

Highlands Newspaper

Join us for the Christmas Parade!

FREE Every Thursday

Volume 22, Number 49

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Tues., Dec. 4, 2025

New chapter at Hudson Library begins

By Kim Lewicki

As Mary Beth Brody said during the public comment portion of the November Town Board meeting, Highlands is a highly educated, vibrant, socio-

economic community and the Hudson Library is a vital piece of Highlands' puzzle – one that enriches the lives of the young, old, full-timers and part-timers.

"I hope when you hear the

library board's presentation to-night, you give it your worthy consideration," she said.

Commissioners learned that a new chapter has begun

• See **LIBRARY** page 5

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Highlands annual Christmas Parade is Sat., Dec. 6



Join the crowds as they line Main Street for Highlands' parade extravaganza beginning at 10a, Sat., Dec. 6. Santa will also be in the KH Founders Park after the parade to hear Christmas wishes.

Candidate filing notice for Macon County's 2026 race

Notice is hereby given for the Filing Notice of Candidacy for the 2026 Primary Election. Filing began Monday, December 1, 2025 at noon and will end on Friday, December 19, 2025 at noon per G.S. 163294.2(c).

The following seats are open for filing at the Macon County Board of Elections office:

SHERIFF – the filing fee is \$921.25; Brent Holbrooks currently holds the seat

REGISTER OF DEEDS – the filing fee is \$722.99; Todd Raby currently holds the seat

CLERK OF COURT – the filing fee is \$1,117.26; Shauna Lamb currently holds the seat

DISTRICT ATTORNEY – the filing fee is \$1,673.37; Ashley

• See **FILING** page 7

Home for the Holidays 'Spirit of the Season'

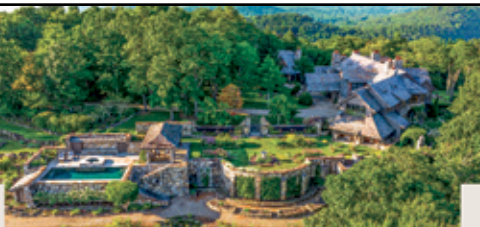


Mountain Theatre Company's 2025 Season wraps up with *Home for the Holidays* Dec. 5 – Dec. 21. An all-new production featuring holiday classics, sparkling costumes, and breathtaking choreography. Always the perfect gift for anyone in your family. For tickets go to www.mountaintheatre.com/tickets-box-office

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Southwestern Regional Planning Commission meeting recap

At the last meeting of the Southwestern Regional Planning Commission, director Russ Harris presented a report on regional economic development. For several years, the commission has been implementing a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the seven counties of Western North Carolina.

The report contained interesting data on the region's economic health. For instance, the median family income in WNC is \$54,800. For the state, the median income is \$69,900.

The top Western Carolina industry sectors in 2024 were local government, restaurants and other eating places, and education and hospitals. When one thinks about the major industries in Highlands and Macon County, those categories match up with other counties. Our town employs about 74 workers,



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

and our school and hospital are major employers too. Our hospitality industry, especially restaurants, is a substantial part of our economy.

The population of Western Carolina has been steady, with modest growth as of 2024. The current population is 211,585, which represents a 0.9% increase from 2023. The state average for this period was a 1.51% increase. I was surprised by this figure. I thought that, coming out of CO-

VID, the regional population growth would have been larger.

Nevertheless, in Highlands, our last census figure was 1065 full-time residents. We have had modest yearly population growth for several decades. While we have a steady flow of retirees moving to the Plateau, we also experience an equally steady decline in our aging population.

The other economic measure for the region centers around employment. As of August 2025, the regional unemployment rate mirrored the state rate of 3.7%. From 2019 to 2024, job growth in the region increased by 3.1%, a modest number.

An eye-catching number in the report was the labor force participation rate. Only 51.8% of the population in WNC was in the workforce, compared to 60% at the state level. Director Harris pointed out that the anomaly was due to the high percentage of retirees living in the region.

The big question arising from this economic data was: what strategies should be pursued to support economic vitality in WNC? The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy of the Southwestern Commission has four goals. So much of the commission's work focuses on these goals. Towns and counties are also focused on these goals.

The first goal is to build an economy aligned with the region's culture and assets. This goal focuses on regional industries such as retail, agriculture, and food services. The commission is highly active in supporting small businesses by securing business development grants. It operates a

• See MAYOR page 12

• SNAPSHOT •

Santa is ready to hear wishes!



Santa will be in the KH Founders Park on Pine Street to hear Christmas wishes Dec. 6 after the parade, Dec. 12 and Dec. 20 from 11a to 3p. Children can also put a letter to Santa in the mailbox in the park. He will collect them during his visit.

Photo by Kim Lewicki

• WEATHER •

Thu, 4-Dec	Fri, 5-Dec	Sat, 6-Dec	Sun, 7-Dec
43°F 34°F	40°F 32°F	43°F 33°F	49°F 32°F
Mostly cloudy	Chilly with rain at times	Mainly cloudy	Rather cloudy
RealFeel® High: 45° Low: 28°	RealFeel® High: 40° Low: 31°	RealFeel® High: 44° Low: 30°	RealFeel® High: 50° Low: 34°

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Highlands Newspaper

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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

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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 •

Living the High Life

You've probably heard the line, "I wasn't born in —fill in the blank— but I got here as fast as I could." If they didn't say it, almost all second-homeowners have thought it.

One of the best ways to see if you're ready to bite the bullet and buy a second home is to pretend you've already done it. If you live within a day's drive, preferably two-three hours away, from the town under consideration for a second home, it makes perfect sense to rent first and buy later.

You can rent almost any home anywhere with a 30-night minimum, but why not make it longer? It's a great way to see what it may look like for you to have a second home. Two months have eight weekends you could be spending in your home-away-from-home. Chances are, you probably wouldn't come back every weekend, but then again, you may decide to stay a week or two before going back to your primary residence. This is the part where I say, "But wait! There's more!" And there is, the sweet spot of vacation rentals is when you rent for three months or more, you won't pay the occupancy tax. That's close to a 10% savings off your rental.

This isn't a new thing. Our office has been offering vacation rentals since the '70s, and at that time, there were a lot of families who rented the whole summer and many of those renters became second-homeowners. There were many times that at least one of the group, usually a husband and wife, would leave to go back to work during the week during their stay, or sometimes, they'd rent two or three months and come a week late and/or leave a week or so early. Nowadays, many people can work from anywhere, at least for a temporary period.

The last two or three decades have seen lots of changes in vacation rentals, though. Renters feel like if they're paying for a night, they want their head in the bed here, but maybe it's time to consider the alternative. If people are coming to stay two



Jeannie Chambers
Chambers Realty
& Vacation Rentals

or three nights, a hotel is fine for most, but for a longer stay, a hotel suite can feel cramped and what about meals? Most hotel suites have provisions for a heat-and-eat and a small refrigerator, and some have other amenities that make the stay nice, but that's not giving you an idea of what it's like to live here, is it? You can stay in a hotel anywhere, but to live in a private residence is a whole other experience.

So, why not live like many of the second-homeowners do? Come for a weekend, a week or a month. If you have to leave during your tenancy, lock up and leave and come back the next weekend. Second-homeowners have obligations and go back and forth to their primary residence all the time. It's the best of both worlds!

Whether you're in the market to buy a second home or not, renting for an extended period has many benefits, like getting to know the area. You'll have more time to scope out all the areas to either see where you would like to rent next, or where you'd like to buy. Unless you're a hermit, you will probably start meeting people from all walks of life, maybe joining some of the many non-profit groups, churches, and attending club meetings and volunteering at events. You may even find you have a standing appointment with your hair stylist, massage therapist or chiropractor. And another best part? When it's time to go home for a few days or a week, you don't have to pack up everything, just get in the car like other second-homeowners, and when you come back, "your home" is just as you left it.

Some of the best three-month rentals are May, June and July, or August, September and October or October, November and December. Each of these will give you a taste of different seasons which is important if you're planning to buy a second home ... or just living the high life as a pretend second-homeowner.

...LIBRARY continued from page 1

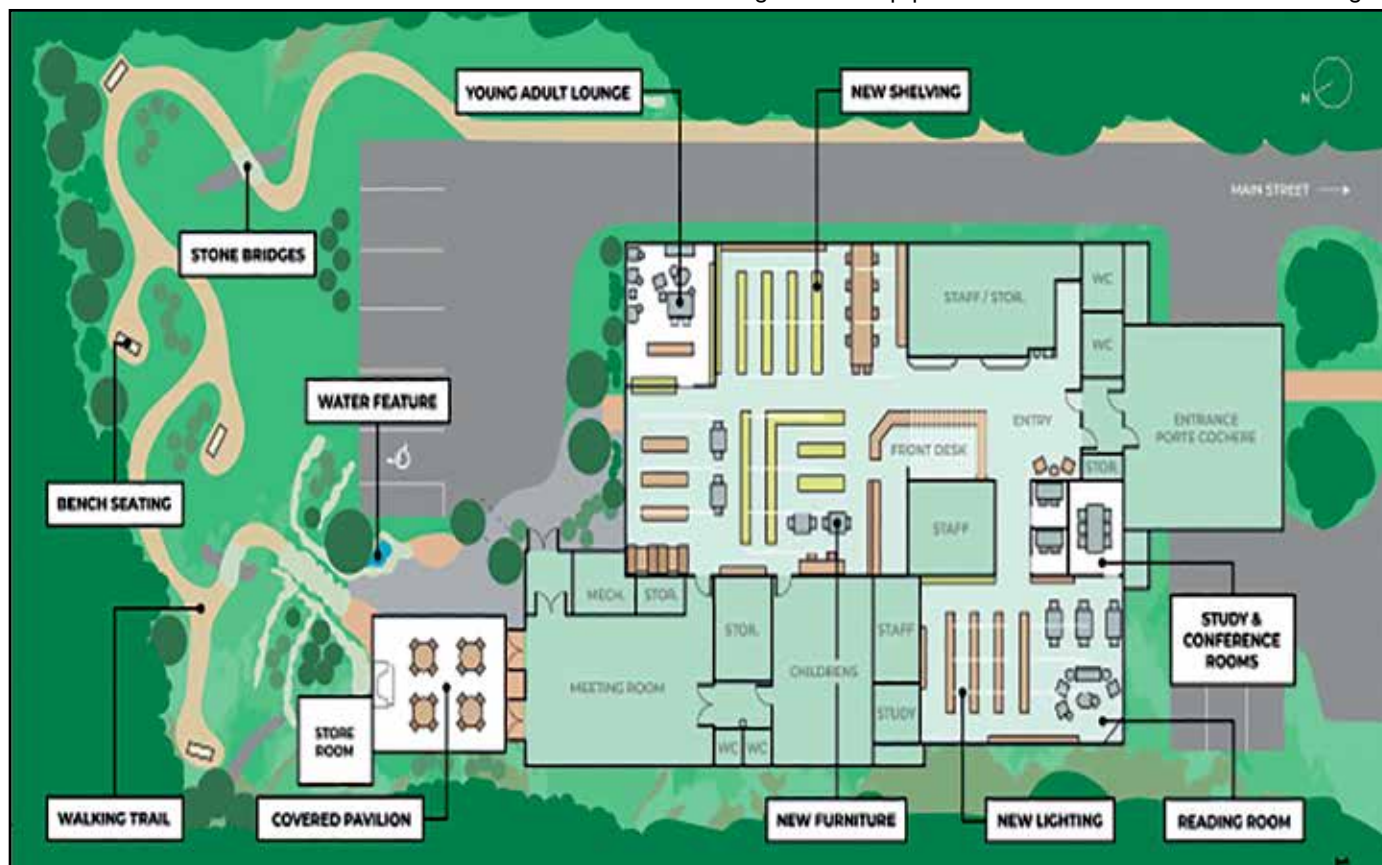
at the Hudson Library with a \$1.5 million capital campaign that over the next 18 months will enhance the interior to accommodate all ages with new designated areas, furniture, lighting and more, but most of all the grounds of the property will be developed.

Over the past year, board member Andy Chmar said the library had 30,768 visitors, with 6,076 cardholders. It presented 204 programs, opened its meeting and study-room 866 times with visitors logging 17,135 internet sessions. But now the library board is ready to offer even more.

A recent community needs assessment survey indicated a need for more work and study spaces, updated furniture, more shelving, young adult spaces and outdoor spaces.

According to Chmar, the first \$600,000 the Hudson Library Foundation has raised and has on hand will be used to develop outdoor spaces.

• See **LIBRARY** page 9



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• LETTERS •

Regarding the proposed hotel on the BofA property

Dear Editor,

These out-of-town developers have certainly pulled one over on Highlands. It's a travesty, and I doubt that this monstrosity, which looks more like something seen on a freeway than in Highlands, will ever be accepted, admired or appreciated by most people in Highlands.

I also don't believe that all of the ramifications have been considered. For one, the adjacent Founder's Park is home to numerous events, many of them very noisy. I am reminded of the complaints that First Presbyterian Church got from Old Edwards Inn because their guests were awakened by the church bells ringing at the ungodly hour of 10 a.m.

Just imagine how guests in the new hotel will react when they hear tents and tables being erected in the park at 7:30 on a Saturday morning for the farmers market. What will they say about the art and craft shows, hearing ninety-five booths going up with the clang of metal and

bang of wood; with thousands of noisy people strolling through the show?

Won't it be a bother when an event like the car show brings in thousands of people for a day, and hotel guests are subjected to hours of music and announcements on the loud speaker.

Speaking of music, how about those loud bands playing every Saturday night in summer, with boisterous crowds cheering and dancing? Even in winter there is laughter and the screams of children at the ice-skating rink.

The park is a very popular place, and the hotel can do nothing about that. It sure doesn't sound like a peaceful place for vacationers hoping to "get away from it all." I can see the on-line reviews now.

**Cynthia Strain
Highlands**

...FILING continued from page 1

W. Hornsby currently holds the seat

COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 1 (HIGHLANDS) – the filing fee is \$118.44; John Sheari currently holds the seat

COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 2 (FRANKLIN) – the filing fee is \$118.44; Danny Antoine currently holds the seat

COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 2 (FRANKLIN) – the filing fee is \$118.44; Gary Shields currently holds the seat

SCHOOL BOARD-DISTRICT 2 – the filing fee is \$5.00; Stephanie Laseter currently holds the seat

SCHOOL BOARD-DISTRICT 4 AT LARGE – the filing fee is \$5.00; Diedre Breeden currently holds the seat

SENATE-DISTRICT 50 – the filing fee is \$1,740.00; Kevin Corbin currently holds the seat

SENATE-DISTRICT 120 – the filing fee is \$1,740.00; Karl Gillespie currently holds the seat

The Board of Election office is located in Room 127A on the 1st floor of the Macon County Courthouse, 5 W Main st., Franklin, NC 28734—phone 828-349-2034.

Highlander Caleb Brown announces run for NC House District 120

Caleb Brown, a teacher, coach, and National Guardsman, announced today that he is running for the North Carolina General Assembly in House District 120.

Brown, who has made Highlands his home for the last seven years, said his campaign will focus on "strong schools, healthy communities, and an economy that works for Western North Carolina families." His priorities include fully funding public education, lowering household costs, expanding access to healthcare, and making sure local voices are heard in Raleigh.

"As a teacher, I see firsthand the pressures our families face, from rising grocery bills to the lack of good-paying jobs close to home," Brown said. "Western North Carolina deserves a representative who will listen, lead with integrity, and put people ahead of partisanship. I'm running to make sure our communities aren't left behind."

Brown's roots in public service run deep. Originally from South Carolina, he learned hard work, dedication, and empathy from his parents. After losing his mother to cancer at age 17, he organized a fundraiser that raised more than \$22,000 for Camp Kemo, a summer program for pediatric cancer patients and their siblings. That experience, combined with the encouragement of his teachers, inspired him to pursue a career in education.

For the past decade, Brown has taught high school Social Studies and coached varsity soccer, helping prepare the next generation of leaders both in the classroom and on the field. He also serves as a 2nd Lieutenant in the North Carolina Army National Guard.

Brown lives in Highlands with his wife, their young daughter, and two dogs.

"Whether in the classroom, the community, or the

Guard, my mission has always been the same: to serve others," Brown said. "In Raleigh, I'll fight to bring resources back to our region, strengthen our schools, and ensure working families can thrive right here in Western North Carolina."

Background on NC House District 120

North Carolina's 120th House District includes the far western counties of Cherokee, Clay, Graham, and Macon. In 2024, Republican Karl Gillespie won re-election, continuing the GOP's control of the seat. The district, however, is changing as new families, retirees, and small business owners move into the region. The primary election will be held on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, and the general election will be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2026.



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MC Health Dept. and Animal Services to join forces

By Kristin Fox

For several months, the future of Macon County Public Health (MCPH) has been the subject of discussion among members of the Macon County Board of Health and County Commissioners.

At this month's regular meeting of the county commissioners, the board voted unanimously to follow the recommendation of the health board to approve a resolution for consolidation of MCPH and Animal Services.

The unanimous vote came after a motion by Commissioner Barry Breedon seconded by Commissioner John Shearl. Both Breedon and Shearl are the liaisons to the health board and have participated in the ongoing debate about what to do with MCPH and Animal Services.

The final resolution between the health board and commissioners has not come easy. For many months, the two boards have heard from disgruntled employees, concerned citizens had two board of health members resign including the chairman and seen the early retirement of MCPH Director Kathy McGaha.

To calm any fear among the public that MCPH will be going under a lot of changes, County Manager Warren Cabe stated the main difference with the consolidation is administrative with a consolidated health and human services director overseeing the health department and animal services rather than a health director. The new director will have the same duties as the former health director but with a different title.

"The services will be the same," said Cabe. "We are not looking to removing any positions, changing people, taking duties away or eliminating positions. It's an administrative change mainly for human resource purposes."

Board of Health Director Garrett Higdon stated at the commissioner meeting that the recommendation of the health board as a whole is to consolidate the two agencies (MCPH and Animal Services) as the Consolidated Human Services Agency (CHSA). The CHSA board, formerly the health board, will become the policy making part of the board with the county taking over all the human resources and personnel matters.

The resolution states that the board "approves the creation of a Consolidated

Human Services Agency for Macon County, which shall include the functions and responsibilities of the Macon County Health Department and the Macon County Department of Animal Control and shall serve as the policy-making, rule-making and administrative board of the Consolidated Human Services Agency pursuant to the powers conferred by the NCGS §153A-77(b)2 and (c)."

The approved resolution will take effect on January 13, 2026. This will give commissioners the time needed to approve the additional health board members required by the state for a consolidated board.

The health board voted to appoint Tammy Keezer the current human resource director as the interim director.

While the current health board members will roll over into becoming the consolidated health board, the new board will have four vacancies to fill as a consolidated board has to have more members. County Commissioners will appoint the existing board of health members to serve as members of the CHSA Board.

According to the resolution, the consolidated human services board shall consist of no fewer than 15 and no more than 21 members. The consolidated human services board shall initially consist of the 11 current members of the Macon County Board of Health until their current terms expire, plus four additional members who are consumers of human services and any additional professionals necessary to fulfill the board requirements.

The current members of the Macon County Board of Health shall serve as the nominating committee and will nominate the appointments necessary to meet the requirements of the state. The county commissioners will approve the human services board's nominations.

Members shall serve four-year terms and no member shall serve more than two consecutive terms.

The consolidated health and human services director will start January 13, 2026. Cabe will be in charge of hiring the new director with the consent of the consolidated health board. The director will oversee the operations of the CHSA

• See JOIN page 12



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...LIBRARY continued from page 5

As it stands now, it feels like the Hudson Library property ends at the back parking lot, but it actually extends almost to the rector's house on the Catholic Church property.

Now, the library board is ready to make use of that property with walking trails, bench seating, a stone bridge, a water feature, a covered pavilion extending off the current meeting room where a fireplace is planned.

The park-like setting will be wired with wi-fi throughout, so connection is available both inside and out while offering a tranquil setting amidst Highlands' natural surroundings.

Design partners in the project are McMillan, Pazdan, Smith Architecture, Ross Landscape Architecture, Summit Architecture, Bryson Grading & Paving, and Futral Enterprises.

"We want to get started on the exterior now because this is a good time of year to do plantings," he said. "We have been economical and modest in deciding what we are going to do and it's all been based on public input."

Plans for the interior changes will

begin in the fall once another \$900,000 is raised.

The library building and property are owned by the Hudson Library Foundation with Macon County renting the library from the foundation for \$1 a year since 1989. Macon County has been part of the umbrella of the Fontana Regional Library system that serves Jackson, Macon, and Swain counties since 1980 enabling the sharing of resources.

"The county only does basic maintenance on the facility – replacing light bulbs, minor plumbing, no kind of capital improvement or renovations, but we are going to ask them to support this project because we are their constituents. So, we are hoping they will step up and help with some funding," said Chmar.

Though the Hudson Library Foundation doesn't need Town Board approval to proceed, commissioners listened intently to the presentation.

"After you approach the county and they make a commitment, you might want to come back to this board to see if we're able to do some partnering with you to help," said Mayor Pat Taylor.

The Hudson Library Foundation is a private non-profit corporation with a working Board of Trustees. This board conducts fund-raising activities to raise

money for materials, furnishings, and to maintain and enhance the library building and facilities.



An open pavilion housing seating areas and a fireplace will extend off the present meeting room. Behind the pavilion will be a small storage building, as well.

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• HERE'S THE THING •

The 'drug policy' contradiction

I'm struggling to understand some things that are going on that, to me, don't make much sense. As always, at least with the folks currently in charge up in DC, this could all work itself out in the next few days, or it might just fade into oblivion as if much of it never stuck to the wall in the first place. At best, we're seeing some glaring inconsistency. At worst ... well, you tell me what's at play here.

I don't understand why our nation's armed forces, in which I proudly served for four years back in the 1960s, are currently in blowing boats ALLEGED to be carrying drugs ostensibly to be smuggled into the United States, out of the water down in the Caribbean Sea. This is occurring without, for example, first boarding and inspecting them to determine if our suspicions are true, which seems only prudent. The most powerful military machine in the world doesn't just act in this manner on unverified suspicions. Does it?

We've done this several times now with aptly named "go fast" boats heading north from the coast of Venezuela. We SUSPECT they're carrying drugs, and we SUSPECT they're coming here, but based on media accounts and a seeming unwillingness to obtain congressional approval, which is called for in the Constitution, any real evidence is in very short supply. Actually, no evidence supporting these strikes has been presented to either of the Armed Services committees in Congress, or to the public to help us make up our own minds regarding the veracity of these activities.

On the most recent of these attacks by our Armed Forces it has been suggested that orders were given to ensure that all of those on the boat picked for destruction be killed. This statement, reported in the Washington Post but denied by the Secretary of Defense, suggests that no witnesses should be left to either validate or invalidate the basis for the interdiction. I can't speak for anyone else but that leaves a question mark for me.

If there is actionable intelligence supporting this otherwise at best, premature behavior by our nation's military, at least let Congress see it and nod their heads before the bullets and missiles start flying.

Stopping the flow of dangerous drugs into the US is never a bad thing. That said, killing human beings before we know that this is what's really happening doesn't pres-



Bud Katz

ent as very American to me.

This leads me to a second drugs-related question. If we, through our elected leaders, support punishing those we SUSPECT are bringing dangerous drugs into in the United States, why, why, why would the President last week announce a pardon for a known, convicted, and imprisoned, very big-time drug trafficker? This is

exactly what's been offered to the American people in the person of Juan Orlando Hernandez, the former President of the central American nation of Honduras, who is currently in the fourth year of a 45-year prison sentence for a 2024 conviction on drug trafficking and weapons charges. Does it make sense that, on one hand, we're blowing boats and people out of the water who MIGHT be bringing drugs into our country from Venezuela, but we're pardoning a known, convicted, and already imprisoned drug trafficker and gun runner from Honduras? As I said earlier, at best, inconsistent policy, at worst another example of disdain for the Constitution, which the men involved swore to protect and defend.

Here's the thing. Controversial actions and decisions from our leaders work best when they're consistent and defensible. Killing people for ALLEGEDLY bringing drugs into America works if there's evidence that's what is happening. Pardoning a TRIED AND CONVICTED drug trafficker highlights the glaring contradiction with our action in the Caribbean.

I'm sure the people involved in these decisions, including the American Secretary of Defense and the President of the United States, know what they're doing. After all, we elected one of them, and he, in turn, appointed the other one of them.

I only wish the rest of us knew what they were doing, and why.

• Bruce F. "Bud" Katz, and his wife, Lynn, have lived year-round in Highlands since 2011. Bud is the author of four novels and a work of non-fiction. He facilitates the Highlands Writers Group and spends much of his time in front of a computer making words into sentences, sentences into paragraphs, ... etc. You can contact him, regarding his books, this column or for information about the Highlands Writers Group, at brucekatzauthor@gmail.com.



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• TOWN LIGHTING •



On Santa's count, the town's lights turned on Saturday night.

...MAYOR continued from page 2

small-business innovation loan program.

The second goal is to build the infrastructure needed to ensure robust growth that is at a scale appropriate to the region. This goal has been extremely critical in light of Hurricane Helene's damage to essential infrastructure. On a local level, our efforts to improve our electric grid and upgrade the water and sewer systems are linked to continued economic sustainability.

The third goal is to develop talented and innovative people to address the region's workforce and leadership needs. We must applaud Macon County for stepping forward to build the new Franklin High School and for making improvements to the Highlands School. That support of our young people will pay economic dividends for years to come.

The final goal is to build economically vibrant communities with opportunities for all who wish to live and work in the region. At the local and regional level, the watchword to me is livability for the entire population. For our workforce, it

translates into affordable housing, access to childcare, healthcare, and other critical community services. There will be challenges in meeting this goal, as well as the others, in the years ahead. At the state, regional, and local levels, everyone will have to work together to realize these goals.

In that spirit, I was so pleased to see such a cross-section of support at the Southwestern meeting. In addition to municipal and county officials in attendance, state elected officials, such as Senator Corbin, spoke at the meeting. We also had representatives from the governor's office, both senators' offices, nonprofit organizations, educators, and our congressman's office attending and providing updates. In working with the Southwestern Regional Commission, we all park our partisanship and personal agendas at the door to work for the public good and to advance Western North Carolina.

...JOIN continued from page 8

and report directly to the county manager.

The state gives counties the flexibility and authority to organize human services in such a way as to promote efficiency and effectiveness in the administration of human services and to strengthen the local public health infrastructure.

The resolution states that board of commissioners "has determined that consolidating the Macon County Health Department and the Macon County Animal Control Department into a single

Consolidated Human Services Agency (CHSA) will improve administrative efficiency, enhance services, and strengthen oversight."

The health board and commissioners both believe that consolidating the health department with another human services agency (Animal Services) into a CHSA is beneficial to the health department, its staff, and the citizens of Macon County.

• HS SPORTS RECAP •

Highlanders hit the hardwood, swimmers dive into competition

The Highlands athletics programs are in full swing as the basketball teams opened their seasons and the swim and dive team kicked off their competitive schedule. Here's a look at the recent action on the court and in the pool.



Brett Lamb
Highlands School
Athletic Director

Middle School Basketball Splits with Rabun Gap

The Highlands Middle School basketball teams faced off against Rabun Gap at home on November 19th.

- Girls' Team: The girls' squad fought hard but ultimately dropped a tough game, losing 17-29 to the visiting Rabun Gap team.

- Boys' Team: The boys' team secured a decisive victory, coming away with a strong 45-36 win over the Rabun Gap Boys.

HS Basketball Opens Season

The Highlands High School basketball teams started their regular season with a road game and a home opener.

Season Opener at Andrews (11/18)

The Highlanders traveled to Andrews High School to kick off their season, facing tough competition across the board:

- JV Boys: The JV Boys came up short in their debut, falling to Andrews

18-55.

- Varsity Girls: In the most nail-biting finish of the night, the Varsity Girls lost a heart-breaking 38-39 contest after Andrews sank two clutch free throws with only 1.9 seconds left on the clock.

- Varsity Boys: The Varsity Boys ran into a hot-shooting Andrews squad and dropped their season opener 39-58.

Home Opener vs. Towns County (11/24)

The Highlanders hosted Towns County for their home debut, with the Varsity Girls securing the night's highlight victory.

- JV Boys: The JV Boys showed grit but could not overcome Towns County, losing 26-43.

- Varsity Girls: Thanks to timely shooting, tough defense, and strong rebounding, the Varsity Girls secured a solid 33-24 win, thrilling the home crowd.

- Varsity Boys: Early foul trouble put the Varsity Boys in a tough hole they couldn't recover from, resulting in a 33-63 loss to Towns County.

Swim and Dive Team Makes Waves

The Highlands Swim and Dive team began their season at the Franklin Invitational, competing against six other teams.

Despite only two swimmers compet-

ing, the Highlanders made a strong showing:

- Ivan Shchelgachov dominated his events, winning the 200 freestyle and taking 2nd place in the 200 breaststroke. His performance earned enough points to place Highlands an impressive 4th overall in the team standings.

- Trinity Fernandez-Faust competed in two demanding events, finishing 5th in both the 500-yard freestyle and the 100-yard breaststroke.

Upcoming Athletics Schedule

Mark your calendars to support the Highlanders in their upcoming competitions:

- December 5th (High School Bas-

ketball): Home vs. Hayesville. JV Boys start at 5 pm, followed by the Varsity teams. This is our Homecoming game. The court will be introduced between the varsity girls and varsity boys games. Wear your blue and Gold and come out and support The Highlanders.

- December 9th (High School Basketball): Home vs. Cherokee. JV Boys start at 5 pm, followed by the Varsity teams.

- December 10th (Swim): Travel to Asheville School for a meet held at the Jewish Community Center.

- December 11th (Middle School Basketball): Travel to Tallulah Falls.

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SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING

The significance of numbers

Pastor Dan Robinson
Highlands Central Baptist Church

We Three Kings of Orient Are, The Twelve Days of Christmas and The First Noel are all familiar to us, and they have something in common.

Black Friday commanded a startling retail income of some 11.8 billion dollars. It is projected that Cyber-Monday will generate some 14.2 billion dollars. Giving Tuesday emphasis anticipates 4.01 billion dollars in revenue to non-profit and charitable organizations. They also have something in common.

If you are reading this article on Thursday, December 4, then you have twenty-one days left until Christmas. And again, there runs a common thread.

It is estimated that the world population is eight billion-plus. And depending on when you (or I) believe the earth began, some scholars posit the total population since the very beginning at some 117 billion.

Statisticians keep records not only of births, but also of deaths.

My own denomination estimates that some 166 thousand people die every day. And they die without a personal-salvational relationship with Jesus Christ.

Finally, there are some 300 prophecies in the Old Testament regarding the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and some 400 years spanned the time between the close of the Old Testament and the opening of the New Testament and the beginning fulfillment of those prophecies.

It is plain as day, isn't it, that numbers are the common bond in all of the information above.

Our culture has both a fondness and necessity for numbers.

Birthdays and Social Security numbers are easily recalled. Phone numbers used to be!

Indeed, even the Bible has a book called Numbers. What application then can we make of all of this?

- Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. He is the one and only Savior of the world. There aren't many ways to God. Jesus said that He was/is the way, truth and the life and that no one comes to the Father except through Him (John 14:6). This is what and whom we celebrate this month! It is the birthday of the Son of God!

- He has personal and intimate knowledge of every person on the planet! There is absolutely nothing about anyone that He doesn't know. Our CIA pales in comparison.

• See SPIRITUALLY page 17

• 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
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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 • fpcchighlands.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
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sharing the facilities of the Shortoff Baptist Church.
Sunday Worship is at 9a. & 6p. Wednesday Worship is 6p

HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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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.;

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

• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from Nov. 13. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.

Nov. 24

• At 5:20 p.m., officers responded to a call about a person not paying the full amount owed (\$118) on a tab at the Ugly Dog Pub on S. 4th Street.

Nov. 29

• At 8:40 p.m., officers responded to a call about an assault on a female by grabbing her by the arm in a residence on N. 5th Street.

• At 10:15 p.m., Padro J Avendano

Jarquín, 23, of Highlands, was arrested for assault on a female. He wasn't issued a bond. His trial date is Jan. 27, 2026.

Accidents:

Nov. 13

• A box truck was traveling north on the Highlands Mountain Club road. It hit power lines that caused extensive damage to the lines and two power poles.

Nov. 29

• A vehicle was traveling east on Horse Cove road when it ran off the right side of the road when entering a left curve. It struck a rock embankment which stopped the vehicle.

• POLICE & FIRE NEWS •

Please help us prevent brush fires

Fire Chief Ryan Gearhart reminds people to not dump ashes from fireplaces in the leaves or pine straw.

The department has been responding to brushfires that started when people dumped hot coals or ashes in leaves and pine straw.

"The best practice, even if it has

been several days since having a fire, is to place ashes or coals in a metal bucket with a lid, and place it on a non-combustible surface like concrete, asphalt, dirt or gravel and let them cool down," he said.

He said flooding the canister or a fire pit with water is also a great idea.

Car lands down in the Gorge



Photo by Kim Lewicki

During the afternoon, of Tuesday, Nov. 25, a car traveling toward Highlands on the Gorge Road, hit the guardrail at the curve, flipped over the guardrail and went down the bank about 75 feet. According to Asst. Fire Chief Robbie Forrester, there were zero injuries.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Nov. 24.

Nov. 24

• At 12:26 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance at a residence on Pinecrest Road.

Nov. 25

• At 2:37 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 west (Franklin Road).

• At 9:43 p.m., the dept. was called to a residence on Shelby Circle to investigate an issue.

Nov. 26

• At 8:20 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Main Street.

• At 2:35 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Oak Street.

• At 9:13 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on S. Old Walhalla Road. It was cancelled en route.

Nov. 27

• At 11 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of a chimney fire at a residence on Upper Lake Road.

Nov. 28

• At 2:05 a.m., the dept. responded to a call of a brush fire at a residence on Turtle Pond Road.

• At 3:56 p.m., the dept. responded to a CO2 alarm at a residence on Dog Mountain Road.

• At 11:03 p.m., the dept. was first-

responders to a residence on Chestnut Street.

Nov. 29

• At 1:34 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on Horse Cove Road.

• At 2:56 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Turtle Pond Road.

• At 12:02 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Lake Villas Way.

• At 12:38 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance at a location on US 64 east (Cashiers Road).

Nov. 30

• At 3:16 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Flat Mountain Road.

• At 4:07 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on NC 28 south (Walhalla Road).


• At 5:51 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Willow Way. It was cancelled en route.

Dec. 1

• At 8:50 a.m., the dept. provided public assistance at a location on Main Street.

• At 5:27 p.m., the dept. provided mutual assistance to Cashiers FD on a chimney fire.

• At 5:49 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Azalea Lane.



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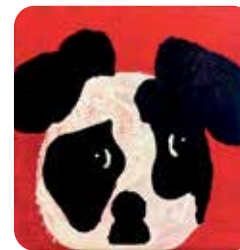
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CABIN FOR RENT – 2 bed, 2 bath in peaceful Horse Cove. \$2,200/month. Available 12/1. Dogs and

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3 BED, 2 BATH HOUSE FOR RENT. Rolling Acres. \$3,000/month. Available Dec 1. Huge yard. Hardwood floors. All appliances. No animals. Outdoor fire pit. Warm, friendly place and neighborhood. Call Dick at 828-200-4264. (st. 11/13)

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LONGTERM RENTAL – Top of Eagle Ridge. Flat yard. 4 bed/3 1/2 BA. Central HVAC, water/sewer. Cable TV. 4,000 ft. elevation. Parking for 3 vehicles. Call 828-743-2655. (st. 10/9)

HIGHLANDS 1-2 SPACES – 1 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)

4 BD/3BA FOR RENT HIGHLANDS – Updated farm home, located between Highlands & Cashiers off Hwy 64. \$3,200/month, includes all utilities with high speed wifi. Call Marcy 828-482-4239 (st. 7/10)

2BD/2BATH SINGLEWIDE \$1,100 per month internet included. First last security. Mark 828-200-0765. (st. 5/29)

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PLATEAU PAINTERS – Interior and exterior painting, pressure washing, decks, and sanding and staining wood floors. Division of Chatlos Construction. Fully insured. Free estimates. Call Mike at 828-200-4071. (6/26)

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NEED FURNITURE MOVED OR ANYTHING HAULED AWAY? Call or text James of Going Gone at 828-421-2655. (7/31)

HIGH COUNTRY PHOTO/KEVIN VINSON: scanning photos, slides & negatives to CD or DVD for easier viewing. Video transfer to DVD. Everything done in house. Leave message at 828-526-5208.

...SPIRITUALLY continued from 15

• He wants every person to know Him personally. Christianity isn't first of all about keeping the rules of a religion. It is about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Do you have this? Anyone may.

• There is one thing which keeps us from Him That is sin. This is why He came (I Timothy 1:15).

• He saves people one at a time. There is a digital-time-statistic clock at The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association headquarters in Charlotte. It records in real time men/women/boys and girls who are turning to Jesus Christ in faith and asking Him to be their Savior. It is fascinating to stand there and watch those numbers increase so rapidly. And these are the ones we know about in and through the Billy Graham organization and via their telephone-internet outreach. Only Heaven knows how many more are giving their lives to Jesus Christ as a result of multiple world ministries and outreaches. Would you add yourself to that number right now?

• You may do so by repenting of your sins and asking Jesus Christ to be your Savior. Tell Him that you want to know and serve Him and that you want to spend eternity in Heaven with Him. He will respond right now if you will ask Him.

Numbers.

You will never be just a number to Jesus Christ.

He will always regard you as a person of great worth and value. So valuable, that He gave His life for you on the Cross.

The birth (and hence first coming) of Jesus Christ is historic and dated.

Still, there is another date on Heaven's calendar. It is the date of His return. That time is known only in Heaven. But it is as certain as His first coming.

In this Christmas season I encourage you to give your life to the One who knows you the best and loves you the most and will return for you one day.

That's a Heavenly Number worth being part of!

O Come, Let Us Adore Him!

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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 10a to 1p. Nov. 14-15 ; Nov. 28-29; Dec. 5-6 (Parade 12p - 3p); Dec. 19-20

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

findings.org

PAC WEEKEND MOVIE

• At PAC, Wicked for Good. Fri. Dec. 5, 2p & 5:30p. Sat., Dec. 6, 2p & 5:30p. Sun. Dec. 7, 2p with captions & 5:30p. Tickets are \$12. Link to tickets: Highlands Performing Arts - Wicked: For Good

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

and Highlands @ the 1st Presbyterian Church, 471 Main St., on Monday at 5:30 p.m. and on Wednesday & Fridays @ 12 noon. Open in person meetings are held in Cashiers @ the Albert Carlton Cashiers Community Library, 249 Frank Allen Rd. on Sunday at 5 pm, on Tuesday @ 7pm, on Friday at 5:00 pm and on Saturday at 9:00 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

Sat., Dec. 6

• Highlands Christmas Parade. Revel in the magic of the holidays at the Highlands Christmas Parade, a cherished tradition that brings joy to all ages. For info, call 828-526-2112.


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.

Sat., Dec. 13

• 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 North 4th Street at noon with wreath placement immediately following the ceremony. Shuttles will take volunteers to and from the cemetery to lay veteran wreaths.

‘Tis the Season!



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Map labels: 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, E. Main St., Smallwood Rd., Leonard Rd., South St, Spring St, Church St, Main St, Oak St, Pine St, Spruce St, Laurel St, Chestnut St, 4th St, 5th St, 3rd St, 2nd St, 1st St, W. Main St, Franklin Rd, Highway 106 (Dillard Rd), Highway 28.



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