie program is at 10 a.m. each Thursday through the summer.
- The program is FREE for children of all ages and their parents.
- Seating availability is on a first come first serve basis.
- For more information including a list of our upcoming FREE kid’s movies, visit our website:
  www.rubycinemas.com
... REZONING continued from page 1

lowing day as long as the motion is made by at least one person who voted with the prevailing side.

Developer Chuck Simmerson's attorney William Clarke was present at the meeting and disagreed with Coward citing the decision at two previous planning board meetings to recommend rezoning the property to R-3. "I think the process is still open because you, yourselves want to rezone the property to R-2," Clarke said. "This is smart growth, and Mr. Simmerson is willing to do everything you have encouraged him to do."

But either way, Coward said the board couldn’t take a look at a rezoning request for the property for 12 months.

The town denied rezoning the property R-3 and sent the issue to the planning board for consideration, who agreed in a 4-2 decision that the property should be R-3 — not once, but twice. The second consideration was initiated by the Town Board who suggested the entire property be down-zoned to R-2. But the planning board stuck by its initial decision.

At Wednesday night’s meeting, Commissioner Hank Ross suggested rezoning the commercial B-4 portion of the split-zoned property to R-3, saying that would at least reduce the number of multi-family units by four. The back part of the property could remain R-2, he said.

Commissioner Amy Patterson argued that light commercial B-4 was to be a buffer between residential and commercial zones. She said if the entire parcel was rezoned R-2 it wouldn’t “degrade” the property’s value, in fact it would be better than its current split-zoned scenario. "The way it is now, the R-2 portion overlooks the commercial B-4 zone, which degrades the R-2 portion."

But Commissioner Ross felt the property could be better used rezoned R-3. "This is one piece of property that has a much better use than commercial," he said.

Commissioner Patterson emphatically disagreed with Ross and said there was no greater threat than allowing more people on the plateau.

“Highlands is finite,” she said. “Yes, they’re coming, but you shouldn’t increase the number of people or the density. I am opposed to any multi-family which doubles the density.”

Real Estate Broker for the property Wick Ashburn asked the board if they could rescind their votes and vote again on the issue, but was shut down.

Later Simmerson said he was going to develop the property one way or another, but if there is the “slightest chance” of doing it the way he originally proposed — multi-family units on a R-3 plot — he would do it that way.

"Obviously that’s the best way to go," he said. At this point four to five retail shops with apartments above are planned for the B-4 portion and four single-family homes for the R-2 portion.

But at this point, neither the town nor Simmerson or any other multi-family developer are getting what they want.

The same night developer David Bock requested the rezoning of a 4.423-acre parcel on Smallwood and South Fifth Streets from R-2 to R-3 to allow a multi-family development. The property is owned by Michael Crisp, Judith Edwards Crisp and Mozelle Edwards.

Bock said the surrounding property owners weren’t opposed to the plans for the development, which would include eight buildings of two-unit duplexes for a total of 16 units.

However, based on the Werder property decision and because it looked like the request would be denied, Bock withdrew his application.

Commissioner Amy Patterson said her position was clear on additional multi-family developments in town. Commissioner Dennis DeWolf said he was not going to make a motion regarding rezoning the property until conditional zoning was in place. Conditional zoning would give the Town Board leeway to determine development on a site-specific basis.

Zoning Administrator Larry Gantenbein said he was still working on conditional zoning with the Institute of Government.
Chamber board changes presidents

Outgoing Chamber of Commerce president Wick Ashburn hands the reins over to Jim Mullen. Mullen's reign begins with the Chamber's move to its new location, The Phelps House.

... QUESTIONS continued from page 1

Thus taking the responsibility of defining the ambiguous term off the hands of the board.

James said if a building is determined to be destroyed, it should go to the zoning board for a special use permit saying "somebody's got to interpret repairs to include when something's destroyed."

Town Administrator Richard Betz, who was not in attendance, wrote a "draft" amended portion of the ordinance to read "non-conforming buildings destroyed by fire or other natural disasters, to the extent that the appraised value has been reduced by 50 percent or more, may not be reconstructed except in accordance with all of the requirements of this ordinance."

But his verbal input was not requested at the recent sub-committee meeting. Betz and Zoning Administrator Larry Gantenbein were expressly asked not to attend the meeting.

At the March 16 Town Board meeting, commissioners Gantenbein and Betz went head-to-head in their differing interpretations of the current ordinance.

Gantenbein said he informed the board in 2002 “to make sure there weren't any non-conforming buildings in the setback” that the board wanted "to get rid of" because after the ordinance was amended the board wouldn’t be able to change anything.

Patterson said it was a matter of interpretation and if a building is destroyed it shouldn't be rebuilt in the setback, stating the ordinance was referring only to repairs and alterations.

"There are no experts out there that can write an ordinance so it can't be nit-picked," James said.

Betz and Gantenbein both interpreted the amended ordinance to allow rebuilds as the foundation remained.

The issue of destroyed has yet to be decided, but the members on the sub-committee agreed they should determine what they want and then let a lawyer draft an amendment to the ordinance not Betz or Gantenbein.

"We need to figure out what we want it to say and tell someone with some legal background," said Ross. "Maybe the town attorney or the league of municipalities to re-write the ordinance."

Another subcommittee meeting is set for July 16 at 8:30 a.m. in Town Hall.

... BUFFERS continued from page 1

...ion to every project without regard to the nature of the project or the topography of the land." And the planning board agreed, unanimously, stating that a minimum 20-foot buffer was needed and the Appearance Commission and Zoning Board should have the latitude to require a wider buffer where it was needed on a case-by-case basis.

Gantenbein said he originally made the 40-foot setback a vegetative buffer, but then realized it was unnecessary and suggested a formula – two staggered rows of plants placed five feet apart — for the minimum 20-foot buffer making sure it was opaque.

Commissioner Dennis DeWolf disagreed saying the 40-foot buffer wouldn’t hinder the multi-family development; it would just depend on the size of the lot.
Highlands is an upscale resort town rapidly becoming famous nationwide.

We should have a first class waste program, well publicized so visitors will know what to do with waste. Currently, we are saying, “Come to Highlands, see our dumps.”

Chris Stahl, director of Macon County Waste, thinks people don’t care. I disagree. I think people just don’t know where to put their waste. Hazardous waste and building materials are not permitted at dumps in many areas of the country. Being visitors, they assume the same exists here. Most people I know who visit us don’t want to litter. Again, who wants to go to the dump while on vacation?

And who is throwing all those empty beer cans along our roads? I’ll bet it isn’t the tourists or the country club people. In my 37 years of visiting and living in Highlands, I have never once seen an empty beer can get flung from a Mercedes, Lexus or Lincoln Continental, but empty beer cans are everywhere.

The way to stop the trashing of our roads is to put a countywide seven-cent deposit return on all aluminum cans and bottles. The stores make money, the roads will be cleaner and serious beer drinkers can pick up some extra money by picking up littered empties. Beer drinkers are like cigarette smokers; no matter what you charge, they’ll still drink beer.

And are you sitting down? Probably the worse case scenario for illegal dumping occurred right under our noses. Someone, probably in the dead of night, snuck in here and dropped several loads of demolished building materials right on Oak Street, a block from the police station. Talk about chutzpah. They tried to hide their sin by covering it with dirt but, with all the torrential rains we have had, all the dirt eroded down the hill, making an even bigger mess, exposing bricks, roofing, mortar, scrap wood, etc.

We should appoint Little John as our chief investigator on this. After all, he is the czar of waste. He is always on time with his pickups and has a big smile for everyone. If Highlands lets those scofflaws get away with this brazen dumping, how can anyone expect law abiding citizens to have respect for the town’s waste policies? I say, Sic ‘em, Little John.”
Hospital's spring screenings show need for healthier lifestyles

Area residents need to be paying a lot more attention to the numbers – their health numbers, that is.

A record number of area residents participated in this year’s annual series of free community health screenings, conducted this spring by Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. And if the results of those screenings are any indication of the overall state of health of the area’s population, many of us need to watch our diets, exercise more, and take steps now to head off more serious medical problems down the road.

For example, approximately 60 percent of the nearly 400 people who took part in the six community screenings this spring showed some indication of having either high or borderline high cholesterol. Unlike screenings conducted in other areas, the hospital runs a full lipid profile on every participant which breaks down the results into six different categories. Nearly two thirds of those tested had higher than recommended levels in one or more categories.

“A screening isn’t a substitute for seeing your physician,” cautioned local internist physician Dr. Mark Wagner. “It is only an indicator that you might have a problem. There are many other things to consider, such as each individual’s risk factors that need to be considered. If you were one of those people with cholesterol numbers outside the generally acceptable range, you should talk to your physician.”

Cholesterol isn’t the only thing area residents may need to worry about. Forty-three percent of screening participants had at least one of two common indicators for obesity. A third of those tested had higher than healthy levels of body fat. And roughly a third had a body mass index of 26 or higher, which may indicate they are overweight.

“These numbers do not always paint a true picture, particularly for someone whose fitness level is borderline, but clearly there are a lot of people out there who need to consider changing to a more healthy lifestyle,” said Yvonne Smith, MHS, RD, a dietitian and exercise instructor who heads the hospital’s HealthTracks program. “When compared to the population nationwide, the numbers of people who should be concerned about their weight who came to the screenings is not that large. Many studies indicate as many as two-thirds of the American population are overweight. Still, there’s no way to know if those who took part in the screening are representative of the area’s general population.”

The screening results also showed that 22 percent of participants may have either hypertension or pre-hypertension, and about 11 percent had blood sugar levels higher than recommended, indicating they may be at increased risk for diabetes. About 10 percent of men over the age of 45 who took part in the screening had PSA (prostate specific antigen) test results that indicated they should follow up with their doctors.

Not everyone who participated was a candidate for the osteoporosis screening test, offered jointly by the hospital and the Osteoporosis Program at Haywood Regional Medical Center. The appropriateness of that test is based on age and risk factors, but of the 139 who were tested for possible bone loss, approximately 85 percent were found to be likely candidates for more comprehensive diagnostic testing.

“The hospital’s goal in holding these free screenings each year is to reach as many segments of our communities as possible. The focus is on providing prevention and wellness education to people where they live, rather than asking them to come to us,” says hospital Administrator Jim Graham. “There is no cost involved and everyone is welcome. We see this as part of the hospital’s mission.”

In addition to the testing procedures, each screening provides plenty of opportunity to obtain free advice from hospital staff and area physicians.

“This represents a significant commitment on the part of the Hospital’s staff and a number of local physicians,” said Graham. “It takes a dedicated team, and we are fortunate to have that kind of folks associated with Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. It’s very rewarding to see the number of people from the community who take advantage of screenings each spring. That’s what makes all of our efforts worthwhile.”
Bring all Offers!

Sellers Must Move!
350 Queen Mountain Road, Highlands, NC
Open House: July 15th, 16th and 17th
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Offered at $455,000
Buyer Will Receive Cash Back at Closing (1% of Purchase Price)
All Offers Must Be Submitted by July 22, 2005
3 Bedrooms, 3 Baths
Large Decks
Mountain Views
4.66 Acres
Generator
Beautiful Landscaping
Glassed Family Room
Unfinished Guest House
Paved Access

Susie deVille Schiffli
John Schiffli Real Estate
828-526-2880
Cathy Garren
Century 21 Mountain Lifestyles
828-743-7999

Directions: 28 South.  Left into Queen Mountain.  Left at "Other Side of the Mountain."  350 Queen Mountain Road.

Lush colorful gardens full of texture and light will delight tour-goers on July 15. Four and a half gardens will be on tour. Tickets for the tour only are $55, tickets for the Patron Party on July 14, to be catered by Wolfgang's on Main are $130. Call 526-4949 for tickets.

An archive photo of dancing at Helen's Barn.

Highlands Historical Society's Historical Village opens this weekend – July 8 & 9

On Friday and Saturday, July 8th and 9th, the Highlands Historical Society will celebrate the Grand Opening of the Highlands Historical Village. The occasion marks the renovation of two buildings on North 4th Street that will house the museum and archives.

The ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled for Friday at 7 p.m., officiated by Mayor Buck Trott and including special guests, but the entire public is invited to attend.

In the old Hudson Library building, which will soon house the archives of the town’s history and many historical artifacts, Ran Shaffner will describe some of the truly fascinating treasures contained in these archives. Quoting from letters, interviews, articles, books, sayings, and diaries by local people who long ago made Highlands their home, he will focus on the humor and wisdom of the personalities and characters that have made Highlands unique among Southern towns.

The society hopes residents of the town will contribute stories and records of their families, as well to the Highlands archives for the general public to value as much as these ancestral letters, diaries, etc. are already appreciated.

On Saturday, from 11 a.m. - 5 p.m., a selection of native family artifacts, documents, and photos will be on display, including subjects of historical interest that relate to the history of the town and video showings of past interviews with memorable personalities. Docents from the Wright family will help lead tours of the House-Trapier-Wright House, also known as the "Prince House," which is the oldest house in town, built by millwright Arthur House in 1877 and home to the Rev. Richard Trapier and his daughter Alicia, at the turn of the 20th century, as well as the Wright family for over 80 years.

At 4 p.m., Rebecca Schilling will give a special preview of her "Walk-in-the-Park" portrayal of Ella Hudson, for whom the old Hudson Library was originally named.

And from 7-9 p.m., there will be music, dancing, and refreshments. Johnny Webb will lead his well-known JW Band, and Donnie Calloway will serve as caller for square dancing, reviving a once extraordinarily popular Highlands pastime.

A highlight of the night will be a performance by the Carolina Christian Cloggers. Refreshments will specialize in Grandma’s favorite recipes.

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The society hopes residents of the town will contribute stories and records of their families, as well to the Highlands archives for the general public to value as much as these ancestral letters, diaries, etc. are already appreciated.

On Saturday, from 11 a.m. - 5 p.m., a selection of native family artifacts, documents, and photos will be on display, including subjects of historical interest that relate to the history of the town and video showings of past interviews with memorable personalities. Docents from the Wright family will help lead tours of the House-Trapier-Wright House, also known as the "Prince House," which is the oldest house in town, built by millwright Arthur House in 1877 and home to the Rev. Richard Trapier and his daughter Alicia, at the turn of the 20th century, as well as the Wright family for over 80 years.

At 4 p.m., Rebecca Schilling will give a special preview of her "Walk-in-the-Park" portrayal of Ella Hudson, for whom the old Hudson Library was originally named.

And from 7-9 p.m., there will be music, dancing, and refreshments. Johnny Webb will lead his well-known JW Band, and Donnie Calloway will serve as caller for square dancing, reviving a once extraordinarily popular Highlands pastime.

A highlight of the night will be a performance by the Carolina Christian Cloggers. Refreshments will specialize in Grandma’s favorite recipes.
CLUSTERING continued from page 1

property, commissioners agreed to amend the B-3 ordinance to accept clustering.

At the July 6 Town Board meeting, commissioners were called to consider a subdivision request based on those B-3 clustering allowances made last year.

Zoning Administrator Larry Gantenbein said by today’s standards, a subdivision of four structures called Mill Creek Village on less than an acre on Mill Creek Lane could not be to be built.

But since the development is in existence with all infrastructure including parking and roads intact, it now falls under clustering in B-3.

For years the property has been used as a vacation rental complex. Now the owner wants to subdivide the cluster to sell the four structures as individual plots.

Gantenbein said the cluster amendment to B-3 was not restricted to new development and subdividing a cluster development is legal, as long as the setback requirements can still be met within the cluster. Each plot must be at least 6,000 sq. ft., and each structure has a five-foot setback from the other, a total of 10-feet between structures.

Gantenbein said to meet the five-foot setback requirement, decks have to be removed, but other than that, the subdivision is in compliance as a clustered entity in B-3.

The Town Board voted unanimously to allow the lots to be designated, but even though the property is in the B-3 commercial zone, once plotted as four residential units, it can’t revert back to commercial or retail use without Town Board approval.

When subdividing a property into less than three lots, the Town Board doesn’t have to get involved, but since four plots were requested, the Town Board had to hear the case.

In B-3, lots have to be a minimum of 6,000 sq. ft. – at Mill Creek Village, one lot is 6,000 sq. ft, one is 9,000, one 10,000 and one 11,000.

Volunteers needed for school project

Volunteers are needed to help Highlands School PTO with the beautification of the middle school.

Workdays are scheduled for 8 a.m.-noon and 4-8 p.m. on July 29 and 8 a.m.-noon on July 30. A rain date is July 31 from 1-4 p.m.

Contact Mark Thomas at the school at 526-2147 or leave a message to sign up.

Tasks include weeding, raking, hauling and spreading mulch, planting bushes and general clean-up.

At the end of the street at Falls on Main Featuring the art of Helena Meek

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Call 743-1174 to reserve your Tee Time today
The Most Reverend Peter J. Jugis Bishop of Charlotte confirmed Steven Karcher at the Wed., June 22 mass at Our Lady of the Mountain Catholic Church.

Bishop Peter Jugis and Father Bill Evans during Wednesday's mass.

Far right: church member George Schmitt and Father Evans chat at the June 26 “goodbye picnic.” Brendan Karcher looks on.

The Most Reverend Peter J. Jugis Bishop of Charlotte confirmed Steven Karcher at the Wed., June 22 mass at Our Lady of the Mountain Catholic Church.

Father Bill Evans has seen a lot of changes at Our Lady of the Mountain Catholic Church, a mission church of Franklin. Church membership has tripled during his seven-year tenure and it has become a full-service church. Changes include a full-service Sunday school lead by Kristen Karcher and a full-service music program lead by Mary Beth Brody.

Father Evans hopes the Bishop will raise the status of the church to “parish” instead of a mission church.

“During his visit recently, he was not unfavorable to the idea,” he said.

Father Evans will retire in Cashiers but will stay busy as a “rent-a-priest” anywhere west of Asheville.

Deacon Charles Heine spoke at the luncheon saying how much he loved Father Evans and how much he will be missed at Our Lady of the Mountain Church.

Father Evans will retire in Cashiers but will stay busy as a “rent-a-priest” anywhere west of Asheville.

Photos by Phyllis Sutter and Kristen Karcher

Combo Sandwiches with fries, salad or soup $7.95
Dusty Burger, Fried Chicken, Fried Fish, BLT, 4 Cheese Grilled, Corned Beef
Crunchy Fresh Salads
Hearty Homemade Soups
Luscious Gourmet Sandwiches
Famous Appalachian Fries
Cajun Specialties

Fast Food is not Good And Good Food is not Fast

526-1600
30 Dillard Road • Highlands (corner of Main Street and Dillard Road)
4th of July – Highlands style

It started at 11 a.m. with barbecue, hot dog and grilled chicken plates at the Conference Center and continued with old-fashioned games at the ball field next door.

Sack and three-legged races – reminiscent of days of old – are a tradition in Highlands on the Fourth of July. Residents and visitors, young and old, partake in the fun.

Popcorn, cotton candy and ice cold softdrinks whether enjoyed from the bed of a pick-up truck or from a boulder rounded out the fare.

Jewel Hedden and Sandra Baty pose with actors Don Knots and Jim Nabors look-alikes who brought “Mayberry” to Highlands this year when they portrayed Barney and Gomer.

Far left, Highlands Rotarians, Joan Levison, Diane McPhail and LaDonna Keener serve up heaps of BBQ with all the fixings.

Photos by Jim and Kim Lewicki
The showhouse runs from August 20 – September 4. Visitors to The Homestead at Lonesome Valley can see the vision of designers from throughout the Southeast, benefitting the Zachary-Tolbert House restoration fund and 2005 grant recipient Cashiers Community Council. Tickets for the Showhouse, as well as the August 19 “Diamonds and Denim” Patron Party. Call 828-743-7710 for tickets.

Who could have imagined that a family immigrating to this country more than 200 years ago would someday be involved in the Cashiers Designer Showhouse? Aptly presented by the Cashiers Historical Society, The Homestead at Lonesome Valley, the eighth annual Showhouse, has its roots firmly planted in the Jennings family history.

The Jennings family arrived in this country, settled in western Pennsylvania and throughout the 1800s and early-mid-1900s, became prominent business and social leaders in Pittsburgh. Mr. Jennings and his brothers, later joined by son E. H., built the E.H. Jennings & Bros. firm into a Pennsylvania-wide oil production company.

Traveling to then-known “Sapphire Country” in the late 1800s, E.H. and several partners created the Toxaway Company which included Lake Toxaway, property around the lake, surrounding resort areas and the Toxaway, Fairfield and Sapphire Inns. By 1911, the Toxaway Company had to declare bankruptcy. E.H. Jennings bought the company in foreclosure for $100,000, giving him ultimately ownership of 27,000 acres and the three hotels.

With almost unimaginable foresight, Jennings built a road around Lake Toxaway, an electric light plant, a nine-hole golf course and a club house. Throughout the early 1900s, the Jennings family returned annually to “Sapphire Country,” by now experiencing tremendous growth. Among Jennings’ property that he protected was Lonesome Valley.

During the 1950s, as the Jennings family began to sell some of their property, Jennings’ oldest son Richard G. bought an additional 550 acres in the box canyon adjacent to Lonesome Valley. After Richard G.’s death, one of his sons, Richard, Jr., became the ultimate owner of Lonesome Valley. He and his wife raised their children there – at a time when the nearest doctors were in Sylva and Asheville - and Richard, Jr. started mink and trout farms.

Though none of Richard, Jr’s children live at Lonesome Valley today, their multi-generational legacy remains. One of Richard Jr’s children owns a trout farm in Waynesville with her husband; one is an architect; and in Cashiers, as well as Sapphire, Brevard and Franklin, the family is committed to protecting Lonesome Valley’s natural integrity, respecting its historic legacy and by careful planning, creating a community on the property where families come together to enjoy a uniquely beautiful place with a “big house,” authentic cottages overlooking a meadow of natural plantings, fly fishing, trails, swimming, tennis and a spectacular view of Laurel Knob.
Police chief to start July 11

By Kim Lewicki
highlandseditor@aol.com

Eleven resumes and five interviews later; Highlands has a new police chief. Bill Harrell, 32, of Franklin and Detective of Criminal Investigations with the Macon County Sheriff’s Department, will officially take over July 11.

"But the sheriff has assured me that he can be on hand if needed between now and then," said Mayor Buck Trott.

Of the five finalists Harrell and one other contender, currently with the Salem, N.C., police department, were the strongest candidates, said Trott. He said the board picked Harrell for several reasons – his experience with the Franklin, Morganton and Hickory police departments, as well as his experience with the Sheriff’s department; his Bachelors of Science Degree in Criminal Justice, and the fact that he knows the area.

"He’s been up here quite a bit and was one of the first School Resource Officers," said Trott. "He comes with an excellent recommendation from the Sheriff," too.

"I think Bill Harrell will make a fine Police Chief for the City of Highlands. He has proven to be an outstanding officer here at the Macon County Sheriff’s Office and someone that I could always count on to get the job done," said Sheriff Robbie Holland. "He handles himself in a professional manner and treats people with the respect they deserve even under stressful situations. I know that he will expect nothing but the same of his officers. Chief Harrell has my full support, and I wish him the very best as he takes his new position."

Both he and the candidate from Salem said they could apply “big city” policing to a small town and the board is anxious to see Harrell put his plan to work.

"Not that the current department isn’t doing a good job, but I think we will see some changes as to policing and management styles once he gets on board," said Trott.

Several board members were impressed with Harrell’s plan. "He actually had one," said one board member.

Trott acknowledges the three other local candidates, Acting Chief Willy Houston, Detective Todd Ensley and officer Cliff Ammons may feel stilted.

"But that’s human nature, and I understand that," Trott said. "There’s bound to be a transition period, and I just hope they will cooperate and help the new chief. That’s all I’m asking."

Harrell, too, says a time of healing is expected. "I understand their feelings, and once I get up there I will be able to see for myself the tone and direction of the department and the goals and aspirations each of the officers have for themselves," he said. "Then I can see how all of that can be used to better serve the community of Highlands."

He plans to develop a mission statement to incorporate a general vision of "making a difference in at least one person’s life each day" by implementing a core of beliefs – integrity, professionalism, fairness, compassion, respect, cooperation, perseverance and a shared vision.

Harrell is married with two children ages two and four.

Next up at Highlands Playhouse – July 14

Kyle Guglielmo (center) plays the role of Joseph in The Highlands Theater production of “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat” opening July 14. The show features lavish Egyptian costumes, great singing and dancing in many styles and is directed and choreographed by Artistic Director, Robert Ray. Call 526-2695 for ticket information.
The Episcopal Church of the Incarnation presented its first concert of its newly established fine art series a few weeks ago and it went over with a bang.

In the midst of a torrential rain storm, a full house showed up to hear the brilliant Robert Henry perform. And perform he did, giving the large hall a program which both delighted and excited playing works by Boulanger, Bach and Chopin. Henry played with amazing technical musicality.

His playing so captivated the audience that at the end of each piece, they stood, cheered and whistled so that one might think you were at a sports event.

During the performance the electricity went out and the artist and audience were cast in a dark hall. Not to worry, Henry never missed a beat.

Such is the caliber of performances the community can expect at the Church of the Incarnations summer fine art and interlude series. He performs again Sunday, July 10 at 3 p.m. at the Episcopal Church and it’s free.

Next up is "A Program of Spirituals, July 20 at 2 p.m., featuring Lawrence Weaver, pianist and Kathye J. Gary, soprano.

Aug. 3 it’s The Capital City Opera Company from Atlanta with director Donna Angel; and Aug. 17, Katherine Palmer, pianist and David Kirby, clarinet.

Alternating Wednesdays the interludes move to First Presbyterian Church also at 2 p.m.

Coming up: July 13: Vance Reese, organist; July 27, John Greene, tenor with Kathryn Greene Heeney, soprano; Aug. 10, Kate Watson, soprano accompanied by Sandra Bush; Aug. 24, Stell Huie, baritone accompanied by Angie Jenkins; and Aug. 31, The Smoky Mountain Brass Quintet. Admission is free.
I was recently in Denver on some business (and pleasure) taking in that other mountain range out west. My wife, Lisa, and I were enjoying a late evening on our hotel’s restaurant patio with Mark, a man we had met from Boston. The conversation lingered and we laughed late into the evening. Mark was alone in Denver having been recently relocated by his firm. His new wife of four weeks was back east. We talked for quite a while when the inevitable question was asked of me, “What do you do?” As a pastor, I sometimes cringe at that question because my answer quickly sets the tone for the rest of the conversation. Mark didn’t seem to flinch too much at my response; however, he did quickly ask for forgiveness for swearing earlier in the evening and a couple of other minor ‘sin’s’ committed in his recent past. We laughed some more and toasted his birthday together and then went our separate ways.

Last night we were enjoying the Fourth of July with some friends over in Cashiers. As we were walking together, they mentioned that they had altered the manner in which they describe us to others. Instead of saying “We’re going over to our pastor’s house,” they simply say, “We’re going to our friends’ house.” They realized that they were identifying me more with a position and a title rather than a person.

I’ve joked with people who call me “Pastor Bill” that I would start greeting them in similar fashion. “Hello, school teacher Sue.” “Greetings, real estate agent Bob.” “Good morning homemaker Jane.” What are titles all about anyway?

In this brief musing, I simply want to say that what matters most is who you are rather than what you do. As a Christian who views the world and life through lenses grounded by the gospel of Jesus Christ, I approach this issue in a particular way. Some of you may disagree with my perspective and I respect that freedom. That being said, what matters most in this world is not the wealth you accumulate, the friendships you amass, the good deeds you perform, or the title you obtain. What matters most is who you are in relation to God – not some ethereal concept of God, but the God of the Bible.

I have been a pastor. I have been a truck salesman. I am a father. I am a husband. I have been a data entry clerk. I have been a dishwasher in a restaurant. I am and have been lots of things. All those titles mean very little, or nothing at all if I am not first a man who has come to know himself fully by being fully known by his Creator. As you ponder ultimate questions and ultimate meanings I invite you to look into God’s Word and investigate what He has to say about who you are. I think you will find an answer that transcends anything this world has to offer you with all of its titles.
The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 1.5 mile stroll through the Highlands Biological gardens through woods and wetlands where many plants are labeled. Meet at Mason Plaza (Bi-Lo) at 2:00 p.m. or call Ben Helon, Speno Auger and Ingrid Faust with the option of hiking an additional three miles to Hidden Falls. Meet at the Highlands Bank of America at 9 a.m. Call leader Kay Coriell, 369-6820

July 11

“Fine Art, Fine Wine, Fine Dining” at Wolfgang’s on Main. Tour Down Under – Australian wines, art by Elizabeth Ellison. 6 Call 526-3807 for reservations.

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Cajun festival poster contest

The Martin-Lipscomb Performing Arts Center will be holding an old-fashioned Cajun dance fund raiser on Sunday, September 4th, beginning at 6 p.m. We are inviting artists of ALL AGES to enter the Cajun Music and Dance Festival Poster Contest. All entries will be displayed at the dance.

The winning entry will receive two tickets to the festival, including dance lessons given by Carolina Cajun Dancers, some great Cajun cuisine from Don Leon's Deli Cafe and Holly Does The Cooking, as well as a Cajun gift basket from The Toy Store (fun for both adults and children). Total prizes are valued at $100. Entries may be any size, but must be turned in to The Toy Store or the Martin-Lipscomb Performing Arts Center by July 31.

For more information contact Janet Wilson at 526-1552.
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MEDICAL RECORDS CLERK AT HIGHLANDS-CASHIERS HOSPITAL Part-time, 8am - 4:30 pm Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday. Send resume to International Friendship Center, 348 S. Fifth St, N.C., or call 526-9938 ext. 290.

MEDICALooky for CASHIERS HOSPITAL Duties include working patient tray line and cafeteria line, stock kitchen, wash dishes. Excellent benefits. After 60 days. Pre-employment substance screening. Call Mary Osmar, 828-526-1301.

DIETARY AIDES – HIGHLANDS-CASHIERS HOSPITAL Duties include working patient tray line and cafeteria line, stock kitchen, wash dishes. Excellent benefits. After 60 days. Pre-employment substance screening. Call Mary Osmar, 828-526-1301.

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CNAS - FIDELIA ECKERD LIVING CENTER AT HIGHLANDS-CASHIERS HOSPITAL Now hiring for all shifts. If you want to join a team whose focus is on excellent elder care with a low staffing ratio, above average wages, excellent benefits, and shift differentials, call. We are also accepting applications for PRN CNAs. Pre-employment substance screening. Mary Osmar, 828-526-1301.

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Highlands
Mountain Garden Club installs new officers

The Mountain Garden Club installed new officers at a luncheon at the Cullasaja Club. The installation was conducted by Mrs. Ginny Harris, outgoing President of the club. New officers for the 2005-2006 year are: Dixie Barton, president; Diana Rethorst, first vice president; Ginny Dunwody, second vice president; Nancy Bonner, recording secretary; Pud Brogan, corresponding secretary; Eloyce Richardson, treasurer; Virginia Worley, parliamentarian. Through their annual plant sale each Memorial Day and other fund-raising projects, the Mountain Garden Club raises funds to support community projects including scholarships to help Highlands area students further their education.

Burish, chair elect for American Cancer Society coming to MountainTop relay

On August 26, the Mountaintop community will not only welcome its fifth year of Relay For Life, but will also have the opportunity to welcome a special guest, the Chair Elect for the American Cancer Society, Dr. Thomas Burish.

Dr. Thomas Burish will be at the opening ceremonies at 6 p.m. He is the president of Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Va. He has been an active volunteer with the American Cancer Society since 1983, chairing a number of scientific advisory committees including the Blue Ribbon Advisory Committee on Research and Medical Grants. He has been a member of the ACS National Board of Directors since 1991.

The American Cancer Society Relay For Life is an overnight celebration of life and cancer survivorship. It’s a unique team event designed to raise awareness about cancer and raise funds to support the research, education, advocacy, and patient services vital to the Society’s mission of eliminating cancer. Relayers camp out at the event, and when they are not taking their turn walking, have fun participating in Relay activities and enjoying fabulous local entertainment.

The Relay For Life of Mountain Top has held the number one ranking as the top Relay in the nation since the first event five years ago. The first-year goal of $15,000 was surpassed by teams raising $100,000. To date, Mountaintop has raised $693,000 for the American Cancer Society through the Relay For Life.

The strength of the Mountain Top event is in our teams. They are sources of inspiration for the community and are made up from all walks of life. Churches, schools, family teams, businesses, medical professionals and civic organizations have stepped up in the fight against cancer.

The Relay is a representation of the Mountaintop communities, which include Highlands, Cashiers, Glenville, and Sapphire. This August, the proceeds are expected to surpass the $250,000 mark. Funds will be used to help the American Cancer Society to eradicate cancer through education, advocacy, research and service.

For more information on the American Cancer Society, Relay For Life or any of its programs, please contact 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit www.cancer.org.

Annual ‘Walk in the Park’ coming up

The Sixth Annual “Walk in the Park” is set for July 15, 16 and 17 at the Highlands Memorial Park, with rain dates the following week-end. Shuttles will run from the Conference Center each of the three days. Friday and Saturday performances are at 6 p.m., with the last shuttle leaving the Conference Center at 7:30 p.m. The Sunday performance is at 4 p.m., with the last shuttle leaving the Conference Center at 5:30 p.m. Performances last slightly over an hour. Depicted this year will be: Dr. Alexander Anderson, inventor of Puffed Wheat and Puffed Rice; Ella Hudson, the first adult buried in the Memorial park, Margaretta Ravenel, a philanthropist; Joe Webb, builder of log homes; Margaret Randall “Ted” Wilcox, one of the founders of the original Highlands Playhouse; George Masa, a Japanese photographer whose photographs helped convince Congress to establish the Great Smoky Mountains National Park; Helen Wright Wilson, founder of Helen’s Barn and Herman Wilson, who served as a one-man welcoming committee.