

Highlands Newspaper

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Thurs., Nov. 6, 2025

Chief explains how to curtail solicitation

By Kim Lewicki

The solicitation ordinance has been amended, and though it will help the Highlands Police Department enforce infractions concerning solicitation, it won't solve the problem entirely.

For years, business owners, residents and visitors have complained to the town administration, the Town Board, and the Chamber of Commerce about aggressive sales techniques by two businesses on Main Street.

Business owners claim aggressive solicitation of pedestrians by the businesses has cost them sales because potential customers cross the street to avoid being solicited.

With the amended ordinance,

• See **SOLICITATION** page 19

BOE recalls recent cell phone policy

By Kristin Fox

A month after the Macon County Board of Education voted to adopt a stricter cell phone policy banning all personal electronic wireless communication devices from "bell to bell" or from the beginning of the school day to the end of the school day, school officials voted to recall the policy.

At their October regular meeting, the school board voted 3-2 to allow students to use cell phones and other wireless communication devices during lunch and breaks between class. School board members Stephanie La-seter and Diedre Breeden voted against the policy change.

"I am still in favor of our current policy, because I heard from two parents who wished that we would reverse our decision, but I heard from around 33 parents who said they were fully supportive and thanked us for

• See **CELL PHONE** page 14



Pat Taylor



Eric Pierson



Amy Patterson



Jim Tate

Incumbents seize the day; Tate takes Stiehler's seat

By Kim Lewicki

In Highlands, incumbents Mayor Pat Taylor, and Commissioners Eric Pierson and Amy Patterson retained their seats. They will serve for another four years. Jim Tate won Commissioner Brian Stiehler's unexpired seat and will serve the remaining two years.

Interestingly, in Highlands, this election saw a record number of write-ins for all seats.

There were 46 write-ins for the mayoral seat; 81 for Commissioner Pierson's and Patterson's seats, and 5 for Jim Tate's seat.

Known write-ins were Stephanie Molyneux for mayor and Donnie Calloway and Jan Pittman for commissioners. Those are the

only names made public the week prior to the election; there could have been others.

Though those numbers weren't enough to turn the tide, they indicate that voters aren't completely happy with the status quo in Highlands.

Mayor Taylor got 265 votes; Commissioner Pierson got 235; Commissioner Patterson got 230 and Tate got 293.

The Town of Franklin has a new mayor in Stacey Guffey — he got 333 votes versus Matthew Holland who got 228 votes. There were 3 write-ins.

The three commissioners are now Jeff Berry with 313 votes;

• See **INCUMBENTS** page 10

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Regulators give Mission Hospital until Nov. 9 to propose remedies

By Jane Winik Sartwell
Carolina Public Press

Federal regulators have officially placed Asheville's Mission Hospital in Immediate Jeopardy for the second straight year. The hospital now has 18 days to make things right, or else lose its Medicaid certification and the critical funding that comes along with it.

Preventable patient death, unsafe patient transport, patient misidentification and harmful infection protocol — instances of all four were found at Mission in recent months.

In response, the NC Department of Health and Human Services recommended the hospital face Immediate Jeopardy, the most serious citation regulators can deliver.

The federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in Atlanta, or CMS, agreed. Mission, then, is officially in violation of the conditions of participation in Medicaid.

By Nov. 9, Mission must outline and enact a plan to stop and prevent harm to patients.

If CMS approves Mission's removal plan, and verifies the plan's enactment, this could all be over without much consequence for the hospital. That's what happened last year, even after DHHS identified four instances of preventable patient death.

If CMS does not approve Mission's plan, it would be disastrous for the hospital. Mission would lose Medicare and Medicaid funding, face fines and potentially lose its state license to operate.

Mission CEO Greg Lowe claimed that widespread misinformation and outside pressure were key factors in the disastrous ruling.

Lowe emailed hospital staff in the wake of the CMS citation, so that his employees could hear directly from him, "given the large amount of misinformation that has been circulating online and in

• See **MISSION** page 10



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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

I will keep on keeping on

I would like to thank everyone for the opportunity to serve as Mayor of Highlands for another four years. When I was first elected back in 2013, I never thought I would serve 12 years, let alone 16 years in office. On that long-ago election night, I was just hoping I could lead the town effectively for just four years. Strange how things work out.

While in office, I have always tried to keep Highlanders informed about their government operations, town activities, and local issues. Of course, I have my own viewpoints and biases in my communication efforts, but I strive to keep to the facts and basic information. My communication efforts center around four methods.

I usually write the pieces on either Sunday or Monday so I can meet the newspaper's deadline of Tuesday evening. I now use Microsoft Word and compose a draft on my iPad.

After reading it several times, I use the Microsoft editor function to make corrections. The editor function always gives me an



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

editor score. If the score is not over 90% I go back and make improvements. It works like a teacher grading a student's essay. After I reach the 90% threshold, an A, I send the article to my paid editor for added review. The editor, Matthew Eberz, sends his revised draft, which I review carefully. Matthew makes stylistic changes but does not make content changes, as he says, "This is the Mayor's voice, they want to hear your voice, not mine." Sometimes he will ask me questions about

whether what I am saying will be clear to the reader, and we work on the language to make it more so. Finally, I sent the piece to the newspapers for publication. Sometimes, the newspaper editor reads the article before publishing and may provide additional feedback; I am always appreciative of another point of view.

I know the question some may have is whether I use AI, such as ChatGPT, to compose the articles. The answer is absolutely not. I have it on my iPhone and would never use it for this; these messages I write must be my writings, my thoughts, and my voice.

The second method I use is recording the Ask the Mayor radio program on WHLC. These recordings are conducted with Steve Day on either Thursday or Friday mornings. I enjoy working with Steve. When I fumble and stumble a section of the program, we do it again. After the recording session, Steve edits out the mistakes and puts together the final recording, which Steve then broadcasts on Sunday morning. Sometimes we have to return to the studio and re-record or cut a section because new information about a town issue has emerged after the initial recording session, and I need to be accurate in my reporting, regardless of whether it takes multiple recording sessions.

The third method of communication I use is the Community Coffee with the Mayor, which takes place on Friday at the Hudson Library after Thursday's town board meeting. I hold the coffees during the season from around March to October. Kasey Klodsky of the Hudson Library coordinates the event and secures sponsors for each session. I usually have a topic and presentation followed by questions from the audience. I enjoy the questions and dialogue.

The fourth method of communication is my videos. For the past four years, I have also authored the AskMayorPat.com website. This

• See MAYOR page 8

• OBITUARY •

Marcia Wilson Chastain

Marcia Wilson Chastain, 72, of Highlands, NC, passed away on Sunday, November 2, 2025, at the Eckerd Living Center with her family by her side.

She was born on February 28, 1953, in Macon County to the late William Sampson Wilson and Annie Belle Lamb Wilson. She was married to her loving husband, Den Chastain, for 54 years.

Marcia was a devoted member of Clear Creek Baptist Church, where she enjoyed singing in the choir. She dedicated 38 years of her career to Schmitt Construction as an accountant. Known for her wonderful sense of humor, she loved watching The Golden Girls and found her greatest joy in caring for her beloved grandchildren, who affectionately called her "BeBe."

In addition to her husband, Den Chastain, she is survived by two sons, Zeke Chastain and wife Emily, and Waylon Chastain and wife Nicole; grandchildren, Will Chastain and wife Kadence, Alicia Chastain, Morgan Chastain, Oliver Chastain, and Zoe



Chastain; great-grandchildren, Taylor Chastain and Cayson Chastain; one brother, Gary Wilson and wife Lorretta; and several nieces, nephews, and cousins also survive.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her brother and sisters, Edward Wilson, Williene Robinson, Wilma Fendley, Rose Burkett, and Leigh Anne Wilson.

Funeral services will be held on Thursday, November 6, 2025, at 2 p.m. at Clear Creek Baptist Church with Rev. Mike Wilson officiating. The family will receive friends prior to the service from noon p.m. to 2 p.m. at the church. Interment will follow in the Clear Creek Community Cemetery. Pallbearers will be Will Chastain, Tim Burkett, Curt Lane, Allen Fendley, Sampson Wilson, and Craig McCall.

Hunter Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Marcia Chastain. Condolences may be shared at www.hunterfuneralhome.com or may contact us at (706) 782-4243 for any further questions.

• WEATHER •

Thu, 6-Nov	Fri, 7-Nov	Sat, 8-Nov	Sun, 9-Nov
			
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There is a 500-word limit. We reserve the right to reject or edit letters-to-the-editor. No anonymous letters will be accepted. Views expressed are not necessarily those of Highlands Newspaper.

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Highlands Real Estate: Finding Balance in 2025

Well, folks, it's time for our annual peek behind the curtain of Highlands real estate, and I've got some fascinating numbers to share over our metaphorical cup of coffee this morning. Spoiler alert: our little mountain paradise continues to prove it's not just a pretty face—it's a savvy investment too.

The Numbers Tell a Story

Year-to-date through early November, there have been 311 closed residential transactions in the Highlands proper, generating approximately \$480.5 million in sales volume. Now, you might notice that's down from last year's 411 transactions and \$687.8 million, and before you panic, let me explain why this is actually perfectly normal—and even healthy.

Remember the post-pandemic frenzy when everyone and their cousin suddenly realized they could work from anywhere? That created an unsustainable buying surge. What we're seeing now is a more balanced market where buyers can actually take a breath, tour properties without bidding wars erupting, and make thoughtful decisions. Trust me, as someone who's been doing this for years, this is the sweet spot.

The Luxury Market Remains Resilient

Here's where things get interesting. While overall transaction volume has moderated by about 24%, our luxury segment

has shown notable staying power. There have been 40 closed sales over \$2 million so far this year, compared to 58 last year — a proportional decline that tracks with the overall market slowdown. The \$1-2 million range has seen 64 combined sales this year versus 78 last year, following a similar pattern.

But let's talk about the ultra-luxury market — properties over \$3.5 million — because this is where Highlands truly distinguishes itself. Through early November 2025, there have been 11 closed sales in this rarefied tier compared to 21 during the same period last year. While that might sound like a significant drop, here's the fascinating part: there are currently 36 active listings over \$3.5 million, 4 properties under contract, and 4 in pending status. That's 44 properties in the pipeline at \$3.5 million and above — nearly double what we saw actively listed at any point last year.

What does this tell us? The ultra-wealthy are positioning themselves for Highlands' next chapter. These aren't impulse purchases



Tricia Cox, Broker-in-Charge
Berkshire Hathway HomeServices
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es — these are carefully considered investments in luxury properties, many with average days on market well under 100 days for the properties that sold. When the right property at the right price comes along, serious buyers are still making decisive moves.

Despite the overall average sale price dipping from approximately \$1.68 million in 2024 to \$1.56 million in 2025, we're still talking about sales averaging well over \$1.5 million. When you look at the 3+ bedroom market where most of our premier properties live, we're seeing average prices of \$1.34 million for 3-bedroom homes and \$2.66 million for 4+ bedroom properties. The message is clear: serious buyers with substantial resources continue to choose Highlands, even in a more measured market environment.

Inventory: A Healthy Balance Emerges

Now here's the really juicy part. As of early November, we have 166 active residential listings in Highlands proper, with an average list price of \$2.47 million. Read that again. The average home for sale in Highlands commands nearly \$2.5 million. That's not just any mountain town, my friends.

With 20 properties currently under contract and another 20 in pending status, the gears are still turning smoothly. The combined 40 properties working their way to closing carry an impressive average price of \$2.41 million. Properties are spending an average of 100 days on market for active listings — a far cry from the feeding frenzy days, but hardly sluggish. In fact, 42 homes sold within 30 days this year, proving that quality properties priced right still move quickly.

Why the Smart Money Stays in Highlands

What we're witnessing is market maturation, not market decline. The velocity has slowed, but the value proposition has only strengthened. Think about it: in a "slower" market, we're still generating nearly half a billion dollars in residential sales volume while maintaining average sale prices well over \$1.5 million.

But here's what hasn't changed one bit: Highlands remains fundamentally supply-constrained. We're surrounded by national forest, perched on a plateau with limited buildable land, and protected by thoughtful development restrictions. You can't just conjure up more Highlands properties—and that's precisely what makes this market so resilient.

The land market reinforces this story beautifully. There are only 55 active lots and land parcels within Highlands, with an average price exceeding \$616,000. Yes, you read that correctly—the average lot in Highlands is over \$600K. That's not a barrier; it's a moat protecting property values for existing homeowners.

The Investment Case

Let me be crystal clear: any market that can generate nearly half a billion dollars in residential sales volume over ten months while maintaining average sale prices approaching \$1.6 million — in a "cooling" environment — is not struggling. It's thriving in a more sustainable, sensible way.

The wealthy aren't buying Highlands' properties on a whim. They're making calculated decisions based on limited supply, incomparable beauty, sophisticated amenities, and a lifestyle that seamlessly blends small-town charm with world-class everything.

Final Thoughts

So should you invest in Highlands? If you're looking for a place where your money buys not just real estate but entry into one of America's most exclusive mountain communities — where properties maintain their value even as the market finds its footing — then yes, absolutely.

The market has matured from frenzy to balance, and that's exactly when smart investors make their moves. While we have more inventory available now than during the peak buying frenzy, the fundamentals that make Highlands special — limited buildable land, natural beauty, and a sophisticated community — remain unchanged.

See you on Main Street!

• Tricia Cox is Broker in Charge of the Berkshire Hathway HomeServices Meadows Mountain Realty office in Cashiers. 828-526-1717 or tricia@bhhsmmr.com

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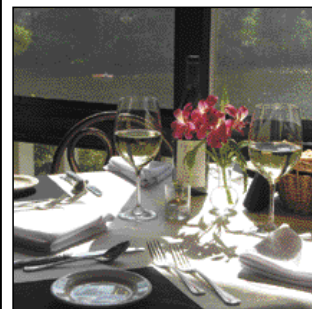
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• DINING •

• LETTERS •

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Is Peggy Noonan right? Is our Republic in jeopardy?

Dear Editor,

Donald Trump has exerted power as no previous President has in our history. His actions raise a chilling question. Is Peggy Noonan right as she recently wrote in the Wall St. Journal that our Republic is in jeopardy because of the actions of our President?

I certainly give him credit for getting the border under control as well as brokering the first peace deal in the Middle East that has a chance of ending the conflict. Time will tell on both of those issues. However, his destruction of key democratic institutions, his disdain for judicial independence and legislative authority have substantially interfered with the checks and balances that were put in place by our founders. Like Peggy Noonan, I believe our Republic is in danger. Please read the following and decide for yourself if I am right.

1. The military is being deployed to cities in blue states to deal with crime even though statistics show that crime is dropping. Why not restore the massive cuts to public safety programs in the "Big Beautiful Bill" to allow cities to hire more police who unlike our military are trained for community policing.

2. The military is extrajudicially killing Venezuelans for alleged drug smuggling without providing evidence. This particular strategy will not solve America's drug problem. Why not use that money for treatment programs.

3. Our President is now entertaining strikes on Venezuela's mainland without consulting Congress. At the same time, he has approved a \$40 billion bailout for Argentina's economy while millions of Americans will either lose their health insurance or see their premiums increase dramatically.

4. U.S. citizens and legal immigrants are being arrested

and detained because of the color of their skin. Are we going back to the racist times in our history?

5. The Justice Department is spending millions of taxpayer dollars prosecuting President Trump's political foes, an unprecedented revenge campaign. Many experienced prosecutors have resigned over these frivolous and costly law suits.

6. Our President's Sec. of War is banning books at military academies and requiring the press to only report what he decides should be in the public domain. His Sec. of Health is denying decades of medical research, putting our lives at risk.

7. Our President said he would have the final say on whether the Justice Department pays him \$230 million for damages related to charges that he tried to overturn the 2020 election and his efforts to retain presidential records after leaving office. The evidence was overwhelming that he committed both crimes. This is while thousands of Americans are losing their jobs because of AI.

8. Our President posted an AI-generated video of himself dumping feces onto protesters in American cities. That is just one example of his juvenile and tasteless behavior.

9. Our President has suggested the U.S. cities should be "training grounds" for the military. I am absolutely certain that if that happened it would be in blue not red cities.

Each of these might have constituted weeks-long scandals for past administrations. But now? They are barely blips on the news reporting. All of this in his first nine months in office. What is next?

Linda B. Arnold
Highlands

No Kings participants aren't 'shadowed anarchists'

Dear Editor,

Like Mrs. Catlin in her "Big Girl Pants" letter-to-the-editor in the Oct. 30 edition of Highlands Newspaper, I was reared in a household that inculcated the virtues of civility and patriotism. My father, a career soldier in the US Army, instilled in me an autonomous response to address everyone as "Sir" or "Ma'am," regardless of their age or their social status.

That's why I would like to apologize to Mrs. Catlin for my participation in the No Kings protest offended her. My stance and my handmade sign were not directed at her or anyone on the Plateau.

In fact, though I walked through the counter-protest in front of Appalachian Harvest on Main Street several times, I assiduously avoided making any comments about its assertions or proclamations (with the exception of the young man in its midst holding a flag – I praised him for participating in our Democracy).

A couple of months ago, I responded to a letter-to-the-editor from Mrs. Catlin's husband in which he castigated the participants in a previous No Kings Rally. I implored Mr. Catlin to tone down the rhetoric and the vitriol directed at his neighbors.

Though such take-no-prisoners gamesmanship seems to dominate the nation's political landscape, it needn't be ap-

plied here in Highlands or Cashiers.

For instance, the late Walter Taylor was the fifth person I met when my wife and newborn son and I arrived in Highlands.

Though we were decades apart in age and miles apart in political viewpoints, Walter and I were fast friends. He readily shared stories of the past (both uproarious and tragic). He also listened patiently as I outlined a young man's vision of the future.

When we talked politics, as friends will do, it was always with a bit of humor and a large dollop of respect. We never, ever, questioned the patriotism or basic decency of the other, and it was always – politics is "Out There," while we were "Here."

I'd like to believe the spirit of collegiality still animates life in Highlands.

Mrs. Catlin, I'd ask you to consider that among the men and women of the Highlands Police Department, there may be a couple of officers who disagree with your side's celebration of the cop-beating Jan. 6th rioters. That woman who rings up your groceries may have fundamental differences with you about the efficacy of the Affordable Care Act. The server at your favorite restaurant, who's doing everything in his or her power to ensure that your meal

• See LETTERS page 11

...MAYOR continued from page 2

is not an official town website; it is my personal website. I have funded the production costs out of my own pocket for every one of my videos that appear on the site. Matthew Eberz, owner of Heritage Productions, serves as both the videographer and editor of the videos. On many occasions, we try to do the videos at various town locations. Over the past four years, we have created and posted over 400 short

video updates. I am committed to keeping the issues and "goings on" of this town at the forefront of the public eye.

So, in conclusion, I guess I will be committed to writing, recording, videoing, and speaking for another four years. Flashback to 12 years ago, and this new Mayor could not have imagined what I am doing now. And for full disclosure, I love doing it.

• HERE'S THE THING •

Stop the madness

I hope this becomes obsolete by the time it appears in the November 6th edition of the Highlands Newspaper.

The partial shutdown of the U.S. Government began on October 1. It wasn't a surprise. Congress hasn't passed a budget since 1997. They've been operating under a series of 'continuing resolutions' because the U.S. Congress, regardless of who's in charge, doesn't seem to understand its job.

The sticking point this time involves the expiration of health insurance subsidies under the Affordable Care Act. Democrats want to extend these subsidies. Republicans won't do that until the government reopens. We, American voters, are not really a factor.

If allowed to expire, premiums under the Affordable Care Act could double. This would affect nearly 11 million American families. Also impacted are nearly 42 million American families enrolled in the SNAP (food stamps) program.

Air Traffic Controllers are not getting paid. Nor are TSA agents at America's airports. Both groups are required to report for work because they are considered "essential to passenger safety." How long can they be expected to work without being paid? How safe will passengers be then?

Other government functions are already impacted or soon will be. Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements to physicians and hospitals, food safety inspections by the FDA, research grants and contracts from the National Institutes of Health, visitor and police services at National Parks and Forests, drinking water and hazardous waste inspections by the EPA, new contracts under the National Flood Insurance program and the Small Business Administration, new mortgages under the Federal Housing Administration and the Department of Housing and Urban Development, new grants under the Low Income Home Energy Assistance program ... all are delayed or suspended.

Additionally, audits, taxpayer assistance programs and tax refunds by the IRS may be delayed, as will hearings at immigration courts.

While all this madness plays out, the 535 members of the House of Representatives and Senate, along with their staffs, continue to be paid, essentially, for doing nothing, because, well, I don't know why, since they can't really do anything else because they've enabled the U.S. government to SHUT DOWN!!

Sorry. I didn't mean to yell.



Bud Katz

Just so you know, members of Congress are paid \$174,000 a year, with those in leadership taking home \$193,400. They all get paid, get health insurance, and are allotted a sizable budget for staff and expenses, even though they are not really "working" while the government is shut down. Must be nice.

Here's the thing. Politics is about compromise. A successful negotiation occurs when both sides walk away equally disappointed.

While these well-paid yahoos spend time blaming one another, the wants, needs, and expectations of the American people go unaddressed. As the 2025 holiday season approaches, these elected officials don't seem to care if millions lose access to food assistance and health insurance, or if their constituents can't fly home for the holidays.

To be fair, some things are getting done in Washington.

The East Wing of the White House has been torn down to build a new, \$300 million, 90,000 square foot ballroom, ostensibly so the President can throw elaborate parties for visiting heads of state and his wealthy American oligarchs, er, businesspeople. Many of those businessmen and women are allegedly helping fund the project. Whether that's true, or legal, is to be determined.

Also, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is paying recruitment bonuses of up to \$50,000 each to potential Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents so up to 10,000 more of them can chase down undocumented men, women and children, who may or may not be criminals, or represent any threat to citizens of the United States.

So, yeah, things are getting done. Just not things that really affect most Americans. If you're reading this, and if the shutdown is still going on, no matter how you identify politically, give your congress member or senator a call and tell them to do their jobs and negotiate an end to this madness of their own pathetic creation.

It really is the least they can do.

• 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 Bud regarding this column or for information about the Highlands Writers Group, at brucefkatzauthor@gmail.com.

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• BIZ/ORG NEWS •

MountainTop Rotary
 Past President Cath Connolly
 Hudson received a surprise
 when the District Governor
 gave her The Avenue of Service
 Award for her
 leadership during Helene
 recovery.



...INCUMBENTS continued from page 1

Rita Salain with 297 votes and Travis Higdon with 283 votes. There were 11 write-ins for those seats.

In the Franklin districts of Macon County and Highlands, only 908 votes were cast out of the 3,908 registered voters. Early voting accounted for 449 votes.

In Highlands, 339 of the 986 registered voters voted on Nov. 4; in Franklin, 569 of

the 2,922 registered voters voted.

In Highlands, early voting accounted for 163 out of 986 registered voters and in Franklin, 286 votes out of 2,922 registered voters.

In Highlands, the mayor and commissioners will be sworn in during the December Town Board meeting.

...MISSION continued from page 1

the press about the incidents that prompted the survey leading to these developments.”

“There were several aspects of this survey that were unusual,” Lowe wrote.

“This includes the length of time surveyors were on-site and ... that more than two-thirds of the complaints they were sent to investigate were determined to be baseless. I want to be clear: I have a tremendous amount of respect for the surveyors and they were simply doing the jobs required of them. However, it is unfortunate that there seemed to be outside pressure on these surveyors to find a problem.”

This is the third time Mission has been threatened with Immediate Jeopardy since Tennessee-based, for-profit HCA Healthcare purchased the formerly nonprofit Mission Health hospital system in 2019. Mission Hospital in Asheville is the flagship hospital of the Mission Health group, which is the primary health care provider for several Western North Carolina counties.

“CMS has taken appropriate action to hold HCA accountable,” said Aaron Sarver, a spokesperson for Reclaim Healthcare WNC, a coalition whose goal is to replace HCA as owner of Mission Health.

“Unfortunately, this is not the first-

time that Immediate Jeopardy has been invoked against them due to staffing that continues to put patients in danger of serious injury, harm, impairment, or death,” Sarver said.

“Step one is to restore staffing at Mission to safe levels. The core issue is that nurses, techs and support staff are overburdened and cannot reasonably provide quality care to all the patients they are responsible for.

“The pattern we now can see clearly since HCA purchased Mission in 2019, is after being sanctioned by regulators, HCA surges resources to the hospital for a period of time to have an IJ lifted. Then, they return to a baseline of unsafe staffing levels. That can be fixed tomorrow by bringing in more staff, but it must be a permanent fix.”

The hospital has already formulated a plan to correct the violations, according to Lowe, and that plan has been proactively shared with CMS.

“We welcome the follow-up survey and remain confident in the ability of our team to provide compassionate, high-quality care,” Lowe wrote in his email.

...LETTERS continued from page 7

those landscapers laboring to ensure your trees and bushes and lawn safely traverse the fallow season will almost certainly have differing views on the humane treatment of legal/illegal immigrants.

But here's the thing — the one quality that sets us apart from nearly everywhere else in the world: each of those people will greet you with kindness and civility, perhaps with gentle good humor, and should misfortune arrive at your doorstep, with a level of compassion that's almost Biblical in its grace.

Rather than let our correspondence devolve into a tedious back-and-forth that'll almost certainly drive the patient Ms. Lewicki to consider finally hanging it all up, let me invite Mrs. Catlin to lunch (or at least a cup of coffee). I can attempt to convince her that I'm not a shadowed anarchist hollering at passing cars and looking to strangle this country that we all love.

She can contact me at luke@thelau-

Judge not, and you will not be judged

Dear Editor,

I found Pastor Ford's Spiritually Speaking column in the Oct. 30 edition, a little confusing. How on earth can he equate the "No Kings" rallies with a rejection of "the sovereignty of Biblical, Christian teachings restricting sinful lifestyles and behaviors." I think he has erroneously equated liberalism with sinful living. One has nothing to do with the other. Try researching the number of Christian ministers/priests who have been arrested for sex crimes against children (a lot!).

In my church today, we were encouraged to "work with others for justice, freedom and peace, and to serve Christ in our daily tasks." To "love your neighbor." Who is my neighbor? According to Jesus, everyone.

I want Pastor Ford to know that many

reimagazine.com — and we can talk politics, avoid politics, swap stories about kids and grandkids, and share a couple of jokes or the occasional odd story.

PS: I must say I'm a bit flattered that Mrs. Catlin would devote a portion of her message to my choice of undergarments, and I'm sure that with a little convincing Tricia would allow me to don a pair of her Vanity Fair briefs, but let me bow out of Mrs. Catlin's imprecation to slip on a pair of "big girl pants." I'm perfectly comfortable in my Hanes boxer briefs (in a variety of colors and perfectly designed to accommodate my man bits). In fact, if Mr. Catlin is uncomfortable in his big girl pants, perhaps he'd find the same level of comfort in Hanes boxers — he can order them through Amazon and they can be on his porch in 5-6 days!

Luke Osteen
Highlands

of us liberals and progressives (Christian or not) are working for exactly those things that Jesus encouraged us to. We are compassionate people who care about injustice and suffering in the world, and we really do try to treat others the way we want to be treated. Most of us give our time and money to various charities and other good works. We also reject the authoritarian direction our country is going in and the blatant racism we are seeing. I don't understand how all that gave us such a bad reputation.

I think the hardest instruction from Jesus was, "Judge not, and you will not be judged. Condemn not, and you will not be condemned." That seems like a good place for all of us to start.

Cynthia Strain
Highlands

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Halloween Highlands-style



Halloween Highlands-style



For a few hours Halloween night, Main Street was transformed into a fairylane of frivolity while friends and family become someone or something else for a night of trick-or-treating, hanging out and dancing to tunes generated by two bands and a DJ. This Highlands' tradition takes place every Oct. 31.

Photos by Jim and Kim Lewicki

HOLIDAY MARKET

November 4-
December 27

Join us for The Bascom's Holiday Market, where our space transforms into a festive wonderland! Explore a curated selection of unique, handcrafted gifts for both children and adults, perfect for everyone on your holiday list.

In addition to shopping, enjoy holiday-themed workshops, a Santa Letter Writing Station, Kids Make-and-Take Ornaments, Fun in the SmART Space, and a holiday photo selfie station. There's something for everyone to enjoy!

Key Market Dates

- Nov 7-8** Kate Furman
Jewelry Trunk Show *with*
Hot Chocolate bar
Friday, 1 pm - 5 pm
Saturday, 10 am - 3 pm
- Nov 22** Letters to Santa
Station Opens. *Write a letter to Santa and snap a photo.*
- Nov 28** Gingerbread House
(All Ages Workshop)
Register at TheBascom.org
- Dec 6** Holiday Market Reception
Following the Highlands Christmas Parade | 2-4 pm
Hot Chocolate bar | Free

Gingerbread Workshop



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THE HEIGHT OF HAPPINESS
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...CELL PHONE continued from page 1

our decision,” said Laseter.

“For every negative I heard I had at least three positives,” said Breeden. “Parents and students reached out and said thank you. I have had students saying they hated it at first but actually like it now.”

With the school board's decision, Highlands School will return to the cell phone usage policy it had in place. The school's existing policy states students are only allowed to use cellular devices including smart watches and headphones in the non-academic areas in the building during non-academic time.

Non-academic time is defined as before school (before 7:55 a.m.), after school (after 3:10 p.m.), during high school break, and during high school lunch. Elementary and middle school students can only use electronic devices before and after school.

Governor Josh Stein passed House Bill 950 in July 2025 banning cell phone use during school instructional time in public schools. While the bill did not call for a complete ban on cellular devices for students, the new legislation did require school districts to implement policies that restrict cell phone use in classrooms during instructional time. The state left it up to individual school systems to decide how they wanted to handle cell phone usage during non-instructional time.

The policy adopted by the Macon County School System reads: “The board recognizes that cellular phones and other wireless communication devices are an important tool through which parents communicate with their children and through which students gather information. The board also understands that excessive use of wireless communication devices may post significant health and social risks for students. Therefore, to balance these interests and the needs of students, parents, and the school community, the board limits the use of wireless communication devices as provided in this policy.”

In the policy, “instructional time” is defined as the time during which students are assigned to a teacher for the primary purpose of instruction. In addition, a “wireless communication device” is any portable wireless device that has the capability to provide voice, messaging, or other data communication between two or more parties, including but not limited to cellular telephones, tablet and laptop computers, paging devices, two-way radios, and gaming devices.

Students are permitted to possess wireless communication devices on school property so long as the devices are not turned on, used, or displayed during instructional time or as otherwise directed by school rules or school personnel.

Additionally, the policy allows individual students to use wireless communication devices as required by the student's Individualized Education Program or Section 504 plan or to manage the student's healthcare in accordance with a documented medical condition. Teachers may authorize individual students to use the devices for instructional purposes, provided that they supervise the students during such use, or in the event of an emergency.

Although use of wireless communication devices is generally permitted during non-instructional time and before and after school, the principal may establish additional limitations on the use, possession, or display of such devices consistent with the policy.

Use of wireless communication devices may be prohibited on school buses when noise from such devices interferes with the safe operation of the buses. In addition, elementary and middle school students who participate in after-school programs are prohibited from using wireless communication devices during such programs.

The policy gives school employees the authority to immediately confiscate any wireless communication devices that are on, used, or displayed in violation of the policy. In general, the confiscated device will be returned to the student at the end of the school day. However, an administrator may require a student's parent to recover a confiscated device if the student has repeatedly violated this policy.

“There are different variations for each school, and I feel that it's our job to empower our administration and our superintendent as they are the ones that are running the schools to make the decision about cell phone usage during non-instructional time,” said School Board Member Hilary Wilkes. “I do prefer that the principals have the ability to run their schools in the manner that they feel is the best for their student bodies. I encourage anyone to reach out to us or their principals at their school and express their opinion.”

HS Principal Sarah Holbrooks said Highlands School remains committed to its longstanding policy of “no cell phones during instructional time.”

“This policy continues to be effectively enforced, with minimal issues among high school students who are accustomed to the rule. Phones that are used during class are confiscated and returned at the end of the day, either to the student or their parent, depending on the number of prior infractions,” she said. “We are proud of our students' respect for school rules and their responsible behavior. Their cooperation helps maintain a focused and productive learning environment.”

• BIZ/ORG NEWS •

Youth art installations celebrate collaboration along the Cashiers Greenway

WALK CASHIERS, a collaborative campaign led by the Cashiers Area Chamber of Commerce, Jackson County, and Vision Cashiers, is proud to announce the installation of two youth art sculptures along the Cashiers Greenway Ramble.

The pieces, one composed of ceramic tiles and the other of hand-painted timber, were created by members of the Boys and Girls Club of the Plateau through a partnership between The Bascom: A Center for the Visual Arts, the Vision Cashiers Public Art Task Force, and the Boys and Girls Club of the Plateau.

These artworks were unveiled at the WALK CASHIERS booth during Trick or Treat Street on October 25, a family-friendly Halloween event hosted by the Albert Carlton-Cashiers Community Library, Big Brothers Big Sisters of WNC, the Boys and Girls Club of the Plateau, Jackson County, and The Village Green.

This winter, visitors can view the temporary installations in the courtyard of the Albert Carlton-Cashiers Community Library, located along the Frank Allen Road section of the expanding Cashiers Greenway Ramble.

The Vision Cashiers Public Art Task Force's mission is to provide opportunities for residents and visitors to experience thoughtful, high-quality art that reflects the values and character of the Cashiers community—enhancing the five miles of connected trails that make up the Cashiers Greenway Ramble. Extending these opportunities to local youth allows young artists to take pride in seeing their work displayed publicly and to explore creative and vocational possibilities within the visual arts.

"The Bascom is proud to join our longtime community partners in creating opportunities that connect art, place, and people. Projects like this celebrate the creativity of our youth while strengthening the shared vision that makes the Plateau such a vibrant and connected community," says Billy Love, Executive Director at The Bascom: A Center for the Visual Arts.

"It is a privilege to support the Ramble and the community, while giving Club kids the opportunity to express themselves creatively while working with professional artists from The Bascom. We look forward to participating in more projects like this," says Kaie Harris, Edu-

cation Director at the Boys and Girls Club of the Plateau.

"The Library is thrilled to be given the opportunity to host our local students' art. Having been a long time partner of the Boys and Girls Club, it is especially meaningful for us. Collaboration is the heart of our community and being a part of such a diverse group of organizations truly highlights what we can accomplish together," says Serenity Richards, Branch Librarian at the Albert Carlton-Cashiers Community Library.

Collaborative projects like this one are made possible through the generosity of donors who support each participating nonprofit. To learn more or contribute through volunteerism or financial gifts, please visit:

The Bascom:

thebascom.org

Boys and Girls Club of the Plateau:

bgcplateau.org

WALK CASHIERS:

cashiersgreenwayramble.com



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Highlands School Fall Festival, Sat., Oct. 25

By Sarah Holbrooks
HS Principal

Last weekend, Highlands School celebrated its annual Fall Festival, and it was undoubtedly one of the most successful events in recent years. The festival brought together students, families, staff, and community members for a fun-filled evening that showcased the spirit and unity of our school community.

A special shout-out goes to the PTO, whose dedicated team played a pivotal role in organizing and executing the event. Thanks to their hard work and generosity, the PTO was able to raise over \$15,000. These funds will be directly reinvested into our school and classrooms.

The contributions from the PTO have already made a tangible difference. PTO has allotted funds for various field trips, end-of-year activities, and graduation essentials such as caps and gowns. Additionally,

funds have been allocated for teacher appreciation gifts, scholarship programs, and various requests from teachers for curriculum materials, resources, and instructional tools.

The success of this year's Fall Festival was made possible through the collective effort of our community and local partners. Their support and participation helped create a memorable event for everyone involved.

This marked the eighth Fall Festival I have had the pleasure of being part of at Highlands School, and I can confidently say it was our best yet! We look forward to building on this success in the years to come.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to making this event so special. Together, we continue to make Highlands School a wonderful place for our students to learn and grow.



Photos by Keeley Bosdell, Rachel Lewicki and Kim Lewicki

• HS SPORTS WEEKLY RECAP •

MS basketball begins; Varsity soccer concludes; Worley shines

Last week brought a flurry of athletic competition, starting with the Middle School Basketball teams officially kicking off their pre-season.

Middle School Basketball Scrimmages

The season started with a tough test against Rosman on Tuesday, October 28th. The girls' team fought hard but ultimately dropped a very close game. The boys' team managed to pull out a nail-biter, securing a four-point win to start their run on a high note.

The teams wrapped up their scrimmage schedule on Thursday, October 30th, hosting Murphy. The girls again played an incredibly close game but suffered another narrow loss. The boys finished strong, earning a decisive victory. These scrimmages served as excellent tests to prepare both teams for the regular season.

Don't miss the first regular season game! The Middle School teams will host Towns County at home tonight Thursday, November 6th. The girls' game starts at 4:30 PM, with the boys' game to follow.



Brett Lamb
Highlands School
Athletic Director

Varsity Soccer Concludes Regular Season and Heads to Playoffs

The Varsity Boys Soccer team wrapped up their regular season with significant action.

On Thursday, October 30th, the team hosted Swain for Senior Night. Determined to avenge an earlier 0-0 tie, the boys secured a dominating 6-1 victory. Bryan Juarquin scored the opener, followed by five more goals from Highlands' offense.

The team then traveled to Summit Charter on Friday, October 31st, for their final regular season match. Summit jumped out to a 3-0 early lead, but the Highlanders mounted a fierce comeback, cutting the score to 3-2. However, Summit managed to add one more goal, pulling out a 4-2 win over the Highlanders.

The boys' strong season earned them a 1st Round Bye in the NCHSAA State Playoffs! They will host their first playoff game this Thursday, November 6th, at home against Jackson Day at 6 PM.

Worley Shines at Cross Country State Championship

On Saturday, November 1st, Highlands' top runner Claire Worley competed

in the NCHSAA 1A State Championship held at Ivey Redmond Sports Complex in Kernersville, NC.

Facing a field of 95 top 1A girls, Claire ran a stellar 5K race, finishing 13th overall with an impressive time of 22:37.

Also competing was former Highlands student Nicole Taylor, who currently at-

tends the North Carolina School of Science and Math in Morganton. Taylor finished 7th overall with a time of 21:53, helping her team become the State Champions. The overall individual winner was Fern Crayton of Tri-County Early College, finishing with a time of 20:04

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Claire ran a stellar 5K race, finishing 13th overall with an impressive time of 22:37.

SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING



Gratitude Stretches

Pastor Randy Lucas
Highlands United
Methodist Church

Thanksgiving is coming.
I want to be ready.
So I'm starting my gratitude stretches,
preparing myself, thinking ahead.

I think I'll start tomorrow,
Friday November 7th at 3pm
at Memorial Park.
Flags are being placed
on the graves of our
local veterans.
I'll be there.
I'll place a few flags.
I'll speak a few names.
I'll say a few prayers.
I'll remember.
I'll give thanks.

Gratitude stretches.

Maybe I'll write
a "thank you" card or two.
Maybe even send
a "thank you" email.
Maybe even make
a "thank you" phone call.
Maybe even write
a "thank you" poem.

Gratitude stretches.

Thanksgiving is coming.
I want to be ready, so
I need to get in shape.
I want to be prepared, so
I need to think.
I want to act, so
I need to remember.

It's easy to be distracted,
to become overwhelmed,
to fail to see or pay attention,
to fail to realize or recognize
the many things that bless me,
the many people who bless me,
the many things and
the many people worthy of
a simple word or
a simple expression of gratitude.

Thanksgiving is coming.
I want to be ready.
I don't want to wait.
I want to start now.
I don't want to put it off.

So I'm stretching.

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

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Rev. Oliver Rice. Pastor 706-782-3965
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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

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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

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

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

Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

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

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

HIGHLANDS CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Dan Robinson • 11339 Buck Creek Road

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

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

HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Dr. Randy Lucas. Pastor 526-3376

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Pastor Zane Talley

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

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

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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

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

SCALY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Marty Kilby

Sundays: School - 10 a.m.; Worship - 11 a.m. & 7

Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Donald G. Bates • 526-3212

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

SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Rev. Richard Salmonson

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

ST. JUDE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Mass: Sun. 9a (English); Mon. 9:30a (Vatican II in Latin); Tues.
7p (Spanish); Wed., 9:30a (English)

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Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from Oct. 24. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have

been used.

Accidents the police responded to:

Oct. 24: 2 vehicle accidents in Highlands Plaza.

...SOLICITATION continued from page 1

not only is it illegal for anyone to solicit or to operate on public property, they can't solicit on private property, either — specifically alcoves adjacent to the public sidewalks on Main Street — without the expressed permission of the owner, proprietor, or person in control of the private property — the lessor.

According to Police Chief Andrea Holland, soliciting even means reaching over the private threshold of a business onto a public area.

"The airspace above the public sidewalk is also, public so attempting to give out free samples by reaching past the threshold is also considered soliciting and therefore illegal," she said.

Solicit means engaging in the temporary or permanent business of selling, soliciting, taking orders, attempting to take orders, offering for sale, or distributing free samples in an attempt to sell, any goods, wares, or merchandise.

Furthermore, the amended ordinance makes it clear what "aggressive manner" when soliciting means:

Aggressive Manner means approaching or speaking to a person in a way that is intended or likely to cause a reasonable person to fear bodily harm, or the commission of a criminal act upon their person or upon property in their immediate possession or touching someone without the person's consent; blocking passage, using obscene or abusive language toward someone while attempting to solicit the person; forcing oneself upon another by engaging in any of the following conduct: continuing to solicit in close proximity to the person addressed after the person to whom the solicitation is directed has made a negative response, either verbally, by physical sign, by attempting to leave the presence of the person soliciting, or by other negative indication.

The problem is the police can't patrol Main Street 24/7 because officers are needed — everywhere. That's where citizens come in.

According to Chief Holland, if someone feels they have been "solicited" while walking Main Street, they should immediately call 9-1-1 and be willing to verify the behavior as a witness.

"One of our officers will respond to the 9-1-1 call and through testimony will determine if illegal solicitation took place. But we need citizens to step up and help. That's the only way solicitation will stop," she said.

Chief Holland said cameras — either those owned by businesses or by the town — would help.

At the October Town Board meeting, commissioners began discussing the possibility of purchasing and installing two types of cameras — FLOCK cameras which are used across the country to mainly track vehicles that cross state lines in criminal activity and also standard street cameras that could monitor illegal activity at business sites.

Chief Holland said cameras situated on both sides of Main Street — south side shooting north and north side shooting south would not only deter and verify aggressive solicitation, but also other criminal activity such as breaking and entering and burglary.

She said it's not likely that the police department would monitor cameras 24/7 — personnel limitations would make that difficult — but if someone is solicited and they are willing to report it giving the time of day and the place, the activity could be traced via camera footage and the police could investigate and issue a misdemeanor citation if warranted. The cost per incident is now \$500 per incident — up from \$250.

The FLOCK camera program in North Carolina involves automated license plate readers (ALPRs) used by law enforcement and communities for crime reduction, with a pilot program for state roadway camera installation extended until 2026.

Gov. Roy Cooper's signing of a law in June 2024 allows the State Bureau of Investigation to install these cameras on Department of Transportation (DOT) property for use by various law enforcement agencies.

While hailed for solving crimes like catalytic converter theft and hit-and-runs, the program faces privacy concerns from groups though FLOCK data is controlled by local agencies — in this case the MC Sheriff Dept. and/or the Highlands Police Dept. — and is deleted after 30 days.

Commissioners will likely discuss the costs of both camera-types at the November Town Board meeting, Nov. 18 at 7 p.m.

Oct. 30: 2 vehicle accident at Mirror Lake and 64.

Nov. 2: 2 vehicle accidents in Highlands Plaza.

Since last week, officers issued (14) Citations and (16) Warning Tickets

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Oct. 28.

Oct. 28

• At 8:45 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 east (Cashiers Road).

• At 1:09 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Main Street.

• At 3:31 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Main Street.

• At 5:51 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Main Street.

Oct. 29

• At 9:47 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Spring Street.

• At 1:44 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Big Bear Pen Road.

Oct. 30

• At 3:38 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Flat Mountain Road.

• At 3:48 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Flat Mountain Road but it was cancelled en route.

• At 6:26 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance at a residence on Choctaw Road.

• At 6:54 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Hummingbird lane.

Oct. 31

• At 4:42 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Upper Brushy Face Road.

• At 7:32 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to location on N. 3rd Street.

Nov. 1

• At 6:56 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Rich Gap Road.

• At 8:38 a.m., the dept. assisted NC Highway Patrol on US 64 east (Cashiers Road).

• At 10:37 a.m., the dept. responded to a call of a vehicle fire in Highlands Plaza.

• At 5:29 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of an illegal burn on Jackson Drive.

Nov. 2

• At 10:15 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Wilson Road.

Nov. 3

• At 8:27 a.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to the Cashiers FD.

• At 10:27 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on N. 4th Street.

• At 12:04 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Laurel Terrace.

• At 12:32 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Cullasaja Club Drive but it was cancelled en route.

• At 1:54 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Morewood Circle.

• At 2:03 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Half Mile Drive.



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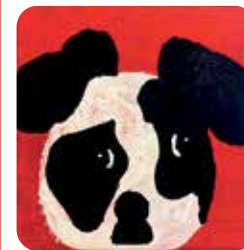
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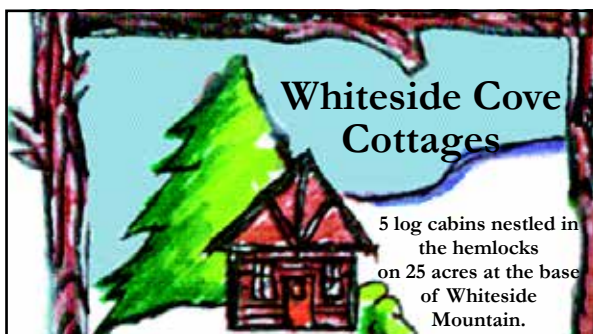


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or submit a resume, please contact the Church Office at fpchurchoffice@gmail.com. (st. 10/16)

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4 BDM/3 BATH 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)

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• BIZ/ORG NEWS •

Toys for Tots is now Macon County Elves

A new volunteer group will bring holiday joy to children and families in Macon County this year, replacing the annual US Marine Corps Toys for Tots toy drive based in Franklin, NC. The group, calling themselves The Macon County Elves, is the same group of volunteers who previously managed and supported the Toys for Tots drive and distribution for Macon County.

According to long-time volunteer Debra Garren, who leads the new group, this local organization was created to ensure that every dollar and toy donated will stay in Macon County and support families needing gift assistance this holiday season.

"For many years, our team of dedicated volunteers in Macon County, led by local veteran and businessman Jack Brennan, proudly supported the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots program," said Garren. "This year, we've chosen to form our own local organization, one with less red tape, to continue our mission of ensuring that every child we serve in Macon County experiences the joy and wonder of the holiday season and through the power of community and local giving - every toy, and every act of kindness stays right here at home."

As outgoing head of the volunteer group, Brennan paid tribute to the Toys for Tots program. "We are deeply grateful for the years of partnership and experience gained through Toys for Tots and we are excited to carry that same spirit of giving forward," he said, "with a local touch."

According to Garren, Brennan will continue volunteering his time to support the new group to ensure a successful drive and a continuation of established relationships with businesses, organizations and individuals in the community who have supported past toy drives.

"Your financial support, volunteer efforts or donation of a new, unwrapped toy will make the holidays a little brighter for our children in Macon County," said Garren. "Join us as we continue our tradition of generosity, now as the Macon County Elves. We are neighbors helping neighbors, one gift at a time," she said, "and together, we can make sure that no child goes without a reason to smile this holiday season."

Visit www.maconcountyelves.com for details.

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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

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

PAC WEEKEND MOVIE

• At PAC, Downtown Abbey: The Grand Finale. Thurs., Nov. 13, 2p; Fri., Nov. 14, 2p; Sat., Nov. 15, 530p; Sun., Nov. 16, 2p & 5:30p with captions. Mon., Nov. 17, 2p & 5:30p. Tickets are \$12.

SATURDAY MARKET

• Farmers Market in KH Founders Park on Pine Street from 8a-12:30p rain or shine.

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 & Strength Class at the Rec Park 8:30-9:30am. The cost for the class is \$30 a month and is led by Cathy Hodgson. Call the Recreation De-

partment 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.

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.

Thurs. - Sun., Nov. 6-9

• Highlands Cashiers Players present "Deathtrap" by Ira Levin. Directed by Michael Lanzilotta. Tickets are \$25-\$35. For show times and tickets go to HighlandsCashiersPlayers.com or call 828-526-9047

Thurs., Nov. 6

• Shop With A Cop Rotary Bingo in the Community Building 6:30 – 8:30pm. \$15 for 15 games.

Tues., Nov. 11

• Veterans Day Ceremony at 11 a.m. at Veterans Plaza in parking lot of police station. This brief ceremony is to honor all who wear and have worn the uniforms serving our great country. New bricks will be dedicated into the "Veterans Honor Walk."

Fri., Nov. 14

• Barrett Family Wine Dinner at ...on the Verandah at 6 p.m. \$250 per person. Reservations required. Call 828-526-2338 or book online at

www.ontheverandah.com.

Sat., Nov. 15

• Brochelle Vineyards Wine Dinner at ...on the Verandah at 6 p.m. \$250 per person. Reservations required. Call 828-526-2338 or book online at www.ontheverandah.com.

Sat., Nov. 22

• 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., Nov. 29

• Light Up the Park & Main. Start the holiday season with this electric celebration. Gather with friends and family as KH Founders Park and Main Street glow with festive lights — and a visit from Santa himself. For more info, go to highlandschamber.org or call 828-526-2112.

Dec. 5-21

• At PAC, Mountain Theatre Company presents Home for the Holidays. For tickets go to box-office@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 more 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.

Sun., Dec. 14

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

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