Volume 22, Number 51

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Thurs., Dec. 18, 2025

# Threat deemed a hoax; HPD stays vigilant

### By Kim Lewicki

For the second time in a little over a year, the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation at 5th and Main streets in Highlands has been the subject of a

swatting incident.

Swatting is a malicious act that can involve placing false emergency calls to emergency responders, often reporting a false, severe, ongoing crisis at a specific location.

"These false reports not only endanger the lives of firstresponders and the public but also divert critical resources,"

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# **Newly elected officials are sworn into office**



At Thursday's Dec. I I Town Board meeting, Macon County Clerk of Superior Court Shawna Lamb swore in incumbents Mayor Pat Taylor, Commissioners Amy Patterson and Eric Pierson as well as Jim Tate, who won



the election to finish out the remaining two years on Commissioner Brian Stiehler's vacated seat.

Photos by Kim Lewicki

# 'Room tax' rate hike and more suggested at Workshop

### By Kim Lewicki

For years, as tourism has increased in Macon County and Highlands, Mayor Pat Taylor has lobbied to update or change

the occupancy tax enabling legislation under which the Highlands Chamber of Commerce/ Visit Highlands operates.

Currently, under 1985 leg-

islation, 100% of the 3% occupancy tax collected in Highlands goes to the Chamber to be used to promote tourism and support Visit Highlands expenses. Proceeds hover around \$1.5 million.

In 1997, NC legislation was adopted to allow counties and municipalities to use 2/3 of the

• See ROOM TAX page 7

# Zoning Board gets ready for court battle

### By Kim Lewicki

Preparing for a likely Superior Court battle, at its December meeting, the Zoning Board of Adjustment met to go over the verbiage of the written ruling of the Administrative Appeal Decision that summarized what the board voted on at its November meeting.

At the November meeting, the board heard an appeal of Planning and Development Director Michael Mathis's decision regarding the Willoughby's Family Farms LLC's short-term rental (STR) on Worley Road from neighbors Ronnie and Cheryl Wood also of Worley Road.

The vote was 3 to 2 to overturn Mathis's decision. Chairman Margot Teed, and board

· See ZONING page 9



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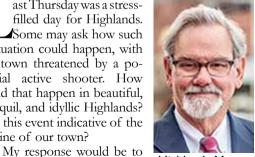
# PLATEAU'S POSIT

## Thursday's incident is sign of the times

ast Thursday was a stressfilled day for Highlands. Some may ask how such a situation could happen, with the town threatened by a potential active shooter. How could that happen in beautiful. tranquil, and idvllic Highlands? Was this event indicative of the decline of our town?

say, don't be so fast to make such a drastic pronouncement; this kind of event in the Hyper -information Age, along with the unlimited resources at the hands of mean, evil, and grievance-driven madmen, can happen anywhere in the world. There is no sanctuary or escape from such criminal

actions, not even in Highlands. Our police and sheriff departments are always vigilant against such potential threats, as seen in their response on Thursday. The caller threatened to shoot up and use violence against a local church, a place of worship that also had a daycare center in operation at the time.



Patrick Taylor

# Highlands Mayor

Our policemen and sheriff deputies responded at once. I am sure some people may have been shocked and surprised to see our police armed with AR-15 assault weapons protecting the church and a perimeter around the east section of the business district. They were taking no chances and responded as if this event might suddenly escalate into an active shooter situation. Thank God it did not.

About a decade ago, the town board quietly approved including funds in the town budget to equip the police with AR-15s and tactical gear. In addition, the police developed an ongoing training program on how to use these weapons in tactical situations, whether at a school, daycare center, church, public building, or anywhere else in town. That training was put to the test at once when the shooting threat occurred Thursday morning, and that training proved its worth in the sterling reaction by our police department.

Also, the 9-1-1 dispatcher did his job by trying to engage the caller making the threat and keep them on the line as long as possible. That period gave police time to get into position and begin efforts to ping the caller's source and location. After long hours of investigation, the sheriff's department and the NC State Bureau of Investigation (NCSBI) determined that the caller was using very advanced technology that has made tracing the call difficult and continues to do so. Federal authorities have provided resources and aid in the ongoing call-tracing investigation.

As mayor, I want to thank everyone who responded and provided support to address this emergency. Our police chief and her force stepped forward and followed their training and an emergency response plan, as did the Macon County Sheriff's Department. Both agencies functioned as a unified team. We all appreciate the support for NCSBI, as well as the bomb unit that came from Asheville.

I also want to thank our town employees. Our fire chief and firefighters immediately placed trucks at key intersections to

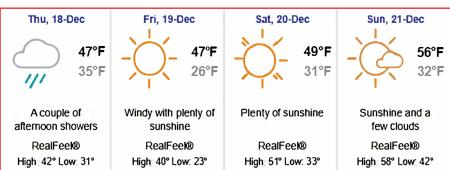
See MAYOR page 4



Photo by Kim Lewicki he said.

At the December Town Board meeting, Mayor Pat Taylor presented outgoing Commissioner John Dotson with a plaque commemorating his 18 years of service as a commissioner to the Town of Highlands, Dotson is resigning from his seat effective Dec. 31, 2025. The Town Board has 60 days to appoint his replacement for the remaining two years of his term Dotson thanked the citizens of Highlands for their support over the years. "It's been the highlight of my life to be able to serve the Town of Highlands,"

# Vfath<u>er•</u>



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Publisher/Editor: Kim Lewicki Reporters: Kristin Fox Digital Media/Circulation - Jim Lewicki Locally owned and operated by Kim & Jim Lewicki Adobe PDF version at www.HighlandsInfo.com 265 Oak St. PO Box 2703 Highlands, N.C 28741 Copyrighted - All Rights Reserved. 5,000 copies printed weekly. Independently verified by: Gannett Printing Knoxville TN Letter Policy:

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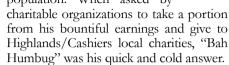
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### Beware the real estate firm of **Greed and Parley**

benezer Greed was a d local real estate firm I founder. His focus was business. Win it, own it, and crush everyone. It had been that way for years. Ebenezer was all about spouting to the world how many closings he had made, his dollar volume of sales, and his rank amongst peers. When asked about aiding or helping his fellow REAL-TORS, he suggested that they should give up their license and decrease the local surplus population. When asked by



Ebenezer was extremely successful in business. His assets, accumulated over decades, were monumental: stored in a complex portfolio of financial and real estate holdings. Ebenezer was not remotely interested in sharing them and thus had achieved no meaningful success in life. He had not been caring. He had not been neighborly. He had not been loving. And anyone who knew him knew it to be true. It was only Ebenezer who was blind to his own condition.

One night during the Advent season, Ebenezer pondered his life. He recognized his many blessings and how he



John Sheehan, Broker Mountain Life **Properties** 828-239-8814

could change the lives of the less fortunate of so many in Highlands/Cashiers. He awakened to the possibility of advancing the conditions of local culture, education, societal-aid, and institutions of worship. A tidal wave of giving poured forth from Ebenezer, and not just for a temporary period, but the remainder of his life. He was changed. A man who became a leader within Highlands and Cashiers, replacing a lifestyle of ME with a lifestyle embracing all.

God bless Ebenezer. Bless anyone who recognizes, they have a duty to improve the condition of mankind if they have the means. Bless them when they take the great step to act. For those of us in senior years, the thunderous bell in the proverbial church tower has only so many swings left. Its low and deep reverberating ring is shaking both firmament and body to awaken our souls within. Let the vibration reach your heart. It is not

• John Sheehan is a Broker at Mountain Life Properties serving the luxury real estate sales market. The Mountain Life Properties team welcomes all to stop by their log cabin office at 134 Maple Street, visit our website MountainLife-RE.com. or reach us at 828-239-8814.

### ...MAYOR continued from page 2

help form a closed perimeter around the church. I also want to thank the volunteer firefighters who immediately came to the scene to provide assistance, along with our sanitation workers, who used their trucks to block key intersections. I am also grateful to our school administration, the teachers, and the staff at the local daycare centers for implementing their lockdown procedures to protect our children. I appreciate the many volunteers who helped evacuate the children from several daycare centers to the fire station, where parents could pick them up.

The Chamber of Commerce played a key role in disseminating information to local businesses.

In an emergency like this, it was chal-

lenging for me and the town staff to provide updates and accurate information to the public. We were inundated with a constant stream of news media inquiries and requests. Such an emergency can be very fluid and multifaceted. In the coming days, our town staff and police department will review how we responded to the situation and determine whether there are additional procedures we can implement to enhance our emergency response plans in the future.

Finally, I want to thank the businesses and residents who cooperated with and supported our first responders. It was truly a community effort that makes this still a wonderful place to live and work.

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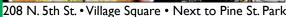
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# Did you know our representatives get a 72% premium subsidy for Obamacare without regard to income?

Dear Editor,

Many of the politicians in Washington D.C. live in a fantasy land when it comes to health insurance and the actual delivery of healthcare. The bottom line is that most of the senators and representatives who allegedly represent us do not even understand how the health insurance and healthcare industry work. I have stated this before, and I stand by it, the only hope we have is to force our representatives to be in the same insurance situation that 30 million of us find ourselves.

Our representatives are required to participate in Obamacare but they also receive a 72% premium subsidy without regard to income, and with their base income, most would not qualify for an Obamacare subsidy.

Additionally, this talk about Health Savings Accounts (HSA) being the answer is simply hogwash. An HSA is great, but if your monthly premium is \$2,500 per month and your deductible is \$15,000 (actual quote from GA ACA website for family of four earning \$130,000), how much can a broke nation actually put into your HSA to make healthcare even close to affordable. The only real solution would require everyone who receives healthcare benefits, to actually pay for those benefits. Yes, this would be a mandate and the most likely solution is Medicare for all.

Medicare is not free, which is just one of the misleading facts for those who are not actually on Medicare, but it is affordable compared to private insurance. A Medicare for all system would allow the younger population (typically healthier) to participate, which would give them coverage and also keep the costs down for the older population (typically less healthier). Private insurance would continue to play a role in the Medicare for all systems, much like it does now for those 65 and older who participate in Medicare and use some type of private insurance supplement.

Comprehensive change is needed to our health insurance system, and spending more money on subsidies and HSAs is not the answer. As a nation with some of the greatest innovations in healthcare, we need to make sure that all of the population can enjoy those innovations.

Jerry Moore Highlands & Dillard

### Grateful to live in a town where care can still be felt

Dear Editor:

I want to express my sincere gratitude to the Highlands Police Department, Macon County Dispatch, the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation, the Macon County Sheriff's Office, and the many town employees and first responders who acted with professionalism, care, and steadiness during this past week's incident. Their work helped bring safety and calm to a day that was frightening for many.

Although the reported threat was directed toward the church, its effects were felt far beyond our doors. Streets were closed, schools and childcare centers were on lockdown, and an entire town quite understandably entered a posture of fear and vigilance. What occurred disrupted daily life and unsettled people.

Swatting incidents are not victimless crimes. They cause real harm and terror. They frighten children and

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families, unsettle neighborhoods, place first responders in unnecessary danger, and divert resources that communities rely upon. They leave behind a residue of anxiety long after the immediate crisis has passed. In a small town, that harm spreads quickly and touches many.

That such acts occur at all is a sobering reminder of the darkness that marks so much of the of the world we inhabit. Naming that sadness matters. We should not pretend that events like these leave us unchanged.

If there is hope to be found in moments like this, it is not reassurance, and it is not denial. It is the harder conviction that fear, falsehood, and violence are not what finally hold the world together. Communities endure when people continue, often quietly and imperfectly, to live as though truth is something we receive rather than invent; as though our neighbors are more than the worst words spoken about them; and as though care for one another connects us to something more lasting than panic. That kind of faithfulness rarely draws attention to itself, but it is how meaning is carried when trust has been shaken.

I am grateful to live in a town where that kind of care can still be felt.

The Rev. Bentley Manning Rector, Church of the Incarnation

### **Just who does Trump worship?**

Dear Editor,

Here is a Great Mystery. How did it come to pass that a corrupt real estate mogul who is also a convicted criminal, a sexual predator, and a compulsive liar now sits in the highest seat of honor in American government?

Reason and ration doesn't explain it, so we could try a different approach.

"And the devil said unto him All this power shall I give unto thee (the kingdoms of the world) and the glory of them, for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine." -- Luke 4:6-7

On the front page of the New York Times, 11/02/25, Trump is quoted as saying "I don't think there's anything that's going to get me into heaven. I'm not maybe heaven bound."

So did Trump cut a deal? If so, how does he then keep his end of the bargain -- to worship as required?

He does it so by bowing down with praise and admiration for all the other tyrants and dictators around the world -- Putin, Kim Jong Un, Duterte, and Victor Orban to name a few.

He does so by pardoning violent criminals while persecuting those who stand up for basic goodness.

But maybe the highest form of worship is to imi-

tate your deity. The word "devil" comes from the Greek word "diabolos," meaning slanderer, or accuser. And hurling accusations is Trump's modus operandi. Trump is The Accuser personified.

Trump more than fulfills his part of the deal, and the devil has kept his bargain.

Frank Stockton Highlands

# ...ROOM TAX continued from page 1

occupancy tax to promote tourism and 1/3 to help pay for "tourist related expenditures," instead of only promoting tourism and chambers.

The Town of Franklin is already operating under this premise and has an additional occupancy tax rate of 3% with 2/3 of it used to promote tourism and 1/3 to promote tourist-related expenses. Therefore, occupancy tax for Franklin lodging facilities is currently 6%.

Mayor Taylor suggested raising the occupancy rate and operating under the 1997 legislation. He said this would enable the town to use some tax proceeds

• See ROOM TAX page 11



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### ...THREAT continued from page 1

said Highlands Police Chief Andrea Holland.

At 10:28 a.m., on Wed., Aug. 21, 2024, Highlands Police responded to a call for service regarding the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation. A call had gone to the crisis hot-line and then 9-1-1 claiming a possible active shooter at the church who had already shot some people.

After responding, officers found out it was a hoax.

"At approximately 10:30 a.m., a call from a crisis hot-line in New York came through Macon County dispatch reporting that a male called and said he was at the church and he had shot everyone and was holding a child hostage," said Chief Holland.

Of course, the police took the call seriously and responded appropriately, descending on the church, entering the building, and evacuating the children and employees before the call was determined to be a hoax.

In comparison, the Thurs., Dec. 11, 2025 incident was notably escalated requiring numerous law enforcement agencies – Highlands Police, the Macon County Sheriff's Dept., emergency services, a bomb squad out of Asheville and the NC State Bureau of Investigation.

Last Thursday, at approximately 10:40 a.m., a 9-1-1 call came into Macon County Dispatch threatening to shoot an employee at the Episcopal Church and to shoot any police officer who attempted to stop him.

Due to the threats to employees of the church, patrolling police officers and the claim that two incendiary devices were planted outside the church, businesses in the immediate vicinity were locked down with access points at Main and Fifth, Fifth and Pine, and Oak Street at Fourth and Fifth street blocked off to pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

Chief Holland said once sufficient law enforcement resources were in place, officers and deputies began safely escorting and evacuating the childcare facility.

Children in the church's childcare center, as well as the children in the other two childcare centers in town, were evacuated to the Highlands Fire & Rescue Department where they were united with their parents.

Meanwhile, law enforcement officers with assault rifles patrolled the area and as the day progressed the entire business district was locked down.

By around 5pm, the joint investiga-



tion determined the threat was a swatting incident, but Chief Holland said this week her department continues to patrol the area.

"While the investigation has deemed that this call was a false report, Highlands Police Department will remain vigilant in patrolling the downtown area, especially around the Episcopal Church and our local childcare centers and Highlands School," she said. "We take incidents like this call very seriously and the investigation into the origin of the call remains ongoing."

It's unclear why the Episcopal Church has been the focus of the swatting incidents but in case it has something to do with a webcam view from the Silver Creek Real Estate office across the street from the church, owner of Silver Creek Jochen Lucke took the webcam down.

"We took it down and once the investigation is complete, we will consider putting it back up but repositioning the view," he said. "Unfortunately, there are people in this world with evil intentions and we will do whatever we can to keep this from happening again."

Chief Holland said the safety of the community is the department's top prior-

"We sincerely appreciate your patience, cooperation, and support as we work through this incident," she said.

Anyone with information is encouraged to contact the Highlands Police Department at 828-526-9431.

### ...ZONING continued from page 1

members Mike King and Ricky Siegel voted to overturn Mathis's decision. Board members Bill Futral and Robert Wood voted not to overturn it.

The Woods said the property wasn't a legitimate STR because it wasn't rented consistently since Sept. 2022 when the town amended its ordinance to disallow new STRs in zones R1 and R2 after Sept. 15, 2022, but to allow existing STRs prior to that date.

Mathis ruled the Willoughby's home a legitimate STR based on an affidavit from the previous owner of the property, Paula Dodson; a Rental Management Agreement between Dodson and Landmark Real Estate Sales & Vacation Rentals; an email from Mandi Cantrell, with Landmark, emails between the current owner, Mitchell Willoughby, and Dodson and an email from VRBO Support.

Based on the documentation, Mathis determined the property was being used as an STR as of September 15, 2022, and that the property had not discontinued its use.

The Woods, who are part-time residents, said the property lapsed being rented for 20 months after Sept. 2022, thereby making it an illegal STR. To maintain standing, an STR must be rented at least once within a 12-month period.

Even though Mathis explained that the written ruling of the board's decision, which was being reviewed that night, wasn't meant to be a verbatim minutes account of the November meeting, board member Mike King, who had the most to say at the meeting, kept returning to the meeting and even brought up new issues including questioning the legitimacy of Dobson's signature on her affidavit, the lack of traditional documentation verifying Willoughby's private STR rentals for compensation and the intention of the town's STR ordinance versus the words in the ordinance.

With its 3-2 vote, the board said Mathis's interpretation of an active rental was wrong – marketing of a property but not renting it didn't count.

Mathis said the VRBO listing and compensation for private rentals verified Willoughby's STR was active and open for business whether it rented or not.

King, Teed and Siegel said a VRBO listing wasn't enough and the fact that

Willoughby didn't supply documentation of the compensation he received meant it wasn't a legitimate STR.

"Michael said it was an active rental if it was open for business whether or not it was rented," said King. "He said if a restaurant was open for business but didn't serve any meals it was still an active business. I feel that wasn't the intent of the town's ordinance."

The board asked Zoning Board attorney Evan Lee to add a few things to the document: the town's definition of an STR, and added to the Conclusion of Law segment, that a mere "listing" doesn't deem a property a STR – that it had to be rented for compensation.

According to Highlands' Unified Development Ordinance, a STR is defined as renting a residential unit for compensation for less than 30 consecutive days.

Member Futral said the IRS considers the items Willoughby mentioned to be fair compensation – use of the house as favors to business associates and friends – but during the November hearing, he did ask, "Knowing you were coming here, don't you think you should have brought proof of that compensation?"

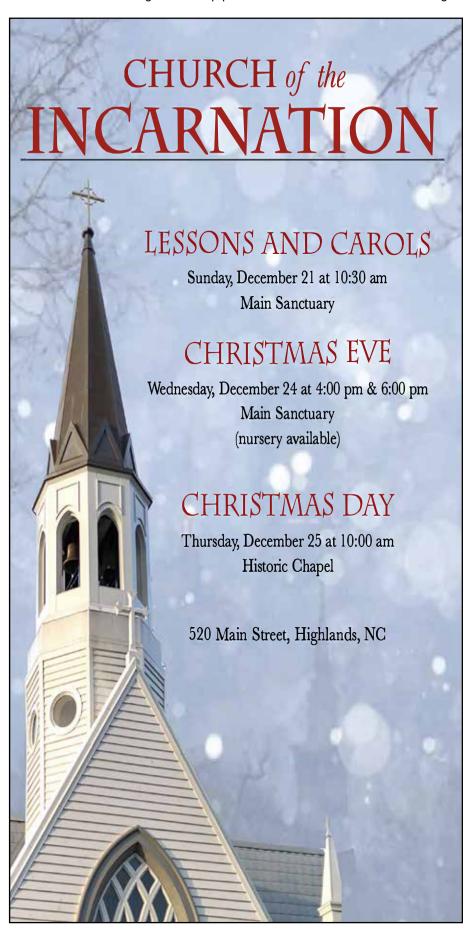
That proof being emails, texts and telephone conversations; Willoughby said he could supply that.

At Wednesday's meeting Futral also said that the IRS considers compensation to be everything of value that an individual receives in payment for personal services, whether in the form of money, property, or services.

Teed wrapped up the discussion saying the document needed to reflect what the board decided and why because Willoughby indicated he would be going to court.

"We need this to reflect the fact that Willoughby didn't provide compensation documentation to prove he had been renting it privately over the 20 months in question, and explain our interpretation of the ordinance as intended by the Town Board," said Teed. "Our job is to interpret what the board's intention was when they passed this ordinance to the best of our ability."

Once that verbiage is added to the Administrative Appeal document, Chairman Teed will sign it and the Willoughby's have 30 days to appeal the Zoning Board's decision in Superior Court.





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# BITUARIES •

### Joe Alister Brady

Joe Alister Brady Jr. was born in Jackson, MS to Joe Alister Brady and Frances Johnson Brady, April 17, 1945. He died Nov. 24, 2025. He was a loval friend who adored his family and had a quick wit and an infectious sense of humor.

His family and friends will remember Al as having a soft soul and a generous spirit. Al is

a graduate of Murrah High School and the University of Mississippi where he earned a law degree, and Georgia State, where he received a master's in counseling.

Al is survived by his devoted and loving husband of 48 years Michael Lanzilotta; their relationship was a testament to commitment and filled with love and laughter and unwavering support; his sister Joan and brother-in-law H.C. "Buster" Bailey; his cherished niece, Leigh Bailey and husband Jamie Redmond, his nephew Covt Bailey and his wife Leah; his great-nephew Hugh Bailey and great-niece Sara Bailey. Also surviving is another great niece, Al's namesake Alister "Ali" Rothrock and her husband and daughters, Tom, Marleigh and Bailey.

In 1994, Al and Michael purchased their second home in Highlands, NC and made it their full-time residence in 2013. Al loved Highlands and developed wonderful friendships with a group affectionately called his "Highlands Family." Al was deeply involved with community, serving as Chairman of the Board of the Counseling Center. Al was a founding member of Indivisible of Highlands and held the roles of former Democratic Precinct Chair and Co-Chair. Al was passionate about fighting for justice and equality.

His community work included contributions to the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation, where he was a choir member and former Vestry

member, and played a pivotal role in the church's mission to Haiti, alongside Jane Chalker.

Beyond his civic and church endeavors, Al's love extended to his cherished dachshunds, Luigi and Travis, who were an important part of his life.

A celebration of Al's life will be held on December 20 at the Church of the Incarnation in Highlands, NC. Friends and family are invited to visit with his loved ones starting at 11 a.m. in the Parish Hall, followed by a funeral service at 12 p.m. in the Nave, accompanied by his beloved choir. A reception will follow immediately afterward in the Parish Hall.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Al's honor to Ansanm (which means "Together"), the Haiti Mission at 520 Main Street, Highlands, NC 28741, or online at finance@incarnation.org, or alternatively to the Highlands Food Pantry at 348 S. 5th Street, Highlands, NC 28741, or online at HighlandsFriendshipCenter.org.

### **Mary Jeannette Chidsey Trott**

Mary Jeannette Chidsey Trott, age 92, of Highlands, North Carolina, passed away on December 11, 2025.

Jean was a devoted and loving mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother whose life was defined by resilience, creativity, and deep love for her family. She had a lifelong affection for animals and found great joy in artistic pursuits, particularly in creating beauti-

ful porcelain dolls and imaginative stump houses that reflected her creativity and

At the age of 34, Jean experienced the tragic loss of her first husband, James Berrien Chidsey, Jr. Faced with profound hardship, she courageously raised their four young children on her own, demonstrating remarkable strength, persever-



ance, and devotion. Her familv remained the center of her life, and she took great pride in nurturing generations with love, wisdom, and kindness.

Jean was preceded in death by her husband, James Berrien Chidsey, Jr., her son, James Berrien Chidsey III and husband Allen L. "Buck" Trott.

She is survived by her children: Sallie Chidsey Taylor (Patrick); Jeannette Covington

Chidsey; and Charles Truman Chidsey (Gretchen), and her sister, Barbara Hine Briley of Rome, Ga. She also leaves behind 11 grandchildren and 15 greatgrandchildren, all of whom were a constant source of joy and pride in her life.

In lieu of flowers, hug the people you love while you can.

# • HS Sports Recap

### Week of triumphs and trials for Highlands athletics

The Highlands Highlanders and Lady Highlanders athletic programs navigated a demanding schedule last week, facing tough conference rivals in basketball and opening the season with a strong showing in the pool.

The week, spanning December 9th through the 15th, was highlighted by a significant winning sweep against Rosman and a spectacular individual performance on the road against Swain.

### Hardwood Battles: Cherokee & Conference Clashes

The week kicked off on Tuesday, December 9th, with a challenging home stand against Cherokee.

- The JV Boys struggled, falling 27-54. Jonathan Carpenter led the scoring effort for the IV squad with  $1\bar{2}$  points.
- The Varsity Girls faced a formidable opponent in the two-time defending state champions, resulting in a 59-15 loss. Taylor Hays put up 7

points for the Lady Highlanders.

• The Varsity Boys also took a tough loss, 24-75, with Isaiah Vilardo leading the team's scoring with 11 points.

### Sweep at Rosman and Thriller vs. Swain

The Highlanders found their stride on Thursday, December 11th, traveling to Rosman and achieving a decisive threegame sweep:

- IV Boys secured a convincing win, 48-25, powered by a 20-point effort from Jonathan Carpenter.
- · Varsity Girls dominated their game, winning 45-12, led by Jordyn Borino with 20 points. Hunter Conner provided an outstanding defensive performance with 7 blocks, 6 steals, and 4 rebounds.
- · Varsity Boys pulled out a close victory, 54-45. Isaiah Vilardo matched his teammate with 20 points.

The high school teams traveled to Towns County, GA, on Friday, December 12th, resulting in a trio of heartbreak-

- The IV Boys lost a tough one, 33-34, when a potential gamewinning shot just after the final horn was disallowed
- The Varsity Girls dropped a low-scoring defensive battle, 19-21, Highlands School lands High School due to a difficult shoot- **Athletic Director** ing night. Jordyn Borino led with 12 points and Hunter Conner grabbed 14 rebounds.
- The Varsity Boys fought hard but fell to a 59-71 loss, with Javven Alverado scoring 16 and Bryan Juarquin adding 13.

The week of basketball concluded on Monday, December 15th, at Swain:

- The JV Boys lost 35-54.
- The Varsity Girls secured a hard-fought win, 52-44, pulling away in the second half after being down 17-18 at the break. Jordyn Borino delivered a phenomenal, career-high performance, pouring in 38 points to lift the



**Brett Lamb** 

Lady Highlanders to victory.

• The Varsity Boys were outsized and plagued by early foul trouble, resulting in a 42-79 loss.

### Swim Team Starts Strong

The Highswim team officially opened their season

on Wednesday, December 10th, at the Asheville School. The Highlanders set several personal records and posted strong individual scores:

- · Aniah McKim led the team with 19 points.
- Ivan Shchelgachov contributed 14 points.
  - · Trinity rounded out the

top scorers with 7 points.

 Middle School Basketball: Win and Loss

The Middle School basketball teams traveled to Tallulah Falls on Thursday, December 11th. The Girls team lost 13-25. while the Boys secured a solid road win, 37-24.

### Looking Ahead: This Week's Schedule

High school basketball teams are back in action Tuesday at home against Andrews and Friday on the road at Robbinsville. The swim team travels to Murphy on Wednesday. Middle school basketball will resume play after the New Year, with their next game scheduled for January 8th at Towns Coun-

### ...ROOM TAX continued from page 7

for things like extending parking from 1st to 3rd streets; tree and landscape maintenance downtown and at KH Founders Park, maintenance for the new playground; public bathroom maintenance as well as the construction of new public bathrooms; Greenway development; ice skating rink maintenance and operation, even sidewalk construction and maintenance.

According to the legislation, tourism-related expenditures can include a broad range of municipal services due to the impact of tourism on local infrastructure, such as fire protection, solid waste treatment, and the construction and maintenance of performing arts and convention centers.

Prior to the Dec. 11 Town

Board meeting, commissioners and members of the public had a somewhat contentious discussion during the work-session that started at 5pm.

Mayor Taylor's suggestion revolved around increasing the room tax, like many of the 90 counties have done, from 3% to up to a max of 6%.

Richard Delany, president and managing director of the Old Edwards Hospitality Group voiced immediate concern.

"With all the issues we have had with huge inflation, tariffs and massive labor increases which have led to huge operating expense increases for us, the last thing we need is for an additional room rate increase," he said. "When guests check out of a hotel, they are not looking at the itemized room rate and then

the sales tax and then the occupancy tax and the resort taxes as separate charges they look at one number – the bottom line. And as the bottom line continues to increase they stop booking."

He said any increases to room rates will negatively impact all the hotels in Macon County, STRs and every single business that those hotels and STRs sup-

"Furthermore, siphoning off current occupancy tax revenues to use for other projects and items not related to tourism, visitors and town businesses is a slippery slope and currently not legal," he said. "We will fight this with everything we have at the town level, the county level and the state level no matter what it costs us."

• See ROOM TAX page 15

# THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD



Saturday, December 20 5:30 pm Winter Fire Concert

A Cinematic Holiday Concert with Glenn Basham & Michael Yannette

Christmas Eve - December 24 3:30 pm Christmas Eve Children's Pageant 5:30 pm Lessons & Carols

Christmas Day - December 25 12:00 pm Christmas Day Holy Eucharist

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# LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF THE HOLY FAMILY

Christmas Eve Service

3:00 pm 2152 DILLARD RD, HIGHLANDS

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Sunday, December 21
11am - Sunday Celebration

Monday, December 22 12pm - Service of Light

Wednesday, December 24 2:30pm - Piano Prelude

3pm - Christmas Eve Service

4:30pm - Harp Prelude

5pm - Christmas Eve Service

All are welcome - Please join us!



# Business/Organization News



# Seeking help: Highlands Biological Station's school outreach program to discontinue after 22 Years

Highlands Biological Station's STEM Outreach Program serves preK-12 schools throughout the rural mountain counties of western North Carolina and offers more than 50 different place-based science programs that integrate multiple subject areas and align with NC science Essential Standards. In 2021, HBS school Outreach was awarded the "Exceptional Environmental Education Program" by EENC.

"Our science programming supplements existing lessons and curricula by bringing additional resources to classrooms and outdoor learning laboratories for a diversity of students, including demographics that might otherwise have limited opportunity for direct interaction with the natural world," said Patrick Brannon, HBS Outreach Education Specialist. "For example, a teacher recently remarked that one of her special-needs students is usually nonverbal, except for when 'Mr. Patrick' visits with his science lessons."

Informal science education, such as those offered through museums and nature centers,

extends student learning beyond the classroom through activities that reinforce STEM concepts, and can raise student interest, confidence, academic achievement, and desire for science careers. By building longstanding relationships with teachers, schools throughout the mountain region have come to depend on HBS Outreach as a regular part of their annual science curriculum. Now, its Outreach Program has even become multigenerational.

"Recently, a new teacher at Highlands School commented that she was excited to have me visit her classroom, because she enjoyed my presentations back when she was a first-grade student there," mused Brannon.

Highlands Biological Station averages two Outreach programs every day, most often at different schools. "Local teachers usually schedule programs months in advance, as my calendar fills almost immediately due to high demand," Brannon said.

Over the past 22 years, HBS Outreach has delivered over 4,500 STEM Programs to 159,000 preK-12 students across the region. In 2025 alone, Brannon has presented more than 350 programs to nearly 16,500 children, including 65 different schools and other community organizations throughout 11 different WNC counties (Macon, Jackson, Swain, Graham, Clay, Cherokee, Haywood, Buncombe, Henderson, Transylvania, Polk) and the Qualla Boundary.

"Because most are remote, economically disadvantaged Title I schools with limited budgets, science programs are presented in the classroom or at nearby outdoor recreational areas at minimal or no charge. This permits schools to take advantage of our educational resources without a cost or travel burden, while also allowing HBS to serve a greater number and wider range of students and teachers," stated Brannon.

Despite being a part of WCU, the HBS school Outreach Program currently receives no direct financial support from the University. It also receives no monetary as-

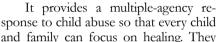
· See HBS page 13

### • Biz/Org News •

### Rotarians learn about KIDS Place

At a recent MountainTop Rotary meeting, Alisa Ashe the director of KIDS Place spoke.

KIDS Place is Macon County's only nonprofit organization that coordinates the efforts of child protection services. interviewing, law enforcement, child prosecutors. advocates, and medical and mental health experts, all under one roof.





have served thousands of children since 1991, averaging 120 new referrals each year.

# The Laurel Garden Club opens grant cycle for 2026

Laurel Garden Club of Highlands is now accepting applications from community organizations for 2026 grants. To further the purposes of Laurel Garden Club, grants are awarded to protect and conserve our natural resources and to enhance the beauty of our town and its native mountain landscapes. In recent years grants have been awarded to environmental preservation organizations including Highlands Biological Foundation, Coalition for Non-native Invasive Plant Management (CNIPM), Highlands- Cashiers Land Trust, and The Mountain. To promote community beautification through landscaping with native plants, grants have been awarded to local non-profit organizations including The Bascom, Highlands Historical Society, Hudson Library, Highlands Performing Arts Center, and Peggy Crosby Center.

Laurel Garden Club is a non-profit educational organization. In keeping with its purposes, the Club periodically engages in fundraising activities such as cookbook sales, kitchen & home tours, luncheons and other ticketed events, the proceeds of which are donated as grants to recipient organizations. Since 2002, Laurel Garden Club has given a total of more than

\$234,645 through grants to community organizations.

The deadline for grant applications is January 31, 2026. To apply, visit www. laurelgardenclubhighlands.com and use the search bar to download Guidelines for Grants and the Laurel Garden Club Grant Request.

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### ...HBS continued from page 12

sistance from the Highlands Biological Foundation. Consequently, HBS Outreach is forced to rely entirely on grants and other external funding sources for its sustainability.

"Sadly, our longstanding and celebrated HBS school Outreach Program will likely be discontinued at the end of February, because our primary grant award (the NC Science Museums Grant Program) was reduced by 50%," Brannon said. Maybe some compassionate, philanthropic person will read this and come to our aid. In the meantime, we strive to secure financial support in other ways, with the hope of ensuring continuity for the thousands of school children of western North Carolina who benefit from this important community service every year. "

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### PIRITI IAI I Y SPEAKING



### Pay attention to the silent arrival of the **Savior**

Rev. Dr. Marcus B. Robertson is Interim Priest in Charge of Christ Anglican Church, Cashiers.

n my younger years I was an acolyte (read, "altar boy") at my parish in Alabama. The bishop was Lecoming for his annual visitation in early June, and I was to serve at the altar. I was only 12 years old, and serving at the altar when the bishop came was a true honor. It was also a very intimidating affair.

My priest gave me some wise advice: "Don't be startled if the bishop begins to sing or quote Christmas carols at the altar," he said. "It's just one of his quirks." Christmas carols in June? That was indeed a bit off-center! But I was prepared.

During the service, the bishop stood at the altar, having just consecrated the bread and wine for Holy Communion. Then, just as I was told, he began to whisper words to a famous Christmas carol. He spoke the words softly but clearly:

"How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given:

How God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven.

No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,

Where meek hearts will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in."

I was stunned. The words were so fitting, so appropriate – even in the summertime! My dear bishop was quoting from "O Little Town of Bethlehem," written by Phillips Brooks, a 19th-century bishop of Massachusetts. Brooks had traveled to the Holy Land and had the privilege of visiting the birthplace of Christ in Bethlehem. Upon his return to the United States, he wrote this famous carol as a reflection of his time in that special place, and that carol has become a classic in American Christmas music.

As we approach this most holy of Feasts in the Christian Tradition, I encourage you to reflect on these simple words from Phillips Brooks. Our Lord comes silently, without pretention, fanfare or display. The very blessings of heaven are offered to all who will receive them, especially the blessing of the Christ child, who is the Lord and King of the universe.

I am sure there will be festive parties, lots of cooking and eating, visiting relatives and plenty of travel. Our calendars will be filled with all sorts of holiday activities! I usually need a few days of rest and recuperation after

### NORSHIP

### 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 |acob Tedder • |acob@cashiers.church • 743-5470 www.cashiers.church

Sun. 10:45a; Wed Study5:15p 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: 1 la.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 • fpchighlands.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

### **GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF CASHIERS**

Non-Denominational-Contemporary Worship 242 Hwy 107N. I/4 miles from Crossroads in Cashiers 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 IIa & 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: 1 I

### 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 In-Person and live-streamed Worship Services 909a Bluegrass and I Ia Traditional www.highlandsmethodist.org

### HOLY FAMILY LUTHERAN CHURCH: ELCA

2152 Dillard Road • 526-9741

Rev. Ken Langsdrof

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 • mountainsynagoguewnc.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.;

### **OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAINS 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)

### THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

1448 Highway 107 S., Office: • 743-2359 • Rev. Rob Wood Sunday Service (summer): 9am & I Iam Visit our website: www.goodshepherdofcashiers.com Our Bazaar Barn supports outreach in the community.

### Open Fri & Sat. I Iam-3pm UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

85 Sierra Drive. Franklin • uufranklin.org Sunday Worship - 11 a.m.

### WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers •828-743-2122 Sunday School:10 am. Worship Service:11 am

• See SPIRITUALLY page 15

# • Police & Fire Reports •

Highlands Police entries from Dec. 11. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.

### Dec. 11

• At 10:38 a.m., officers responded to a threat of a bomb at the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation.

### Dec. 13

• At 2:23 p.m., officers responded to a call of a shop-lifting incident at Potpourri on Main Street where \$32 of merchandise was taken.

### **Accidents**

### Dec. 10

• Two vehicles were traveling north on NC 106 (Dillard Road). Vehicle 2 cut through the parking lot of Farmer's Market to get in front of vehicle I to travel east on US 64 (Main Street). Vehicle I ran the red light and turned right onto Main Street. Vehicle 2 hit vehicle I as it passed.

### **Dec. 13**

 Vehicle was damaged in the parking lot of the Highlander Mountain House.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Dec. 4.
Dec. 4

### ...SPIRITUALLY continued from page 14

such a time. But all the merriment can be a distraction, and distraction is often the enemy of spiritual focus. The silent arrival of our Lord is often missed because we are engulfed in the activities that accompany the season. I'm no Scrooge when it comes to celebration. It's great to enjoy the fun! But it might be helpful to steal away

for a quieter moment, a moment that reflects that Holy Night in Bethlehem, that quiet miracle when God came to earth – "Emmanuel, God with us." Ask God to give you eyes to see and ears to hear the presence of Christ. He is here in the silent places, the quiet moments of faith and gratitude. He is even present in the

• At 2:02 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Hemlock Drive.

### Dec. 10

• At 12:26 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Old Rock Road, but it was cancelled en route.

### Dec. 11

• At 10:53 a.m., the dept. assisted Highlands Police Department regarding the swatting incident at the Episcopal Church.

### Dec. 12

- At 6:50 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on VZ Top Road.
  - At 7:07 a.m., the dept.

seasons of loneliness and melancholy, which often accompany this time of year for many of us.

Christ comes in surprising ways at surprising times and in surprising places. Keep your eyes and ears open – I am confident you will encounter Him when you least expect it, and when you most need it.

# ...ROOM TAX continued from page 11

Blye Hunsinger, president of the Chamber board also raised concerns.

"Currently, the money earned in Highlands, stays in Highlands. I am concerned that if the rate is raised, when the money goes down the hill it will become diffused and limit our ability to continue to support key initiatives here in Highlands. Yes, we want to continue to use dollars for tourism, but the community also benefits from many of the things the Chamber does like Saturday night music in the park. We need to keep those dollars in Highlands."

During Mayor Taylor's presentation, he cited occupancy tax increases that are now in effect in Jackson, Henderson, Graham, Clay, Cherokee,

Transylvania and Swain counties which all operate under the 2/3, 1/3 scenario.

Commissioner Jeff Weller asked if they raised the tax because they weren't getting enough money to begin with and suggested more research was needed as well as a taskforce made up of stakeholders to discuss the matter at length.

For '23-'24 with a 4% room tax, Jackson County got about \$2.5 million but with the increase to 6% effective July 1, 2025, it's expected to get \$3.4 million.

Currently, at the 3% rate, between Highlands and Franklin proceeds, Macon County gets about \$2 million.

The cutoff to propose changes to the Macon County scenario is April 2026. Weller said given the number of stake-

holders, including county commissioners, and pending discussions it's not likely a consensus will be arrived at by April.

When the mayor and citizen John Rymer questioned financial transparency at the Chamber, Director of the Chamber Johanna Fein took offense saying though all have been invited, only Commissioner Jeff Weller has met with her over the issue.

"I can't say how this was done before, but since I have been there since July, everything is there. We want to work with you. We aren't trying to hide anything and I am available anytime," she said.

To see how Chamber/Visit Highlands allocates funds, go to https://www.highlandschamber.org/chamber/highlands-tour-ism-development-commission/.

was first-responders to a residence on Mirror Lake Road.

- •At 12:28 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Mountain Laurel Drive.
- At 4:51 p.m., the dept. responded to a "cooking fire" at a residence on US 64 west (Franklin Road).

### Dec. 13

- At 10:34 a.m., the dept. investigated the cause of smoke at a location on N. 4th Street.
- •At 7:08 p.m., the dept. was called about smoke in a residence on Shelby Drive.

### Dec. 14

•At 5:26 a.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to the Satolah FD on a structure fire.

### Dec. 15

•At 10:37 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a

location on Oak Street.

- At 12:33 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance at a location on Pierson Drive.
- At 3:06 p.m., the dept.
   responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Hemlock Ridge but it was cancelled en route.
- At 3:08 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Maple Way.
- •At 8:19 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 west (Franklin Road).

### NOTE:

As of this report, the Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. has logged 900 calls in 2025. The total number of calls for 2024 was 869 and that included 95 calls due to Hurricane Helene.



### HIGHLANDS CHURCH

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HIGHLANDS 1-2 SPACES – I large or 2 smaller spaces for rent in popular Mill Creek Shopping Center next door to Blue Bike Cafe. Each space is 800 sq/ft at \$2,333/mo OR both spaces at 1,600 sq/ft for \$4400/mo. Inquires to Debi: bock7@me.com or 404-323-9444. (st. 7/10)

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<u>OUALITY HOUSEKEEPING</u> – Mori Smith. 228-383-4448. Resume upon request. Serving Highlands and Franklin. (st. 12/4)





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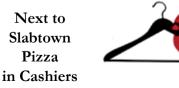
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### Highlands Area Events

### **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 pres-

ident 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 cll 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

• Dec. 20th meeting is cancelled. Meeting will resume in January. The American Legion Post 370 meets at the First Methodist Church at 315 Main St. in their community room/909 chapel. Breakfast ia at 9a; meeting is at 10a. Email ncpost370@gmail.com or just join us at 9am.

### Sundays

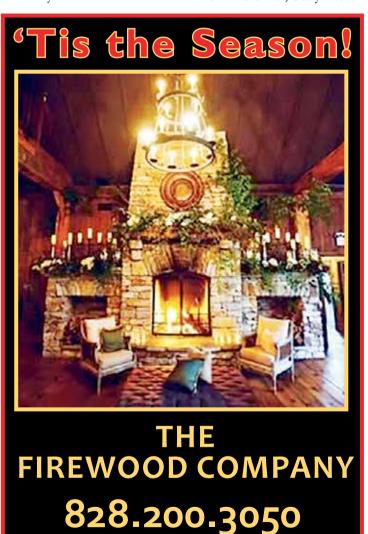
• At Wayfarers Chapel, Sunday Service: 10a Sunday Mornings. Stick around for visitation and coffee hour immediately after service. (Coffee hour is replaced by potluck dinner the 1st Sunday of each month).

### Thru Dec. 27

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

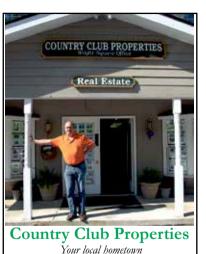
### Dec. 5-21

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





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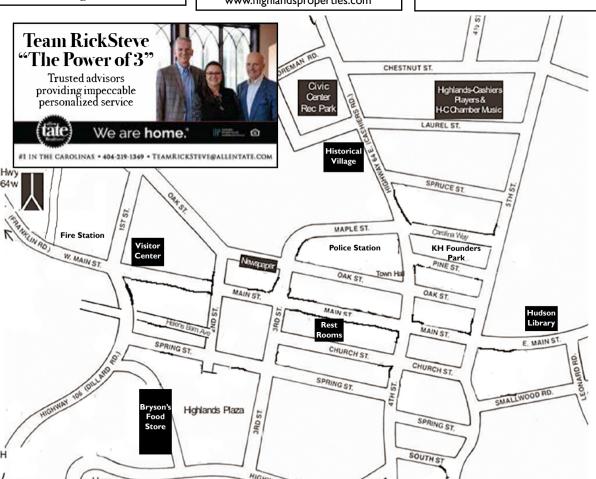


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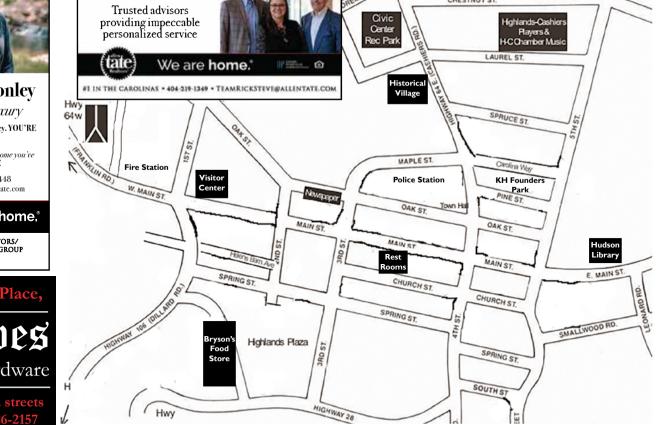
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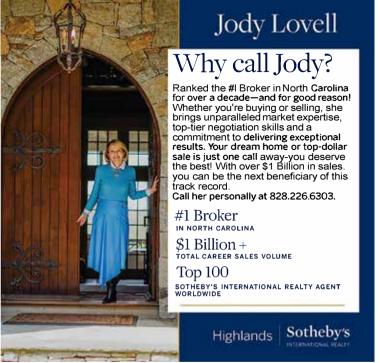














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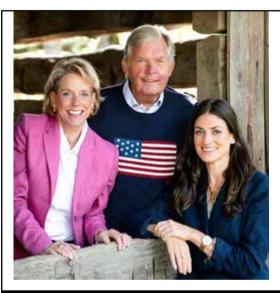




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