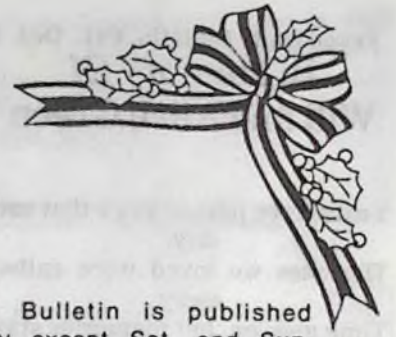


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The weather Wednesday: high 63; low 48; hum. 82 percent.

It's not cold outside, and snow is unlikely. Many of us are frightened for relatives and friends in the Persian Gulf. The economy is faltering. Christmas sales were good—after prices were slashed.

But we're blessed with another day of living, and blessed to spend it in a place where trees still cover much of the landscape, and people know one another by name.

For making the Bulletin a part of your lives for this past year...for making the Bulletin the Bulletin by your efforts and participation, we thank you. For making us feel Thermal all over, we thank all of you.

A Christmas "card" from the Bulletin is included inside this issue, along with greetings from a few dozen area businesses.

Also, by way of thanks, we have printed a map today showing the county's newly given road names. It was prepared by Jim Cochran, director of the county's emergency management agency. Hopefully, it will help guide your way to grandma's house.

You should also be sure to  
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## High School Bids Awarded For \$9.3 Mil.

The Polk County Board of Education Thursday morning unanimously awarded \$9,362,059 worth of contracts for the new high school building, which price includes all additional cost alternatives.

"This is a real landmark day for all of us," Supt. James Causby said. "We received not only good prices, but bids from very good companies."

However, the board disapproved two alternatives recommended by Causby which would have saved \$87,575. The board members said they would rather spend the additional money to assure a quality building from the outset.

In a four to three straw vote, the school board decided against using utility brick on the building, which was bid at a savings of \$70,575, for aesthetic reasons explained by architect John Cort. Utility brick is larger than regular brick but the difference between the two aesthetically would be seen at the five main entrances to the school, each of which has an enclave of 45 degree angles. The smaller brick can be shaped, while the large, utility brick would have to be cut and caulked, leaving a noticeable caulk line, Cort explained.

The first straw vote had members Phillip Pleasants, Georgia Pack and Ann Whitmire voting for the smaller brick and Wayne Bradley, Geoffrey

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## Fireside Players Are Rehearsing At FENCE



Shown rehearsing are Fireside Players Liz Norstrom, Ellie Roemer and Jean Winslett. The "Home for the Holidays" program at FENCE takes the stage tonight and tomorrow night from 6 to 8 p.m.

## Counterfeit Bills

Kathy Woody of the Tryon-Thermal Belt Chamber of Commerce warns businesses that counterfeit \$20s are floating around town. They are of poor quality, and look like a photo copy.

## Brevard Tournament Begins Wednesday

The Polk County men's and women's varsity basketball teams will take part in the Blue Devil Basketball Tournament at Brevard High School Dec. 26-28.

## Town Offices Closed

The offices for the Town of Columbus will be closed for the holidays Dec. 24 and 25 and will reopen Wednesday, Dec. 26.

## Sign Moratorium Challenge Ongoing

Polk County Attorney R. Jay Foster told the county commissioners this week that he has asked the N.C. Attorney General's office to review the county's off-premises sign moratorium ordinance before the county decides whether to pursue legal action against violators.

A letter was sent in October to Carl Meroney, owner of HealthCall Pharmacy in Columbus, giving him 30 days to remove his two signs, one located on each side of town. However, Meroney has refused, Foster said.

Meroney told the Bulletin he would comment on the situation at a later date.

Foster summed up the arguments he has heard. "He (Meroney) has stated that he ordered his signs last March," Foster said, well before the one-year moratorium went into effect August 1. "Due to delays by the sign painter, the signs were not erected until about five days after Aug. 1.

"He claims he had no notice (of the moratorium)," Foster explained. However, the county attorney said Meroney was given an opportunity to appeal, and he did not exercise that option.

"Now we're attempting to decide the proper course of action," Foster said. "We don't want to force him to take down the signs if he has a legal basis

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