

Highlands Newspaper

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HS prepares for Pre-K class come fall

By Kristin Fox
Over three years ago, the Advancing Highlands Education Committee (AHEC) came before the Macon County Board of County Commission-

ers to present a proposal to add two Pre-K classrooms to Highlands School. Although at times the journey has been difficult, the proposal has now become a reality as Highlands School gets

ready to welcome its first Pre-K students next fall. The addition of the pre-K classrooms was a part of an \$8 million dollar expansion and

• See PRE-K page 5

MC jumps to Tier 3 in state ranking

By Kristin Fox
At this week's regular monthly meeting of the Macon County Board of Commissioners, county officials announced that based on the state's Distressed County Tier Ranking System, Macon County will move from a Tier 2 County to a Tier 3 county in 2026. Showing improved economic development rankings, Macon County moved up to Tier 3, the least distressed rank. This change in state tier ranking could have a significant effect on the county's eligibility for funding and match requirements for state incentive programs. North Carolina's County Development Tiers system ranks all 100 of the state's counties based on economic well-being and relative eco-

• See RANKINGS page 4

King and Queen for the night!



Highlands School seniors Aiden Crook-Jenkins and Olivia Corbin were crowned Saturday night at the Highlands School 2025 Homecoming Dance held at the Highlands Community Building. See photos on page 10.

Photo by Sunset Staff

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HCP celebrates 30 years with free holiday show

The Highlands Cashiers Players will present their annual free holiday show on Tuesday, December 16 at 7 pm. The tradition is the organization's way of thanking everyone who has supported them throughout the year - volunteers, donors and audience members. This year's show will be a special one as Highlands Cashiers Players is celebrating its 30th anniversary. The performance will be a 1940's-style radio theater production of a shortened version of *It's A Wonderful Life*, adapted by Joe Landry. The many parts in the production will be read by HCP actors, directors, board members and volunteers past and present. "We would love for this 30th anniversary holiday performance to feel like a homecoming for any and all who have ever been involved with Highlands Cashiers Players, whether they participate in the show or attend as audience members. We are very grateful to the PAC for sponsoring the event so that we don't have to charge admission to cover the venue cost." said April Getz, HCP president. In keeping with the old-time radio tradition, sound effects will be created live on stage using a variety of objects, such as corn flakes for cracking ice and crunching snow, and ribbon candy and a hammer to mimic the sound of breaking glass. This will add an interesting visual element to the show. During "commercial breaks" in the radio theater, live holiday music will be provided by the Highlands Horns Trio. Their performance is made possible by a grant from Macon Arts Council. Following the show, guests will be invited to stay for a cake and champagne reception (a departure from the usual cookies

• See HCP page 4



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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Holiday events and Town Board lineup

Highlands has had a wonderful start to the holiday season. The new wreaths that decorate the business district are extremely attractive. The ice-skating rink is in full operation, and the chamber sponsored the town lighting and Christmas parade, which were wonderful events. Seems that we had an exceptionally large turnout for the parade.

I want to thank all the community organizations that took part in the parade. I also want to give a shoutout to the two bands that marched down Main Street, the Rosman High School Band, and the Franklin High School Band. Marching bands playing Christmas carols in Christmas parades go hand-in-hand.

We have two other events coming up during the season. Wreaths Across America, in cooperation with American Legion Post 370, will place wreaths on veterans' graves on Dec. 13. The ceremony will begin at the Highlands Community Building at 12 noon. After the ceremony, people



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

will be bused to the Highlands Cemetery to place the wreaths. Call (828) 200-9753 for more information or email Ppotts@frontier.com

On Dec. 14 at 5:30, the lighting of the Menorah will take place to celebrate Hanukkah. The ceremony will be at KH Founders Park. Call Visit Highlands at (828) 526-2112 or go to Visit Highlands for more information.

On Thursday night, Dec. 11, the Town Board will hold three sessions. At 5 pm at the Highlands Community Center, the board will hold a closed-session meeting to consult with our attorney regarding the Huff v. Town of Highlands lawsuit. At 6 pm, there will be a town workshop concerning the county room occupancy tax legislation that has been in place for the past 40 years. Discussions about updating this local enabling legislation will take place.

At the 7 pm official Town Board business meeting, the newly elected officials will be sworn in. Amy Patterson, Eric Pierson, and Jim Tate will take the oath as commissioners. I will be sworn in as mayor for a fourth term. The swearing-in ceremony symbolizes the start of a new Town Board for the next two years.

The board will also hear an update from a coalition of nonprofit organizations that have developed a response plan to provide assistance and information if the community were to be hit by another emergency of the magnitude of Hurricane Helene. These organizations would set up a help and information center at the Highlands Community Building. Representatives from nonprofits and churches have been meeting for several months to develop a comprehensive plan.

Another agenda item is to consider reserving the parking lot next to Town Hall for town employees and vehicles during weekly business hours. After business hours and on the weekend, the lot would be open to the public.

I hope folks can attend the workshop and/or the board meeting this Thursday. As always, these two meetings can be accessed remotely by using the YouTube button on the town website.

Hope to see everyone at the meeting or at the remaining holiday events.

• SNAPSHOT •

Caught in the act!







John Sheehan with Mountain Life Properties "toting" a bear in a garbage can during the parade.

Do you have a heartfelt, funny, interesting, or beautiful photo you would like to share in our "SnapShot" section? Email it to highlandseditor@aol.com or text it to 828-200-1371, with a brief description and a name. No anonymous photos will be accepted.

Photo by Kim Lewicki

• WEATHER •

Thu, 11-Dec	Fri, 12-Dec	Sat, 13-Dec	Sun, 14-Dec
			
37°F 23°F	48°F 27°F	52°F 29°F	42°F 10°F
Mostly cloudy and chilly	Clouds and sun; not as cold	Intervals of clouds and sun	Variably cloudy and cooler
RealFeel® High: 34° Low: 17°	RealFeel® High: 47° Low: 27°	RealFeel® High: 55° Low: 23°	RealFeel® High: 38° Low: 19°

For Real-time Weather and the Extended Forecast, go to www.highlandsinfo.com and click on Weather

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Santa arrives to light the town for the holidays!

Saturday, November 29 | 6pm | Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park

Highlands Christmas Parade

Saturday, December 6 | 10am-12pm | Main Street

Santa in the Park

November 28, December 6, 13 & 20 | Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park

Lighting of the Menorah

Sunday, December 14 | 5:30pm | Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park



HIGHLANDS

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All events, other than Ice Skating, are organized and hosted by the Highlands Chamber of Commerce/ Visit Highlands, NC.

• INVESTING AT 4,118 Ft •

We need to develop carefully

We welcome Christmas in Highlands! The town is so beautiful when decorated. I love the old-fashioned decorations and traditions. Funny that Winterfest was put off because it snowed one year.

The parade last Saturday was a good example of what towns small and large across the country do to celebrate, a diverse group in one big celebration.

One of the best investments in Highlands are the people. They take care of and look after each other. I hope that never changes!

Most people who have purchased homes here come because they love the lifestyle in Highlands. We need to be careful to protect that!

Lately, new development is geared to extract the most profit and shoehorn in the maximum units possible.

They can do that so long as the laws allow it. We are so fortunate that a great deal of Macon County is U.S. Forest Service land; unless that changes it will help to protect the natural beauty in the long run.



W Terry Potts
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When people who live here do a development, they understand that if you do it correctly the profit will come. I hope the developers of the new hotel on Carolina Way will redesign to make it more in keeping with our area.

Last week there was an article in the Wall Street Journal about Highlands and Cashiers. It talked about how wealthy people are coming to this area. That has always been the case from the beginning. The main difference is way back lots were 1 to over 100 acres.

The Mirror Lake area was developed in the 1920s, small lots were put in for summer cabins that made it an affordable retreat for the time.

It is inevitable that as long as Highlands keeps its small-town life we will thrive and grow. I just hope it we can keep it growing in a manner that ensures the things that make Highlands a nice place to live for years to come.

• W. Terry Potts, CCP of Highlands, over five generations in Highlands. 828-421-3417

...RANKINGS continued from page 1

economic distress. This tier system is incorporated into various state programs to encourage economic activity in the less prosperous areas of the state.

Macon County's economic distress rank improved to #81 (from #73 in 2025). The county's median household income rank improved 12 positions and its population growth rank improved by 8 positions.

Since 2007, North Carolina has used a three-level system for designating County Development Tiers. The designations, which are mandated by state law, determine a variety of state funding op-

portunities to assist in economic development.

Counties are ranked and grouped into fixed allocations: 40 counties designated as Tier 1 (most distressed), 40 as Tier 2, and 20 as Tier 3 (least distressed). These rankings are determined using four standardized metrics: unemployment rate, median household income, population growth over the previous 36 months, and the county's per-capita property tax base.

The North Carolina Department of Commerce releases its county economic

• See RANKINGS page 7

...HCP continued from page 1

and cider in honor of the 30th anniversary) by the Saint Lucia bride, a Scandinavian hospitality custom often observed during the holidays. Families are encouraged to attend - nonalcoholic beverages will also be provided.

The Holiday Show will take place in the Martin Lipscomb Theater at the Highlands Performing Arts Center. Admission is free, and seating will be on a first-come, first-served basis, so early arrival is encouraged.

...PRE-K continued from page 1

renovation project at Highlands School. The recently completed expansion project included the renovation of a four-classroom addition, two Pre-K classroom renovations, three project labs, media center renovation, outdoor classrooms and middle school renovations.

With the renovations now complete on the two Pre-K classrooms, the school system is working on completing the requirements to be licensed as a part of the NC Pre-K Program which could take up to a year to complete. The Pre-K program cannot start until the final license has been granted.

All classroom manipulatives, learning stations and curriculum have to be in place and then approved before the final license is approved. This includes computer programs, learning games and anything that will be used in the classrooms which all must be in place before the final license is approved.

"We are excited to introduce a pre-school element to Highlands School," said HS Principal Sarah Holbrooks. "Currently, we are working on getting one Pre-K room licensed and securing funding for the classroom teachers in the upcoming budget. The county office and other liaisons have been incredibly helpful in guiding us through the process of opening a childcare center. We are now focused on preparing for the pre-licensing assessment visit. There are several items to complete before we can be issued a temporary license. When opening a childcare center, there are many specific requirements to meet."

The NC Pre-K Program is designed to provide high-quality educational experiences to enhance school readiness for eligible four-year-old children. The NC Pre-K Program requirements are built on the National Education Goals Panel's premise that to be successful academically in school, children need to be prepared in all five of the developmental domains that are critical to children's overall well-being and success in reading and math as they enter school: Approaches to play and learning; Emotional and Social Development; Health and Physical Development; Language Development and Communication; and Cognitive Development.

The NC Pre-K Program Requirements are designed to ensure that a high-quality pre-kindergarten classroom experience is provided and to the extent possible, uniformity exists across the

state. Programs are also required to meet the NC Child Care Rules.

NC's Pre-K program meets a number of nationally accepted benchmarks for measuring quality early learning. These include comprehensive Early Learning Standards; staff who are required to meet education/licensure requirements, professional development; 1:9 staff/child ratio; developmental screens and referral; evidence-based curriculum and formative assessments; monitoring and nutritional requirements.

"An on-campus Pre-K program at Highlands School is a game-changer for our students' kindergarten-readiness," said School Board Member Hilary Wilkes. "Those who attend will gain confidence in navigating 'big school,' access to support for development delay issues, and early identification for second-language needs. This sets them up for success at the elementary level and beyond."

Representing the Highlands District, over the last several years Wilkes has fought hard to get the much-needed Pre-K classrooms at Highlands School.

According to Highlands School Principal Holbrooks, the school plans to open one Pre-K classroom next fall. This classroom will accommodate 18 students with one teacher and one teacher's assistant. First priority will be given to teachers at Highlands School. Tuition for students in the Pre-K classrooms will be both private pay as well as state-funded slots.

The school will share more details in the spring regarding applications, screening, and seat availability. The goal will be to fill all 18 Pre-K spots by the fall.

Holbrooks said Highlands School could potentially have two Pre-K classrooms in the future. However, the school wants to ensure it can fill one classroom first before requesting additional funding for a teacher and teacher's assistant. The priority is sustainability at Highlands School and the school wants to confirm that there is a genuine need for two classrooms to serve 36 Pre-K students.

"The idea to establish this preschool program originated several years ago, with the goal of providing additional Pre-K options for our community, as the area currently has limited options with long waitlists," said Holbrooks.

Highlands has two licensed facilities, the Gordon Center and the Highlands Community Child Development Center. Between both centers there are more

than 50 children who are on the two centers' waitlists.

"I want to express my gratitude to our community partners who currently serve Pre-K-aged children — they do a wonderful job preparing them for kindergarten," said Holbrooks. "This is a true partnership, and we look forward to continuing these collaborations while also establishing our own classroom here at Highlands School."

"I am very excited to add this new element to our K-12 school," added Holbrooks. "Working at a K-12 school offers a unique experience, as we witness the entire journey of our learners — from their first steps to walking across the stage and moving on to the next chapter. This Pre-K integration will be special, helping our youngest students acclimate to the school

environment and classroom expectation. We will also begin working with them on skills necessary for a successful kindergarten year."

Holbrooks said it has been a journey to reach this stage of development.

"I couldn't be prouder of what our team has accomplished," she said. "I also want to thank the county commissioners, school board members, and our county office staff for their support in getting us here."

She said providing early education within the school setting will be a positive step for everyone.

"I have a feeling we will learn just as much from these little learners as they will from us," she said.

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• LETTER •

NC Courts have given HOAs the power to act like judges — and homeowners are paying the price

Dear Editor,

North Carolina homeowners are facing a growing constitutional crisis — one that threatens property rights from the mountains to the coast. Through a series of judicial decisions, sparked by a legal argument advanced by Charlotte attorney Ashley B. Oldfield of Rayburn Cooper & Durham, P.A., private homeowners associations (HOAs) have gained the practical power to act as courts. The result is a dangerous precedent: HOAs can now hold private “hearings,” declare homeowners negligent, impose liability, file liens, foreclose on homes, and pursue attorney-fee awards — all without any judge ever determining wrongdoing.

This alarming shift began in Swain County, where the Smoky Mountain Country Club Property Owners Association (SMCC POA) held a private negligence hearing against homeowners Ronnie and Shira Hedgepeth. Their alleged negligence? Exercising a legal right to file a bankruptcy appeal. That appeal was dismissed on a technical basis — not because they did anything wrong. Yet under Oldfield’s legal theory, the HOA treated a lawful appeal as actionable negligence and conducted what amounted to its own trial.

The HOA issued written findings, levied an assessment, filed a lien, foreclosed on the home, purchased it at its own sale, and pursued more than \$35,000 in attorney fees. Not once did a real court make a judicial finding that the homeowners had acted improperly.

This troubling expansion of HOA authority was validated early on by now-retired Superior Court Judge William H. Coward. Coward permitted foreclosure based solely on the HOA’s internal hearing — a

private process with no constitutional protections. After Coward’s retirement, multiple Superior Court judges remained complacent, allowing attorney-fee awards and enforcement actions to continue while ignoring the constitutional implications.

Homeowners hoped the North Carolina Court of Appeals would intervene. Instead, the Court sidestepped the core issue, focusing on how many prior appeals had been filed rather than addressing the merits. Most strikingly, the Court compared HOAs to school boards — entities that are state actors with legislatively granted quasi-judicial powers. HOAs are private corporations, not government bodies. They have no statutory or constitutional authority to adjudicate negligence or issue binding legal findings.

Equating private HOAs with public school boards was not only inappropriate — it was dangerous. This comparison effectively legitimized a system where private associations may function as courts without oversight, transparency, or due process.

The North Carolina Supreme Court has twice denied review of the issue. A third petition is now pending — likely the last opportunity for the Court to prevent this precedent from spreading statewide.

This crisis is not limited to Swain County. Nearly two million North Carolinians live in HOA-governed communities. In cities like Charlotte, Raleigh, Wilmington, Asheville, Greensboro, and their surrounding suburbs, HOAs play a major role in everyday residential life. Under the emerging precedent, any HOA in North Carolina could begin conducting its own negligence trials, punishing homeowners for filing appeals, and taking homes

without judicial findings. No North Carolinian should lose their home based on a private meeting held by an HOA board. No homeowner should face attorney-fee awards arising from internal HOA rulings. And no private corporation should have the authority to act like a court.

The General Assembly must step in and clarify that HOAs have no adjudicatory authority. Legislation should prohibit foreclosures, liens, or attorney-fee awards based on private HOA hearings. These protections are essential to restore the constitutional separation between private governance and judicial power.

The North Carolina Supreme Court must also act. The Court should accept review, address the constitutional issues the Court of Appeals ignored, and reaffirm that judicial power belongs to the courts — not to private associations or the attorneys who represent them.

If the judiciary refuses to intervene and lawmakers remain silent, the consequences will spread far beyond one mountain community. Every HOA in the state will be emboldened to test the limits of this new quasi-judicial authority. The next home taken through a private tribunal may not be in Swain County — it may be in any subdivision in North Carolina.

Homeowners across the state deserve better. They deserve courts that protect their rights, not courts that hand judicial power to private boards. It is time for North Carolina’s leaders — judicial and legislative — to act before private HOA tribunals become a permanent part of our legal landscape.

**Shira Hedgepeth, JD, MBA, MS
Cullowhee, NC**

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...RANKINGS continued from page 4

development tier rankings, an annual assessment that categorizes all 100 counties into three levels of economic distress. The tier system determines eligibility and match requirements for some of the state’s largest taxpayer-paid incentive programs, including the One North Carolina Fund and Job Development Investment Grants (JDIG).

An example of the funding differences between tiers, is the determination of a county’s match using its Tier ranking. Under One North Carolina Fund (OneNC), the local government match depends on the Tier ranking -- \$1 for every \$3 in state funds in Tier 1; \$1 for every \$2 in state funds in Tier 2; and \$1 for every \$1 in state funds in Tier 3.

Macon joins 17 other counties that will shift tiers under the 2026 designations, Counties moving toward improved economic status include Beaufort, Camden, Davie, Graham, Macon, Montgomery, Randolph, Stanley, and Surry.

Counties showing reduced economic performance

include Buncombe, Burke, Granville, Haywood, Henderson, Jones, Madison, Pasquotank, and Yancey.

Many of these counties’ economies were significantly affected by the impacts of both Hurricane Helene and the recent federal government shutdown. The hurricane led to a rise in unemployment in western NC, impacting not only their rankings but other counties’ rankings across the state. In addition, the shutdown delayed the release of recent monthly unemployment data. As a result, the most recent 12-months of county unemployment were used for the designation.

In some cases, a given program’s use of the Tiers system is required by statute. In other cases, state agencies and even private-sector or nonprofit organizations choose to adopt the Tiers system as guidance for determining eligibility requirements for a particular program.

Further details about the tier designation system can be found on the North Carolina Department of Commerce website at commerce.nc.gov/tiers.

• HOSPITAL NEWS •

December is a time to reflect on this season's gifts — Those we give and those we receive

In this season of giving, I want to share some information about important gifts that Highlands-Cashiers Hospital (HCH) has both given and received this year.

As part of Mission Health, we are proud of the support our health system provides communities across our entire region. Throughout the 18 counties of Western North Carolina, Mission Health contributes more than \$750,000 each year to charitable organizations that align with our goals which involve creating healthier tomorrows for so many communities. On a national level, HCA Healthcare and HCA Healthcare Foundation gave over \$48.5 million to community organizations in 2024.

In just this past year, Mission Health colleagues — including those from HCH and Eckerd Living Center (ELC) — utilized HCA Giving and Volunteering incentives to raise \$460,000 in charitable giving and company match to causes that have special meaning and matter most to them. This also translated into a contribution of more than 10,000 volunteer hours. HCA Healthcare colleagues logged almost 240,000 volunteer hours nationally and HCA contributed an impressive \$18 million in matching contributions to charities of our employees' choice. Locally, we have financially supported many valuable organizations serving our community.

With these kinds of numbers, it's easy to understand that these efforts and funds make a deeply meaningful difference for individuals and families across Western North Carolina and in our own community.

I'm also proud that HCA Healthcare is involved with diverse initiatives that support the health of our community. For example, we partner with the Blood Connection to host blood drives at the hospital — this is a critical, lifesaving need. We also participate in the Healthy Food for Healthier Tomorrows Food Drive each year, to help individuals and families in the community who are facing hunger. The food



Tom Neal CEO, CNO
Highlands-Cashiers
Hospital

collected is donated to our local food pantries, Fishes and Loaves in Cashiers, the Highlands Food Pantry, and the Highlands Emergency Council. Also, we use the donated cans to create a sculpture that is entered into a national contest with the winners receiving a \$10,000 prize to donate to local food banks. Our sculpture is a life size CT scanner with patient. It is amazing.

We host wonderful community events called Teddy Bear Clinics, where we invite children to bring their stuffed animals in for a check-up. This helps them become more comfortable with going to the doctor themselves. Our volunteers help administer vaccinations, take vital signs and X-rays, and perform other care duties on the stuffed animals so they can feel better. The Teddy Bear Clinic has proven to be an effective tool for lessening children's anxiety about being in clinical environments and receiving treatment.

Though I noted that HCA Healthcare makes a deep imprint on our region with charitable contributions, their investment in HCH this year has given us a new CT scanner, MRI scanner, an expanded therapy gym, and a new phlebotomy area. This signifies ever-improving care that's close to home for our community members. These improvements are just part of an expansive \$17 million investment by HCA Healthcare in our hospital, and this translates into a profound gift to support community health.

All of the gifts I've mentioned are directed at the same goal — to enhance care on the Plateau. These also align with our mission: Above all else, we are committed to the care and improvement of human life. We're happy to be here for you and appreciate the gift of trust you place in us as we care for you.

Finally, I want to wish our community members the most joyous of holidays and a very Happy New Year. Take this month to enjoy family and friends, experience the spirit of giving, and anticipate good things to come for 2026.



Andrea Gabbard
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JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE
THE FIRST NIGHT OF
HANUKKAH WITH THE

Lighting of the Menorah!

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14 | 5:30pm
KELSEY HUTCHINSON FOUNDERS PARK

Experience the warmth and spirit of Hanukkah as we
gather to share peace, light, and community.
Enjoy traditional blessings, music, and the glow
of the first night's illumination.

Let's come together to honor this beautiful tradition
and spread light and hope throughout Highlands.



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Presented by the Highlands Chamber of Commerce / Visit Highlands, NC

VIP & Weekend tickets for Bear Shadow go on sale Thurs., Dec. 11

Single-day tickets to go on sale Mon. Dec. 15, at noon

Tickets for the 2026 Bear Shadow spring music festival, May 29–31, 2026, at its new home, Ferngrove, will go on sale Thursday, Dec. 11, at 12 noon ET.

The weekend will open with an exclusive pre-festival benefit concert for Stage4Hope charity on Friday, May 29, for VIP 3-Day ticketholders. Friday's event is 21+.

3-Day and 2-Day tickets for Bear Shadow will be available at <https://bearshadownc.com/>. VIP 3-Day tickets are \$800, which includes access to Friday's benefit concert.

General Admission tickets include admittance to Bear Shadow Base Camp live performances for Saturday and Sunday; complimentary beer, wine, premium non-alcoholic beverages and water; access to a variety of food, sponsors and retail vendors on-site; and complimentary shuttles to and from downtown Highlands for \$300 plus applicable taxes and fees.

General Admission Children (2-Day) – \$50 (plus applicable taxes and fees) for ages 9-18 (children ages 8 and under are FREE)

Base Camp shows are scheduled for Saturday, May 30, from 3:30 p.m.-10 p.m. and on Sunday, May 31, from 12:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Stage4Hope Welcome Concert (Friday; Ages 21+) – \$300; VIP Single Day – \$325; GA Single Day – \$175; VIP Kids Single Day – \$25 (Sat/Sun only) Ages 9-18 (children ages 8 and under are FREE); GA Kids Single Day – \$25 (Sat/Sun only) Ages 9-18 (children ages 8 and under are FREE)

Christmas

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES DECEMBER 24TH

5:00 PM
Family-Oriented Candlelight Service

7:00 PM
Christmas Eve Eucharist *(approx. 30 min.)*

9:00 PM
Lessons and Carols *(approx. 30 min.)*

11:45 PM
Midnight Eucharist *(approx. 15-20 min.)*

ALL HELD IN CHURCH SANCTUARY

Highlands United Methodist Church

315 Main Street, Highlands NC
(828) 526-3376

CHURCH *of the* INCARNATION

LESSONS AND CAROLS

Sunday, December 21 at 10:30 am

Main Sanctuary

CHRISTMAS EVE

Wednesday, December 24 at 4:00 pm & 6:00 pm

Main Sanctuary

(nursery available)

CHRISTMAS DAY

Thursday, December 25 at 10:00 am

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Photo by Sunset Staff

• HS SPORTS RECAP •

Highlanders battle through tough early season slate

The Highlands High School basketball teams have faced a rigorous start to their season, hosting competitive match-ups against Towns County and Hayesville as they find their rhythm on the hardwood.

Defending the Home Court: Lady Highlanders Secure Back-to-Back Wins

The Varsity girls have provided the early-season highlights, securing two hard-fought victories at home.

On November 24th, the Lady Highlanders hosted Towns County, jumping out to an early lead and never looking back. Hunter Conner anchored the team with a dominant 13-point performance, supported by Jordyn Borino's 9 points, leading the team to a 33-24 win.

The momentum carried into December 5th against

Hayesville. Despite a slow start that saw them trail 12-0, the Lady Highlanders showed immense grit. A crucial 19-11 fourth-quarter run, powered by an impressive 11-of-12 performance from the free-throw line, sealed a 48-37 victory.

Standout Stats:

Charlotte Westendorf led the scoring with 15 points, while Hunter Conner recorded a monstrous defensive triple-double of sorts with 13 points, 13 rebounds, and 10 blocked shots.

Varsity Boys Face Sharp-Shooting Opponents

The Varsity boys encountered tough resistance in their home stands. Against Towns County, an early 24-5 deficit proved too much to overcome, resulting in a 63-33 loss. Paolo McRae led the scoring for Highlands with 13 points.

The following week against Hayesville, the Highlanders kept



Brett Lamb
Highlands School
Athletic Director

things tight through the first half, trailing only 25-36 at the break. However, a slow third quarter allowed Hayesville to pull away for a 65-45 finish. McRae again led the Highlanders with 14 points, followed by Isaiah Vilardo with 7.

JV Update

The JV Boys continue to develop despite two losses. Jonathan Carpenter has been a consistent bright spot, scoring 7 points against Towns County and exploding for 19 points in the 34-54 loss to Hayesville.

Weston Sellars and Sam Conner have also provided steady contributions in the backcourt.

Upcoming Schedule

The Highlanders have a busy week ahead as they look to climb the standings:

- Tues., 12/9: vs. Cherokee (Home) — Jersey Night!
- Thurs. 12/11: Middle School at Tallulah Falls
- Thurs., 12/11: at Rosman
- Fri., 12/12: at Towns County



Photo by Todd Sumner



Thank You, Commissioner John Dotson!

John "Buz" Dotson is retiring from the Board of Commissioners after eighteen years of service to the residents of Highlands.

Buz always brought the perspective of "What is best for Highlands?" to every issue and has been a great steward of the Town's resources. Commissioner Dotson leaves huge shoes to fill and sets a high bar as a caring and committed public servant to the residents of Highlands.

Please join us in thanking Buz as he turns his focus to his family, his Preferred Properties real estate business, and being "just" a regular resident of our wonderful town.

Thanks Buz!



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HighlandsNeighborhoodCoalition.com

Highlands 2025 Christmas Parade Sat., Dec. 6



Photos by Kim Lewicki

• ROTARY NEWS •

Rotary Bingo benefits 'Why Us Kids?'

During the evening of December 4th, The Rotary Club of Highlands hosted the final Highlands Rotary Bingo of 2025. Partnering with Why Us Kids? and Lead Sponsor Pat Allen, the 15 rousing Bingo games culminated in Super Bingo with winner Maggie Baxter, who generously donated her \$200 winnings back to Why Us Kids? The evening drew an enthusiastic crowd at the Highlands Community Center, with net proceeds exceeding \$8,000 from the event benefiting the Why Us Kids? mission to "raise awareness about the youth mental health crisis and to empower kids and young adults to speak out about their traumas." Highlands Rotary Bingo will return in early 2026.



From left: Rotary Bingo Chair Tim Dearth; Super Bingo Winner Maggie Baxter; Why Us Kids? Founder Gracie Parker and "Oma" Elke Kennedy.



From left: Rotary Bingo Lead Sponsor Pat Allen, Why Us Kids? Founder Gracie Parker and grandma and grandpa Kennedy.



From left: President Randy Foster, Allison Kaserman, Evan Hatch, Billy Love.

Rotary hears about S'western CC

Guests at the Rotary Club of Highlands were two of the major players at the Southwestern Community College Foundation, Evan Hatch, the executive director of Institutional Advancement and Allison Kaserman, donor relations & scholarship coordinator.

The mission statement of the college clearly states what this learning institution was created to do. "Southwestern Community College provides a quality, innovative learning environment that

promotes student success, workforce development and community advancement."

The college, established in 1964, was rated the number one community college in the country by bestcolleges.com in 2020 and has been awarded many accolades since. The diversity of its student body, and multitude of courses it offers, both academic and vocational, make this college a significant asset to our communities.



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Highlands' most beloved holiday tradition – *Home for the Holidays* – returns in an all-new production: *Spirit of the Season*. An all-star cast performs festive favorites alongside fresh new arrangements, creating a sparkling seasonal spectacular for the whole family. This heart-warming 90-minute celebration bursts with breathtaking song, dazzling dance, and a touch of technical magic that will leave you asking, "How did they do that?" Whether it's a cherished annual outing or a brand-new tradition, *Home of the Holidays: Spirit of the Season* is the perfect way to celebrate the season and fill your heart with holiday cheer.

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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING

Loyalty Wanes?



**Sr. Pastor
Gary Hewins**
Community Bible Church

I, like many of you, enjoy competitive college football. However, I do regret surrendering my emotional well-being to a highly stressed 19-year-old student athlete on many Saturdays. Being a football fan adds both some spice and stress to life. I am a University of Georgia football fan, and I have been since I was a student in Athens. That's my school, that's my team, those are my "peeps," and I am going to be a Georgia fan until the day I die. It's established. Go Dawgs! When I see Georgia fans wearing Georgia "swagger" I say "Go dawgs" no matter what part of the world I am in, including international airports in Istanbul, France and India. I am part of the "Bulldog Nation" as you are likely a part of some other fan base. I respect your loyalty to your team in both good and bad times as you respect my loyalty to my team during consistently good times.

I was an Atlanta Braves fan when Ted Turner was an owner/manager, and the Braves couldn't win a game. I am a loyal person, and I make no apologies for that. I am not a "fair weather fan," but many are in our culture today.

What is the true meaning of loyalty anyway? According to artificial intelligence, loyalty is:

"A steadfast, faithful commitment and devotion to a person, cause, family, or country, built on trust, honesty, and consistent support, often involving selfless actions and unwavering allegiance even through difficulties. It's about being reliable, staying true to your word, and demonstrating a strong, continuing faithfulness to your obligations and the bonds you share."

If you think about it, by this definition, loyalty is waning in our culture. Marriage, one of our greatest tests of loyalty, is on the decline and divorce isn't. Estrangement between family members is significantly on the rise. "Friendsgiving" gatherings often replace family Thanksgiving gatherings because family is becoming less important.

Our cancel culture alienates others where a deep loyalty once existed. People "church hop" at the drop of a hat. In the world of politics, the greatest manifestation of immaturity in our culture, loyalists can flip and be labeled traitors. Student athletes refrain from post season play and abandon their teammates, fellow students and fan base for personal gain. Coaches can lead a team into an entirely newfound level of success only to leave their players days before the magic of post season possibility.

• See SPIRITUALLY page 15

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

BLUEVALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Oliver Rice. Pastor 706-782-3965

Sundays: School: 10 a.m., Worship: 11

Sunday night services every 2nd & 4th Sunday at 7

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

BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

828-269-3546 • Rev. Jamie Passmore. Pastor

Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11

CASHIERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Aryn Williams-Reubel. Pastor 828-743-5298

Sundays: School at 9:30; Worship 10:30

GRACE CHAPEL ON HIGH HOLLY

9615 Dillard Rd Scaly Mountain, N.C.

Pastor Steve Kerhoulas. <http://www.Graceonhighholly.com>

Sunday School 9:45; Worship 11; Prayer Service Wed 5:30p

Men's and Women's Bible Study throughout the week

CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

The Rev'd Dr. Marc Robertson & Rev. Nick McGee

464 U.S. Hwy. 64E, Cashiers, NC

CAC@christanglicancashiers.org • 828-743-1701

Sunday: Adult Christian Ed. 9:15a; Holy Eucharist, 10:30a;

Fellowship 11:45a; Wed: Bible Study/Contemplative Prayer, 5p

CHRIST CHURCH OF THE VALLEY. CASHIERS

Pastor Jacob Tedder • jacob@cashiers.church • 743-5470

www.cashiers.church

Sun. 10:45a; Wed Study: 5:15p supper and childcare.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH

283 Spring Street - Sunday Service: 10:30 a.m.

Testimony meeting: 3rd Wednesday at 5:30 p.m.

CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Jim Kinard

Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11 a.m.

1st & 3rd Sunday night Service: 7 p.m.

Wednesdays - Supper at 6 p.m.

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

www.cbchighlands.com • 526-4685

3645 Cashiers Rd. Highlands. NC • Sr. Pastor Gary Hewins

Sun: Service 10:45am, Children's 10:30am

Wed.: Youth 5:30-7pm; Women's Bible Study: Mon. 4:30pm, Tues.

10am; Men's Bible Study: Wed. & Thurs. 7am @ Zookeeper

Bistro

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION

Rev. W. Bentley Manning, Rector • 526-2968

5th and Main streets • www.incarnationwnc.org

Sunday: Rite I, spoken, 8 am in Chapel, Rite II with Choir 10:30

am in Sanctuary, Wed: Healing Eucharist 12 pm in Chapel,

Morning Prayer: Mon-Thurs 8:30 am in Chapel

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HIGHLANDS

828-526-4153 • www.fbchighlands.org

Dr. Mark Ford, Pastor • 220 Main Street, Highlands

Sun.: Worship 10:45 am; Sun.: Bible Study 9:30 am

Wed.: Men's Bible Study 8:30 am; Women's 10:30 am

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Emily Wilmarth, pastor; Rev. Kelley Connelly Asso. Pastor

828-526-3175 • fbchighlands.org

Sun.: Adult Ed.: 10a; Worship 11a.; Tues: Men's Group 10a;

Wed: Bell Choir 4p. Chancel Choir: 5:30p

GOLDMINE BAPTIST CHURCH

(Off Franklin/Highlands Rd)

Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

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www.gracecashiers.com • Pastor Steve Doerter 743-9814

Services: Sundays 10am - Wed. - 7pm; Dinner - Wed. 6pm

HAMBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

Hwy 107N. • Glenville. NC • 743-2729 • Nathan Johnson

Sunday: School 9:45a. Worship 11a & 7p. Bible Study 6p

Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Randy Reed. Pastor 828-421-9172 • 165 S. Sixth Street

Wed. Bible Study: 6 p.m.; Sundays: Worship: 11

HIGHLANDS CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Dan Robinson • 11339 Buck Creek Road

The Highlands Central Baptist Church is temporarily sharing the facilities of the Shortoff Baptist Church.

Sunday Worship is at 9a. & 6p. Wednesday Worship is 6p

HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Dr. Randy Lucas. Pastor 526-3376

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909a Bluegrass and 11a Traditional

www.highlandsmethodist.org

HOLY FAMILY LUTHERAN CHURCH: ELCA

2152 Dillard Road • 526-9741

Rev. Ken Langsdorf

Worship/Communion: 10:30 All are welcome.

Visit our website: Holy Family Lutheran Highlands NC

MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH

8 miles south of Highlands on N.C. 28 S in Satolah

Pastor Zane Talley

Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11. Choir: 6 p.m.

Wed: Bible Study and Youth Mtg.: 7 p.m.

MOUNTAIN SYNAGOGUE

Franklin • 828-634-1312 • mountainsynagoguenc.com.

Services: 1st Fri. and 3rd Sat. and Rosh Hashanah & Yom

Kippur.

MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

743-2583 • Independent Bible Church

Sun: 10:30 a.m. at Big Ridge Baptist Church. 4224 Big Ridge

(4.5 miles from NC 107)

Weds: Youth Group 6 p.m.; Bible Study 6:30 p.m.;

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CATHOLIC CHURCH

Rev. Fr. Jason K. Barone - 526-2418

Sat. 4pm 5/24/25-10/25/25; Sun. - 11am

SCALY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Marty Kilby

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 Donald G. Bates • 526-3212

Sun.: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 10:45 a.m.; Worship: 6 p.m.

SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Rev. Richard Salmonson

Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11 a.m.

ST. JUDE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Mass: Sun. 9a (English); Mon. 9:30a (Vatican II in Latin); Tues.

7p (Spanish); Wed., 9:30a (English)

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UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

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Sunday Worship - 11 a.m.

WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers • 828-743-2122

Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from Nov. 29. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.

Nov. 29

• At 1:34 a.m., Suzanna Shellman Dulany, 78, of Savannah, GA, was issued a Criminal Summons Citation after being taken to the hospital for DUI on Horse Cove Road.

Dec. 6

• At 8:45 a.m., Kenneth Mitchell Koch, 63, of Highlands, was arrested for DUI on US 64 west (Franklin Road). He was issued a \$1,000 unsecured bond. His trial date is Feb. 14, 2026.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Nov. 24.

Dec. 2

At 10:42 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Johnwood Road.

At 11:07 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm on Main Street.

At 10:53 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of a gas leak at a location on N. 4th Street.

Dec. 3

At 9:55 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on Buck Creek Road.

At 10:45 a.m., the dept. responded to a call of a possible gas leak at a residence on Kettle Rock Road.

At 12:46 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Skyline Lodge Road.

At 2:47 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Church Street.

At 4:30 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Cullasaja Club Drive. It was cancelled en route.

Dec. 4

At 7:52 a.m., the dept. responded to a call of a possible gas leak at a location on Carolina Way.

At 2:34 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance at a location on Main Street.

At 6:19 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Horse Cove Road. It was cancelled en route.

Dec. 5

At 6:13 a.m., the dept. provided mutual assistance on a structure fire in Satolah, GA.

At 11:49 a.m., the dept. provided public assistance at a residence on Pinecrest Road.

At 3:06 p.m., the dept. provided mutual assistance on a structure fire in Cashiers.

At 3:25 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of a gas spill on Harris Drive.

Dec. 6

At 6:52 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Harris Drive.

At 8:43 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Main Street.

At 1:50 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Shortoff Lane.

Dec. 7

At 6:03 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance at a residence on Walhalla Road.

Dec. 8

At 9:14 a.m., the dept. responded to a call of a possible motor vehicle accident on US 64 east (Cashiers Road) but nothing was found.

At 10:30 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Bowery Road.

At 11:55 a.m., the dept. was first-re-

sponders to a residence on Cheney Lane.

At noon, the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Oak Street.

At 1:05 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Oak Street.

At 5:24 p.m. the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Dendy Orchard Road.

Dec. 9

At 2:51 a.m., the dept. provided mutual assistance on a structure fire in Cashiers.

...SPIRITUALLY continued from page 14

ties. Don't get me started on the portal. A freshman athlete may play for multiple teams prior to graduation, if graduation is still a reason to attend a school. Loyalty is waning big time.

How does living in an increasingly disloyal culture affect our lives? In a word, we "drift." Without anchors we drift. We are pushed about and motivated to drift apart by an offense that could easily be overcome. We drift apart because we fail to slow down to ponder the importance of personal intimacy. We drift apart because we have people in leadership, who have no idea how to live in relationship to others, influence our relationship with others. We drift apart or leave one another

because of the allure of status or money or both. We drift apart because people are increasingly objectified in our culture and objects are easily abandoned or cancelled. We drift apart because we lack the emotional intelligence to truly understand our own personal responsibilities in relationships to others. We drift apart because fewer people possess the humility and vulnerability to acknowledge they are not right all the time. We drift apart because we sometimes fail to understand how important we are to one another. We all need to be seen, heard, and understood.

Too often, many drift apart and go their separate ways because they pull up

• See **SPIRITUALLY** page 17

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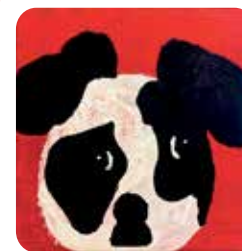
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...SPIRITUALLY from pg 15

anchor when a storm is on the horizon. Loyalty necessitates an anchor. I have enjoyed the euphoria of life on many mountaintops, but I, too, have experienced the anguish of life in significant valleys. I have come to appreciate an anchor in my life that keeps me away from the destructiveness of drift and centers me in the stability of loyalty.

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure (Heb. 6:19). There is a way to live that minimizes drift. When we live anchored in the vitality and enthusiasm of a personal and meaningful relationship with Christ, our hope, we live in His loyalty to us, and we effortlessly extend His loyalty to others. Let Christ lead you before any other. He is accessible, talk to Him. Ask Him today to reveal Himself to you in a way that you know it is Him. He is attentive, and affectionate. He is loyal, faithful, never changing and eternally loving. Christ is our loyalty.



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POOL SCHEDULE

• Lap Swim: Mon.-Fri. 6am-9:45am, and Saturday 10am-11pm - 6 lanes. Water Aerobics: 18 y+ Mon.-Fri. 10-11am with Karen Chambers. Adult Swim: 18y+ Mon.-Thurs. 11am-3:30pm, Friday 11am-1:30pm. Public Swim: Mon. thru Thurs. 3:30-7pm, Saturday 11am-6pm and Sunday 1-6pm

PICKLE BALL

• At the Recreation Dept. every Monday - Friday 10am-1pm indoors for the winter (notice the days and time has changed),

MOUNTAIN FINDINGS

Winter Hours: Friday & Saturday Dec. 19-20

• Open: 10 am - 1 pm. Spruce Street. www.mountainfindings.org

ICE SKATING IN PARK

• Thurs., 3:30-8p; Fri. 3:30-10p; Sat. 1-10p, Sun. 1-5p Hours

will be extending during Thanksgiving and Christmas vacations. \$8 with or without skates.

ALL WEEK

• Scaly Mountain/Highlands/Cashiers Alcoholics Anonymous "Open Meetings" are for anyone who thinks they may have a drinking problem or for anyone interested in the A.A. recovery program. Open meetings are held at Scaly Mountain @ Grace Chapel, 9915 Dillard Rd., Scaly Mountain each Tues at 5:30 pm and Highlands @ the 1st Presbyterian Church, 471 Main St., on Monday at 5:30 p.m. and on Wednesday & Fridays @ 12:00 noon. Open in-person meetings are also held in Cashiers @ the Albert Carlton Cashiers Community Library, 249 Frank Allen Rd. on Sunday at 5pm, on Tuesday @ 7 pm, on Friday at 5 pm and on Saturday at 9 am. For more information please visit our website

www.aawnc80.org or to speak with a member of A.A. 24/7 call our HELP Line 828 349-4357

Mon.Thurs.

• At First Presbyterian Church, ArtSpace is open from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The next exhibit will start in mid-August. For information contact fpchkelley@gmail.com

Mon-Wed-Fri

• Aerobics with Tina Rogers 8-9am at the Rec Park.

• Balance, Stretch & Strengthen Class at the Rec Park 8:30-9:30am. The cost for the class is \$30 a month and is led by Vivian Brewer. Call the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

Mon., Tues., Thurs.

• The Food Pantry behind the Methodist Church on Spring Street is open from 10a-6p.

• Exercise Class with Michelle Lane at the Rec Park at 5:30. A combo class with different types of exercise. 828-526-3556

Second Mondays

• The local chapter of PEO, an off-campus sorority founded in the 1800s that provides grants and loans to women with financial need who want to return to school or further their education meets at 10 a.m. For more info call president Paula McDonald at 706-372-3004

Tuesdays

• Strength Training at the Rec Park 8:15-9:15 am.

• At Wayfarers Chapel, Workshop for Writers – from 5-6:30 PM

• ESL classes at The Literacy & Learning Center, 6-7 p.m. 675 S 4th St. Highlands.

2nd Tuesdays

• Highlands Writers Group meets on alternate Tuesday afternoons at 3pm. Writers still uncomfortable with in-person gatherings may participate via Zoom meetings For more info contact Bud Katz at either 828-526-3190 or at budandlynn@me.com

2nd Wednesdays

• Hudson Library, in partnership with VAYA Health, is hosting an educational series on adult mental health topics, at 11 AM.. To register, stop by the library or call 828-526-3031.

Wednesdays

• Digital Navigators will be at the Hudson Library from 1-3 PM, digital navigators will host a Tech Time drop-in time at Hudson Library with the goal to assist attendees with basic smartphone, laptop, iPad and tablet skills. Tech Time sessions offer one-on-one help on any personal digital device. Tech Time is a chance for residents of all ages to bring their devices and ask any questions. Learn how to set up an email account, mute your cell phone, back up and store files. Those are just a few of the skills we teach patrons. For more information, call the Library at 828-526-3031. This program is free and open to the public.

Thursdays

• Kickboxing 8:15-9:15a. at the Rec Park. No martial arts background necessary Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more info.

• At First Presbyterian Church a free concert "Music for Prayer" at noon. These casual concerts are almost entirely improvised and last 30-45 minutes. This offering is called Music For Prayer.

• At Hudson Library, special children's events will be on tap on Thursday afternoons at 3:30 Kids Zone programs.

3rd Friday thru April

• Senior lunches at the Rec Park in the meeting room at noon.

Fridays

• At Hudson Library, Friday afternoons at 2 PM, there's a variety of children's programs including board games, STEM programs, and crafts.

3rd Saturdays

• The American Legion Post 370 meets at the First Methodist Church at 315 Main St. in their community room/909 chapel. We serve breakfast at 9a and hold our monthly meeting at 10a. We invite ALL veterans to attend. Email ncpost370@gmail.com or just join us at 9am.

Sundays

• At Wayfarers Chapel, Sunday Service: 10a Sunday Mornings. Stick around for visitation and coffee hour immediately after service. (Coffee hour is replaced by potluck dinner the 1st Sunday of each month).

Thru Dec. 27

• At The Bascom, Holiday Market. Handcrafted gifts and holiday-themed workshops.

Dec. 5-21

• At PAC, Mountain Theatre Company presents "Home for the Holidays." For tickets go to boxoffice@mountaintheatre.com. 828.526.2695

Fri.-Sun., Dec. 12-Dec.

14 • At Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School, Lux Nativitas" an immersive Christmas experience blends the beauty of dance, the wonder of circus arts, and the power of live music to share the story of the Nativity in a fresh and meaningful way. Inspired by the Gospel of Luke. Buy tickets at rabungap.org/tickets.

Sat., Dec. 13

• Your favorite vendors from the Saturday Farmer's Market (plus a few extras) will be warm and cozy indoors at the Highlands Rec Center with fresh produce, locally made bakery treats, specialty foods, handcrafted gifts, unique products, artful jewelry, Haitian metal art, and a FREE cup of Haitian Coffee we all know and love. 10a to 3p. Come shop for one-of-a-kind gifts and other things you need for the holidays.

• Wreaths Across America will be at Highlands Cemetery to remember and honor our veterans through the laying of Remembrance Wreaths on the graves of the country's fallen heroes and the act of saying the name of each and every veteran aloud. The ceremony will take place at the Highlands Community Bldg. 869 N. 4th Street at noon with wreath placement immediately following the ceremony. Shuttles will take volunteers to and from the cemetery to lay veteran wreaths.

Sun., Dec. 14

• Lighting of the Menorah. to honor the beginning of Hanukkah, a celebration of light and unity that marks this meaningful season. highlandschamber.org or call 828-526-2112.

Tues., Dec. 16

• HCP presents FREE Holiday show at PAC's Martin Lipscomb Performing Arts Center on Chestnut Street at 7 p.m.

'Tis the Season!



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Map labels include: Civic Center Rec Park, Highlands-Cashiers Players & HC Chamber Music, Historical Village, Fire Station, Visitor Center, Newspaper, Police Station, Rest Rooms, Bryson's Food Store, Highlands Plaza, Hudson Library, and various streets like Main St, Oak St, Spring St, Church St, and Highway 28.

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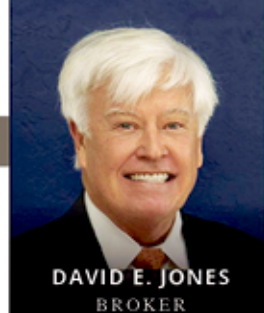
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