

Highlands Newspaper

Volume 23, Number 28

Digital Version at HighlandsNewspaper.com

Thurs., July 16, 2026

Commission still undecided on redistricting

By Kristin Fox

At this week's regular monthly meeting of the Macon County Board of Commissioners, a large crowd showed up at the courthouse to voice their

concerns over several hot topic items. Exceeding the boardroom capacity, the meeting was moved to the courtroom upstairs to accommodate the large turnout from the public.

While the public also showed up to discuss frocking and data centers, voting redistricting was a hot topic with many citizens from across the

• See REDISTRICTING page 13

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Citizens will be asked to vote on property tax cap

Pending legislation may affect counties' ability to 'do business,' fund schools and more

By Kim Lewicki

Though Macon County Tax Administrator Abby Braswell, didn't make a formal presentation at the July MC Board of Commissioner meeting – only a brief overview – she did supply information regarding state legislation, some pending, that could have long-term effects for

Macon County and its citizens.

The one bill that passed and on which Macon County citizens will have a say, is NC House Bill 1089 – North Carolina Property Tax Levy Limit Amendment (2026) which is on the Nov. 3 ballot as a legislatively referred constitutional amend-

• See CAP page 5

MC Commission says 'no' to FLOCK camera use

By Kim Lewicki

Since the Spring of 2024, the Macon County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) has implemented the use of Flock Safety automated license plate reader (ALPR) in its work to provide law enforcement to Macon County.

Currently, the MCSO has 16 cameras located in the county

with four strategically placed at schools for the security and safety of children.

The MCSO uses these systems strictly in public areas to capture vehicle license plates and characteristics, aiding officers in locating suspects and recovering stolen vehicles.

• See FLOCK page 16



HF&R officer Travis Brooks, Tonya Whitaker, Gauge Hennequin and HPD officer John Fairchild with the rescued kitten ...yet to be named.

Photo by Kim Lewicki

Orphaned kitten gets lucky in Highlands

By Kim Lewicki

Thinking it was something nefarious, around 11 a.m., Tuesday, July 14, calls came in regarding police officers gathered around a white van parked on

Main Street near Old Edward Inn.

Turns out there was a serious rescue mission in the works.

When Tonya Whitaker started up her camper van bound

for a hike at Glen Falls Tuesday morning, she heard wailing that soon softened to meows, and she knew a passenger had hitchhiked a ride.

• See KITTEN page 7



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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

• SNAPSHOT •

About lights, stop signs and roundabouts ...

I heard an interesting presentation by Steve Buchanan at a recent Southwestern Commission Transportation Advisory Committee meeting. Steve is the traffic engineer in charge of signal lights, stop signs, roundabouts, and crosswalk installations for Division 14.



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

The decision-making process Steve and his team go through when installing a light or stop sign is not simple. Nor is it inexpensive. A major installation of a signal light at an intersection runs about a quarter of a million dollars.

There are three major criteria for deciding whether to install a stop sign, a signal light, or even a roundabout. First, a traffic study is conducted to determine the volume and pattern of traffic at the intersection. Factors such as the number of driveways near the intersection are considered. Steve pointed out that there

are very isolated intersections in the division where the traffic is so light that signal lights or even stop signs are not called for.

The engineers also evaluate additional information before making a decision, such as accident history at an intersection and existing sight distances. These factors also apply to decisions about installing roundabouts and crosswalks on major highways. The two crosswalks

that were completed last week on US 64 at Chestnut and one at Hickory Street underwent this review process before approval by NCDOT.

Another factor is which government entity is responsible for a road or intersection. Some roads in town are private, others may be town roads, and many are state roads.

Recently, someone contacted NCDOT to express concern that there was no stop sign at the intersection of Gibson and Smallwood. Also, a concern was raised about the lack of stop signs at the intersection of Oak and 2nd Streets, next to First Baptist Church.

Both of these intersections are town roads, so NCDOT does not decide whether to install stop signs; the town does. With that said, our town engineer and road department follow the general criteria NCDOT uses.

As for Gibson and Smallwood, there are several factors to be considered. First, it is very lightly traveled. Second, there is no history of accidents at the intersection. Third, some sight-distance issues are being evaluated. Fourth, the steep topography of Smallwood creates a unique situation for the intersection. Our staff is developing a plan for the intersection. Simply placing stop signs there may not be the best solution.

As for 2nd and Oak streets, similar issues can be applied. First, there is ample sight distance from all entrances to the intersection. Second, there is no major history of accidents at the intersection.

• See MAYOR page 4



Sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, the Pop-Up Pipers performed Saturday on the First Presbyterian Church lawn. They "pop up" once a month around town.

• Photo by Kim Lewicki

• WEATHER •

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Highlands Newspaper

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Publisher/Editor: Kim Lewicki

Reporters: Kristin Fox

Digital Media/Circulation - Jim Lewicki

Locally owned and operated by

Kim & Jim Lewicki

Adobe PDF version at

www.HighlandsInfo.com

265 Oak St. PO Box 2703

Highlands, N.C. 28741

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5,000 copies printed weekly.

Independently verified by:

Gannett Printing Knoxville TN

Letter Policy:

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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...MAYOR continued from page 2

Third, there is a light traffic pattern at the intersection. And finally, installing stop signs would require a total redesign of the intersection, including the loss of parking spaces. I do not see stop signs being installed at the intersection anytime soon.

One personal observation is in order here. I see cars approaching many of our intersections with stop signs. Unfortunately, many motorists use the roll-through method instead of coming to a complete stop. Self-confession, I have been guilty of that, too. The point is that all the traffic control devices we use do not guarantee that people will take personal responsibility for operating a vehicle safely.

Finally, there is the recurring issue of placing roundabouts in Highlands. Some folks still think a roundabout is needed at the intersection of US 64, Satulah, and South Streets. I like roundabouts, but I do not think our town's street system is a good match for these structures. Steve indicated that the smallest radius distance for a roundabout is 75 feet. Or put another way, a minimum distant for a roundabout would 50-yard circle. That distance is the width of a football field. He points out that large trucks, like those we see traversing US 64, must have this minimum distance to make a roundabout turn.

Examining the criteria for a roundabout at this location would reveal several

problematic issues. First, the traffic pattern is light. Second, there is no history of recurring major accidents. Third, to meet the area's needs for a basic roundabout would require more rights-of-way than exists now. My solution is simple. Every motorist should come to a full stop at the multiple stop signs at the intersection, especially at the one at the entry to US 64.

One final note. Sometimes residents take it upon themselves to place signs on state and town roads to control or moderate traffic. These private signs are not authorized by a government agency. Those who place such signs in a public rights-of-way may expose themselves to liability if the sign causes problems for motorists traversing the public vehicular byway.

Such is the case with an unauthorized sign recently placed on the signal light pole at the entrance to Little Bear Pen and US 64. Also, contractors or homeowners working next to public road rights-of-way should exercise caution when removing road signs. Notifying the town or NC-DOT is advised. At least the signs should be placed where they were removed when work is completed.

Tonight, July 16, is the Town Board meeting at the Highlands Community Center. It starts at 7 pm. The main agenda item is the continuation of the discussion with McGill Engineering concerning the Mirror Lake Project

• OBITUARY •

JJay Joannides

Artist, trailblazer and champion pun maker JJay Joannides died on June 13, 2026, at Solace Center in Asheville after an extended illness. She was born March 30, 1933, to Leone and Arthur Jones in Littlefield, TX, which JJay described as brown and treeless. Visiting grandparents in East Texas with greenery and creeks was a delightful change. After college, JJay taught elementary school art in Texas and Latin America.

After a divorce in the 1970s, she moved from Florida to North Carolina. JJay was legendary in Highlands for her love of horses (a stable for her beloved horse Missy was in her house), dogs, crows, flowers, rum, cats, Prairie Home Companion, long hikes (often on trails she made and named, such as the Wanderweg), art and her 35-year-old Mercedes. She was a word person, loving scrabble and writing imaginative stories. She was a member of Highlands' Episcopal Church of the Incarnation, and filled it on Sundays with magnificent flower arrange-



ments that she "borrowed" from the local forest and neighborhood yards.

JJay was preceded in death by a sister Jean Moore, and is survived by a niece and two nephews. Among many longtime friends, three who gave loving support at the end of JJay's life are Holly Roberts, Steve Lucas and Birney Robert.

A memorial service will be held at the Episcopal Church in Highlands on August 15, at 10:30 am, with a gathering in Jones Hall after the service. On Sunday, August 16, from 5-7 pm, friends are invited to a wake at Robin Austin's home at 605 Shortoff Rd., Highlands, for munchies and some of JJay's favorite drinks. Collectors of JJay's art are encouraged to bring it to the services for an exhibition of her work.

A donation to any organization that benefits the environment is a fitting tribute to this woman who always preferred being outside.

• BIZ/ORG NEWS •



From left: Nic Lancelotta, MountainTop Rotary president John Martin and Josh Husted.

This week MountainTop Rotary welcomed Nic Lancelotta, co-founder of Access Capital Management, and Josh Husted, Head of Wealth Management. Together they bring decades of institutional investment experience and a disciplined approach to helping individuals and families build and preserve wealth through thoughtfully diversified portfolios. Their presentation offered insights into today's investment landscape and long-term financial planning.

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Sapphire, Lake Glenville, Cashiers, Highlands, Scaly Mountain, Otto and Franklin

...CAP continued from page 1

ment.

If approved by a majority of voters, the amendment will require the North Carolina General Assembly to enact general laws capping annual increases in local property tax levies.

A "yes" vote supports amending the North Carolina Constitution to require the state legislature to pass laws limiting the amount that property taxes may increase.

A "no" vote opposes amending the North Carolina Constitution to require the state legislature to pass laws limiting the amount that property taxes may increase.

No one likes to pay taxes, but money funded through taxes keeps the wheels rolling in counties and municipalities.

Experts say counties and municipalities need property tax revenue because it is the most stable, independent funding source used to pay for essential local public services like schools, police, and infrastructure.

Cutting property taxes coupled with

federal cuts over the past two years has forced states, counties, and municipalities to absorb massive financial burdens, leading to delayed services, workforce cuts, and in some cases higher local taxes.

Local governments face three main challenges: higher expenses, less federal aid, and less local power. The town and the county have had to adjust budget expectations for schools and shift administrative and benefit costs directly onto state and local budgets. Healthcare rates have increased as have changes to Medicaid matching rates and incentives which has forced states and counties to pay a much larger share of resident care expenses.

On top of that, slashing discretionary grants for housing, public health, and non-profits leaves community organizations without the resources needed to aid vulnerable residents.

Braswell said there have been some really interesting ideas on how the county would get around the "no property tax increase" to pay for services.

• See CAP page 12



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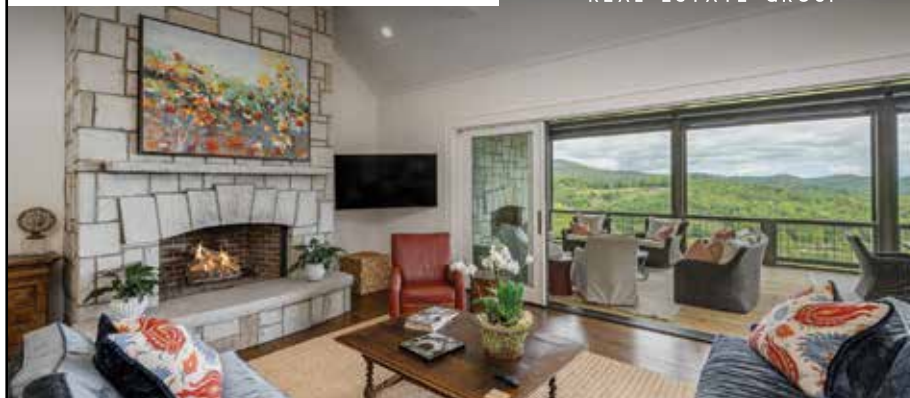
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The July Shuffle

Every town has its seasons. Ours has a dance.

It starts sometime around the Fourth of July, and everybody on the Plateau knows the steps, whether they've lived here 40 years or 40 minutes.

There's the Main Street Parking Waltz — that slow, hopeful loop past the storefronts, blinker on, radiating optimism. Everyone does it. The full-timer running to the hardware store, the summer resident meeting friends for lunch, the first-time visitor who can't believe how charming this town is and is about to say so out loud. We're all equals in the search for a parking spot.

Then there's the Grocery Store Two-Step — your cart, my cart, a polite stand-off by the tomatoes, a laugh, a "No, you go ahead." Somehow it always works. And, of course, the Restaurant Rumba, where waiting for a table becomes an excuse to stand on the sidewalk in perfect weather, talking with people you met only minutes before.

I've been doing this dance for 20 years. I traded big-city life for the Plateau two decades ago and never looked back. As a real estate broker, I have the privilege of introducing people to Highlands every season, but what I love most isn't helping them buy a home — it's watching them discover a life. Months after closing, they'll call to tell me about their first concert in the park, or the new friends they've made at a neighborhood cookout. Those conversations have very little to do with real estate and everything to do with finding "home."



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My own calendar has filled with those same moments: music in the park, cookouts and bonfires with friends, afternoons people-watching on Main Street, afternoons spent beside the river (and no, I will not be naming any secret spots), and conversations with visitors who ask what it's really like to live here. Fair warning — once I start talking about why I love this place, it's hard for me to stop.

Yes, July tests everyone's patience now and then. Mine included. But step back and look at what all that hustle really is. It's local businesses thriving, musicians playing to full lawns, grandchildren making memories, and someone falling in love with Highlands the exact same way I did 20 years ago — probably while looking for parking.

And here's the secret that the July Shuffle has taught me: it always ends. Winter arrives, the town exhales, and the pace softens. I love July for its energy, but I love January because it reminds me why I stayed. You can't truly appreciate one without the other.

So, this month, when you're four cars deep in the Main Street Waltz, take a breath and wave somebody through. Some have been coming here for 50 years. Some arrived last weekend. Some never planned to stay and somehow never left.

For a few weeks every July, we all learn the same dance. So have some patience and grace.

Around here, that's not traffic. That's everyone loving the town.

Upcoming HC Film Festival Screenings

Thurs., July 30

• A FREE viewing of *The Return of Lake Toxaway* as a prelude to HC Film Festival. 5-7p, viewing, reception, and Q&A at The Village Green of Cashiers.

Sat., Aug. 15

• As a prelude to the HC Film Festival, the viewing of "The Gardener + Walk in the Garden Soiree. Viewing is a 4p at PAC. Soiree to follow.

Sun., Aug. 16

• Never Not Yours + Meet the Director. 2p a PAC. FREE. This family dramedy tells the story of three adult siblings visiting their family's remote retired cabin for a weekend visit.

For more information, go to www.highlandscashiersfilmfestival.com

...KITTEN continued from page 1



HF&R officer Seth Schmitt was able to grab the kitten and hand it off to HF&R officer Travis Brooks.

Photo by Kim Lewicki

Whitaker had camped at Blue Valley, and it turns out a tiny, tortoiseshell kitten had sought shelter on the chassis of the van where it was warm and dry during the storm that blew in Monday night.

With no one to turn to, Whitaker, with the kitten hanging on under the van, headed for town, parked and called the police.

Since rescuing the kitten wasn't going to be quick, they decided to move to the police station parking lot. Whitaker followed them to the police station and parked where their efforts resumed. The kitten ran back and forth the length of the chassis, meowing all the way, up into the engine block, onto the spare tire, the heater vent and on and on.

With the hood up, at one point, HPD officer John Fairchild said he almost got it.

"It peeked out and I almost had it, but it got away," he said.

Highlands Fire & Rescue was called with hopes they could jack the van up so someone could reach underneath and get

the kitten, but the van was too big and the jack too small.

When it started pouring rain, everyone decided to move to the fire station where the van could be pulled into the bay where it was dry.

It took a while, with HF&R officers scooting under the van on their bellies and backs trying from all angles to locate and coax the kitten out.

Finally, around 12:45 p.m., the kitten moved into a position toward the rear of the van where it could be grabbed, gently by HF&R officer Seth Schmitt.

Officer Fairchild said from the start that unless someone else wanted the kitten, he was taking it home.

"After what it's been through it deserves a home," he said. "This is one lucky kitten."

With the kitten safe and boxed up, he headed to the vet.

Whitaker said she has had mice get up under the chassis but never a kitten and now she has a very special Highlands story to add to her travel log.



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• LETTERS •

This new law could silence your vote

Dear Editor,

Last week we saw several Letters-to-the-Editor about how Macon County Redistricting is not responding to voter representation. It's not just Macon County. The state of NC is also working against voters.

Across party lines, most of us agree on two basics: every eligible voter should be able to vote without harassment or confusion, and every community should trust that ballots are counted fairly. HB 958, the sweeping "Election Law Changes" bill, moves us in the opposite direction.

Behind its bland title is a 30 plus page overhaul that would make it easier to challenge and investigate ballots,

harder for military and overseas voters to cast theirs, and would even bar election officials from publicly encouraging people to vote. It shifts more control over our elections to partisan state level actors and treats ordinary voters' participation as something suspect.

This isn't about who you vote for; it's about whether your vote is treated as a right to be respected or a problem to be silenced. If we let rules like HB 958 pass quietly, we may not notice the damage until voters start being turned away, delayed, or drowned in red tape.

HB 958 has passed the House and is currently in the

Senate Rules and Operations Committee before heading to the state Senate. Please pay attention before this bill becomes law. Call Senator Kevin Corbin (919-733-5875) and members of the Senate Rules and Operations Committee (Chair Bill Rabon 919-733-5963; Vice Chair Warren Daniel 919-715-7823) and tell them to oppose HB 958. Our elections should make it easier for eligible voters to be heard, not easier for politicians to silence them.

Constance Neely
Scaly Mountain, NC

Reclaim Healthcare doesn't want HCA/Mission Hospital to close - just to be held accountable

Dear Editor,

Thank you for your recent coverage of Mayor Taylor's attempt to pass a resolution asking HCA Healthcare CEO Sam Hazen to engage with our communities in WNC. Mr. Hazen must address the deficiencies at Mission Hospital in Asheville, as it is the only Level I trauma center in our region. If the worst happens, we are all reliant on Mission for care.

Unfortunately, the commission members of Highlands did not pass this resolution.

We agree with Commissioner Amy Patterson's assessment that the resolution is not accusatory. It only asks for collaborative engagement to address the issues.

In addition to endorsement by the Southwest Commission, a similar resolution by the counterpart Land of Sky Commission representing Madison, Buncombe, Henderson and Transylvania counties asking for this engagement has been passed. It has also been passed by 10 Land of Sky municipalities and Franklin has also recently endorsed this resolution as well.

Brian Stiehler, a member of the Highlands Cashiers Hospital board publicly stated, while acknowledging there are issues, that our advocacy organization, Reclaim Healthcare WNC, wants "every community in Western

NC to get rid of for profit hospitals like HCA/Mission Hospital."

That is not accurate. As indicated on our website, Reclaim has two goals. First, "Holding HCA leadership accountable to provide consistently excellent patient care and experiences," and secondly, "Empowering WNC residents to be their own best health care advocates."

We're grateful that some patients do receive excellent care at Mission. That said, the excellence at Mission is inconsistent as evidenced by the repeated Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services findings of Immediate Jeopardy, the most serious federal citation possible. Mission has been cited three times in the past two years. These citations have resulted from multiple avoidable harms and deaths and these findings of Immediate Jeopardy are related primarily to inadequate staffing and resources.

Our concern is for the well-being of HC Hospital patients who are transferred to Mission. Most of us in the region will at some point want or need services at Mission. We should be able to trust that no one will be at risk for avoidable harm, poor experiences, or worse.

Aaron Sarver

Are you working harder just to stay in place?

Dear Editor,

Are you working harder just to stay in place?

Do you feel as though it is getting harder to make ends meet, even when you are doing everything right?

You work. You pay taxes. You save when you can. Yet housing, insurance, healthcare, food, and basic services keep taking more.

That may not be personal failure. It may be a system that rewards asset ownership through tax policy, housing scarcity, inherited wealth, corporate power, and political access far more reliably than it rewards ordinary work.

This is not simply left versus right. It is a conflict between the public interest and a set of rules that increasingly protects wealth, subsidizes power, and tells everyone

else to tighten their belts, work harder, and expect less. For example, money made from investments is often taxed less than money earned from a paycheck, local rules can make it harder to build affordable housing, and public money can help big companies without giving taxpayers much say in return.

Anti-communist rhetoric is rising again. The irony is that indiscriminate labeling is itself a propaganda tactic: reduce complicated people and arguments to a contaminating word, then discredit them without answering the substance. McCarthyism used the tactic with devastating consequences, as did Soviet authorities against critics.

When ordinary families need help, we hear about

• See LETTERS page 10

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...LETTERS continued from page 9

dependency, government waste, and moral hazard. We are warned: "Beware communism."

When corporations need help, the language changes.

Then it becomes stability. Competitiveness. National security. Strategic investment.

Sometimes intervention is justified. The double standard is not.

In 2025, the federal government exchanged \$8.9 billion in semiconductor funding for a 9.9 percent stake in Intel. Taxpayers now share in the potential gain and loss, yet the government holds no board seat.

Maybe the investment will succeed. Maybe not.

Either way, citizens deserve answers.

Why Intel? Who measured the risk? How will success be judged? Who benefits if it works? Who answers if it fails?

Those are not partisan questions. They are stewardship questions.

The larger picture is harder to ignore. In early 2026, the wealthiest 1 percent held about \$27.6 trillion in corporate equities and mutual-fund shares. The bottom half held about \$590 billion.

That means the bottom half held roughly two cents in those assets for every dollar held by the top 1 percent.

This is how the stock market can rise, America can grow richer on paper, and millions of Americans can still fall behind.

We see the local version in Highlands.

The people who cook the meals, repair the homes, teach the children, maintain the roads, care for older residents, and keep businesses open increasingly cannot

afford to live near the town they sustain.

More homes are treated as investment vehicles. Workers commute farther. Young families leave. Businesses struggle to find staff.

A town can look prosperous while being hollowed out from within.

That is the real danger.

It is not our visitors, retirees, workers, conservatives, or liberals. It is a system in which housing is increasingly valued for its investment return, labor is treated primarily as a cost to minimize, and the town risks being marketed more successfully as a luxury destination than sustained as a year-round community.

Left and right should be able to agree on this:

If the public carries the risk, the public should share the reward.

If a business is truly competitive, it should not need political connections to stay afloat.

If a town depends on workers, those workers should have a fair chance to belong to it.

So ask the questions the "communism" slogans help us avoid:

Who benefits? Who bears the risk? Who receives the return? Who gets rescued? And who gets the bill?

If you feel as though you are working harder just to stay in place, you are not imagining it.

The system may not be designed specifically to hold you back, but many of its rules steadily direct wealth away from work and toward ownership.

David Baumgartner
Highlands

Democrats don't hate America; they just believe in an America for all

Dear Editor,

The Democrats do not hate America. This is red meat fodder that the right-wing media promotes to keep us all divided and distracted. Right wing media is financed by ultra wealthy people who want to take complete control of our country and indeed the world. Their Project 2025 lays it out in black and white.

Newt Gingrich began the process of demonizing Democrats. Consequently, there is very little cooperation across the aisle, in state or federal houses. Right wing media uses fear, hate, and anger, some of

the worst impulses of human nature, to fire up their base against the Democrats. That 30% of the American public has fallen for their trickery is both sad and pathetic.

Our only hope as a nation is that, like the reflecting pool, the Republican party will implode when it becomes unavoidably obvious that they are on the path of the ultra-rich to gain more at the expense of the rest of us.

David Stearns
Otto, NC

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...CAP continued from page 5

"I am not sure how that all would work," she said. "I know how the state laws say we have to tax property and that is what I know how to do. Our commission and our County Manager have done a really good job at keeping us at revenue neutral when it comes to property taxes, while trying to cover services and additional needs every year. But it is a balancing act and while no one gets everything the county has made it work well."

The Highlands Town Board, along with other municipalities in the state, passed a resolution against capping property tax – not that they plan to increase rates which they haven't done for almost 10 years and didn't do for the '26-'27 fiscal year – but they don't want their hands tied in case they have to.

Mayor Pat Taylor said he routinely speaks with other mayors about the challenges facing municipalities since NC is one of the fastest growing states in the country.

"With that growth comes pressures on communities to provide services to meet continuous demands for basic services," he said. "The same can be said for counties that also are experiencing rapid growth. We need tax money to do that."

In addition, the federal and state governments have continually passed down unfunded mandates to local governments that impact local budgets.

"Elected officials have concerns about the property tax constitutional amendment on the ballot in November because limiting a town or county from increasing property taxes to meet new demands, especially in communities experiencing exponential growth worries all elected officials that I know," he said.

Taylor said the big question is, if that amendment passes what

services and programs will have to be reduced or eliminated to meet the state mandated balanced budget requirement for county or municipal governments?

HB 1089 was approved by a 73-46 vote. In the North Carolina State Senate, HB 1089 was approved by a 31-15 vote. Votes in both chambers were mostly along party lines, with Republicans supporting the amendment and all but one Democrat opposing it.

Republicans claim property taxes are out of control with some local government abusing their power and overtaking and underdelivering for their constituents.

It's time for reform, said State Rep. Destin Hall (R-87).

But State Rep. Deb Butler (D-18) said "The truth is, property taxes are not rising because cities and counties suddenly went on a wild, drunken binge and started spending like sailors. It's because of the cost shifting that we have done from this body."

State Rep. Alan Branson (R-59) said capping the rate changes the incentive structure for local governments by preventing expanded budgeting by automatic absorption of large revenue increases from reevaluation.

Macon County is going through a revaluation right now and there is pending legislation regarding that process, too.

Pending is SB 889 is an act requiring certain counties with reappraisals effective as of Jan. 1, 2026 to use a schedule of values adopted prior to that date for the '26-'27 fiscal year, requiring those counties to use the 2026 schedule of values for '27-'28 and future fiscal years until the county's next general reappraisal.

Macon County is reappraised every four years.

Highlands Hurricanes boys' team wins again, girls swim well

**By Steve Hott
Coach**

On Thursday, July 2 the Highlands Hurricanes Swim Team traveled to Sylva to swim against host team JCST (Jackson County Swim Team) and CCAC (Cherokee County Aquatics Club). Highlands' boys won and the girls finished 2nd.

The Hurricanes were led by Jaycee Powell who scored 19 pts. And won 2 events. Emma Dennisoff, Bella Batista, Luca Maseko and Melanie Zabrian all scored 18 pts. Denisoff won 3 events, Batista, Maseko and Zabrian all won 2. Rocco Basil and Justin Powell both won 2 events and brought home 17 pts. Max Jestin, Helix Sutton-Sharpe, Anna Shchegachova, Charlie and Emily Zbrowski all brought home 16 pts. Emily won 2 events, the others all won 1. Ivan Shchegachov, Zana Maseko, and Stella Kerr all won a race and had 15 pts.

Nikita Denisoff brought home 14 pts, Ian Batista 13, Estelle Edwards 12, and Ezra Cannon 11. Ben Shchegachov and Agatha Jestin had 10.5 pts, while Lucas Zabrian and Blakey Sears had 9. Katherine Wise had 8, Annabelle Searles and Hananiah Edwards 7.5, Azariah Edwards 6.5, Senna Sherrill 3.5, Addyson Cannon 2.5, and Nehemiah Edwards 1.5.

The Hurricanes next meet will be the 2026 MSL (Mountain Swim League) Conference Championship in Franklin on Saturday, July 18, 2026.

The Highlands Hurricanes are a Highlands Recreation Park Team that practices mostly in the evenings at the Highlands Recreation Park Pool. To join the swimmer must be able to swim 25 yards (the length of pool unassisted). For further information please call 828.421.4121.

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...REDISTRICTING continued from page 1

county showing up to express their concerns to commissioners.

Prior to the public comment period, Commissioners John Shearl, liaison to the MC Planning Board, made the announcement that no action would be taken on the redistricting decision at Tuesday's meeting.

"As liaison to the planning board, and it is appropriate as one of the front runners for redistricting in this county, I will not be seeking any action or expect any action on the redistricting tonight," said Shearl. "We need to spend some time out in the community for the next several months and talk to people who did not show up for the planning board meetings; however, the issue will be introduced from planning board tonight as an agenda item."

Redistricting of the county's precincts has been discussed on and off since 2023. In 2023, county commissioners voted 3-2 to approve an option to divide Macon County into three districts (Highlands, Franklin and Nantahala) with one commissioner elected from each district and two at-large seats. However, before such a change could take place, the commissioners' recommendation for redistricting had to be approved by the state.

In the 2024 primary election, current Commissioner Barry Breeden defeated former Commissioner Paul Higdon. The state then requested the board vote again on the redistricting decision as Higdon had voted in favor of the change. The decision was further delayed as Breeden stated he was not ready to vote on the issue as a new commissioner.

After nearly a year, discussions about redistricting began again with Commissioner Shearl's proposal to recommend that the state give the county permission to revise how it elects its commissioners. In January 2026, the board voted on the issue again deciding to hold a public hearing on adopting the three districts, two at-large option for voters.

Following a significant outcry from the public against redistricting to the 3-2 option and the February public hearing, the county voted 4 to 1 against a motion from Shearl to move ahead with the 3-2 redistricting request to the state. The board then decided to send the redistricting topic to the planning board, request-

ing the board look at all the options for redistricting and make a recommendation to the commissioners.

In June, the planning board voted to recommend that candidates live in the district they are running for but voted on by all citizens of Macon County. In July, the planning board met again and voted 4 to 1 to recommend to commissioners that they adopt the 3-2 redistricting option.

Fast forward to this week's meeting of the commissioners with the public once again coming forward to speak with most voicing their opposition to the 3-2 option with a preference for a 5-district option.

"It is incomprehensible to me that public servants would consider placing individual political ambition above the goal of ensuring fair representation of Macon County citizens by instituting a 3-2 voting model," said Joanne Roesner of Scaly Mountain. "It is equally unconscionable that elected officials here and members of the planning board would completely disregard public comment in making their decisions on this issue and others. I see no benefits to citizenry of countywide voting and especially at-large commissioners."

Roesner said the only advantages of the 3-2 option are for those candidates who wish to run.

"Voters should choose candidates and elect officials; candidates should not be allowed to choose their voters. The only fair option here is five districts with each district voting for their own commissioners. This allows us to elect candidates who intimately know local issues and have vested interest in the outcome of the resolution of issues and allows greater accountability of elected public servants to the voters who elected them."

Roesner said democracy at its best is one direct vote for each woman, for each man.

"I urge you to place this into the forum of ultimate public expression, place redistricting on the ballot and allows citizens to choose. Is this not after all, how democracy should work?"

One concern with citizens that live in Highlands and Nantahala is that they will not be fairly represented on the board if the commissioners decide to go with the 3-2 option.

"The redistricting decision for me is

• See REDISTRICTING page 14



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Presenter: Bob Inglis, Tuesday, July 21, 10 AM-12 PM
Sponsored by Hillary Cone



The Rise of Motown: "The Music of Young America"

Presenter: Tom Dell, Wednesday, July 22, 10 AM-12 PM
Sponsored by Esther and Jim Stokes



Seeds of Hope: How Conservation Horticulture is Preserving Southeastern Biodiversity

Presenter: Jennifer Cruse-Sanders, Wednesday, July 22, 2-4 PM
Sponsored by Kitty and Glenn Bosio



The British Invasion and American Rock's Response

Presenter: Tom Dell, Thursday, July 23, 10 AM-12 PM
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Navigating the New Global Economy: Trade, Borders, and Technology

Presenter: Santanu Chatterjee, Tuesday, July 28, 10 AM-12 PM
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...REDISTRICTING continued from page 13

about whether you will strengthen local representation and public trust or weaken both of them,” said Constance Neely also from Scaly Mountain. “I want my commissioner to live in my community; I want my commissioner to know my community, and I want my community to know its commissioner so well that they can be held accountable at the ballot box and that is why I support the 5-district option of pure voting.”

Neely said across three planning board meetings the public comments did not support the 3-2 option, only one comment supported it, but the planning board gave the recommendation for 3-2 option.

“That includes votes from some of the planning board members who never spoke or explained their reasoning during deliberations. When the public shows up in good faith and board members responds with silence, it undermines the confidence in the process and raises serious concerns about how that outcome was reached,” she said. “If there is going to be a change it should strengthen repre-

sentation not dilute it, like it would do for Scaly Mountain.”

Highlands resident Margaret Pickett agreed with Neely asking commissioners to reconsider the adoption of the 3-2 option.

“District voting, also known as pure voting option, allows the voters in the district to choose their representative giving them greater access to their representative and allows the representative to have better knowledge of the needs and issues of their district,” said Pickett “It is the most logical and fairest way to go. The pure voting option would give the voters greater say and each commissioner a smaller constituency so voters would have the the ability to know their representative.”

Highlands Town Board Commissioner Amy Patterson, who presented the 5-district option, urged the commission to do what commissions in the past have done – put the question on the ballot.

“Let the good people of Macon County decide,” she said.

MC Teachers of the Year 2026

Bartram Academy - Janet Walker

Macon Middle School - Annie Hornsby

East Franklin Elementary School- Caitlin Lambert

Highlands School - Maci Bears

Mountain View Intermediate School - Brian Burns

Cartoogechaye Elementary School - Holly Parlier

lotla Valley Elementary School - Susan Kannengiesser

Nantahala School - Mikel Morgan

South Macon Elementary School - Bailey Tallent

Franklin High School - Meg Mileti

Macon Early College - Katie Crawford

Support Person of the Year 2026

Bartram Academy - Heather Wallace

Macon Middle School - Nicole Holbrooks

East Franklin Elementary School - Anna Thompson

Highlands School - Laura Deppe

Mountain View Intermediate School - Julie Cochran

Cartoogechaye Elementary School - Mike Arvey

lotla Valley Elementary School - Amanda Barker

Nantahala School - Mike Waters

South Macon Elementary School - Myschelle Baker

Franklin High School - Dennis Ray & Tina Higdon

Macon Early College - Ed Nagy

CTE Teacher of the Year

Michelle Brooks, Business Teacher – Franklin High School

Exceptional Children's Teacher of the Year

Morgan Breedlove, Self-Contained Teacher, South Macon Elementary School

Exceptional Children's Support Person of the Year

Suzanne Younce, EC Teacher Assistant, South Macon Elementary School

School Nutrition Manager of the Year

Deanna Lucky, School Nutrition Manager, Franklin High School

School Nutrition Employee of the Year

Jeanelyn Moore, School Nutrition Assistant, Macon Middle School

• UPCOMING EVENTS •

Upcoming CLE Lectures Address key Science and Technology Issues

By Daniel M. Evans
CLE Board Member

The Highlands-Cashiers Center for Life Enrichment (CLE) invites you to join nationally recognized experts for explorations into some of today's most provocative science and technology topics - including post-COVID public health, climate change, biodiversity, and the future of nuclear energy.

This series of lectures will kick-off on July 20 with Dr. Kathleen Ethier providing insight into current unprecedented changes in the nation's public health system. Dr. Ethier is a social psychologist who recently retired from federal service after 26 years at the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, GA. Her work was primarily on adolescent mental and physical health, with a particular focus on the roll of schools in that effort. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she led the Community Mitigation Task Force in the first months of CDC's response and led the Teacher and School Staff Vaccination Program in March 2021. Since retiring from public service last year, she became a founding partner in Triple Dividend Partners, a consulting firm focused on supporting nonprofits and foundations as they navigate the current changing federal landscape. Dr. Ethier is a graduate of The College of New Rochelle and recipient of a PhD from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

Can we use true conservative principles, including free market techniques, to solve climate change issues? Can Republicans lead on climate action? On July 21, CLE brings retired Congressman Robert Inglis (SC District 4, including Greenville and Spartanburg) to Highlands to give us an insiders view of the debate. Bob is currently Executive Director of RepublicEn.org, a growing national community of conservatives who believe that the power of the free market, not government regulation, is the most effective and sustainable tool for addressing the climate crisis. Once a climate skeptic, Mr. Inglis now lectures at 100+ engagements per year promoting his conservative approach to climate action. Mr. Inglis is a graduate of Duke University and the University of Virginia School of Law.

On July 22 Dr. Jennifer Cruse-Sanders, Director of the State Botanical Garden of Georgia at The University of Georgia will address how conservation horticulture is preserving biodiversity and the resulting benefits to ecosystem function, landscape resilience and food security. She will discuss the importance of the southeastern U.S. to global biodiversity and share highlights from the State Botanical Garden's efforts to conserve rare species through horticultural interventions. Dr. Cruse-Sanders holds an undergraduate degree from Boston University and Masters and Doctoral degrees from The University of Georgia and is a widely published expert in this area.

On August 4th, CLE welcomes back returning lecturer John Kotek to provide insight into why so many people are talking about nuclear energy. Big Tech's investments of billions in AI and data centers have resulted in increased public resistance to these facilities yet, there is no apparent end in sight to growth. One key question at the center of this controversy is how will high-energy demand data facilities be powered in a sensible fashion without placing undue burdens on the electrical power grid and other power consumers? In response to this very real need, the U.S. and foreign governments and private investment are investing hundreds of billions in new nuclear energy technology. As Senior Vice President for Policy at the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI), John has an expert view of the current state the nuclear power industry and its potential role as a key source of energy. Prior to joining NEI, John was Acting assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy at the U.S. Department of Energy. John holds a Bachelor of Science in Nuclear Engineering from the University of Illinois and an MBA from the University of Maryland.

Please join us for these timely and enlightening topics at CLE's Lecture Hall in the Peggy Crosby Center at 348 South 5th Street. The cost for each program is \$35 for members and \$50 for nonmembers.

Reservations may be made online at <http://www.clehighlands.com>, which lists specific dates, times and locations or by calling the CLE Office at (828) 526-8811. Walk-ins are also welcome, as space allows.

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Barak Norton reunion is Sunday, July 26

The Barak Norton Heritage Association cordially invites all descendants and friends of Barak Norton to the annual family reunion on Sunday, July 26, 2026. This year marks the 154th anniversary of the family reunion started in 1872! Our special guest speaker will be Robert "Bud" Hyatt, author of "Keep a Good Backlog on the Fire,"

memories of a Cashiers Valley Boyhood. The meeting begins at 11:30 am at the Historic Whiteside Cove School House located at 4601 Whiteside Cove Road, Highlands, NC. Bring your favorite dish to share and join us for a day of music, stories, food, and fellowship as we celebrate our mountain heritage.

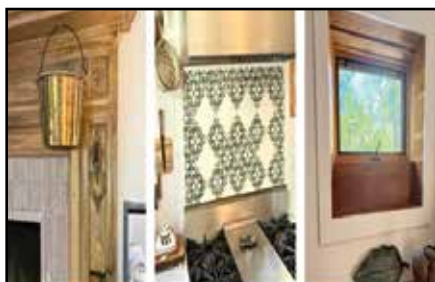
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...FLOCK continued from page 1

However, after this week's meeting of the Macon County Board of Commissioners, the cameras will no longer be used in the various locations throughout the county except on school grounds.

At their July regular meeting, commissioners voted unanimously to defund the Flock Safety cameras as well as called for the removal of the cameras as soon as possible.

The cameras that are located on school property will be allowed to remain on campuses, and those that are not located at schools will be moved onto school property. The county approved the expenditure of \$47,000 to fund the use of Flock Safety cameras in the 2026-2027 budget.

Macon County Sheriff Brent Holbrooks gave a presentation to the board prior to their vote.

"These cameras are utilized daily to assist in various crimes including breaking and entering, larceny, abduction and narcotic related offenses as well as non-criminal such as dementia, silver and amber alerts," said Holbrooks. "Since we have implemented these cameras the amount of narcotics that have been seized, and the number of successful criminal investigations have increased significantly."

He said some of our most successful narcotic seizures have been aided by the use of these cameras.

"Additionally, our ALPRs recently helped us assist Jackson County in the recovery of a kidnapped child."

Holbrooks reminded the board that there are no controlling North Carolina decisions that prohibit the use of ALPRs.

"Courts have generally recognized that license plates displayed on vehicles traveling on public roadways are visible to anyone and individuals do not have an expectation of privacy in public," he said.

The use of the Flock Cameras by the MCSO has been widely discussed on social media with many expressing their concern over the use of the cameras. Critics of the use of ALPRs have raised concerns about privacy, data sharing, oversight and the potential for misuse.

In response to the public debate, the MCSO recently addressed the use of this surveillance technology, clarifying specific operational and privacy parameters.

The cameras do not collect names, driver's license information or other personal identifying information — they only

capture images of license plates and vehicle characteristics. Information collected by the Flock system is automatically deleted after 30 days unless needed for an active legal investigation.

Only sworn law enforcement officers who have been granted authorized access may utilize the Flock system. Access is restricted to authorized personnel and is governed by agency policy, required training, user authentication, and audit procedures to help ensure the system is used appropriately and for legitimate law enforcement purposes.

The cameras are mounted exclusively in public spaces where there is no expectation of privacy.

"The Macon County Sheriff's Office remains committed to using technology responsibly while respecting the rights and privacy of the public we serve. We believe transparency and community engagement are essential to maintaining public trust," the sheriff's office said.

MC Commission Chair Josh Young said people have a nervous tendency to the government as a whole.

"There has not been a lot of generalized public information put out there about this and a lot of people don't even know what Flock cameras are. The public reads the posts on Facebook and social media and it flares up."

He said in his heart, he feels the people he represents and work with -- the average working man or woman that he runs into -- don't want the cameras.

"I represent those people, and they put me here. I have had an overwhelming majority of people who just don't want the cameras. Very few people have come to me and said they want them, and most don't know what they are."

During the public comment period Tuesday night, no one spoke for the cameras — almost all felt their use treaded on their Fourth Amendment rights and equated their use to unwarranted surveillance.

The Fourth Amendment protects against unreasonable searches and seizures by the government in areas with a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as homes. It mandates that warrants be issued only upon probable cause — meaning trustworthy information that a crime occurred — and that these warrants specifically describe the places and items to be searched or seized.

• BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NEWS •

Impact Health to lead landmark Rural Health Initiative in Western North Carolina

NC Department of Health and Human Services names Impact Health Region 1 NC ROOTS Hub Lead, advancing coordinated rural health priorities across 19 counties

The NC Department of Health and Human Services has selected Impact Health as the NC Rural Organizations Orchestrating Transformation for Sustainability (NC ROOTS) Hub Lead for Region 1. In this role, Impact Health will lead implementation of the North Carolina Rural Health Transformation Program (NCRHTP) in Western North Carolina (WNC).

NCRHTP is supported by \$213 million in federal funding from the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The statewide program aims to improve health outcomes, expand access to care, and create a more connected and sustainable rural health system that serves all North Carolinians.

The NC ROOTS Hub model creates regionally governed networks that bring together healthcare providers, behavioral health organizations, and community partners to address the unique needs of rural communities. Impact Health will lead WNC's network across 19 counties and the Qualla Boundary in Region 1.

Laurie Stradley, DrPH, CEO of Impact Health, said the state's designation builds upon Impact Health's proven role as a regional convener and collaborator — an approach shaped by its work with regional partners through the NC Healthy Opportunities Pilot.

"It's a great privilege to be selected as the Region 1 ROOTS Hub Lead," Stradley said. "Our proposal reflects the lessons and expertise gained through Healthy Opportunities. Over the next several years, we will focus on strengthening, expanding, and sustaining efforts that are already working in WNC, while improving coordination and communication across partners."

Regional Priorities & Partners

Over the next five years, Impact Health and other NC ROOTS Hub Leads will support rural communities by:

- Improving behavioral health and substance use services
- Enhancing care coordination across regions
- Leveraging digital tools to improve outcomes
- Expanding access to primary care
- Strengthening healthcare through workforce development

Currently, Impact Health is in the

process of convening rural hospitals, primary care providers, behavioral health organizations, federally qualified health centers, local health departments, community-based organizations, and social service agencies to complete a regional needs assessment and asset-mapping process. Findings will inform the Region 1 Hub Action Plan and guide investments to strengthen rural health infrastructure across the

During the first year of the five-year initiative, Dogwood Health Trust will provide capital to support implementation and establish the Region 1 NC ROOTS Hub, Stradley noted.

"Healthy rural communities depend on dynamic and connected systems," said Dr. Susan Mims, President and CEO of Dogwood Health Trust. "This is an opportunity to strengthen the relationships,

partnerships and systems that help people access and receive high-quality care close to home. Dogwood supports Impact Health as it brings community organizations together around a shared vision for healthier rural communities."

North Carolina is presently home to more than 3.5 million rural residents, the second-largest rural population in the nation.



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SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING

Receive the seeds of grace

Ken Langsdorf
Lutheran Church of the
Holy Family

In teaching about what the Reign of God is like, Jesus told a parable about a farmer who scattered seeds everywhere. The farmer sowed seeds on a path, on rocky ground, among thorns, and on good soil. (Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23)

Part of understanding this parable is a teaching about the way people receive the Good News of the Reign of God. Some are receptive to this Good News, and it transforms their lives, while others resist and reject the Good News, and others become distracted by life and ignore the life transforming message. The Holy Spirit is at work in us to make us receptive to this Good News and even let it change the way we think and live.

Another way to hear this parable that is encouraging to me, is to hear this teaching and observe the life of Jesus and see how he went to all kinds of people with the Good News of the Reign of God. He went to Jewish people, Samaritans, Gentiles, even a Roman army officer. Jesus scattered the seeds of the Reign of God to fishermen, poor people, oppressed people, demon possessed people, people with leprosy, tax collectors, sinners, wealthy people, educated people, persecuted people. Jesus sowed the seeds of the Reign of God to everyone and anyone.

What are the seeds of the Reign of God? What is this life transforming Good News? I think what we see in Jesus' ministry and what we hear in his teaching is a message of welcome. Everyone and anyone is welcome to know and experience the grace of God. We are all invited to receive the mercy of God. God's forgiveness flows to everyone, no matter their past sin and failures. The invitation is to be filled and transformed by the undeserved love of God. The invitation is to come into God's healing and peace. We are called out of our darkness into the light of God. This Good News rescues us from the things that crush and control our lives and into God's salvation.

Some people received these "seeds of the Reign of God" and their lives were changed. Think about Matthew, the one who recorded this story and presented it in the Gospel he wrote. Matthew was a hated and despised Tax Collector. He worked for the Roman oppressors and made his money by over taxing his own people. He was despised. He may have even hated himself. But Jesus invited Matthew to follow him and live a new life.

• See SPIRITUALLY page 19

• 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

5th Sunday Singing featuring Georgia Mountain Trio;

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

Senior Pastor: Rev. Amy Spivey

Assoc. Pastor: Rev. Wonyeong Lee 828-743-5298

Sundays: School at 9:30; Worship & Kids 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

743-5470 • www.cashiers.church

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

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

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION

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

5th and Main streets • www.incarnationwnc.org

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

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

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

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HIGHLANDS

828-526-4153 • www.fbchighlands.org

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

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

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

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

828-526-3175 • fpchighlands.org

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

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

GOLDMINE BAPTIST CHURCH

(Off Franklin/Highlands Rd)

Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

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

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HAMBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

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

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

Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

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

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

HIGHLANDS CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Dan Robinson • 11339 Buck Creek Road

The Highlands Central Baptist Church is temporarily

sharing the facilities of the Shortoff Baptist Church.

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

HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Dr. Randy Lucas, Pastor 526-3376

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www.highlandsmethodist.org

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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

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(4.5 miles from NC 107)

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

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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

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

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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 June 7. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.

Accidents responded to: July 4

• Vehicles 1 and 2 were parked facing north in a parking area off of Hickory Street. Vehicle 1 backed out and hit vehicle 2.

July 11

• Vehicle 1 was traveling east on US 64. It ran off the road to the right and came to rest against an embankment.

July 12

• Vehicle 1 was driving south on NC 28 (Walhalla Road). It ran off the road to the right and down an embankment.

• Last week officers issued six citations and 13 warning tickets.

June 7

• At noon, numerous household items and furniture was re-

ported missing from a house on Hummingbird Circle in Highlands. HPD Chief Andrea Holland said at this time the claim is unfounded.

July 8

• At 8:15 a.m., officers responded to a call for service at Spinx on N. 4th Street where someone was yelling and trying to open a truck door.

July 10

• At 11 p.m., Hilario Pacheco Ruiz, 48, of Franklin, NC, was arrested for DUI and driving left of center on US 64 west (Franklin Road). He was issued an unsecured bond. His trial date is Oct. 22, 2026.

July 11

• At 8:20 p.m., officers responded to a call of simple assault, disorderly conduct and drunkenness at the Primary Restaurant on Main Street where a man claimed he was slapped across the face.

• At 8:30 p.m., Holly Robinson Harris, 51, of Mt. Pleasant, SC, was arrested for simple assault, disorderly conduct and drunken-

ness at the Primary Restaurant on Main Street. She was issued a \$500 secured bond. Her trial date is Aug. 4, 2026.

• At 8:30 p.m., Reed Alexander Harris, 55, of Mt. Pleasant, SC, was arrested for simple assault, disorderly conduct and drunkenness at The Primary Restaurant on Main Street. He was issued a \$500 secured bond. His trial date is Aug. 4, 2026.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from July 7.

July 7

• At 9:59 a.m., the dept. was first-responders at a location on Country Club Drive.

• At 9:45 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Bowery Road.

• At 9:55 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Garnet Rock Trail.

July 8

• At 4:18 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance at a location on Buck Creek Road.

• At 5:46 p.m., the dept. re-

sponded to a call of an unattended fire on Jack Wilcox Lane.

July 9

• At 10:20 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Main Street.

• At 10:28 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Dendy Orchard Road.

• At 1:50 p.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to the Cashiers FD.

• At 3:26 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Shelby Court West.

July 10

• At 11:39 a.m., the dept. responded to a false alarm at a residence on Buck Creek Road.

• At 5:44 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of a tree on a building on Clear Creek Road.

• At 8:57 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance at a location on S. 4th Street.

July 11

• At 11:22 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on West View Way.

• At 1:17 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of a power line down on Horse Cove Road.

• At 2:42 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Klein Road.

• At 7:11 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Old Walhalla Road.

July 12

At 3:03 p.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to the Cashiers FD.

At 10:32 a.m., the dept. responded to motor vehicle accident on Buck Creek Road.

July 14

• At 2:45 a.m., the dept. responded to a call of a possible motor vehicle accident on US 64 est (Franklin Road) but nothing was found.

...SPIRITUALLY from page 18

The seeds of the Reign of God were sown in Matthew's heart and transformed him for eternity. He recorded the Good News that gave him life, and we have these words to read today. The seeds of the Reign of God are sown through Matthew's writing.

As we study the words of Matthew – the Good News of Jesus – the seeds of the Reign of God are planted in us. It is thrilling to see how the Holy Spirit works in our lives to transform us so that through our lives the “fruit of the Holy Spirit” is known. Paul describes this fruit of the Holy Spirit as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23a)

Receive the seeds of grace and see how the Holy Spirit will transform your life.

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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. 11a-7pm, Saturday 11am-6pm and Sunday 1-6pm

PICKLE BALL

• At the Recreation Dept. there are three indoor Pickle Ball courts and six outdoor courts. Pickle Ball can be played every Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs. and Friday 10am-pm outdoors for the summer

MTN FINDINGS

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

FIBBER MAGEES

• Fibber Magee's Thrift Store on Laurel Street Hours: Wed. & Fri. - 10a to 4p. Sat. - 10a to 2p.

FARMERS MARKET

• The "market" is open every Saturday 8a to 12:30p in KH Founders Park on Pine Street.

ALL WEEK

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

2nd 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

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

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.

Tuesdays & Thurs.

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

Wednesdays

• The Literacy & Learning Center offers a FREE weekly Citizenship Class led by Faviola Olvera from 5:30 to 7 pm at 675 S 4th St in Highlands, this program is designed to help students navigate the complexities of the U.S. naturalization exam.

Wednesdays

• Digital Navigators will be at the Hudson Library from 10a-noon 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. 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 Rec Dept. at 828-526-3556 for more info.

3rd Saturdays

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

Through July 25

• At The Bascom, "Connecting to Place: Blue Ridge Craft Trails Invitational 2026" in the Thompson Gallery. The exhibition brings together 20 craft artists from communities across VNC, including Franklin, Waynesville, Dillsboro, Bryson City, Cullowhee, Canton, Cherokee, Maggie Valley, and Brasstown. Admission is free.

July 13-16

• Little Highlander Basketball camp from 1-4p for Rising 1st-5th grade. The cost of the camp is \$75. For any other information call Lester Norris or Janice Mathis at 828-526-3556

Tues., July 14

• Chef Dinners at OEI's The Farm. Annual Champagne Dinner featuring Pol Roger. Tickets start at \$234. Includes dinner drinks, shuttle and gratuity. Book online.

Fri.-Sat., July 17-18

• At The Bascom, the 15th annual Summer Pottery Show 10a to 4p. Admission is Free. Info: TheBascom.org | 828.526.4949



Fri., July 17

• Fans of horse racing and Florida history: Glenville resident Nancy Turner will sign copies of her new book, "Tampa Bay Downs: The First Hundred Years" on Friday from 2 to 4 pm at the Highland Hiker Cabin in Highlands at 601 Main Street. Refreshments will

be served.

• At PAC, Three American Troubadours at 7:30 pm. boxoffice@highlandsp Performingarts.com. 828-526-9047.

Sat., July 18

• Greenway Workday at 9AM. Oak Lane trail, steps, and maintenance. Please email Kevin Gates kvngates@gmail.com if you can come.

• A Meet-'n'-Greet Reception with the artist of "People, Places and Things," at the Albert Carlton Cashiers Community Library Saturday from 5:30-7:30p. 249 Frank Allen Rd, Cashiers

July 22-25, Wed.-Sat.

• At CK Swan, a Capucine De Wulf Jewelry Trunk Show. Enter to win a Berry Gem Classic Hinged Bangle. 223 N. 4th Street, Highlands. 828-526-2083.

Thurs., July 23

• At Old Edwards Farm Pavilion, Highlands Cashiers Chamber Music Festival's Martinis, Mozart & More. \$125/person. Refreshments with cash bar. Call for required reservations. 828-526-9060 or order online at www.hcmusicfestival.org. 828-526-9060

Fri., July 24

• The Asheville Mountain Boys Outdoor Concert at 51 Cowee School Drive, Franklin. 5p.

Sun., July 26

• A viewing of the film, "Bonhoeffer" at 6p at Highlands Central Baptist Church downstairs in the Shortoff Baptist Church Fellowship Hall, 11339 Buck Creek Road.



Thurs., July 30

• A FREE viewing of The Return of Lake Toxaway as a prelude to HC Film Festival. 5-7p, viewing, reception, and Q&A at The Village Green of Cashiers.

Sat., Aug 1

• Pop Up Pipers

Fri.-Sun., Aug 7-9

• 48th Annual Antique Show at The Village Green Commons, 180 Frank Allen Road in Cashiers. Fri., 7:30a-5p; Sat., 9a-5p; Sun., 11a-4p. Antique hand-sewn door prize.

Sat., Aug. 8

• Open House at the Highland Fire & Rescue Dept. at 149 Franklin Road. Free hotdogs, fire truck rides, rescue demonstration, car seat checks, agility drills for the kids. 11a-3p.

Sat., Aug. 15

• As a prelude to the HC Film Festival, the viewing of "The Gardener + Walk in the Garden Soiree. Viewing is a 4p at PAC. Soiree to follow.



Sun., Aug. 16

• Highlands Historical Society invites you to travel through time for the 1920s Gala from 5-7pm. Tickets can be purchased from the Highlands Historical Society website. This roaring '20s themed celebration with a live jazz band.



• Highlands-Cashiers Film Festival Summer Screening. Never Not Yours + Meet the Director. 2p a PAC. FREE. This family dramedy tells the story of three adult siblings visiting their family's remote retired cabin for a weekend visit.

Sept. 1

• Pop Up Pipers

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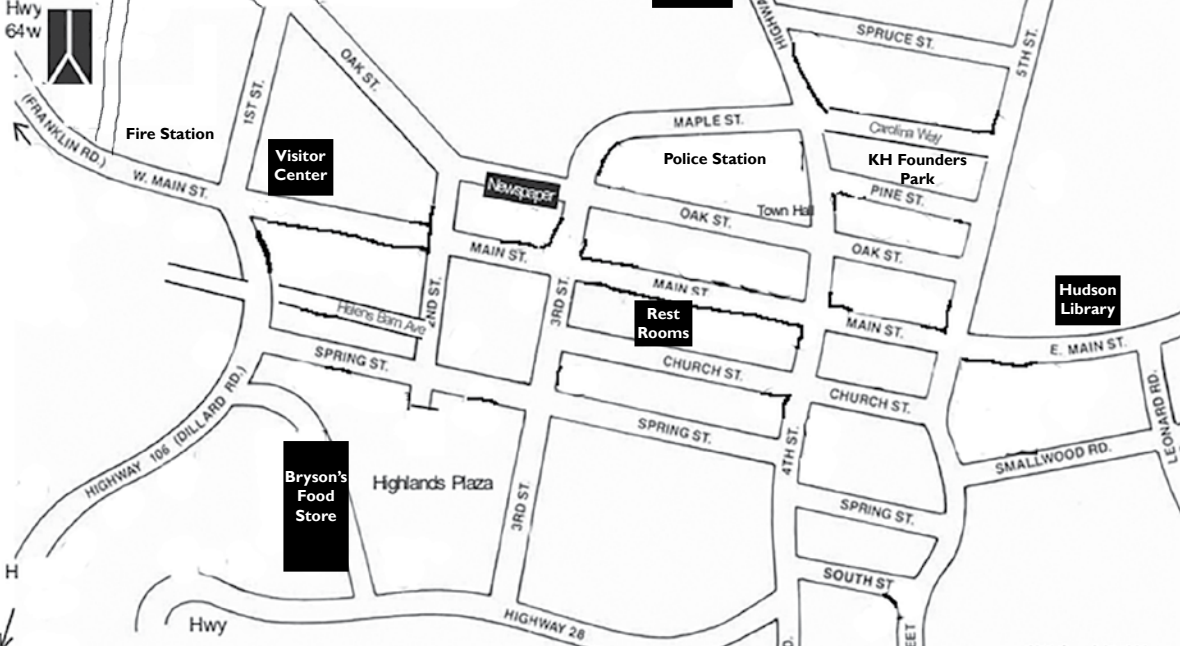
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Map labels include: Civic Center Rec Park, Highlands-Cashiers Players & HC Chamber Music, Historical Village, Fire Station, Visitor Center, Newspaper, Police Station, Rest Rooms, Bryson's Food Store, Highlands Plaza, Hudson Library, and various streets like Foreman Rd, Chestnut St, Laurel St, Spruce St, 5th St, Maple St, Oak St, Main St, Church St, Spring St, 3rd St, 4th St, South St, Smallwood Rd, Leonard Rd, E. Main St, Highway 106 (Dillard Rd), Highway 28, W. Main St, 1st St, Oak St, and Main St.

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