

# Highlands Newspaper

FREE Every Thursday

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## Phone App a go; Playhouse a no

By Kim Lewicki

At the 6 ½ hour annual Town Board Retreat last Thursday, departments submitted “wish lists” to be considered in the upcoming FY’25-’26 budget year.

Normally requests are made but no action is taken, but this year a few discussions resulted

in action – namely a town phone app and the future of the Highlands Playhouse.

Since the town has contracted with CivicPlus to revamp its website, talk had been swirling about also having a Mobile Phone App like the Macon County Sheriff Office.

Tyler Trantham with OCV,

which has built 50 of the state’s 100 sheriff office phone apps, and whose company has designed 1,200 apps in the US and Canada, made a presentation and the board OK’d it.

“This is equally important as the website,” said Commissioner Jeff Weller. “They are two differ-

• See APP page 8

## Man arrested for February stabbing

By Sgt. Tim Broughton

On February 1, 2025, a verbal argument led to a stabbing incident on N. 5th Street near the Kelsey Trail Preserve in Highlands.

An investigation by the Highlands Police Department revealed that two men got into an argument at the greenway trail-head off N. 5th Street.

A man, later identified as Victor Preda, 70, was reportedly allowing his three dogs to run off-leash in the area. The victim, Jason Carlton King, 53, who was walking a dog of his own, asked Mr. Preda to regain control of his dogs. Mr. Preda approached the victim and hit him in the chest. In response, the victim pushed Mr. Preda away. Mr. Preda fell to the ground, and the victim was able to

• See STABBING page 8

## Gov. invites Holland to Raleigh



To acknowledge Women’s History Month, Governor Josh Stein hosted women in leadership at the Governor’s Mansion in Raleigh on March 24. Highlands Police Chief Andrea Holland and HPD Captain Leah McCall attended a reception where the speakers were First Lady Anna Stein, Senator Sydney Batch and Lt. Governor Rachel Hunt. “Governor Stein is an advocate for women and minorities and it was humbling to experience this first hand,” said Chief Holland.

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## Closure of Dept. of Ed may affect NC schools

By Kim Lewicki

It’s budget season and this year municipalities, counties and institutions are all trying to navigate the consequences of executive orders coming out of the White House while formulating their FY ’25-’26 budgets.

The evening of March 20, President Trump signed an executive order to dismantle the U.S. Dept. of Education and Monday, March 24, employees were given 30 minutes to pack up their belongings and leave.

At the March Macon County Schools Board of Education (BOE) meeting, Monday night in Highlands, Superintendent Josh Lynch and BOE chairman Jim Breedlove said despite the shuttering of the Dept. of Ed, they would carry on as usual until they heard otherwise.

“It’s too early to know how this will affect us because we don’t really have enough information,” said Breedlove. “We are getting constant updates regarding the flow of the money, but we just

don’t have enough information.”

Superintendent Lynch said he has been getting guidance from the NC Dept. of Public Instruction which is what he is following.

“Unfortunately, we have way more questions than answers at this time,” he said.

Meanwhile, Finance Director Alayna Ledford presented three versions of the FY ’25-’26 budget which will be sent to the Macon County Board of Commissioners (BOC) for discussion during a joint BOE/BOC meeting prior to the BOC finalizing its budget.

The school system gets its funding from the county, the state and the federal government.

The three budget scenarios were dubbed Maintain, Maintain/Topnotch and Maintain/Topnotch/Expansion.

The Maintain budget is for \$11.6 million. “It’s what it will take to maintain at current standards,” said Ledford. “We absolutely have to have this.”

It includes funding for pro-

• See SCHOOLS page 13

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# • THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

## • MAYOR ON DUTY •

### Town Board Retreat highlights

Before the town retreat that was held last Thursday, I did a personal town assessment by again reading the Highlands Community Plan. The board of commissioners completed and adopted the plan in June of 2022.

Some folks may think it was a document done as a state requirement and then shelved and forgotten. A comprehensive plan like the one we have should be a guiding document for planning and decision-making by the town. On the other hand, it is not a rigid rule book of statutes and regulations.

I took notes as I reviewed the Highlands Community Plan, and at the opening of the retreat, I shared them with staff and the commissioners. I was actually surprised that almost everything on the retreat agenda was in some way connected to the plan.

The plan had some key overarching points about what the town should address in the future. For instance, environmental preservation was at the top of the list, fol-



Highlands Mayor  
Patrick Taylor

lowed by maintaining a vibrant downtown. Expanding and upgrading infrastructure was a major point of concern, as well as controlling STRs. Improving and increasing green spaces and parks was seen as a priority, as well as historic preservation. Promoting new businesses like shops and restaurants made the list, as well as community activities and special events. Sidewalks and crossing improvements were priorities.

And, as always parking was on the list, and also housing.

As the retreat progressed, I noted how so many issues reviewed directly connected to the community plan. For instance, the commissioners got an update about the status of the Mirror Lake dredging project, which I view as an environmental preservation project. The board approved the installation of the town's new pedestrian crossings on US 64 and discussed adding new sidewalks, as has been done since the plan's adoption.

A lengthy discussion at the retreat was about major infrastructure projects. We have a major initiative to upgrade the electrical grid, as well as upgrades in water and sewer. A big and costly project that has top priority is upgrading the force main sewer line on US 64. That project that is key to preserving the environment can't be postponed for another year. The town will have to allocate 1.4 million dollars for this project.

A discussion of the future of the Highlands Playhouse highlighted how certain goals and priorities can sometimes conflict. A year ago, an architectural firm conservatively estimated it would cost 2.6 to 2.8 million dollars to restore and bring the Playhouse up to code. The big question at the retreat was whether that amount or even more, should be spent to save the Playhouse. The PAC is about to launch a campaign to add a small theater at their state-of-the-art facility. One question is, would private funds be better spent on the PAC initiative than the Playhouse? Another question is, if the Playhouse is removed, how should that property be repurposed? Create a small park and green space area. That effort would be consistent with the community plan, just as historic preservation is also. Or, should the property become a parking lot, also a goal

• See MAYOR page 14

## • SNAPSHOT •





### Spring's debut



Photo by  
Janet  
Singletary

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## • WEATHER •

Thu, 27-Mar	Fri, 28-Mar	Sat, 29-Mar	Sun, 30-Mar
 59°F 40°F	 66°F 47°F	 61°F 51°F	 66°F 56°F
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## • INVESTING AT 4,118 Ft •

### Saying Goodbye

Life is full of stuff, isn't it? Some people spend their whole lives accumulating things. One of the largest things we collect are our homes. How many homes have you lived in during your lifetime? For some people it means nothing more than "staring at four different walls," while others actually grieve the loss of their home when it's time to say goodbye. It's not that either of these are right or wrong, but it's how we go about navigating the process.



**Jeannie Chambers**  
Chambers Realty  
& Vacation Rentals

Emotional attachment to homes needs to be dealt with carefully, especially when the decision has been made to sell. It's probably a good thing that sellers aren't usually around when buyers are looking at homes. Selling brokers can see the wheels turning even when the buyers never utter a word.

Listing brokers have a general idea when a home has a lot of sentimental attachment, some consider it more semi-mental attachment. Those are the sellers who want to meet the buyers to approve of them and heavily suggest how they should treat their home.

I recently watched the movie, Here starring Tom Hanks and Robin Wright. The main character in the movie was a home. There were plenty of flashbacks, including before the home was ever built, when a Native American family lived on the land, later in Colonial America and then all the way through the ages to present day. The viewer sees happy times, sad times and all in between. The movie was based on a book with the same title, written by Richard McGuire. I haven't read the book, which started out as a graphic novel, but I wondered if the author had much experience with buying or selling homes.

I had no problem at all seeing the house in that movie as the main character. It's like walking down a mountain trail, passing huge trees and feeling like you're among friends. Others feel the same way in a garden, if you don't believe it, look at a gardener tending their garden with garden gloves and kid gloves. They understand the trees, flowers and bushes can't speak in words, but there's a definite connection. The same is for people who are deeply attached to where they live.

When a person who is attached to their home decides to sell their home, several things happen, and several things need

to happen, but let me rewind a moment. When that seller first acquired their home, it was new to them whether they built it from the ground up, or they purchased a newly built home, or it was a resale that had been owned by many over the years. It was new to them. If you're a pet lover, you instinctively know when a new pet bonds with you. Some people think the same thing happens with a new house.

You make a new-to-you home yours by painting inside and/or out, landscaping, your own tastes in furniture or gutting and starting over. You also bond with your home by making memories. Births, childhoods, birthdays, holidays, etc. all seem to cling to the walls like pipe smoke. For some, walking out of their front door for the last time is like leaving a funeral. Hopefully, the seller is moving on to somewhere they've chosen and will be able to put their mark on wherever that is. They may have aged out of their DIY stage, but they can share their vision with people who renovate for a living and enjoy the end result of their new space.

When it's time to say goodbye, one of the best things to do is imagine yourself with a big eraser. You don't want to completely erase the lives and memories, but just enough to smudge the edges so the new buyers can have a little bit of a blank slate to start their own mural, their own happy place.

That's what buying and selling real estate is all about. Working with sellers who want to sell, even though they may be very attached to their home. Some listing appointments take a long time because the sellers want to show you everything they've done to make it theirs. By the end of the appointment, the listing broker must conscientiously help the seller find the places that will allow a buyer to see themselves in their new home while being careful not to sterilize the living space.

One thing that never gets old is when you're showing someone a home and you see that spark in their eyes, the twinkle that lets you know they've found IT, the home that will become their happy place. Real estate has changed so much over the years, but some things last forever.

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# • OBITUARIES •

## Thomas Allston Moore

Thomas Allston Moore was born on October 10, 1964 in Charlottesville, Virginia; he died peacefully on February 1, 2025. He was the son of Helen Moore of Highlands and Edward Rutledge Moore of Charleston, South Carolina. He was married to the love of his life, Jennifer Stone Moore of Charlotte, North Carolina. Allston was stepfather to three sons, David, Sam and Charlie Oates and grandfather of Beau. He is survived by his brother, Edward (Ned)



Rutledge Moore of Atlanta; his aunt, Trina Welin (Doug) of Alligator Point, Florida; aunt, Charlotte (Steve Sponar) of Bellevue, Washington; cousins, Rusty Sandifer (Stacy), Helen Sandifer, and Ella, Julie, Hugh, and Elizabeth, and also his loved cat, Tango.

Allston grew up in Atlanta, GA and attended Trinity School, Westminster School, Christ School, Arden, NC and Northside High School, in Atlanta from which he graduated. It was there that he met Jennifer his beloved wife. He graduated from The University of the South (Sewanee) in 1987 with a degree in Art History.

Always a kid at heart, Allston grew up brimming with curiosity, creativity, and a big smile. He displayed an adventurous spirit from a young age, digging up golf balls and practicing knee-football in the basement. He carried that spark through his days playing soccer at Sewanee (where he was an All Conference Athlete) and well beyond, embracing life's joys with humor and a hearty dose of spontaneity.

Allston was a devoted husband, stepdad, son, brother, and friend. A man of deep faith, he brought a quiet yet sturdy spirituality into everything he did. He loved his family and friends and found countless ways to show it—whether giving rides to baseball practice, keeping everyone laughing with clever jabs, or capturing treasured memories behind the camera. Allston's grandson, Beau, quickly became the subject of his photography as well as his unconditional love.

Allston was a tech-savvy entrepreneur who taught himself how to build and run his own internet business. Sometimes to the dismay of friends and family, his vast knowledge of trivia, history, and current events gave him the upper edge in any debate. Known as "Mr. Gadget" among loved ones, Allston was always ready to help with any tech issues.

An avid golfer with a competitive spirit, Allston preferred hitting from the back tees and was always working to improve his game. His many skills extended to the kitchen as well—his egg casserole and cheese grits were a staple at family gatherings. He was great company and could command a room with his quick wit.

While our hearts are heavy with loss, the family finds comfort in knowing that Allston departed peacefully, leaving behind memories they will cherish forever.

A service in memory of Allston was held on February 10 at City Church, Charlotte, North Carolina.

Donations may be made in Allston's name to First Tee, a Charlotte-based organization that provides educational programs for young people, building character and instilling life-enhancing values through the game of golf at <https://firsttee.org> or the charity of your choice.

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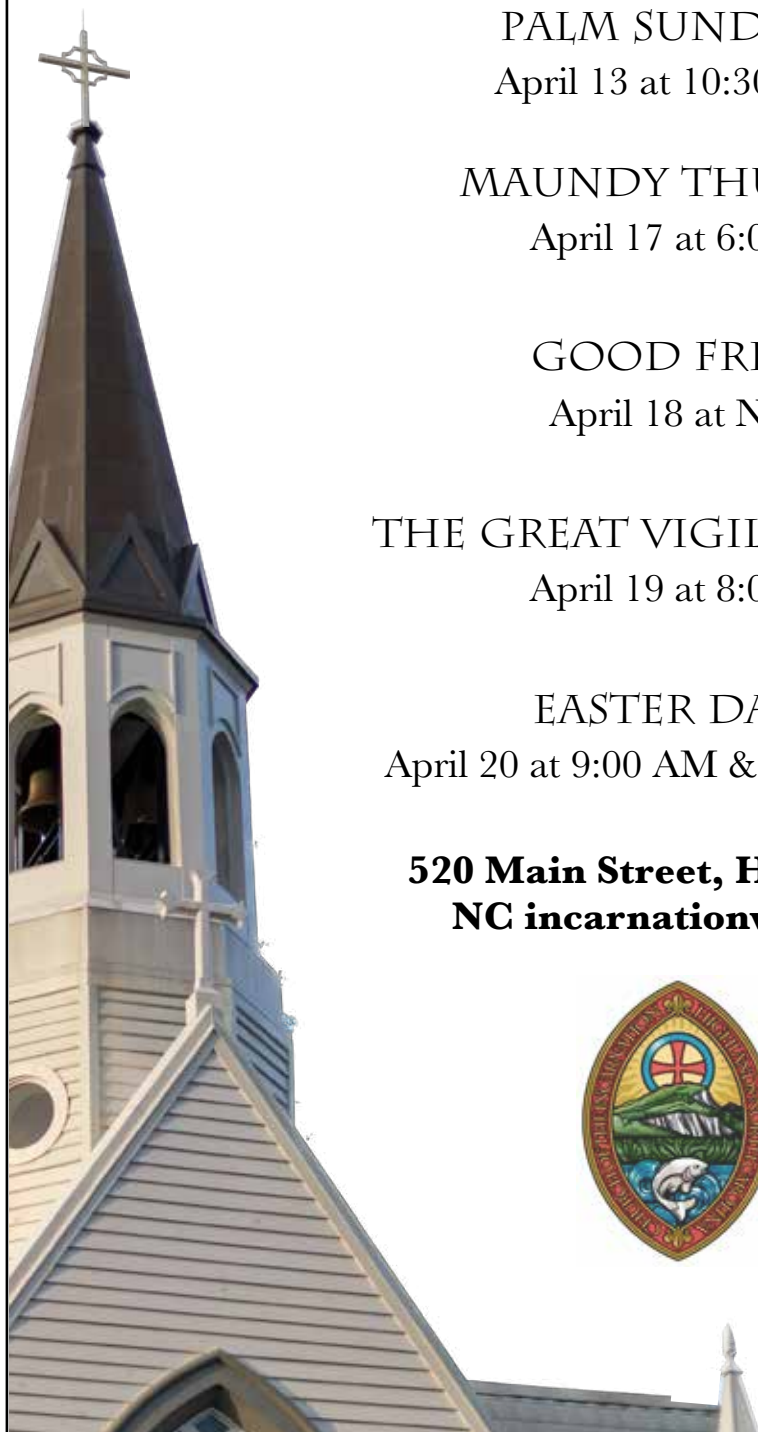
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## ...APP continued from page 1

ent uses that complement each other. This is a no-brainer. What do we have to do to push this forward?"

In general, commissioners saw the phone app as a way to control the factual narrative and getting out in front of information going out into the community in a timely manner.

"Social media is not a direct connection to the community," said Trantham. "A lot of people aren't even using Facebook anymore and American's spend more time on their smartphones than they do watching TV."

Trantham said a custom mobile app works because the information is intentional that includes residents, visitors, businesses ... basically everyone.

"We believe a custom mobile app en-

courages community participation by providing a direct connection with who you are, what you are doing, and how you are serving the community," he told commissioners.

The board voted unanimously to make a budget amendment to the '24-'25 budget to engage OVC to build the app, which is fluid, meaning elements it incorporates can be updated as needed.

The initial buildout of the app will take 4-6 weeks; the initial cost is \$16,900 and the annual cost is \$5,795.

The police and fire departments will also have an icon on the app so citizens can go directly to those departments for information about situations and events involving them.

• See APP page 9



## ...STABBING continued from page 1

walk from the area. As King walked away, he realized he had suffered a stab wound just below his armpit, near his rib cage.

Once Highlands Police officers and Macon County EMS arrived on the scene, King was transported to Highlands-Cashiers Hospital and later to Mission Health with life-threatening injuries. Mr. Preda suffered serious injuries from the fall; officers

transported him to Angel Medical Center.

On March 19, the Macon County Sheriff's Office, assisted by the Highlands Police Department arrested Preda, for Assault with a Deadly Weapon with Intent to Kill, inflicting serious injury, and Resisting a Public Officer. He was released on a \$5,000 unsecured bond. His trial date is pending.

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# • HS WEEKLY SPORTS RECAP •



## Track Team Kicks Off the Season

On March 19th, the Highlands High School track team traveled to Andrews for their first meet of the season. Several athletes delivered strong performances:

- Claire Worley placed 3rd in both the 1600m and 3200m races.
- Blaine Dendy secured 3rd place in the 300m hurdles and 4th in the 110m hurdles.
- Kasen Mitchell earned 2nd place in the high jump and finished 5th in the 100m dash.

## Varsity Girls Soccer

## Triumphs Despite Cold Conditions

On March 20th, the varsity girls' soccer team played their first home match in frigid weather with snow flurries in the air. The team battled through the elements to secure a thrilling 3-2 victory over Cherokee, with two goals from Aislynn Wyatt-Luck and one from Gabi Diaz.

## Middle School Girls Soccer Faces Tough Opponent

March 21st saw the middle school girls' soccer team play their first home match of the season. Despite a strong effort, they fell to Summit with a 4-1 loss.



Meanwhile, the varsity girls' soccer match at Polk County was canceled due to forest fires and poor air quality in the area.

## Middle School Soccer Bounces Back with a Win

On March 24th, the middle school girls' soccer team rebounded from their earlier loss with a dominant 3-0 victory over Blue Ridge. Annabelle Hays led the charge with two goals, while Aubree Brooks added another.

*The varsity girls' match scheduled against Tri-County Early College was canceled and counted as a forfeit by Tri-County due to a lack of healthy players.*

## Varsity Boys Golf Hosts Multi-Team Meet

The Highlands varsity boys' golf team hosted Franklin, Pisgah, and Enka at Highlands Falls Country Club. The team placed 3rd overall with a total score of 390. Carson Forrester and Chase Kenter led Highlands, each scoring 93, followed by Gavin Small with a 97.

– Submitted by Head Coach Brett Lamb

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## ...APP continued from page 8

### The Playhouse

At last year's retreat, commissioners learned it would take close to \$3 million to rebuild it to code and make the Playhouse safe for public use.

Now the cost has likely risen to renovate it to current commercial standards – the flooring, the ceiling, the roof, a fire repression system, plumbing and electrical, HVAC, and to make everything ADA compliant.

In addition, Mayor Pat Taylor said the building doesn't fit with what is going up around it on Oak Street and most of it would have to be removed and then repurposed ... "but for what purpose? PAC is planning on building a movie theatre," he said referring to the Playhouse's

most recent use.

He and the rest of the board said they understand the Playhouse has nostalgic and sentimental value, "but it's not safe to assemble there so what can it be used for? It's time to go ahead and take it down," said the Mayor.

He said people have come and offered to raise money to save it saying they could probably raise \$500,000, but that would only cover a fraction of the cost.

Commissioner Weller said he has been involved with the Playhouse and said it's basically a fire trap.

"The building has been manipulated negatively for far too long. Everyone would love to save it, but we're talking ADA compliant, safety, structural in-

tegrity. None of it meets standards today and inspectors worry about the building for very good reason," he said.

As a building on a government parcel only a nonprofit can use it so Mayor Taylor suggested looking at the master plan to see what could be done once the building is taken down.

"We can't save it," said Commissioner Amy Patterson. "But we will document it and then think about what we can use the site for."

Commissioners agreed to conduct a material assessment to see if there is anything of physical value that is salvageable -- like the relatively new movie theater seats – and then remove the building.

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## SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING



### What happens after Pope Francis passes?

**Fr. Jason Barone**  
Our Lady of the Mountains  
Catholic Church

As I write this column, the Holy Father Pope Francis remains in the hospital after nearly a month's stay. We pray for his recovery and good health, but at 88 years old and in poor health, many are discussing what inevitably comes for all of us, namely his passing. What will happen then? How will a new pope be selected?

Although Pope Emeritus Benedict passed away just a couple of years ago, the last reigning pontiff who passed was John Paul II in 2005. Selecting a pope, by one process or another, literally stretches back 2,000 years to Saint Peter, who was selected by Christ Himself.

Immediately following the pope's passing, a confirmation of death is ascertained, which traditionally was accomplished by the Camerlengo, that is the cardinal who administrates the Vatican between popes. He would call the pope's name three times, and if there was no response, there would be a slight tapping of the head with a silver hammer (keep in mind this process is nearly a millennium old). Doubtless, a medical doctor is the one who officially pronounces death in modern times. The papal apartments are locked and receive a wax seal. The deceased pope's signet ring is destroyed.

Upon announcing his passing, nine days of mourning follow, called the Novendiales, during which this time the pope's body will lie in state in St. Peter's Basilica. The funeral will then likely take place in St. Peter's Square. While popes are usually buried in St. Peter's Basilica, Pope Francis has arranged his interment in the fourth century roman Basilica of St. Mary Major.

About a week or so following the funeral, the conclave will begin. (I've not seen the recent Hollywood movie Conclave; nor does it seem advisable should one have regard for the Catholic sensitivities.) The word "conclave" literally means "with the key" from cum clave in Latin, meaning the cardinals are locked in for the duration of the voting.

All of the Cardinals under the age of 80 are permitted to vote in the conclave. In theory, there should only be 120, but Pope Francis has exceeded that number (which currently sits around 137, but changes almost monthly as cardinals age out). They begin by solemnly processing into the Sistine Chapel while chanting a hymn to the Holy Spirit for guidance.

The current rules for the conclave were last amended by Pope John Paul II in 1996. Absolute secrecy is required; campaigning or deal-making is absolutely prohibited; external pressures (e.g. governmental) is completely forbidden, all under the pain of excommunication. Voting occurs four times daily. Each cardinal writes a name on a small piece of paper, places it in a covered chalice, and three cardinals tally the votes aloud piercing each vote with

• See SPIRITUALLY page 11

## • PLACES TO WORSHIP •

### BLUEVALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Oliver Rice. Pastor (828) 421-1315  
Sundays: School: 10 a.m., Worship: 11  
Sunday night services every 2nd & 4th Sunday at 7  
Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting: 7 p.m.

### BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

828-269-3546 • Rev. Jamie Passmore. Pastor  
Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11

### CASHIERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Aryn Williams-Reubel. Pastor 828-743-5298  
Sundays: School at 9:30; Worship 10:30

### CHAPEL OF THE SKY

Sky Valley, GA • 706-746-2999  
Sundays: 10 a.m. Worship; Holy Communion 1st & 3rd Sundays

### CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

The Rev'd Dr. Michael Matlock, Rector  
464 U.S. Hwy. 64E, Cashiers, NC

CAC@christanglicancashiers.org • 828-743-1701

Sunday: 9a Fellowship; 9:30a Adult Christian Ed; 10:30a  
Holy Eucharist; Wed. Bible Study & Compline Prayer 5p

### CHRIST CHURCH OF THE VALLEY. CASHIERS

Pastor Jacob Tedder • Jacob@cashiers.church • 743-5470  
www.cashiers.church

Sun. 10:45a; Wed Study: 1:15p supper and childcare.

### CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH

283 Spring Street - Sunday Service: 10:30 a.m.  
Testimony meeting: 3rd Wednesday at 5:30 p.m.

### CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Jim Kinard  
Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11 a.m.  
1st & 3rd Sunday night Service: 7 p.m.  
Wednesdays - Supper at 6 p.m.

### COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

www.cbchighlands.com • 526-4685  
3645 Cashiers Rd. Highlands, NC • Sr. Pastor Gary Hewins  
Sun: Service 10:45am, Children's 10:30am  
Wed.: Youth 5:30-7pm; Women's Bible Study: Mon. 4:30pm, Tues.  
10am; Men's Bible Study: Wed. & Thurs. 7am @ Zookeeper Bistro  
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Pastor Steve Kerhoulas

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Rev. W. Bentley Manning, Rector • 526-2968  
5th and Main streets • www.incarnationwnc.org  
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am in Sanctuary, Wed: Healing Eucharist 12 pm in Chapel,  
Morning Prayer: Mon-Thurs 8:30 am in Chapel

### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HIGHLANDS

828-526-4153 • www.fbchighlands.org  
Dr. Mark Ford, Pastor • 220 Main Street, Highlands  
Sun.: Worship 10:45 am; Sun.: Bible Study 9:30 am  
Wed.: Men's Bible Study 8:30 am; Women's 10:30 am

### FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Emily Wilmarth, pastor, Kelley Connelly Asso. Pastor  
828-526-3175 • fpchighlands.org  
Sun.: Adult Ed.: 10 a.m.; Worship 11 a.m.  
Tues: Men's Group 10 a.m. Wed: Bell Choir 4 p.m. Choir: 6p

### GOLDMINE BAPTIST CHURCH

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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. Wednesday Worship is 6:30p

### HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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### MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH

8 miles south of Highlands on N.C. 28 S in Satolah  
Pastor Zane Talley  
Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11. Choir: 6 p.m.  
Wed: Bible Study and Youth Mtg.: 7 p.m.

### MOUNTAIN SYNAGOGUE

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Kippur.

### MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

743-2583 • Independent Bible Church  
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(4.5 miles from NC 107)

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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. Andy Cloer  
Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11 a.m.  
Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study: 6 p.m.  
**ST. JUDE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
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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 March 15. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.**

### March 15

• At 11:45 a.m., officers responded to a vehicle accident in the Blue Bike parking lot on Carolina Way.

**The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from March 20.**

### March 20

• At 8:58 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Pipers Court.

### March 21

• At 12:12 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on US 64 west (Franklin Road).

• At 4:01 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of an unauthorized burning at a residence on Carriage Lane.

### March 22

• At 7:10 a.m., the dept. was first-re-

sponders to a residence on White Clover Lane.

• At 4:47 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of an unauthorized burning at a residence on Buck Creek Road.

### March 23

• At 5:10 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Leonard Road.

### March 24

• A little past midnight, the dept. investigated the cause of smoke at a location on Brushy Face Road.

• At 1:34 p.m., the dept. was first-re-

sponders to a location on Pierson Drive.

• At 1:16 p.m., the dept. investigated the cause of smoke at a location on Horse Cove Road.

## • CHHS NEWS •



Photo by Marty Boone

Paul was found under a house in Highlands when he was just a young kitten. He is now approaching two years old and is a little on the shy side. Paul would thrive best in a loving forever home with a quiet environment and a human companion who is patient and gentle. For more information please call the Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society at (828)743-5752.

## • HOSPITAL NEWS •

### Colon cancer risk factors, symptoms, and screenings

The news about cancer is always changing, and it's usually a mix of good and bad. Although miraculous discoveries and progress are being made in the fight against cancer every day — from testing advances to highly personalized treatments — the disease still claims far too many lives.



Tom Neal CEO, CNO  
H-C Hospital

Colon cancer is the second leading cause of deaths that are cancer-related, but 60% of colon cancer deaths could be prevented if people followed the current screening recommendations. On the bright side, we've got an extraordinary way to screen for colon cancer — the colonoscopy — and there are now more than one million colon cancer survivors in the United States.

Some of the nonmodifiable risk factors that put a person at increased risk for developing colon cancer are having a close family member (parent, sibling, child) who has been diagnosed and living with inflammatory bowel disease.

Fortunately, there are quite a few modifiable risk factors that you do have control over, and by changing some life-

style habits, you can lower your risk for colon cancer. Obesity increases a person's colon cancer risk, so losing weight is critical if your weight can cause you to be classified as obese (when a person has a body mass index, or BMI of 30 or more).

People who live with type 2 diabetes are also at higher risk for colon cancer, but per the Colon Cancer Foundation, good management of blood sugar levels helps people avoid diabetes complications and positively impact the outcome of someone diagnosed with colon cancer.

A diet high in red and processed meat has been seen to increase colon cancer risk, and so has leading a sedentary lifestyle. Dietary changes like increasing fruit and vegetable consumption, as well as increasing physical activity are the solutions here. Avoiding tobacco and alcohol use also lower your colon cancer risk.

Everyone should also familiarize themselves with colon cancer symptoms, which include changes in bowel habits (increased constipation or diarrhea, for example), rectal bleeding, persistent stomach pain or cramps, and unintended weight loss. An-

other sign to be aware of is not feeling fully relieved after having a bowel movement.

There are multiple colon cancer screening options available, but factors like how often a person is tested and which screening they receive will vary, depending on their individual risk factors and personal medical history. One alarming trend has been that an increasing number of younger adults are being diagnosed with colon cancer. Because

• See HOSPITAL page 14

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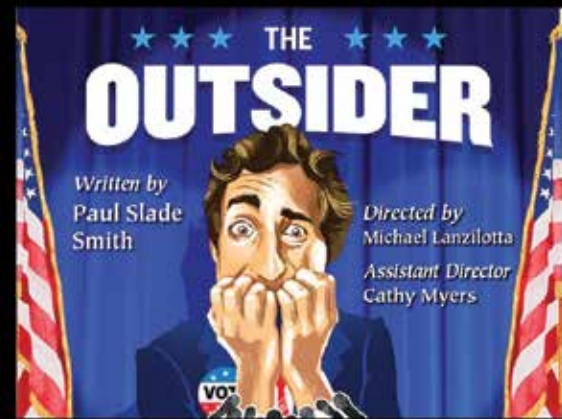
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Friday, March 28 at 7 pm

Sunday, March 30  
at 2 pm



Highlands Performing Arts Center, 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands, NC  
For tickets: [www.highlandscashiersplayers.com](http://www.highlandscashiersplayers.com) or call: 828-526-9047

...SPIRITUALLY continued from page 10

a needle and thread. Famously, with each failed vote, all of the ballots are burned in a small stove set up in the chapel and through the chimney comes black smoke. Voting continues until a two-thirds majority is reached at which time, the cardinal who received the votes is asked whether he accepts.

Immediately upon acceptance, he is the new pope. The ballots are burned with a chemical producing white smoke. The newly elected pope dons the white cassock for the first time and soon emerges on the loggia of St. Peter's upon the announcement from another cardinal: "habemus papam" or "we have a pope."

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## FOR SALE

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**LAND FOR SALE** - 2 tracts, 7.5 miles south of Highlands, 8.64 acres with spring, by far the best view in the area at \$200,000; 6.12 acres with spring (already subdivided into 2, 3-acre lots) \$140,000. 828-974-1137. (5/1)

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**RV SITE** - class A only - in Wildflower Creek RV Resort. Just minutes from Highlands and Sky Valley. Full hook-up, concrete pad, landscaped and storage shed. \$195,000. For more info call 828-421-1709 or email bobnancync@gmail.com. (st. 1/25)

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## ...SCHOOLS cont. from page 1

jected state-mandated increases, local supplements, 10% increase in athletic supplements, utility increases, school nutrition funds for FHS and Highlands School student meals, and the CTE early childhood education pathway salaries.

The Maintain/Topnotch budget is for \$12.5 million and includes nine items that the school board has deemed as top priority.

“The commissioners can choose to fund any of these, or they can choose to fund all of them,” said Ledford.

The Maintain/Topnotch/Expansion budget is for \$14.9 million and includes elements that go beyond the other two and involves funding for elements that plan for the future.

“This will show them, for planning purposes, where we are headed so they can start planning for the future,” said Superintendent Lynch. “It will give them a baseline so they can plan for upcoming years in regards to MC School System’s strategic plan.”

In a March 24 email to school superintendents Superintendent of NC Dept. of Public Instruction Mo Green said while education funding is primarily provided at state and local levels, federal changes could have real implications for North Carolina’s schools and students.

“While we do not have specific details on what this executive order will impact and how Congress will respond, we know what federal funding and services provide for North Carolina schools,” she said.

Almost 11% of funding for NC’s public schools – \$1 billion – comes from the federal government.

In dollar amounts, NC gets \$2,472 per student from the Federal government.

This funding helps to provide educational services for students, including those with disabilities and for low-income families and supports various programs including Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs.

The salaries of more than 14,000 public school teachers and other educators – 7.6% of all public school educators and staff in North Carolina – are paid with federal education funding.

She said the loss of federal funding would also be detrimental to local economies because public schools are the



Music/drama teacher Joi Chapman’s students performed a skit from their latest show, Alice in Wonderland, Jr., at the BOE meeting in Highlands Monday night. Pictured are Caterpillar - Larkin Rice; Little Alice - Aurora Allio; Cats - Rylee Oakey, Madelynn Phillips and Annie Wilkes.

single-largest employer in 44 counties, a top-3 employer in 85 counties, and a top-5 employer in all 100 counties.

Furthermore, she said the elimination of the Department of Education could delay grant processing, technical assistance and guidance for programs that serve students.

In addition to seeking to close the U.S. Department of Education, the executive order seeks to “return authority over education to the States and local communities but “ensuring the effective and uninterrupted delivery of services, programs and benefits on which Americans rely.”

Green said Title I funding and funding for exceptional children may remain in place, but the termination of competitive grants for certain activities such as teacher recruitment and retention have already taken place.

Green said NC DPI is monitoring federal executive orders and actions and will maintain regular communication with districts and schools to understand and assist with immediate needs and concerns and advocate strongly for continued federal funding without disruptions through all available channels.

*Note: The specifics of the Maintain/Topnotch and Maintain/Topnotch/Expansion '25-'26 budget scenarios were not available by press time.*



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# • HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

## POOL SCHEDULE

Lap Swim: Mon.-Fri. 6am-9:45am, and Saturday 10am-11pm - 6 lanes. Water Aerobics: 18 y+ Mon.-Fri. 10-11am with Karen Chambers. Adult Swim: 18y+ Mon.-Thurs. 11am-3:30pm, Friday 11am-1:30pm. Public Swim: Mon. thru Thurs. 3:30-7pm, Saturday 11am-6pm and Sunday 1-6pm

## PICKLE BALL

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

## MOVIES

• No Movies at the Martin Lipscomb Performing Arts Center at PAC on Chestnut Street this weekend.

## MOUNTAIN FINDINGS

• Open: 10 am - 1 pm, March 21-22, April 4-5 and 18-19.

## March 20 - 23

• At the MLT at PAC, HCP's "The Outsider," 7:30p Thurs. and Fri. and 2p Sat. and Sun. The opening night performance will be followed by a free wine and hors d'oeuvres reception. Tickets are available at [highlandscashiersplayers.com](http://highlandscashiersplayers.com), or by calling 828-526-9047.

## Thurs., March 20

• Highlands Town Board Retreat at the Rec Park 9a to 3p.

## Fri., March 21

• Community Coffee with Mayor Pat Taylor in the Hudson Library meeting room 11 a.m. He will be discussing the upcoming 2025-2026 budget.

• At the Rec Park, Senior Lunch at 12 noon.

## March 22

• At the Bascom, a spring exhibitions reception at 3p. It's free.

## Wed., March 26

• The Cashiers Historical Society and Albert Carlton-Cashiers Community Library will present Lillian Smith: Breaking the Silence, a film screening exploring the life and legacy of Southern writer and activist Lillian Smith. th, from 3-5pm. This event is free and open to the public, with a discussion to follow.

## March 27-28, 30

• At the MLT at PAC, HCP's "The Outsider," 7:30p Thurs. and Fri. and 2p and Sun. Tickets are available at [highlandscashiersplayers.com](http://highlandscashiersplayers.com), or by calling 828-526-9047.

## Sat., March 27

• Salon Series at Highlander

Mountain House, John Paul White is a four-time Grammy award-winning singer-songwriter and co-founder of Single Lock Records. <https://www.highlandermountainhouse.com/>

## Fri., March 28

• At the Highlands Biological Station, "How to teach in the outdoors," 8:30a to 2:30p. A free program Open to any K-12 grade teacher interested in using the outdoor to engage student in learning. To register go to [stem.maconk12.nc.us](http://stem.maconk12.nc.us).

## Fri., April 4

• The Boys & Girls Club of the Plateau, in partnership with Western Carolina University's Department of Chemistry and Physics, will host a free evening telescope viewing party on the campus of the Boys & Girls Club of the Plateau located at 558 Frank Allen Road, Cashiers, NC, on Friday beginning at 7:30 p.m for stargazers of all ages!

## Sat., April 5

• Lowcountry Oyster Roast at Outpost Inn. Outpost Inn partners with Lowcountry Oyster Company and Munkle Brewing Company, both of Charleston, SC, to host it's first oyster roast in its courtyard. Tickets include all-you-can-eat freshly roasted oysters with one Munkle beer. Other beer and wine offerings are available ala carte at the wine bar. <https://www.highlandermountainhouse.com/>

## April 11-12

• At the Bascom, Clay Symposium. Free.

## April 13-18

• At the Mountain Learning Center, Music Week. Classes, workshops, and one-on-one sessions with nationally touring musicians. Early-Bird Discount - \$50 off if registered before Valentine's Day! <https://www.themountainrlc.org/event/homecoming-2/>

## Sun., April 13

• The Masters Sunday viewing party at Highlander Mountain House a viewing party on Masters Sunday complete with drink and food specials inspired by the storied menu found at Augusta National. <https://www.highlandermountainhouse.com/>

## Sun., April 20

• Easter Brunch Special at Highlander Mountain House. Chef Adam Bresnahan pulls out all the stops for a festive and seasonal Easter brunch. Expect dish + drink specials, along with their normal menu. <https://www.highlandermountainhouse.com/>

## Thurs., April 24

• Salon Series at Highlander Mountain House. Enjoy the smooth sounds of Lucero front man, Ben Nichols at the next installment of HMH's popular Salon Series. <https://www.highlandermountainhouse.com/>

## Sat., April 26

• Plateau Pickup. Keep Highlands beautiful is a community-wide cleanup day dedicated to preserving our town's natural beauty. For more info, go to [highlandschamber.org](http://highlandschamber.org) or call 828-526-2112.

## ...MAYOR

## continued from page 2

cited in the plan? There will be a public process to address these issues in the coming months. The overarching goal should be what is the best course of action for the Highlands community, not just for one or two groups.

There were parking issues covered at the retreat. One major item was converting the diagonal parking on 4th Street to parallel parking. That plan would improve pedestrian and vehicular safety, but about eight parking spaces would be lost. What is the best decision? I fall on the safety side.

On the other hand, our staff will consult with the state about converting the space on the curve near South Street to additional parking. That effort could reduce the loss of parking space. The community plan states the town has 962 public parking spaces. The parking changes on 4th Street will still keep parking above 950 parks.

The goals and issues cited in the Highlands Community Plan will continue to provide guidance as the Town Board sets priorities for the forthcoming budget. It will take several years if ever, to fully address all the issues and meet the challenges of a dynamic community like ours.

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## ..HOSPITAL continued from page 11

of this, the recommendation age for initial screening for people at average risk for colon cancer was lowered to 45.

There are stool-based tests that are used to screen for colon cancer and can be done at home for those who are at average risk. Visual tests include the flexible sigmoidoscopy and the colonoscopy. During a colonoscopy, the surgeon uses a flexible lighted tube with a tiny camera to examine the colon and rectum. Before the procedure, the patient must do bowel prep, which often involves drinking fluid that causes them to empty their bowels completely. This is important so the surgeon can see the colon and rectum clearly when they

look for any polyps.

During the procedure, the patient is briefly sedated. If no polyps are found, this test is only needed every 10 years. Colonoscopy is often referred to as the "gold standard" colon cancer screening, because if any polyps are found, they can be removed during the procedure.

At Highlands Cashiers Hospital, we're proud to have board-certified general surgeons Dr. Zachary Phillips based in our Highlands clinic and Dr. James Osborne based in our Cashiers clinic. Both surgeons perform colonoscopies at Highlands Cashiers Hospital, as well as many other procedures.

We should all speak with our

primary care provider about what our risk factors are for colon cancer. They can help you determine when you need to get screened. If you're due for a colonoscopy, don't delay scheduling it by calling to see Dr. Osborne at 828-743-2491 or Dr. Phillips at 828-526-4346.

I still meet community members who aren't aware that HCH provides these screenings. Know that we do, so you're able to get this advanced care right here, close to home. Please don't delay. It is a tragedy when we lose a loved one to a disease that is preventable with early diagnosis and intervention.

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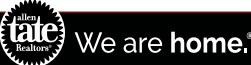
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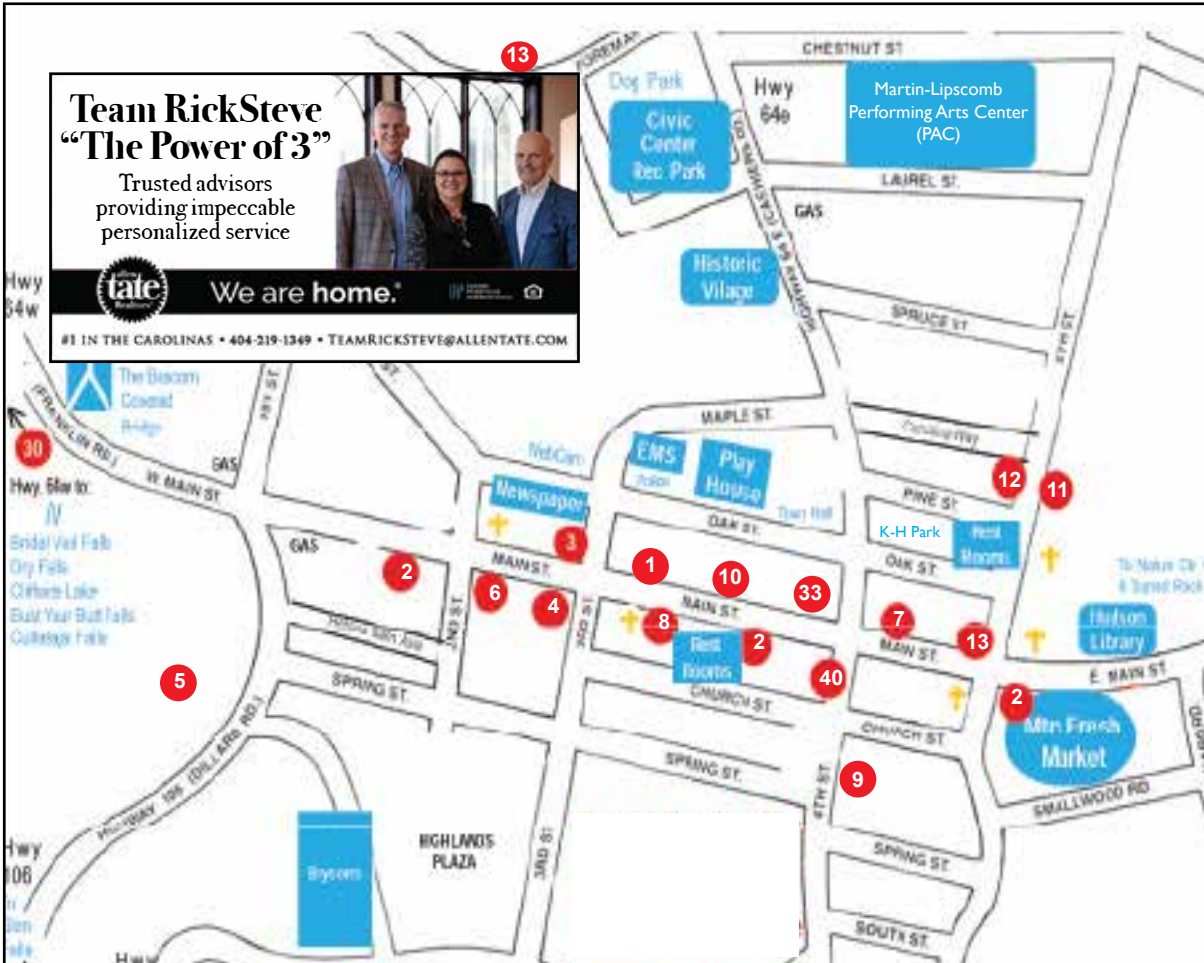
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