

# Highlands Newspaper

FREE Every Thursday

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## HS students' post on UTube puts Highlands community on alert

By Sgt. Tim Broughton & Kim Lewicki  
 In the late evening hours of Sunday, Jan. 26, officers from

the Highlands Police Department and Highlands School officials were made aware of some concerning content found posted online. A group of "Concerned Students" had anonymously posted, • See UTUBE page 8

## Restrictions at Hospital are due to flu increase

By Nancy Lindell  
 Division Director Public and Media Relations HCA Healthcare

There has been an increase in reported influenza-like illnesses throughout North Carolina. According to the North Carolina Public Health Division, the influenza-like illness activity in the state has reached more than six percent, and local transmission has increased.

To help reduce the spread of respiratory illness, Mission Health is implementing temporary visitor restrictions, which means that only two visitors per patient may be in the facility and children under age 13 are asked not to visit. Exceptions will be considered as necessary.

This precaution is being implemented at all Mission Health

• See RESTRICTIONS page 4



HPD Code Enforcement and First-Responder Officer of the Year Captain Leah McCall with HPD Chief Andrea Holland.

## Capt. McCall named 1st Responder 'Officer of the Year'

On January 27, the Macon County first-responder chaplains hosted their annual banquet for all public safety members in Macon County at Discover Church in Franklin, NC.

During the event, the chaplains recognized Leah McCall

for being selected as Officer of the Year. Leah holds the rank of Captain with the Highlands Police Department. She retired from the North Carolina Highway Patrol in 2014 after 30 years of service and subsequently transitioned to the

• See McCALL page 11

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## Area Hispanic community wary of Trump's mandate

By Kim Lewicki

The pounding of hammers, popping of nail guns, and the whirring of electric saws around Highlands have silenced considerably since Friday.

Now that President Trump's "round 'em up" directive has been earnestly pursued, ICE reported it detained nearly 1,000 people across the country on Sunday alone, which is up from just under 300 detentions the day before – Saturday. And the numbers are rising.

Though HCCDC Director Pat Hedden said none of her Hispanic families have voiced concern about the crackdown, sources say in Highlands fewer Hispanics are showing up at food banks and job sites, children are worrying about their parents, students are worrying about their classmates' – some whom they have known since preschool – so organizations are doling out advice.

"Be good citizens and don't attract attention; be careful. Don't get pulled over for speeding. Don't get pulled over for expired tags.

Don't get pulled over for driving without a license. Don't get a DUI," is the mantra.

In Highlands there are scores of children of illegal immigrants born in the U.S. – from babes to teenagers – who for now are safe due to the 14th Amendment, but authorities say they still need protection.

"The children, most likely, won't be taken but it's important that all immigrants not here legally have done a proper Power of Attorney document for their children so they have someone to care for them if and when their parents are deported," said a source from Pisgah Legal Services. "It's important they know their rights."

The 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution grants citizenship to all people born or naturalized in the U.S. and protects citizens from discrimination and arbitrary government action. It has been on the books since 1868 – initially as a means to ensure citizenship for enslaved people.

• See HISPANIC page 8

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# • THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

## • MAYOR ON DUTY •

### Duke to cut power March 7 8am-6pm

I had the honor of speaking to the American Legion Post 370 on Saturday about the electric grid and future plans. I started my talk by paraphrasing the late Robert Palmer's hit song that has the lyrics, "You might as well face it. You are addicted to love."

Here in Highlands, like all communities, we might as well face that we are addicted to electricity. It powers everything we do in our daily lives. And when it goes out, we become very concerned about when it will return, as in the recent winter storm outages.

I told my American Legion colleagues that when I first became mayor, it took about 10 megawatts to fully energize the town's needs, but now in peak periods, that number is about 16 megawatts and climbing. That is why the town is investing several million dollars in electric grid upgrades to address future demand.

I was in my pottery studio just this



Highlands Mayor  
Patrick Taylor

weekend thinking about electric demand. As a potter who operates two electric kilns on a routine basis, I am one of those people addicted to power. I cut off the lights and shut the glass entrance door as I left my studio. I looked back into the blackened studio and noticed all the little indicator lights that were on. My router light was glowing, as well as several battery charger lights. The light switches were still on while my two pottery wheels were not running. In

other words, power is being used throughout a building or home unless we throw the main electrical breaker. I am not advocating that but just making a point.

Even though we use more efficient appliances than what our grandparents used, our increasing use of those addicting, alluring, and convenient electric appliances offset to some degree any conservation efforts. However, efficiencies do help hold power bills down.

Finally, let me address some of the sudden outages we incur in Highlands. Many times, they are acts for God and nature, as the legal term is sometimes invoked. Other times, it is caused by human missteps. I am referring to the multiple times we have had high-speeding, out-of-control vehicles hitting electrical utility poles and knocking out power to a segment of the entire town.

Especially with larger and heavier vehicles on the road, a utility pole is vulnerable to being downed by a car. Usually, it takes a crew hours to replace the pole and reconnect the lines. My point is that everyone should be aware of the dangers of driving fast in town and this potential consequence, not to mention all the other problems such actions may cause.

Finally, Duke Energy has tentatively identified Friday, March 7, weather permitting, as the date they will cut power to Highlands to remove about 28 trees on the transmission line right-of-way on Hicks Road. That date is the next time the Highlands School will not be in session. The power will be cut off early in the morning and remain off into the late afternoon. The town and Duke will provide specific information before that date approaches.

## • SNAPSHOT •







Photo by Lorretta Newton

### Enjoying the thaw

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

## • WEATHER •

Thu, 30-Jan	Fri, 31-Jan	Sat, 1-Feb	Sun, 2-Feb
 44°F 35°F	 48°F 33°F	 55°F 31°F	 51°F 30°F
Partly sunny and cooler	Rain and a thunderstorm	Mostly sunny and not as cool	Low clouds
RealFeel® High: 46° Low: 31°	RealFeel® High: 46° Low: 36°	RealFeel® High: 59° Low: 27°	RealFeel® High: 49° Low: 35°

For Real-time Weather and the Extended Forecast, go to [www.highlandsinfo.com](http://www.highlandsinfo.com) and click on Weather

### Highlands Newspaper

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# • INVESTING AT 4,118 Ft •

## It's a love/hate relationship

I love the internet!

How else would I be able to see my grandchildren who live in three different states? Technology helps me keep up with them and all of their activities.

I hate the internet!

I can't even get on Facebook without seeing a hundred different advertisements...supposedly they are tailored to me but between bariatric recipes and political ads it's a cesspool to wade through just to see a post from a real human.

I love the internet!

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Buyers from halfway around the world can look at pictures or even take a virtual tour of one of my listings and get an idea of what they like -- they can even use VR to stage it differently or conceptualize what a space could look like. This allows them to make an offer quicker than ever before!

I hate the internet!

Listing agents can utilize angles and photoshop to eliminate the inevitable "negatives" that a property might have. When people make quick offers, they end up backing out quicker because when they visit it in person, they see something they don't like, and it doesn't fit with the vision they had.

I love the internet!

A veritable wealth of information about the Highlands community, all that we have to offer, the businesses and services on the plateau, and my favorite subject...the history of the area and how far we have come.

I hate the internet!

People can literally write anything on there, whether it is true or not. They can claim things that are, at best, slightly misinformed or, at worst, outright falsehoods. Misinformation is probably the biggest danger that we face as a society today. America has always been the land



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of free speech, but never before have people had the platform that they do now via social media to reach millions of people with biased information or skewed facts, and some people drink the Kool-aid!

I love the internet!

When I am not sure how to do something, I can just Google it and learn new things.

I hate the internet!

Everyone thinks they are an expert on everything just because they can Google. Google is no substitute for expertise. You

wouldn't trust a regular guy to do a filling on your tooth from watching a Google video, and you shouldn't consider yourself a real estate expert just because you have access to Zillow.

At the end of the day, the internet is what you make of it. It is an amazing tool that has changed our lives in so many ways. However, no matter how much technology assists our everyday life and affects the way we conduct business, there is no substitute for six generations of human experience and over 40 years' experience to help with investing in the right property on the Highlands plateau.

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

## ...RESTRICTIONS continued from page 1

hospitals and affiliates in the western North Carolina region including Mission Hospital in Asheville, CarePartners in Asheville, Mission Hospital McDowell in Marion, Transylvania Regional Hospital in Brevard, Blue Ridge Regional Hospital in Spruce Pine, Angel Medical Center in Franklin and Highlands-Cashiers Hospital in Highlands.

We understand these restrictions may pose a hardship for some, but our utmost concern is for the health and safety of all our patients and our entire community, and we implement restrictions only when absolutely necessary.

We are also urging community members who become ill with symptoms of the flu to stay home and maintain helpful respiratory etiquette such as covering a cough or sneeze and handwashing. If symptoms

worsen, they are advised to contact their primary care provider, seek care at a walk-in clinic such as Mission My Care Now, or call the Mission Health Consult a Nurse at 844-706-8773 for free advice on if and where to seek care. It's important to avoid the emergency room unless there are signs and symptoms of severe illness, as it can expose the patient to other illnesses and expose others to illness as well.

Visitor restrictions will remain in place until reported flu-like activity decreases.

Hand sanitizing stations are available at hospital entrances and throughout the buildings. People who have not yet received the influenza vaccine are urged to do so and to ensure their children have been vaccinated, too.



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# • BIZ/ORG NEWS •

## TL&LC welcomes new board members

The Literacy & Learning Center is pleased to announce the addition of two new members to its Board of Directors: Cal Isaacs and Tracy Wade. They were selected after a rigorous selection process that involved reviewing their qualifications, interviewing them, and considering their potential contributions to TL&LC.

Cal Isaacs, a Human Resources veteran with experience in various industries, brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the TL&LC Board. Having served

in leadership roles at Eckerd Drugs/Rite Aid Pharmacy, GameStop, Spring Mobile, and Performance Food Group, Cal deeply understands human resources management, including recruitment, employee relations, and organizational development.

Tracy Wade, a recent full-time Highlands resident, brings a diverse professional background to the Board. With successful career in marketing, banking, and the insurance industry, Tracy has held leadership positions at companies like Maxum

Specialty Insurance Group and Navigators. Her extensive business experience and commitment to community service will be invaluable assets to TL&LC.

Both Cal and Tracy's dedication will be instrumental in guiding TL&LC's continued success in providing essential learning programs to children and adults in Macon County.



Cal Isaacs



Tracy Wade

## HS varsity swim team finishes 3rd out of 19 preps for regional

By Steve Hott  
Head Coach

On Saturday, January 25, the Highlands Varsity Swim Teams finished their 2024-2025 regular season.

Swimming in a meet with 19 schools, all of them bigger than Highlands, the Boys team of Finneaus Garner, Aniah McKim, Jack Sumner and Jesus Mendoza-Tentle finished 3rd. The boys finished 25-10-0 for the season. The girls' team of just two girls, Layla Babac and Trinity Fernandez-Faust tied for 12th with a season record of 2-29-4.

The boys were led by Jr. Olympians Aniah McKim and Finneaus Garner. McKim won the 200 IM and the 100 breaststroke. Garner won the 50 freestyle and

finished 2nd in the 100 freestyle. The four boys teamed up to score 3rd and 4th in the 200 Medley Relay and the 400 freestyle relay respectively.

Babac and Fernandez-Faust both had best times in the 100 breaststroke.

Next up 2025 NCHSAA 1A-2A West Regionals Friday, January 31.

All four of the boys plus Paolo McRae, who was unavailable for this meet, have qualified with automatic times for regionals in various events.

Babac and Fernandez-Faust have qualified for regionals with consideration times. Final determination of if they are eligible to swim at regionals will be made after press time.



## • CHHS NEWS •



Photo by Marty Boone

### Meet Barney!

Barney is a handsome 10-year-old Beagle and one of the most affectionate dogs at the Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society. Barney loves every person he meets and he gets along just fine with dogs and cats, too. To give this sweet dog a loving forever home, please complete the adoption application online at [chhumane-society.org](http://chhumane-society.org) or call (828)743-5752 for more information.

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## • UPCOMING EVENT •

### Highlands Cashiers Players present a Valentine's Dinner Theatre

The Highlands Cashiers Players will present a Valentine's Dinner Theatre February 13 and 14 at the Martin Lipscomb Theater in the Highlands Performing Arts Center. Doors will open at 6 pm, dinner will begin at 6:30, followed by performances at 7:30. The 3-course pork loin dinner will be catered by Kristy Martin.

The entertainment portion of the evening will consist of duo vignettes directed by

Scott Ewing. A Matter of Husbands will feature Dian-dra Mundy and Sarah

Mathowdis, Yesterday will feature Emily Wright and

David Spivey, and Trysting, an original written by Ewing, will be performed by Berney Kirkland and Michael Kirkland.

General admission tickets are \$55. Non-alcoholic beverages are included. Wine and cocktails will be available for purchase. Table seating is first-come, first-served, but every effort will be made to seat groups together. Tickets are available at highlandscashiersplayers.com, or by calling the PAC box office at 828-526-9047. The Highlands Performing Arts Center is located at 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands, NC.

# • BUSINESS / ORGANIZATION NEWS •

## Mountain Theatre Company earns title of 'Favorite Regional Theatre'

Mountain Theatre Company is honored to have received four wins in BroadwayWorld's 2024 Regional Awards, including the coveted title of Favorite Regional Theatre. BroadwayWorld's 2024 Regional Awards honor regional productions,



touring shows, and more who had their first performance between October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024. This year, the BroadwayWorld Regional Awards were bigger and better than ever, including 100 cities across American, Canada, Central and South America, Europe and Asia.

The BroadwayWorld Awards recognize excellence in regional theatre, and Mountain Theatre Company's wins are a testament to the company's commitment to producing high-quality, engaging productions. In addition to Favorite Local Theatre, Mountain Theatre Company's awards include three additional categories. Al Dollar took home the award for Favorite Performer in a Musical for his performance as agent Carl Hanratty in this summer's, Catch Me If You Can. Melody Munitz was honored as Best Supporting Performer in a Musical, delivering a standout performance as Brenda Strong in Catch Me If You Can. Rounding out the awards included Erin Leigh Knowles' recognition for Best Choreography in Catch Me If You Can. These individual wins prove the company's commitment to nurturing and showcasing talented artists.

"We are overjoyed and humbled," said Scott Daniel, Executive Artistic Director of Mountain Theatre Company. "This recognition is a testament to the hard work and dedication of MTC's talented cast, crew and staff."

Mountain Theatre Company is already looking to the future, with an exciting, jam-packed family-friendly 2025 season in its 87th year. This summer begins with a nostalgic double bill as The Marvelous Wonderettes and Forever Plaid run in repertory.

"By running these two shows in repertory, Mountain Theatre Company offers audiences the unique opportunity to experience two distinct productions, each with its own talented cast, costumes, and incredible creative team. With the convenient repertory schedule, audi-

ences can choose to see both The Marvelous Wonderettes and Forever Plaid on the same day, within the same week, or at their leisure throughout the run." said Scott Daniel.

The Summer continues with The Burnt Part Boys, Mountain Theatre Company postponed this production in 2024 due to the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. This critically acclaimed musical set in the Appalachian Mountains featuring a bluegrass inspired Broadway score, tells the story of brotherhood, hope, and the resilience of the human spirit.

Rounding out the 2025 season is the return of Mountain Theatre Company's beloved holiday tradition, Home for the Holidays. This all-new production of festive favorites, original arrangements, and non-stop dancing is a joyful celebration of the season. This timeless tale will ensure the spirit of the season and make memories with friends and family that will last a lifetime.

As Mountain Theatre Company looks to the future, we're reminded that the survival of regional theaters is more precarious than ever. Many beloved regional institutions like North Carolina's Triad Stage, Southern Repertory Theatre in New Orleans and New Ohio Theatre in New York, closed their doors after more than 20 years in operation. This is why our audiences' support is crucial. By making a donation or becoming a sponsor, you'll be helping to ensure that Mountain Theatre Company continues to be your Favorite Regional Theater for the next 87 years.

For more information about Mountain Theatre Company, please visit our website at [www.mountaintheatre.com](http://www.mountaintheatre.com).



From left: Eric Bishop, Highlands PAC Artistic Director; Lee Trevathan, PAC Artistic and Movement Director; Randy Foster, President of Rotary Club of Highlands;

## Rotary learns about PAC's Educational Theatre program

The Rotary Club of Highlands recently enjoyed an informative program hosted by Rotarian, Rick Trevathan.

The topic: Highlands Performing Arts Center's "Educational Theatre" a youth-oriented opportunity led by Eric Bishop, artistic director and Lee Trevathan, artistic and movement director.

The mission is "To provide students of all ages with exceptional experiences in the theatre arts with instruction in improvi-

sation, pantomime, voice projection, stage movement, acting, singing, dancing and audition techniques."

Often involving Highlands School and community volunteers, the professional experience both educates and builds relationships while providing high-quality theatre entertainment for the surrounding Highlands-Cashiers area communities. For more information: [highlandspac.com/edutheatre](http://highlandspac.com/edutheatre) or call 828-526-9047.

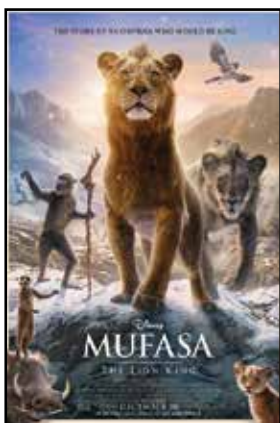


On Thursday, January 23, the Rotary Club of Highlands partnered with the members, families and friends of the Highlands Hurricanes Swim team to sponsor Bingo. All net proceeds benefited the Hurricanes. Above are Jayce Powell, winner of the final Super Bingo game with his mom and members of the Rotary Club of Highlands.

## MOVIES

at PAC's MLPC

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**Sat., Feb. 1 – 2 and 5:30pm**  
**Sun., Feb. 2 – 2 and 5:30pm**

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## ...HISPANIC continued from page 1

ple born in the United States – but has protected thousands of others since then.

Though President Trump wants to do away with birthright citizenship he faces a protracted legal battle to do so. To err on the side of caution, illegal immigrants with children born in the United States need to protect them and one way is with a Power of Attorney, they say.

Though only criminal illegals – those who have done more than enter the country illegally – are the ones Trump says he is after, the truth is more than “criminals” are being swept up and questioned.

On Monday, Navajo Nation leaders raised alarm over reports of Indigenous people being ques-

tioned and detained during immigration sweeps – likely because they “look” Hispanic.

A summary of U.S. Border Patrol enforcement actions related to arrests of criminal noncitizens document the apprehension of individuals and may reveal a history of criminal conviction(s).

That conviction information is recorded in a U.S. Customs and Border Protection database.

Arrests of criminal noncitizens refers to individuals who have been convicted of one or more crimes, whether in the United States or abroad, prior to interdiction by the U.S. Border Patrol; it does not include convictions for conduct that is not deemed criminal by the United States.

## ...UTUBE continued from page 1

what appeared to be, screen captures of posts made by a Highlands School student which depicted Neo-Nazi ideals, and interests in mass violence including posts about mass murderer Dylann Roof.

These screen captures were

posted anonymously to an Instagram account and YouTube and did not show any evidence of a direct threat made toward any school or organization.

Later that evening, Highlands Police officers also received notice of a Snapchat post from an unknown source, which referenced some students’ “friend that is threatening to shoot the school up...” Officers immediately investigated this post and determined that none of the involved persons had directly heard of a threat.

Due to the nature of the posts and reported possible threat, Highlands School officials contacted the parents of the student who was believed to have made the posts and informed them that the student was not to come into school, pending an investigation of the posts and content.

Monday morning both HPD

The total criminal convictions by type nationwide includes criminal noncitizens who may be convicted of multiple criminal offenses.

In most categories, nationwide for 2024, the number of crimes has decreased from 2023 to 2024 except for DUIs and illegally entering and then re-entering the country.

According to U.S. Boarder Patrol enforcement criminal noncitizens statistics for 2024 nationwide, those arrested for assault, battery or domestic violence decreased from 2023 to 2024 – 1,254 to 1,084.

For Burglary, Robbery, Larceny, Theft or Fraud, 864 to 697; for DUI, there was an increase from 2,493 in 2023 to 2,844 in 2024.

For homicide or manslaugh-

Chief Andrea Holland and Highlands School Principal Sarah Holbrooks alerted the community.

“Last night, we received information concerning social media content that deserves attention,” reads the post. “Due to the nature of the content, we have positioned extra officers and a couple sheriff deputies around and inside Highlands School. At this time, I cannot disclose any other information. Rest assured we take our students’ safety seriously. We are thoroughly investigating this matter.”

Students and families also heard from Principal Holbrooks.

“I want to take a moment to address recent concerns regarding an online post that has been circulating. We are aware of the situation and are taking it very seriously,” she said. “We are conducting a thorough investigation

ter 29 in 2023 and 29 in 2024.

For illegal drug possession and trafficking, 2,055 in 2023 and 1,566 in 2024.

For illegal entry and re-entry, there was an increase from 8,790 in 2023 to 10,935 in 2024; for illegal weapons, possession, transport, trafficking it was 307 in 2023 and 232 in 2024.

For sexual offenses, it was 284 in 2023 and 221 in 2024.

With area non-criminal, illegal Hispanics reluctant to show up to work or to congregate, the question arises: is the area’s legal workforce – white, black, or Hispanic – large enough to complete construction projects, work in commercial kitchens, clean hotel rooms, pick crops and various other occupations?

Time will tell.

to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our students and staff. In response to the situation there will be an increase in law enforcement present on campus, Monday, Jan. 27.”

Later Principal Holbrooks confirmed that the student was un-enrolled from Highlands School.

“Please understand that, due to privacy laws, we are unable to disclose further details about the student or the situation,” she said.

The investigation into the social media posts and the reported threat is still ongoing by law enforcement and school officials.

At this time, neither the Police Department nor the school can disclose any further information.

## • BIZ/ORG NEWS •

### Bear Shadow Festival is cancelled for 2025

In collaboration with community stakeholders, we have made the difficult decision to cancel the 2025 Bear Shadow music festival. Based on conversations with community partners, we believe it is in the best interest of the event to pause while we further develop a comprehensive plan for

the future home of the festival as we transition away from its previous location.

Our priority has been – and continues to be – partnering with the community to boost local business efforts, collaborating with local residents and providing a welcoming experience for

visitors.

We remain optimistic in finding a new, permanent home for our beloved Bear Shadow Festival. In the meantime, we look forward to seeing our friends and fans at Highlands Food & Wine Festival this November.

– Highlands Festivals, Inc.



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# • BUSINESS / ORGANIZATION NEWS •

## HCHF supports Hurricane Helene relief efforts with more than \$230,000 in grants

In the wake of Hurricane Helene's devastating effects on Western North Carolina, the Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation has committed over \$230,000 in grants to support essential organizations within the community.

The Health Foundation's grants aim to catalyze and sustain recovery initiatives that address a wide range of needs. Recipients include Big Brothers-Big Sisters of Western North Carolina, Community Care Clinic of Franklin, Community Table, Inc., Counseling Center of Highlands, Fishes & Loaves Food Pantry, Hawthorn Heights WNC, Highlands Community Child Development Center, Highlands Emergency Council, HIGHTS, International Friendship Center, KIDS Place, Macon County Care Network, Macon County EMS, Mountain Alliance and Mission, Restoration House, Rotary Club of Highlands, Swain County, and Vecinos.

"We are incredibly grateful for the outpouring of support of the Health Foundation's Hurricane Relief Fund," said Health Foundation Executive Director Charlotte Muir. "In just 67 days, we quickly raised and deployed over \$200,000. Many thanks to The Village Green, High Hampton, Dogwood Health Trust, and the individuals and businesses here on the Plateau and from afar who came together to help our community recover."

One key area of emphasis in the Health Foundation's relief initiatives has been combating food insecurity worsened by the storm. The main provider for local food banks in the region, MANNA FoodBank, located in Asheville, was devastated due

to Hurricane Helene. This resulted in a significant depletion in food supply and increased costs for local organizations to keep their shelves stocked. To address this challenge, the Health Foundation has dedicated more than \$65,000 to assist local food banks and organizations bridge this gap. This funding will enable them to continue their vital mission of supplying meals to individuals facing food insecurities.

The Health Foundation dedicated over \$90,000 to support healthcare and mental health services, recognizing the increased demand following a disaster like Hurricane Helene. These grants are instrumental in ensuring organizations have the capacity to enhance access to services.

"The Health Foundation's support of Vecinos enables a comprehensive and adaptable approach to disaster relief and recovery," said Marianne Martinez, CEO of Vecinos. "Recognizing that Hurricane Helene exacerbated existing inequities, the Health Foundation is helping us address immediate needs while integrating disaster planning as a core component of our long-term infrastructure. We are deeply grateful for their partnership and commitment to building a more resilient community."

In addition to the initiatives aimed at food insecurity, healthcare, and mental health services, the Health Foundation also designated over \$72,000 for multiple recovery projects throughout the region. These encompass a range of endeavors such as bolstering youth services, home repairs to restore damaged residences, reinforcing emergency response efforts to enhance

preparedness and resilience to future crises, and extending additional assistance to those most severely affected by the storm.

Beyond financial support, the Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation is collaborating with organizations and government agencies in the community to establish comprehensive plans for potential future large-scale natural disasters. The goal of these collaborations is to expand communication of information before, during, and immediately following a natural disaster and coordinate resources and response efforts to identify and provide for those who need it most. By partnering with and supporting a diverse variety of organizations, the Health Foundation aims to enhance the community's preparedness and resilience for future large-scale natural disasters.

"The Health Foundation continues to demonstrate why they are such an important community partner in Highlands and Cashiers," said TJ Smith, Executive Director of the International Friendship Center. "Their response to Helene - to make available funds to meet needs that were a direct result of this disaster - was a much-needed resource to so many nonprofits working directly with those impacted on the Plateau."

Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation is working diligently to ensure that essential recovery resources and support are effectively distributed to those individuals and areas that have been hit the hardest by the storm. This comprehensive approach to relief, recovery, and preparedness efforts across the region will be instrumental in rebuilding essential services and providing a sustainable and

supportive path toward recovery and the overall well-being of the community.

To learn more about the Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation, visit their website at [www.healthylplateau.org](http://www.healthylplateau.org).



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## Students impacted by Hurricane Helene can apply for NCCF Disaster Relief and Resilience Scholarship

Students from western North Carolina whose ability to pay for higher education was negatively impacted by Hurricane Helene can now apply for the North Carolina Community Foundation's Disaster Relief and Resilience Scholarship.

The scholarship is open to undergraduate and graduate students from 29 western North Carolina counties attending two- or four-year colleges and univer-

sities. There is no cost to apply. Students can apply online using NCCF's Universal Scholarships Application, which matches information about the student with criteria for approximately 130 NCCF scholarships.

Detailed instructions about how to apply are available at [nccommunityfoundation.org/Scholarships](http://nccommunityfoundation.org/Scholarships). The deadline for 2025 applications is March 3 at 11:59 p.m.

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# • POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

**Highlands Police entries from Jan. 17. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.**

## Jan. 17

• At 8:15 a.m., officers responded to a 1-vehicle accident on Main Street between 1st and 2nd streets.

## Jan. 19

• At 5:30 p.m., officers responded to a 1-vehicle accident on Main Street and Leonard Road.

## Jan. 23

• At 5:23 p.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident on US 64 east (Cashiers Road) between Memorial Park Drive and Little Bear Pen.

**The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Jan. 21.**

## Jan. 21

• At 12:23 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Holt Road.

## Jan. 22

• At 1:35 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Main Street.

• At 3:49 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence at VZ Top.

## Jan. 23

• At 6:43 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Split Rail Row.

## Jan. 24

• At 9:14 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Pierson Drive.

• At 1:50 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at VZ Top.

• At 2:50 p.m., the dept. investigated the cause of smoke at a residence on Old Walhalla Road.

## Jan. 25

• At 2:33 p.m. the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on N. 4th Street.

## Jan. 26

• At 10:33 a.m., the dept. responded to an accident where a vehicle hit a building on Main Street.

• At 12:06 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on N. 4th Street.

## Jan. 27

• At 1:12 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance at a residence on Old Orchard Road.

• At 1:22 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on Morewood Circle.

• At 3:46 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Mt. Lori Drive.



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## ...McCALL continued from page 1

Highlands Police Department.

In 2020, she was hired full-time as the Code Enforcement Officer. "Leah has excelled in this role and has become a valuable asset to the Town of Highlands, significantly impacting our community. I couldn't be prouder that Leah was selected for this award. Her work ethic and

## ...SPIRITUALLY continued from page 10

for whom he gave his life on the cross."

I hope you will let that sink in.

Now the world population is just over eight billion. Yet, God knows your name, address, height, weight, good qualities (and those not-so-good) your every thought, what your plans are and what keeps you awake at night with anxiety and worry.

He loves you.

No one knows you better and no one loves you more that Jesus Christ.

He is a personal God who wants a personal relationship with you.

When you call Him you will never get an automated voice, be put on hold or re-

determination for excellence set an example that I can only aspire to achieve," said HPD Chief Andrea Holland.

Other nominees who got the 1st Responder of the Year were Firefighter of the Year - Riana Welch and 911/Dispatcher of the Year - Wayne Pendergrass.

quired to talk to artificial intelligence.

After all of those things have passed away (and they will) there will still be (forever) a Holy God. What matters then is what matters now, a personal relationship with Him through His Son, Jesus Christ.

I encourage you to begin that relationship right now.

I hope you will pray for the Persecuted Church. I hope you will evangelize and share the Gospel with a world in desperate need to hear it. And I hope you will take your place among those numbered who are not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:16).

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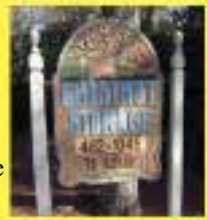
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**TINY HOME LOTS FOR SALE.** \$55k-\$85k ea. Each lot comes with water, power, and sewer run to each lot. www.TinyMountainEstates.com for more info. (st. 11/22/24)

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# • HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

## WINTER 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

## ALL WEEK

• Alcoholics Anonymous: "Open Meetings" are for anyone who thinks they may have a drinking problem or for anyone interested in the A.A. program of recovery. Highlands Mountain View Group holds open meetings in Highlands at the First Presbyterian Church, 471 Main St., on Monday at 5:30 PM and Wednesday and Friday at noon. Women's Group 5:30, Tuesdays. The Cashiers Valley Group holds open meetings at the Albert Carlton Cashiers Community Library Monday at 8:30 AM, Tuesday at 7 PM, Friday and Sunday at 5 PM, and Saturday at 9 AM. For more info, please visit [www.aawnc80.org](http://www.aawnc80.org) or to speak with a member of AA 24/7 at 828-349-

4357.

## PICKLE BALL

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

## MOVIES

• Movies at the Martin Lipscomb Performing Arts Center at PAC on Chestnut Street. See ad on page 8.

## 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. The class is led by Cathy Hodgson. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

## 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. More meeting places call president Paula McDonald at 706-372-3004

• Indivisible Highlands from 5:15-6:15pm at the Hudson Library

Meeting Room.

## 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 information contact Bud Katz at either 828-526-3190 or at [budandlynn@me.com](mailto:budandlynn@me.com)

## Tuesdays

• Strength Training at the Rec Park 8:15-9:15 am. Aim for strong, lean muscles using light weights, body weight, and high repetition to shape and tone. Learn proper form and range of motion to safely target all muscle groups for a metabolic boost and feel great.

• At Wayfarers Chapel, Workshop for Writers – Tuesdays from 5-6:30 PM. Facilitated by Sam Renken, this group has a simple mission: to foster and provide consistent community for local writers thereby giving writers of all ages and genres the opportunity to write, read, revise, and present their work to the group.

• ESL classes are held at the Presbyterian Church in Highlands from 6:30-7:30pm. No registration required – just show up and participate. Questions? call 828-526-0863 or email [info@maconnc literacy.org](mailto:info@maconnc literacy.org)

## 2nd Wednesdays

• Hudson Library, in partnership with VAYA Health, is hosting an educational series on adult mental health topics, held on the first Wednesday of each month at 11 AM. This series is aimed particularly at older adults and will focus on mental health topics of particular interest to them, but all ages are welcome to attend. To register, stop by the library or call 828-526-3031.

## 2nd & 4th Wed.

• Digital Navigators will be at the Hudson Library the second and fourth Wednesdays 1PM - 3PM of each month to help patrons with their tech needs. Bring a smartphone, laptop, or other digital device to receive free assistance and support. No appointments are required - all are welcome.

## 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. Call the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information

## Thurs.-Sat.

• Mountain Findings Hours: 10a to 1p.

## Thursdays

• Kickboxing 8:15-9:15 am. at the Rec Park. An exhilarating and fun mix of martial arts for a calorie-burning workout. No martial arts background necessary. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more info.

• 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 crafternoons.

## Saturdays

• Story Ballet - a gentle ballet & creative movement class for Children 3-4. The flow of class follows a story or theme that changes each month, engaging imaginations! Saturday 5:30-6:30pm. 828-421-6720

• Adult Ballet - crafted for beginners, but mindfully taught for all levels. Ballet is an excellent way to move, grow stronger, improve balance, flexibility and coordination while having fun. 6:30-7:30pm. 828-421-6720.

## 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 9 AM and hold our monthly meeting at 10 AM. We invite ALL veterans to attend - email [ncpost370@gmail.com](mailto:ncpost370@gmail.com) for more information or just join us at 9 AM.

## Sundays

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

## Beginning in Feb.

• At the Mountain Learning Center Youth Programs – Spring Elementary CON (3rd-5th Grade): Feb 14 - 16; Spring Intermediate CON (6th-8th Grade): Feb 28 - March 2; Spring Senior High CON (9th-12th Grade): March 14 - 16 <https://www.themountainrlc.org/event/homecoming-2/>

## Through-March

• Ice Skating in the Park The hours are Thursdays, 3:30-8pm, Fridays, 3:30-10pm, Saturdays, 1-10pm, Sundays, 1-5pm. The price is only \$8, with or without skates. Coffee and

hot chocolate are available for purchase.

## Ongoing on Thursdays

• Christ Anglican Church on 64 East in Cashiers will host "lunch and learn" brown bag sessions beginning Thursday, at noon led by Michael and Robin Matlock. For eight weeks, the book, Emotionally Healthy Spirituality by Peter Scanzero, will be the focal point. Come learn how healthy spirituality and healthy emotions are inseparable! Purchase your book copy at Amazon or your favorite bookstore. Call 828-743-1701 or email [cac@christanglicancashiers.org](mailto:cac@christanglicancashiers.org) with questions. All are welcome.

## Thru Jan. 31

• Youth Soccer signups for the spring is open for ages 5-15. Registration is online at [maconsoccer.com](http://maconsoccer.com).

## Thurs. & Fri., Feb. 13 & 14

• HCP presents Valentine's Dinner Theare at PAC at 6 p.m. 3-course pork loin dinner catered by Kristy Martin begins at 6:30 p.m. Performance begins at 7:30 p.m. The entertainment portion of the evening will consist of duo vignettes directed by Scott Ewing. A Matter of Husbands will feature Diandra Mundy and Sarah Mathowdis, Yesterday will feature Emily Wright and David Spivey, and Trysting, an original written by Ewing, will be performed by Berney Kirkland and Michael Kirkland. Tickets are \$55. Non-alcoholic beverages are included. Wine and cocktails will be available for purchase. Table seating is first-come, first-served. Tickets are available at [highlandscashiers-players.com](http://highlandscashiers-players.com), or by calling the PAC box office at 828-526-9047.

## Thurs., Feb. 13

• Highlands Chamber of Commerce members are invited to a presentation "Setting up simple IRAs for employees" with Todd Holder with Edward Jones at the Community Building. Light breakfast from 9-10:30a. R.S.V.P. [jane.ford@highlandschamber.org](mailto:jane.ford@highlandschamber.org) or call 828-526-5841.

## Fri., Feb. 28

"Garden Tool Sharpening Happy Hour," is a FREE event, hosted by Hagan Binder Landscape Architects. Bring up to 3 garden tools for complimentary sharpening and meet the Hagan Binder Team, and checkout the new HBLA Studio and Fine Tools Retail shop at 466 Dillard Road. Refreshments provided, please RSVP on [haganbinder.com](http://haganbinder.com).

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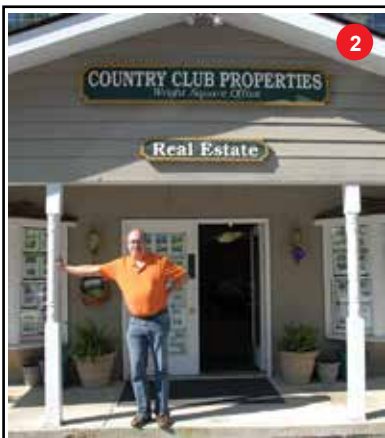
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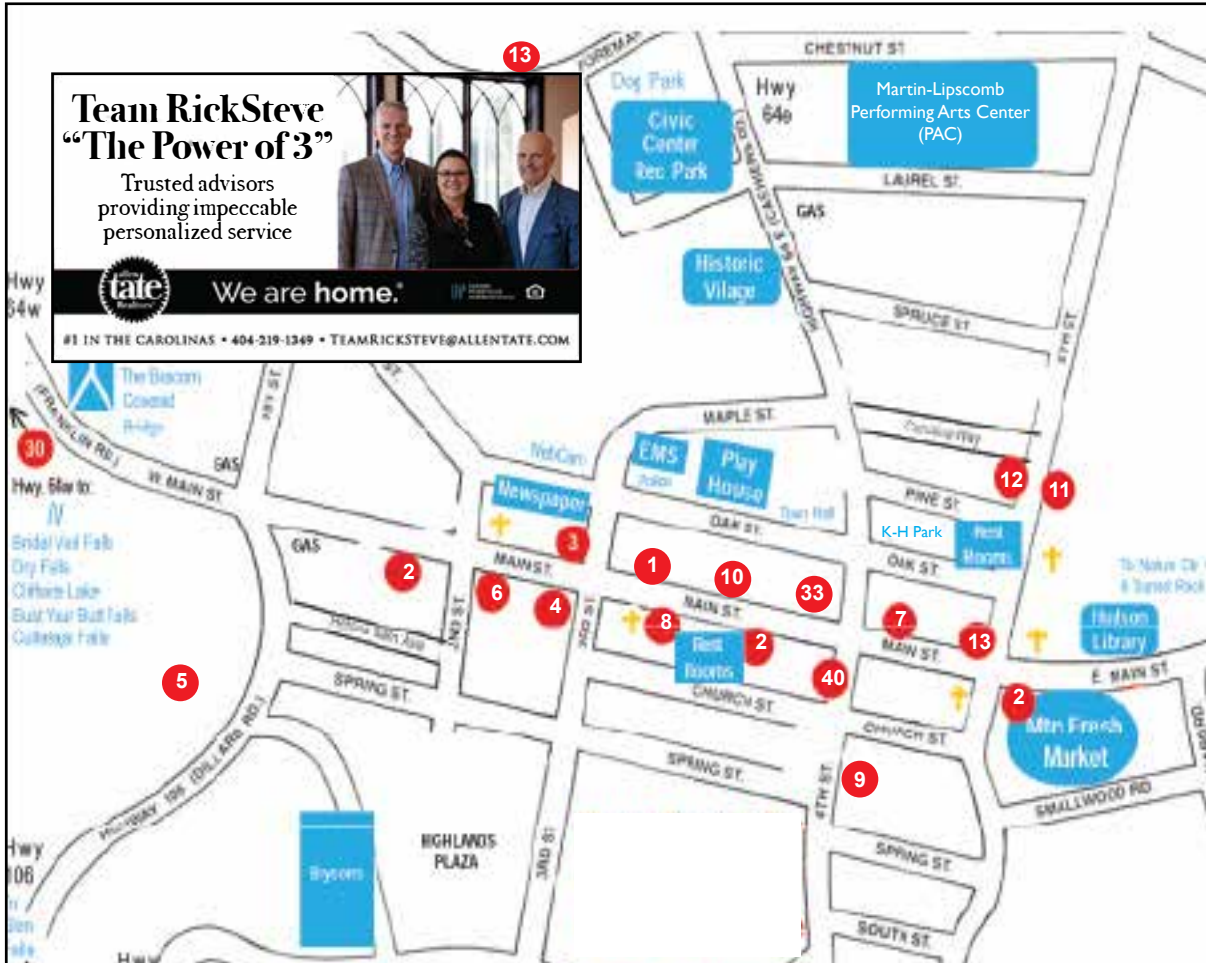
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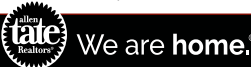
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