Rise in sales tax proceeds proves business is booming in Highlands

By Kim Lewicki
highlandseditor@aol.com

It’s traditionally difficult to get merchants and business people to admit when business is good. But if numbers tell the story, business is more than just good in Highlands. At the last several Town Board meetings, Town Administrator Richard

County budgets & fund balances questioned

By Kim Lewicki
highlandseditor@aol.com

Come budget time, folks who rarely attend public meetings tend to take a stand. At the May 2 Macon County Commissioners meeting, several people spoke during the public session segment to voice concern about the county’s proposed 2005-2006 budget.

Many said they wanted more time to review the $34 million proposed budget; others said decreasing county and school budget fund balances would put more money in citizens’ pockets.

Evelyn Southard, interim finance director for Macon County said a recent report claiming the county has a fund balance of $22 million is absolutely wrong. “We have a 38 percent fund balance of unappropriated money,” she said, “It represents an unreserved portion of general expenditures but it is money we don’t actually have.” It represents tax money that hasn’t come in yet, so it can’t be obligated to any particular line item, she said.

Don Swanson, a member of the audience, said the county could save a bundle by eliminating the school system’s fund balance. "The League of Municipalities says school systems aren’t required to have a fund balance. “You could knock the tax rate down a cent if you appropriated some of the school system’s $1.3 million fund balance.” That figure is a combination of the designated and undesignated fund balance.

But Superintendent of Macon

MC Schools hit coveted AYP mark

By Kim Lewicki
highlandseditor@aol.com

Of the 115 Local Education Agencies, (LEAs) in North Carolina, only 18 of them hit the Annual Yearly Progress target — Macon County Schools was one of them.

At the April 26 Macon County School Board meeting, Tammy Tisdale, director of accountability with the school system, said members of the Education Oversight Committee in Raleigh were presented with the end-of-course and end-of-grade test scores for 2003-2004 as a “success” indicator.

Work nearly over for committee

By Erin Brown
highlandserin@aol.com

For almost a year, the Planning Board’s land use planning committee has been working to update the town’s land use plan. All that work has at long last paid off.

The first draft of the proposed Land Use Plan is ready to be presented to the Town Board. The committee will take part in a joint working session with commissioners June 1 at the recreation park. After that meeting a community meeting will be scheduled so citizens will have a chance to be heard.

“This will eventually become their document,” said Facilitator Geoffrey Willet. “There should be some opportunity for the public to have their say.”
She used a plastic pole and wax worms

Two-year-old Chloe Baty pulled an 11-pound, 21-inch long, large mouth bass from Harris Lake recently using her plastic Princess fishing pole. Her bait? Wax worms! Dad, Jimmy Baty, was proud – Chloe, amazed, surprised and just a little freaked out.

Radical religious right imposing

Dear Editor,

For everyone who thought that there has not been a full-scale war launched against liberals, look at the news.

On Sunday morning, Christian Coalition founder Rev. Pat Robertson told TV viewers nation-wide that the threat posed by liberal federal judges is “probably more serious than a few bearded terrorists who fly into buildings.”

At East Waynesville Baptist Church, if you didn’t vote for Bush, you had to “repent your sin.” Then they figured why deal with the liberal sinners at all and kicked out its Democratic members.

This isn’t a “culture” war, or some sort of political game. These actions simply foreshadow what is to come: the radical religious-right trying to impose a theocracy upon this nation.

Welcome to the "Blue Scare."

Don Twardowski
Franklin

You know the story – now see the play

Dear Editor,

It’s not too late for Highlanders and their visitors to experience some unforgettable theatre: the Highlands Community Players’ production of The Diary of Anne Frank, scheduled Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2:30.

Of course everyone knows the ending of the story, so some may have decided it’s not worth their time to attend. They are wrong. The entire production company does a truly remarkable job of bringing to life the story of two families and one individual attempting to avoid sure death at the hand of the Nazis.

Although we are accustomed to an evening of laughs when the Community Players put on a show, this production provides the opportunity for more in-depth character development and honest-to-goodness acting. Teenager Kayla Bott convinces the audience she is Anne Frank, and the soliloquy rendered by David Spivey at the end of the show is one of life’s rare moments. Thank you, Community Players, for having sufficient faith in the Highlands audience to provide us this production.

And thanks to the four couples who sponsored the production: Gerry and Margaret Pennington, Gerry Sue and Norman Arnold, Pauline and Louis Perlis, Helene and Rick Siegel. You did a wonderful service to Highlands.

Elaine Whitehurst
Highlands

Community makes event a success

Dear Editor,

The Literacy Council of Highlands would like to express its thanks to the entire community of Highlands for helping to make its Monte Carlo Night fundraiser a huge success! A fun-filled evening was had by all and thanks to the never-ending support of this community and its residents they were able to raise a significant amount of funds that will help to keep the programs they offer to the community strong and effective.

A BIG thanks to Rotary for their constant support of Literacy over the years and without its help Monte Carlo Night would not be possible. And to Highlands Country Club for hosting the event. Thanks to all others who helped at the registration and chip tables.

Thanks, especially, to all the merchants who donated items to our silent and live auctions and the restaurants who donated a beautiful array of food. Their support was vital to the success of this event!

Thanks to Cashiers’ Printing and Bryson’s Food Store. Thanks to The Highlander, the Laurel, and the Highlands’ Newspaper and to all table sponsors all of whom helped to defray the cost of the event.

Thanks to Peggy Stumpf and Mary Heffington who continue to volunteer their time to Literacy. Thanks.

It is with the community’s support that the Literacy Council is able to provide the services they offer to residents of our area at no charge!

Breta Stroud
Director of Highlands Literacy Council
Betz has reported sales tax revenue is up – way up in fact. As of last Wednesday, sales tax revenue clocked in at $583,000.

“We budgeted $500,000 for fiscal year 2004-2005,” said Betz. “We have two months to go and we’re already past that.” The town receives its allotment from the county every month.

The State Department of Revenue levies a seven percent sales tax for Macon County and disbursement is based on the property tax collected. The Department of Revenue collects the tax and distributes it to the county which distributes it to the municipalities.

“Macon County gets 87.65 percent of the seven percent sales tax collected,” said Evelyn Southhard Macon County’s interim finance director. “The Town of Franklin gets 5.94 percent and the Town of Highlands gets 6.41 percent.”

The sales tax for every non-food item in Macon County is 7 percent. The sales tax on general grocery items and baked goods is 2.5 percent.

Bill Bassham, director of Highlands Chamber of Commerce, said the accommodations people in town claim they aren’t seeing a rise in “sales.”

“It’s not coming in on the accommodations side and that tells me that people are coming for the day and spending, but not staying overnight,” he said. “We’re seeing a lot of time-share people coming up from the Cashiers-Sapphire and Toxaway area.”

In fact, at the recent Chamber of Commerce retreat attendees learned developments in the Cashiers-Sapphire-Toxaway area are selling Highlands as an amenity to their projects. Bassham thought sales tax revenue was going to be down for 2004-2005 because of weather this past year. “Some months you would have thought would be great, like July, but the weather wasn’t good. It rained almost every weekend, if I remember correctly. Then we got hit in the fall with hurricanes.”

He said even without a scientific study “day-trippers” are clearly affecting business.

“Some of the area antique stores say some of their best customers are from the Greenville-Spartanburg area,” said Bassham. “One good thing is except for parking needs, day-trippers don’t stress the town’s infrastructure.”

What officials do know is several restaurants and businesses which traditionally close for a time after New Year’s opened back up earlier than in years past.
Here, I will lecture you on how to read this newspaper. I know, who am I to tell you how to read? But I’m not talking about just words here: I’m talking about how to read a newspaper and see what’s really between the lines. Using my plan, you will find, hidden away, a multitude of tacky information and you know I am the czar of tacky information.

Here is how it works. A couple weeks ago this paper featured a picture of our Mayor, Buck Trott (aka Trout). He’s the one wearing the clean T-shirt and beamng from ear to ear. On his head is a stupid, red dunce hat which clashes with his purple shirt, placed there by Dana Hamilton, the WNC American Cancer Society chairperson. Also in the picture was Pat Griffin, the funniest lady in Highlands. Unwrap the fish heads from your old paper and take a look, only this time, really look at it.

Are you now convinced that Buck will do anything to get his picture in the paper? Check out those rosy cheeks, that big smile and the hat. You can tell he just loves the hat… and his job. While Dana appears to be cheerful, she is, in fact, embarrassed to be seen by the whole town placing a stupid looking hat on the town mayor. Now take a look at Pat. Just as the picture was taken, she is telling a bystander, “I do not know this man.” I am not sure what they are holding, but it could be an extra large order of fried chicken with mashed potatoes. I did notice that neither Pat or Buck missed too many meals this past winter. Now that’s what I mean about reading between the lines.

Later, Buck must have taken the hat, dyed it blue and given it to Highlands High School prom king, Tim Vos, also sporting rosy cheeks and a big smile. Buck told Tim that if he wore the hat all the time, he may just be the next mayor of Highlands, which includes being Santa Claus.

Appalling as it may seem, the headlines of that same paper read, “Nonconforming ordinance: Quite a conundrum.” While I do not approve of such language for our newspaper, I realize it had to be written. I prefer the word ‘prophylactic’ or something more suitable. It did get everyone’s attention and by reading between the lines you can readily see that someone is about to get ….. well, you know.

Moving on, you know that at least a dozen times a year Selwyn Chalker, El Hefe at the Civic Center, has to pose for the paper holding a check he is either giving or receiving by the person standing next to him. All of this is fake. The picture of Selwyn was taken back in 1992 and through the use of new technologies we just insert the suitable person for the occasion. Selwyn never even has to get out of bed on cold mornings to make appearances and that suits him just fine.

Here’s an easy read between the lines question. What does recreation and sewer water have in common? Everything, according to county commissioners who are willing to fork over $500,000 for the Civic Center if we will forget about sewer money. Can you actually believe they said they were being stingy because the issue did not benefit Macon County taxpayers? Hello, last time I checked, Highlanders were still county taxpayers. Maybe we shouldn’t be.

You can see by reading between the lines that county commissioners consider Macon County residents as everyone except Highlands. That’s the land where all the rich people live and they really don’t want to give them “our” tax money.

What Highlands needs is an employee tax on folks who don’t live in Highlands but come here everyday to make a living, use our sewer system, streets and other facilities, then drive back down the mountain without spending a cent. A small tax should be levied from their earnings to pay for upgrading the sewer system and other projects. That should get the county commissioners to read between the lines.

And don’t you just love commissioner Amy Paterson, who reads between the lines real good. She is like a ninety pound Yorkie who will not turn loose of your pant leg.
The 1998 drama, starring Meryl Streep, Michael Gambon (Harry Potter, Life Aquatic), Catherine McCormack (Weight of Water), Darrell Johnston, Rhys Ifans (Danny Deckchair, Vanity Fair) and more. Directed by Pat O’Connor (Sweet November), adapted from the play by Brian Friel. Really wonderful music by Bill Whelan (Riverdance).

The Storyline: It’s 1936, and in the rural town of Lughnasa (pronounced loo-na-sa, if you’re interested), things don’t change much, and they don’t change quickly. Until now, and not just for the town, but also for the Mundy family. The five unmarried Mundy sisters and one young boy have led a fairly stable, if nearly impoverished life in rural Ireland for awhile now, under the somewhat benevolent despotism of elder sister Kit (Streep does her customarily fantastic job here), but in Europe, a war is about to break out, industrialization comes even to sleepy little Lughnasa, and schoolteacher Kit might lose her job as the parish population declines. This might sound like a little bit of a downer, but this quiet and touching story has a light tone, plenty of life and laughter, and really great acting by all involved. The return of the one Mundy brother complicates things, all the more so that the brother in question has been ministering to the pagans for 25 years and has turned into a bit of a pagan himself. Also arriving on the scene is the father of young Michael, come for a visit before going off to Spain to join the fight against Franco.

A Chick Flick more than anything else, but a well written and superbly acted story, with great cinematography. The tone and pace of the film are quite Irish (there are no specific words for Yes or No in Gaelic, and centuries of Irish and Scottish stories have been influenced by that, as well as centuries of Irish and Scottish speakers. Without Yes or No, they are a people that just don’t know how to end a sentence.) The story is an autobiographical tale of Friel’s early life, and it really is a good drama, not overly sentimental, funny but not hilarious. The film is narrated by Gerard McSorley, speaking the part of the now grown and distant Michael, and it adds a neat quality to the story.

More good Irish drama can be found in Secret of Roan Inish, Magdalene Sisters, Butcher Boy, Circle of Friends and Commitments.
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Library of Congress now a
resource for teachers at HS

By Erin Brown
highlandserin@aol.com

Doors opened wide and a whole
new world of teaching resources be-
came available to 15 Highlands School
teachers through the Library of Con-
gress and Western Carolina University's
program "Adventures of the American
Mind."

A joint project with WCU and the
LOC, the classes are part of a workshop
of the American memory project.

The purpose of the seminar is to
acquaint teachers with the resources
available from the LOC and how to
incorporate the LOC’s American
Memory database in their classes. The
teachers learned how to use the tech-
nology and digital archives in their
classrooms and will mentor other
teachers to instruct them on what they
learned in the classes.

"I have learned how to use the Li-
brary of Congress as a resource in my
classroom for tracing our country's his-
tory,” said Fourth Grade Teacher Tracy
Hedden. “The digital records are amaz-
ing, and they really allow us, teachers
and students, to make a connection to
our country’s past."

Media Coordinator Carol Bowen
initiated the workshop as a follow up
to a focus group of media coordinators
that she attended on Feb. 4 at Mars Hill
College. It was there that she learned
of the AAM project of the LOC and the
resources available to students and
teachers. The workshop includes 15
contact hours of class.

"It is really rather interesting be-
cause the whole thing was co-spon-
sored several years ago by Rep. Charles
Taylor from the Western Carolina dis-
trict to familiarize teachers with the
resources, particularly the primary re-
sources and images, many of which
have been digitized, of the Library of
Congress,” said Bowen.

The fascinating part about this en-
tire project is the core of the partners
are colleges and universities in West-
ern North Carolina.

They explored the website and
used the resources to create lesson
plans relevant to each teacher’s particu-
ar area or grade level. Particular atten-
tion was given to the section of the LOC
that houses photographs from many
historical and current events that have
been digitized and can be downloaded.
Each participant was given a Kodak
digital camera to use to collect photo-
graphs to create their own digital es-
says and stories that can be used in
classrooms.

“I will implement what I learned
by using the digital camera to help ‘tell
stories’ of my students and their fami-
lies past,” said Hedden. “I will also be
able to use the camera as a tool to in-
spire creative writing.”

In addition, the school was given
a Kodak Easy Share Printer Dock Plus.

Bowen is now serving on the AAM
School Librarians Advisory
Committee. She will be attending a
meeting in Asheville on Wednesday to
discuss with other school librarians
suggestions on content for future work-
shops.

The instructors were Dr. Beth
Coulter, director and Chris Akers, digi-
tal preservation educator.

There are 15 participants including
teachers and teacher assistants. They are
Carol Bowen, Gail Garland, Carla Har-
riss, Stephanie Smathers, Karen
Hasbrouck, Donna Sizemore, Joy Ar-
cher, Judy Mouchet, Betty Baker, Anne
Porter, Denise West, Michelle Lane,
For the fifth year in a row, Highlands-Cashiers Hospital has offered citizens a chance at some free health care at its annual health screening. Held this year at the Jane Woodruff building at the hospital, people moved through eight stations to get weighed, their blood pressure taken, blood drawn for PSA, cholesterol and sugar, hearing tested, skin care information, bone density tests, food and nutritional information and even a three-minute chair massage. The tests save recipients about $400. Screenings also take place in Cashiers, Scaly and Dillard, Ga.

Photo by Kim Lewicki

... FUND BALANCES continued from page 1

County Schools Dr. Rodney Shotwell said Macon County is no different than other school systems in the state. “I would dare say that all 115 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) have fund balances in their local budgets. It is there for emergencies that may occur during the year,” he said. “Our undesignated fund balance is $300,000 which is a little over one percent of our total budget.”

He said it’s true that school systems aren’t required to have fund balances, but it represents good management to have something in reserve for unforeseen events.

“If you ask most people, they will tell you they try to have some savings for those unexpected bills that may come in during the month with their personal finances,” said Shotwell.

He also said there are school districts smaller than Macon County with a couple of million in their undesignated fund balance.

“Macon County Schools has maintained a $500,000 undesignated fund balance for many years,” he said. “School systems can’t raise revenue when a problem arises, and that is the main reason they have an undesignated fund balance.”

The Local Government Commission (LGC) which is regulated by the NC Treasurer’s Office mandates counties and municipalities maintain a minimum eight percent fund balance. Highlands Town Administrator Richard Betz said that’s been the town’s practice for a long time.

“The (LGC) recommends eight percent as the bare minimum,” said Betz. “In my opinion, it would be very unwise to allow fund balances to fall beneath this level. Our average fund balance last year – in the general, water, sewer, and electric funds – was 53 percent. We will be using much of that for the WWTP expansion this year. But fund balances will still remain considerably above the eight percent.”

Macon County Manager Sam Greenwood said some years ago the board of commissioners approved a policy ensuring a fund balance of no less than 25 percent of the county budget.

Officials say the fact is healthy fund balances are good to have in case of emergencies.

“Thanks to the county’s fund balance,”

*See FUND BALANCES page 18
Students in Mrs. McClellan’s Kindergarten class invited their mothers to class for a “Mother’s Day” breakfast Friday, May 6. The children painted poems on pillowcases for their mothers. Pictured are Emily and Danielle Mathis with their mother, Janice.

... MC SCHOOLS continued from page 1

of the “No Child Left Behind” legislation.

“No only was Macon County one of the 18 who made the list, we’re one of only two in the far west of the state who made it,” said Tisdale. “Neighboring counties of Jackson and Swain didn’t get it.”

Educators across the country say the “No Child Left Behind Legislation” requires a teamwork approach to be successful. Administrators, teachers, parents and students must commit to reaching the goals that have been set, said Tisdale. “Despite this unfunded mandate, we proved we can do it and we did it,” she said.

Macon County administrators say by achieving Annual Yearly Progress all children in the system have been given equal opportunity to reach their greatest potential. “Macon County stands out as one of the best counties in the state for ensuring that “no child is left behind,” said Tisdale.

“We are very proud of what we accomplished and what we continue to do to meet the needs of children,” said Superintendent Dr. Rodney Shotwell.

Recently, a school system in Oregon announced it would no longer follow the “No Child Left Behind” mandate.

“The biggest resentment about the legislation is that the federal government is creating a “one size fits all” model for every school and school district with no additional funding attached to the legislation,” said Shotwell. “There is not an educator alive who does not agree with the intent of the law. We never want to leave any children behind, but in order to achieve that goal we need support from the federal government just like we receive from other funding sources.”

Hospital looks for help for MRI

Now that state health officials have tentatively approved a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scanner for Highlands, hospital officials are hoping donors will step forward to help fund the $2.5 million project.

During the application process for the certificate of need (CON) required for the MRI, the hospital maintained it had the funding needed for the project, and officials say that’s true. But that would mean dipping into the money in the hospital’s endowment fund. “That is something we really don’t want to do because it defeats the whole purpose of the endowment,” said hospital administrator Jim Graham.

During its $22 million Challenge Campaign four years ago, the hospital’s Foundation set aside $12 million to create an endowment. Foundation President Jack Calloway says that endowment was designed to generate income that will help cover any losses from operations, and to fund new services and replace equipment when the need arises.

“It was not designed to fund projects of this magnitude. The endowment simply doesn’t generate enough income...”

See MRI page 12
Local author to sign latest book at Cyrano’s

Jonathan Williams will sign copies of his latest book, Jubilant Thicket: New & Selected Poems (from Copper Canyon Press) on Saturday, May 14, from 1-3 p.m. at Cyrano’s Bookshop. A publisher and photographer as well as a poet, Mr. Williams was born in Asheville in 1929 and is a long-time resident of Scaly Mountain. He attended Princeton and Black Mountain College and counts as his colleagues many of the great cultural figures of the 20th century.

He has run the Jargon Society, a writer’s press, for more than 50 years. If you’ve heard of him for no other reason, Jonathan Williams was the impresario behind that runaway bestseller “White Trash Cooking” by Ernest Matthew Mickler. For that alone his place in the pop-cultural pantheon would be assured.

Mr. Williams’s own work is approachable, funny, pointed, and often bawdy. Many of his poems are set here in the Southern Appalachians which, as his book makes clear, he much prefers to the city — as he prefers baseball to literary conferences. And though he’s a world-class poet, he’s the first one to prick his own pretensions, as this “meta-four” (each line has four words) called “Gary Carden Reports From the Coffeehouse in Sylva” shows:

what’izit you readin’ carden
jonathan williams izat the
funny feller you must
be thinking of winters
hell yes down to
20 degrees this morning

The poet’s muses range from Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams to Mahler, William Bartram, Stan Musial . . . and more familiar folk and places. In “Three Sayings From Highlands, North Carolina” he offers the wisdom of Doris Talley, Housewife & Gardener: “but pretty though as/ roses is/ you can put up with/ the thorns” and Sam Creswell, My Auto Mechanic: “your points is blue/ and your timing’s/ a week off.”

In “Five Trail-Shelters From the Big Pigeon to the Little Tennesse” the reader accompanies Mr. Williams as he hikes to Siler’s Bald and Tri-Corner Knob: “here the shelter’s/ in a stand of/ red spruce and balsam fir/ for dinner: lamb’s-quarters,/ cress from the streams/ on Mt. Guyot,/ wood sorrel, and/ cold argentine beef, chased with/ tangerine kool-aid.”

In another poem the speaker asks:

“what do you do
anything for?
You do it
For what the mediaevals would call
Something like
The Glory of God
doing it for money,
that doesn’t do it;
doing it for vanity,
that doesn’t do it;
whether it is a stone next to a
stone
or a word next to a word,
it is the glory—
the simple craft of it . . .”

Like the folk art he collects (and exhibited last spring at the Bascom-Louise Gallery), Jonathan Williams is a craftsman and true Highlands original, appreciated by those who will take the time and look.

... LIBRARY OF CONGRESS cont. from page 6

Jane Chalker, Melanie Miller, and Tracy Hedden.

Several NC. colleges and universities are partners in the AAM project.

The last LOC class was in 2002 and several teachers received laptop computers which enhanced their archival studies.

To learn more about the project, visit these websites: http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/about/index.html and http://www.mountainx.com/news/1999/1013notepad.php

Also, if anyone wants to go to the LOC website and explore the American Memory Project, this is the website http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/.
Gilead is the book you’ll wish your father (or mother) wrote to you.

This lovely moving novel is a long letter written by a father who knows he is dying to his son. The man started his family late: he is 76 and his son is just seven. I’m not giving anything away here—you find this out in the first few pages. The father is a minister—and the son and grandson of ministers—and he pours out his heart and soul in this love letter he intends to be read by his son many years in the future. This book is written by a woman, I’m not sure why she chose to speak in a man’s voice but it seems very authentic.

The book mixes reminiscences of the father’s life, his insights about life, and honest accounts of his current struggles (primarily fear for his wife and child’s future).

Many, many places in the book he describes the preciousness and beauty of existence, of all of life, as only someone who is dying can see it. Someone I know was diagnosed with cancer and his description of the experience was that life went from black-and-white to color. We overlook so much of life, we take so much for granted, because we are too busy getting through the days.

I just watched the movie “Peggy Sue Got Married,” in which a woman travels back 25 years in time to the year she was 18 (1960). Her first reaction was to treasure the experience of all the things she took for granted when she was really 18: her parents, her sister, her grandmother’s voice on the phone, her room, cars with tailfins. In fact she scared her family with the intensity of the love she expressed.

The father in Gilead writes, “I’m trying to make the best of our situation. That is, I’m trying to tell you things I might never have thought to tell you, if I had brought you up myself in the usual companionable way. When things are taking their ordinary course, it is hard to remember what matters. There are so many things you would never think to tell anyone. And I believe they may be the things that mean most to you, and that even your own child would have to know in order to know you well at all.”

This passage brings tears to my eye every time I read it. I think this is what causes us so much pain in life—we cannot communicate with each other and so we remain strangers even to our closest loved ones. Thomas Wolfe wrote about this perhaps better than anyone, in Look Homeward Angel:

...a stone, a leaf, an unfound door; of a stone, a leaf, a door. And of all the forgotten faces.

Gilead is the book you’ll wish your father (or mother) wrote to you. This lovely moving novel is a long letter written by a father who knows he is dying to his son. The man started his family late: he is 76 and his son is just seven. I’m not giving anything away here—you find this out in the first few pages. The father is a minister—and the son and grandson of ministers—and he pours out his heart and soul in this love letter he intends to be read by his son many years in the future. This book is written by a woman, I’m not sure why she chose to speak in a man’s voice but it seems very authentic.

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Gilead, by Marilynne Robinson, (F Robinson)
Ancient Christianity revealed in Lalibela, Ethiopia

Doris Picklesimer
Contributor

A number of years ago while visiting in England, my mother-in-law, a Methodist minister’s daughter, went into a shop selling religious antiques. She thought perhaps to purchase something pertaining to Methodist history in England to present to Winthrop College, her alma mater. “I’m sorry,” she was told. “We don’t deal in those recent religions.”

While recently touring the rock churches of Lalibela, Ethiopia, it was certainly brought home to me that their Christianity had ancient roots. If these churches were better known they would surely classifi as “Wonders of the World.”

The Christian church in Ethiopia traces its origins to King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba and their son, Menelik, who was the first king of Ethiopia. Menelik is also credited with bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Ethiopia that the Ethiopians say today rests in a church in Axum.

In this legend, one of the Queen of Sheba maids also gave birth to a son by King Solomon resulting in the beginning of the Zagwe dynasty. This dynasty came to power in the fourteenth century. Lalibela was one of the last kings of the Zagwe dynasty ruling around 1200 A.D. It was Lalibela who gathered the craftsmen needed to complete his vision of these rock churches. He has also given his name to today’s town.

Lalibela is located in northern Ethiopia in the Lasta Mountains. When I visited, the fields in the valleys were lushly green with onions and potatoes. The rugged, as well as rolling, surrounding mountains were also verdant with trees and bushes accented with views of golden soil. It is a sleepy town of about 9,000 people who work in the fields, amble its rocky roads, or pray in its rock churches. It got electricity fairly recently and still has no bank. Yet it has become a religious center of pilgrimage for those people to whom it is an important and vital place. It is not a place where religious ceremonies are ruled by a need to impress the few tourists who make their way here, but by impassioned belief.

Visiting Lalibela today is not as difficult as it was just a few years ago. There are now regular flights to its modern airport located 20 miles from town. Once you leave the only paved road from the airport as you approach the town, getting around even in four-wheel drive vehicles is still a very bumpy proposition.

There are three separate areas of high.

It is difficult to fully describe these churches since all are unique and different. There are faded and bright frescoes of the saints, religious carvings, ornately carved blind windows, carpets on the floor, and usually an ornate curtain covering the Holy of Holies, with its tradition of only being entered by the priest. Each church has its own priest as arms, or the more familiar to us, Latin cross. However, the basic crosses have been totally embellished into many elaborate designs incorporating such things as birds, circles, human figures, indentations, engraving, and cutouts. All represent Biblical symbolism. The priests at all ceremonies carry these crosses atop poles.

All the churches are unparalleled, but my favorite is Bet Georges, The Church of St. George, the patron saint of Ethiopia. A bit apart from the other churches, it is set in a deep excavation. It is 45 feet tall. Easily recognized by its shape, a Greek cross with equal arms with three inscribed Greek crosses, one inside the other, on its roof. It is the most famous and most photographed of the rock churches.

Legend says that St. George in full battle armor approached Lalibela and reproached him for not building a church dedicated to St. George. Lalibela said he would build the most beautiful church for him. It is said that St George not only supervised the building of the church, but also enthusiastically approved it. It is reached by a steep downward trench between the surrounding walls and the church itself. The interior walls have horizontal bands of moldings that correspond to like bands on the exterior walls. Inside there are also pilasters and arches. It is lovely in its simplicity.

To visit Lalibela, especially while a service is being held, is to feel that you have been transported to a much earlier time and peaceful place. The white-shrouded pilgrims and the holy men and nuns who reside in what were tombs carved into the walls surrounding and hiding these marvels of building expertise all give an other-worldly aura to the already mystical atmosphere.

Most Ethiopians live in close harmony with their faith undistracted by the externals of the outside world. Their religion is alive, part of their everyday life; a life lived at a very basic level, but one of acceptance and peace. The amazing rock churches of Lalibela are an earthly representation of that faith.
at this point to repay the debt that would be incurred if the hospital had to borrow the money required to purchase and install an MRI unit,” said Calloway. “We could use principal from the endowment, but that would significantly reduce the earning potential of the endowment in the years to come. We would be robbing Peter to pay Paul, as the saying goes.”

In establishing the endowment, members of the hospital’s Foundation Board of Trustees called its establishment “absolutely vital” to help ensure the hospital’s financial future.

Calloway said the hospital relies on the generosity of donors who understand the importance of having state-of-the-art medical equipment.

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**Race director Richard Betz, clocks in the first runner over the finish line at this year’s 5K race. Sixty-three runners registered, and 60 finished – 44 men and 16 women. It was a beautiful day, and the overall winner set a new course record! The Masters winner was Reid Vannoy.**

### Saturday’s 5K Race results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Reid Vannoy</td>
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<td>15:54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Morgan Vannoy</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Fred Motz</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Taylor Williams</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dan Fields</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70 &amp; Over</td>
<td>16:03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jack Pietri</td>
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<td>65-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bartley Williams</td>
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<td>25-29</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Allie Bristle</td>
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<td>60-64</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Jane Vannoy</td>
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<td>16:48</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Cupcakes and Root Beer

By Julie A. Manhan

There once was a little boy who wanted to meet God. He knew it was a long trip to where God lived, so he packed his suitcase with cupcakes, several cans of root beer and started on his journey.

When he had gone about three blocks, he saw an elderly woman. She was sitting on a park bench watching the pigeons. The boy sat down next to her and opened his suitcase. He was about to take a drink from his root beer when he noticed the lady looked hungry so he offered her a cupcake. She gratefully accepted and smiled at him.

Her smile was so wonderful that he wanted to see it again, so he offered a root beer as well. Once again she smiled at him. The boy was delighted!

As it began to grow dark, the boy realized how tired he was and wanted to go home. He got up to leave but before he had gone no more than a few steps, he turned around and ran back to the old woman, giving her a big hug. She gave him her biggest smile ever.

When the boy arrived home his Mother was surprised by the look of joy on his face. She asked, “What has made you so happy today?” He replied, “I had lunch with God.” Before his mother could respond he added, “You know what? She’s got the most beautiful smile in the whole world!”

Meanwhile, the old woman, also radiant with joy, returned to her home. Her son was stunned by the look of peace on her face. He asked, “Mother, what has made you so happy today?” She replied, “I ate cupcakes in the park with God.” And before her son could reply, she added, “You know, he is much younger than I expected.”

Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring; all of which have the potential to turn a life around.

People come into our lives for a reason, a season, or a lifetime. Take no one for granted and embrace all equally with joy!

Wayah Insurance becomes partner

Wayah Insurance Group is not a franchise partner of Keystone Insurers Group, one of the nation’s largest independent agency operations. This union, which involves no change in ownership or personnel, permits Wayah to expand its opportunities and to provide the region’s residents and business owners more choices.

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Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting – 7 p.m.

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Pastor’s residence: 706-746-5770
Sundays: 9 a.m. – choir
Holy Communion: 1st Sunday of the month
Wednesdays: 9 a.m. Healing and Prayer with Holy Communion each service

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Pastor Everett Wilson, (828) 743-3379
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11
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3645 U.S. 64 east, Highlands
Sundays: 9:30 a.m. Sunday School; 10:45 Worship;
6 p.m., “The Rock” for highschoolers
Tuesdays: 10 a.m. Women’s Bible Study
Wed: 5:30 p.m. Prayer Meeting; 6:15 p.m. Supper;
7 p.m. Teaching

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Rev. Brian Sullivan – 526-2968
Sundays: Choir – 9 a.m.; Adult Sunday School classes – 9:15 a.m.; Holy Eucharist – 10:30 a.m.; Children’s Chapel – 10:30 a.m.;
Mondays: Women’s Cursillo Group (Library) – 4
Tuesdays: Men’s Cursillo in Jones Hall – 8
Wednesdays: Liturgy/Meal – 4 p.m.; Christian Education – 5 p.m.; Supper & Program – 5 p.m.
Thursdays: Holy Eucharist – 10 a.m.
Sunday Service is telecast on cable channel 14

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**
Dr. Daniel D. Robinson, 526-4153
Sun.: 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 p.m.
**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
Rev. J. Hunter Coleman, Pastor 526-3175
Sun.: Worship – 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.
**HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD**
Rev. Scott Holland, 524-6026, Sixth Street
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11
Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study – 7
**HIGHLANDS 7TH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH**
Wednesday evening prayer & Bible Study
Call Lloyd Kidder at 526-9474
**HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**
Pastors Eddie & Kim Ingram, 526-3376
Sun: School – 9:30 & 9:45 a.m.; Worship – 8:30 & 11
Wed: Supper – 5:30 p.m.; Bible Study & activities – 6
**HOLY FAMILY LUTHERAN CHURCH – ELCA**
Rev. Delmer Chilton, Pastor,
2152 Dillard Road – 526-9741
Sundays: Worship/Communion – 10:30
**MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH**
8 miles south of Highlands on N.C. 28 S in Satolah
Pastor Jamie Passmore, (706) 782-8130
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11
Choir – 6 p.m.
Wed: Bible Study and Youth Mtg. – 7 p.m.
**MOUNTAIN SYNAGOGUE**
St. Cyprian’s Episcopal Church, Franklin 369-6871
Friday: Sabbath Eve Services at 7 p.m.
For more information, call (706) 745-1842.
**OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAINS CATHOLIC CHURCH**
Rev. William M Evans, Priest
Parish office, 526-2418
Wednesdays & Fridays: Mass – 9 a.m.
Saturday Vigil Mass – 4 p.m.
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. Wayne Price
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11
**SCOTTSVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH**
Rev. Scott Holland, 524-6026, Sixth Street
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11
**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP**
Rev. Maureen Killoran (part-time) 526-9749
Sundays: Worship/Communion – 10:30
**WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
210 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Alfred Sizemore
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11
**WESTSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH**
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Services in the basement of the Peggy Crosby Community Bible Church in Highlands.

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Service Directory ads – $17 per week. Call 526-0782
May 14-June 16

- The Bascom-Louis Collection will be in the gallery in the Hudson Library.
- Live Music at Pizza Place – Bo Jam, 6-10 p.m.
- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 6-mile hike along the Art Loeb and Graveyard Ridge trails, with 360 degree views from the ridge. This area is accessed from the Balsam parking lot on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin (across from Burger King) at 9 a.m. Reservations are required. Call leader Doug Deane, 864-718-9265.

May 15

- Live Music at the Pizza Place – Bo Jam, 6-10 p.m.
- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy-to-moderate 2-mile hike on the Jack Mountain loop trail at Lake Chatuge in Georgia. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin (across from Burger King) at 2 p.m. Reservations are required. Call leader Kay Corell, 369-6820.
- Community Bible Church will be hosting a Benefit Concert, in our Sanctuary at 2 p.m., for Roger and Abi Lowther. Roger is an accomplished organist with a degree from Julliard and his wife Abi is a concert pianist. They are going to Japan with Mission to the World, and have been traveling all over the US to raise support for their upcoming mission. A love offering to aid in their support will be accepted.

May 16

- Mirror Lake Improvement Assoc. meeting, 7:30 p.m. at the Civil Center.
- Highlands School Athletic Cookout at the Rec Park at 6 p.m. This event is for athletes and their parents.
- In appreciation of all the hard work of the volunteers. The Highlands School PTO will be having a breakfast on Monday from 8:30-9:30 a.m. in the Highlands School cafeteria. Any person who has volunteered their time this school year is invited to attend.

May 17

- Highlands Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors meeting is 5:30 p.m. at the Conference Center. Chamber Board meetings are the third Tuesday of each month.
- InterChurch Pot Luck Supper at Our Lady of the Mountains Church at 6 p.m. For more info, call Pat Griffin at 526-2418.

May 20

- Highlands School Academic Banquet at the Conference Center, 6 p.m.
- Vocal Instrumentalist Genevieve Schiele at The Plateau Fly Fishing Club will kick off its 2005 season on Thursday at the Albert Carlton-Cashiers Library. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. and the speaker is Roger Lowe, professional guide, tyer and owner of Lowe’s Fly Shop in Waynesville. Roger will discuss “Nymping Strategies in Mountain Streams.” A raffle will follow the presentation. New members are welcome! Call Giff Hampton at 743-2078 with any questions.

May 26

- The Plateau Fly Fishing Club will kick off its 2005 season on Thursday at the Albert Carlton-Cashiers Library. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. and the speaker is Roger Lowe, professional guide, tyer and owner of Lowe’s Fly Shop in Waynesville. Roger will discuss “Nymping Strategies in Mountain Streams.” A raffle will follow the presentation. New members are welcome! Call Giff Hampton at 743-2078 with any questions.

May 29

- Live Music at the Pizza Place – Bo Jam, 6-10 p.m.
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May 30

- Live Music at the Pizza Place – Bo Jam, 6-10 p.m.

June 3

- Highlands School Scholarship Assembly for Seniors in the old gym at the school at 10 a.m.
- June 3-4, 12th Annual Audubon North Carolina meeting in Asheville. For information check the web at www.ncaudubon.org.

June 4

- Highlands School Graduation at Rec Park at 7 p.m.
- Get Ready for the “Beetle Ball,” at the Highlands Conference Center. It will be a great party with live music, food, games, silent auctions and fun galore—all for a good cause—to save the hemlocks. Sponsors of the event include Cyprus, Highlands Wine & Cheese, The Summer House, and Signature Properties. For Beetle Ball tickets call JMCA at 526-5838, ext 203 or e-mail us at info@mountaincenters.org.

May 21 & May 22

- The Bel Canto Children’s Choir and Youth Chorus of Franklin’s spring show, “Moments of Magic – An Evening of Theater Music,” is loaded with music and dance to delight both children and adults. Two performances are scheduled for both at the Rearden Theater – located on the campus of the Rabun Gap Nachoochee School. Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday at 2:20 p.m.

May 23

- Chamber of Commerce sponsors Customer Service Seminar and Concierge 01. Call 526-2112.
- Highlands School Awards Assembly grades 8-12 in the new gym at 10 a.m.
- Annual Spring Town Cleanup the week of May 23. Residents may arrange for the collection of white goods, such as old washing machines or refrigerators, during that week by calling the Town Office at 526-2118 during business hours, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Noted Scottish heritage historian, lecturer and entertainer Flora MacDonald Gammon to perform at Chestnut Hill. Come enjoy an evening of entertainment and education. It's free, but reservations are required. Call toll-free 888-473-5093.
- Audubon Birdwalk, Franklin Greenway for migrants and lowland birds. Meet at the Highlands Town Hall Parking lot at 7:30 a.m. to car pool. Contact Edwin Poole, 526-2775.
- Highlands School Graduation at Rec Park at 7 p.m.
- Highlands School Graduation at Rec Park at 7 p.m.

June 6-10

- Magician Shaun Moss will teach a one week Magic Class for junior and senior high school students. The cost is $150 per student which includes all supplies. Scholarships available. Call (828) 526-1687.
before it became a state either to prevent or force slavery in Kansas, and the resulting clash was extremely violent. Among the people who had come to Kansas to prevent slavery was the man’s grandfather, and the book raised the question: what is the ethics of that kind of struggle? If you are a religious person, is it wrong to use violence in a cause that is just? There is never a resolution of this question; rather a broadening of compassion to understand that someone who is deeply religious can still be driven to violence.

Gilead also poignantly brought the struggle for racial equality forward 100 years (the book was set in the mid-1950s) quietly making the point of how long the struggle has had to go on in this country.

I would recommend this book to everyone and I am grateful to the friend who suggested it to me.

because he began this discussion by telling how he baptized cats as a boy.) I have never heard anyone speak of the pleasures of being a minister in quite this way before and it is beautiful.

The book also refers (a little too obliquely—I needed a little more background) to the abolitionist struggles in Kansas in the decades prior to the Civil War. People on both sides of the slavery dispute moved to Kansas...

... BOOK REVIEW continued from page 10
HELP WANTED

IT SYSTEMS AND TECH SUPPORT – Needed in Highlands for the Old Edwards Hospitality Group. Ability to support end-users on a variety of applications, hardware, networks and communications platforms. Duties will include on-going support and installation of software, troubleshooting hardware and software issues, working with system vendors to resolve issues. Knowledge of interfaces, telecommunication protocols, preferable. Strong project management and interpersonal skills a must. Great benefits. Some weekends. Salary range based on experience. Send resume to: P.O. Box 1499, Highlands, N.C. 28741, email to hr@oldedwardsinn.com EOE/Drug free workplace.

READY FOR AN EXCITING CHANGE? John Schiffl Real Estate is seeking an Office Administrator for our Main Street office. Our ideal candidate would possess strong interpersonal, administrative, and organizational skills. Duties include answering the telephone, meeting and greeting clients, scheduling appointments, assisting brokers, and performing office functions. Computer skills a plus. Salary is competitive and commensurate with experience. Please mail your resume to Susie deVille Schiffl, POB 1078, Highlands, NC 28741 or email it to: susie@johnschiffl.com. For more information, call Susie at (828) 526-2880.

EXPERIENCED PART-TIME FOLIAGE DESIGNER. Top pay, great atmosphere. Flexible hours. Call Debbie Mon., Wed., or Thurs., at 526-0490 between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

HIGH COUNTRY CAFE – Now accepting applications for all positions. Apply in person or call 526-0572. Located on Cashiers Road next to Community Bible Church. EOE.

LPN - PHYSICIAN'S OFFICE AT HIGHLANDS-CASHIERS HOSPITAL. Performs various patient care activities and technical skills necessary in caring for patients under the direction and supervision of the physician. Position is full-time, Monday-Friday, benefit eligible after 60 days. Pre-employment substance screening. Call Mary Osmar, 828-526-1301.

CERTIFIED NURSING ASSISTANT CLASSES THROUGH FIDELIA ECKERD LIVING CENTER AT HIGHLANDS-CASHIERS HOSPITAL. Classes run from July 11 through September 19. Work three 12-hour shifts at the Living Center while attending school. Bonus of $200 and salary raise upon graduation. Call for information and to enroll, Judy Miller, 828-526-1317.

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

LPNS AND RNS – FIDELIA ECKERD LIVING CENTER AT HIGHLANDS-CASHIERS HOSPITAL. Now hiring for PRN positions. If you want to join a team whose focus is on excellent elder care with a low staffing ratio, above average wages, and shift differentials, call. Pre-employment substance screening. Call Mary Osmar, 828-526-1301.

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.

RECEPTIONIST/SWITCHBOARD OPERATOR/CASHIER AT HIGHLANDS-CASHIERS HOSPITAL. This job-share position is part time, 24 hours per week, fluctuating days, 7-30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Pre-employment substance screening. Call Mary Osmar, 828-526-1301.

REAL ESTATE - RENTALS

NEED AN OFFICE AWAY FROM HOME? Perfect place near town, for you, or can share with your buddies.

526-5558.


STORE FOR RENT – on 4th Street. Call 864-630-0808.

REAL ESTATE - SALES


HOME FOR SALE NEARLY NEW – 3 bed, 2 bath– King Mountain Club, Atlanta side of Highlands. Immaculate. Large lot borders USFS – Creek on back of property. View of Scaly Mt. 2-car garage, wood-burning fireplace, gas furnace - stove, large kitchen, wood floors, all on one level. Year-round caretaker, pool, tennis court, stocked trout pond. Asking $399,000. Easy to see. Call Sandy at (TLC Assoc.) 828-526-5632.

ITEMS FOR SALE

NEW PLAID COUCH, $300: Traditional wood coffee table, $100; two Oriental rugs – one large, hand-made, navy/burgandy, $500; one antique, small, brown tones, $250; new fireplace screen and tools set, $100. Call Nancy at 813-293-1312.

CUSTOM CABINETS FOR SALE, Cherry finish, glass and raised paneled doors plus tops. Also, 5-ft high white vanity with cultured marble top. $2,000 for all. 828-524-9830 after 7 p.m.

HOME IMPROVEMENTS

BEDROOMS – Wormy Cherry finish, $125. See at All LUMBER – Wormy Cherry finish, glass and raised paneled doors plus tops. Also, 5-ft high white vanity with cultured marble top. $2,000 for all. 828-524-9830 after 7 p.m.

FURNITURE – Almost new. $125. See at All LUMBER – Wormy Cherry finish, glass and raised paneled doors plus tops. Also, 5-ft high white vanity with cultured marble top. $2,000 for all. 828-524-9830 after 7 p.m.


5/27
Differentiated instruction to be used in classes next year

By Erin Brown
highlandserin@aol.com

To prepare for changes at school next year, several teachers and Highlands School Principal Monica Bomengen attended a two-day conference in Atlanta last week on differentiated instruction.

Differentiated instruction is a method of teaching where all students are taught together in the same class regardless of learning level.

"We want to stop using 'pull-out' instruction as a first resort and instead make it a last resort," said Bomengen.

"The research on best practices in teaching is clear that students learn best when they are integrated into the regular classroom with their peers, whether they are academically ahead of or behind the majority of the class."

Bomengen said the purpose of the conference was to demonstrate to teachers K-12 what differentiated instruction looks like in a classroom.

Sixth Grade Teacher Janet Osteen said, "We always have a multitude of levels in our classrooms and adapt to the groups each year, as necessary. As educators, we are always looking for ways to improve our teaching and our ability to reach students."

Middle School Social Studies Teacher Steve Massey said he thinks it will be tough for him at first, but one of the good things about trying a new teaching technique is learning new things from the students.

"There's an axiom familiarity breeds contempt and I think you can apply that to using the same old methods," said Massey.

Osteen said the speaker modeled techniques as the seminar sessions were presented and described the different ways students learn: verbal/linguistic, visual/spatial, logical/mathematical, musical/rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, bodily/kinesthetic, naturalist/physical world, and existential.

Osteen said she particularly appreciated the emphasis put on the responsibility of teachers to think outside the box.

Regarding differentiated instruction the school improvement plan states it will "establish a program of differentiated instruction that supports all students, whether academically and intellectually gifted, in the mainstream, learning the English language, and/or identified with exceptional needs, primarily within the regular education classroom."

Teachers are excited about commencing the new process and seeing how the students respond to the technique.

"I'm actually tinkering with an entire new seating arrangement based on what I saw and heard," said Massey. "I'm hoping to get the kids more involved next year."

"I also believe that any staff development that is important enough for my teachers, I should attend with them," said Bomengen. "I will be teaching AP Language and Composition next year, so I will be 'practicing what I preach.' I wanted to go to the seminar to refresh my skills and to show my teachers how much I value their professional learning."

Teachers who attended, Monica Bomengen, high school English; Carla Harris, third grade; Denise West, fourth grade; Sara Mayer, sixth-grade language arts and social studies; Janet Osteen, sixth-grade math and science; Steve Massey, middle school social studies; Elizabeth Woods, middle school math.

The trip was partially funded by a grant from the H.E.L.P. Committee.
HCP’s ‘Anne Frank’ is a must see

By Kim Lewicki

Just because you know the story of Anne Frank and her family, doesn’t mean you shouldn’t go see the Highlands Community Players rendition of the famous modern classic this weekend.

Yes, it’s a sad story, and yes, it’s been told a many times. But as Director Jim Gordon tells the audience prior to the show, it’s a story that needs to be told a million times, so we always remember how evil and cruel members of the human race can be to each other.

Happily, Anne’s wish to be famous – either a writer or actress – came true. Her diary lived on to tell her story, endearing her to the world forever.

Kayla Bott, is exceptional as 13-year-old Anne in HCP’s version of this story. She perfectly depicts the idiosyncrasies of an adolescent girl living in her own world and the cramped surroundings of the annex.

She is supported by a great cast of HCP players - David Spivey who plays Mr. Frank, Anne’s doting father; Millie McKim who portrays Mrs. Frank, Anne’s patient, loving mother and Callie Rawlins who plays Margo, Anne’s older sister. Rawlins conveys the wisdom of an older sister who acts as the go-between for Anne and her mother, the recipient of Anne’s adolescent lashing.

The mercurial Van Daan family is portrayed by Leon Hananel as Mr. Van Daan, Jean Morris, as Mrs. Van Daan and Ian Holloway as their son, 16-year-old Peter — Anne’s love interest. Holloway portrays awkward Peter perfectly, who like any teenage boy takes his time warming up to Anne’s advances but eventually succumbs.

Stuart Armor does well as Mr. Dussel, the cranky, dentist who must endure Anne’s pubescent behavior in particularly close quarters. Both Carlos Green who plays Mr. Kraler, the factory owner, and Erin Brown who portrays his assistant, Miep do a great job as purveyors of supplies and news of the outside world.

The Highlands Community Players don’t usually do dramatic pieces, but they’ve proven they can do it all and do it well. What’s fun is watching people we know in the community and noticing, more often than not, that the roles they play so well are simply renditions of themselves.

Support Highlands community theatre. Go see “The Diary of Anne Frank” this weekend.

Tickets are $15 each, $8 for students and $12 for groups of 15 or more. The show runs May 14 and 15. Show times are 8 p.m. on Saturday with a 2:30 p.m. Sunday matinee.

Reservations can be made anytime by calling 828-526-8084. The HCP box office is open 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. everyday except Sundays when it opens at 1 p.m. The box office is located at the Martin-Lipscomb Performing Arts Center at 507 Chestnut Street.

Support for “The Diary of Anne Frank” is made possible, in part, by Margaret and Jerry Pennington, Gerry Sue and Norman Arnold, Pauline and Louis Perlis and Helene and Rick Siegel.