Highlands Newspaper

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Mirror Lake dredging is moving forward

Town hears options for Phases 2 & 3

By Kim Lewicki

The $500,000 the Mirror Lake Improvement Association raised for Phase 1 to begin dredging the lake has started and is ongoing. Now the town and the association have their eyes set on Phases 2 and 3.

That was the subject of a Special Town Board meeting Tuesday evening with the required preliminary engineering study presented by McGill Engineering.

The purpose of the dredging project and the reason the state awarded the $5 million grant is to

• See MIRROR LAKE page 8





Citizens gathered in protest Saturday at the county courthouse and across the street at the gazebo plaza

Photo by Erin Bronk

Franklin 'Hands Off!' rally draws 400+

By Kim Lewicki

On Saturday, April 5, Macon County citizens joined 150 groups in more than 1,200 locations in 50 states as part of the Hands Off! movement to protest the way President Trump is running the country.

Thousands of protesters carrying signs and voicing protests gathered all over North Carolina – in Franklin more than 400 people crowded the courthouse and gazebo plazas.

The nation-wide rallies were the biggest day of demonstrations yet by an opposition movement trying to regain its momentum after the shock of the Republican's first weeks in office.

Citizens are assailing Trump and Musk for government downsizing, the firing of thousands of federal workers, closing Social Security Administration field offices, shuttering entire agencies, deporting immigrants, scaling back protections for transgender people, cutting funding for health programs and more.

The next nationwide protest against the Trump administration is scheduled for April 19.

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President's DOGE has cut library funding

MC libraries and Hudson Library to feel affects

By Kim Lewicki

The result of President Trump's "reduction of federal bureaucracy" order has been so rapid and so far-reaching it's hard to keep up with.

One little-known institute that has been slashed is the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) which supports community and school libraries nationwide.

The little group of 77 employees was created by Congress as an independent federal agency in 1996 through the Museum and Library Services Act to support American museums and libraries.

Those employees have lost their jobs, and now Americans' libraries have lost the programs they administered so now IMLS funding cuts will be felt at the grass roots level.

President Trump's mid-March order states that IMLS must be reduced to its statutory functions and that non-statutory functions shall be eliminated to the maximum extent.

Statutory obligations would be those regarding payment of current-year and multi-year contracts, grants, awards, and agreements to recipients that are authorized and appropriated by Congress within the annual federal budget.

Non-statutory functions would be those supporting professional development for library and museum staff, and funding programs that enhance museum services to the public

Currently, nationwide IMLS serves 159,678 libraries, museums and archives; 17,278 public libraries; 3,697 academic libraries; 98,506 school libraries; 4,396 special libraries (special libraries include Corporate, Law, Medical, Religious, Research, Tribal and other libraries not strictly classified in the other library types; 801 government libraries; and 35,000 museums.

• See LIBRARY page 7



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• The Plateau's Position •

• Mayor on Duty •

Town issues on the front burner



Highlands Mayor Patrick Taylor

The impending budget, Mirror Lake dredging, storm recovery, code enforcement, the STR bill, state pressures on municipal zoning, and the start of town construction projects are all issues facing Highlands. When I look back to when I first became mayor almost 12 years ago, the operation of the town these days is much more challenging. On the other hand, the same can be said for almost all North Carolina municipalities.

Looking back there are some ironic moments about the past positions that I have taken. For instance, as homeowner insurance rates began to significantly increase throughout the state due to devastating hurricanes hitting the coast like Matthew and Fred, I asked why folks in Western Carolina should be expected to shoulder increased rates. My rationale was that we never have a hurricane hit WNC with the destructive power as those on the coast. Well, Helene proved me wrong. Our town has been fortunate in that we have recovered from Helene and are fully open for business as spring approaches.

The town is making progress in dredging Mirror Lake. Some may ask why it is taking so long and why the upfront engineering fees are so high. My response is that the town, or any other entity, must do this preliminary work before disturbing any US waterway like Mirror Lake. Months of study and planning lie ahead before phase 2 dredging gets underway.

Some may think the town is too intrusive on code enforcement, and others think we are too lax. My response is that we have zoning and development ordinances that we strive to enforce consistently and without bias. These ordinances have contributed to making Highlands a special place to live and visit. The Town Board and staff are committed to continuously reviewing the ordinances to determine where any needed revisions and improvements can be made.

By now, most of us are aware of several pending state bills that could potentially impact zoning throughout the state. In particular, our staff is tracking SB 291, which would provide comprehensive regulation of STRs throughout the state. If passed in its present form, Highlands' September 24, 2022, STR ordinance that grandfathered STRs operating prior to the ordinance passage would be invalidated and superseded. Put another way, any home residence in Highlands could be operated as an STR. We will have to wait for the sovereign state of North Carolina to make a decision one way or the other. A vote to enact SB 291 would settle the issue by the state. A failed vote would be a de facto statement that the legislature defers to municipalities in regulating STRs. A showdown is pending.

Two construction projects are about to get underway. One is the Dog Mountain water project that we have been working with the state bureaucracy to get underway for three years now. We had hoped to get the go-ahead this past winter so most of the disruptive construction would have been

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Obituary Policy
Obituaries are $8 per column inch.
$10 per photo.
Payable prior to publication.

• SnapShot •

Sophie's Morning Walk



Photo by Hank Ross

Do you have a heartfelt, funny, interesting, or beautiful photo you would like to share in our "SnapShot" section? Email it to 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, 10-Apr	Fri, 11-Apr	Sat, 12-Apr	Sun, 13-Apr
55°F / 41°F	54°F / 37°F	54°F / 32°F	62°F / 37°F
A couple of afternoon showers	Cloudy with showers	Breezy in the morning	Plenty of sunshine
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• Investing at 4,118 Ft •

The value of seller repairs and upgrades



John Sheehan, Broker
Mountain Life Properties
828-239-8814

Why should you think about selling your home when you have no near-term intention of parting with it? Well, most homeowners eventually will sell their home, and while you may not be considering a sale of your home anytime soon, it's best to always maintain your home in a condition as if it could go to market next month.

Your home is a very unique product. Yet, potential buyers will compare it to many other homes for sale, both somewhat similar and not so similar. As a Seller, you need to continually care for your property, so that potential Buyers can readily see the comparative value in your home, both for an expeditious and profitable sale.

The unfortunate reality, however, is both Buyers and Sellers tend to shy away from embracing expenditures of time and cost for repairs and updates. Most buyers are looking for a move-in ready home. Most Sellers are looking to sell their home As-Is and only contract minor repairs and updates. What we REALTORs see time and again though is the party that is willing to smartly invest to fix up a home will likely be the "winner" in the long run.

Let me speak about my own home experience in Highlands. In 2017, my wife and I bought a home that had been on and off the market for several years. The house was in a location we liked, but it needed updating and that was principally why it had remained for sale for so long.

Over the first five years of our ownership, we gutted the kitchen, replaced all appliances, gutted three bathrooms, replaced the HVAC, replaced the hot water heater, replaced all flooring, scrapped popcorn ceilings, repainted the exterior and interior, replaced light fixtures, installed a whole house generator, replaced all railroad-ties in landscape walls, terraces and steps, replaced rain gutters, installed a second driveway, and more.

We now have a home in our chosen location that suits our needs, and if we were to sell it, we are confident we would not only recoup our investment but also sell it more quickly than if we had kept it in the state in which we purchased it.

Over time, REALTORs show innumerable homes to Buyers. While the process can vary, we observe some common behaviors as they tour candidate homes. As you read the following Buyer observations, consider what a Buyer would see if they walked through your home today:

Buyers guess the roof's age and comment on its condition.

They look for good quality kitchen cabinetry, appliances, and countertops.

They expect to see contemporary walk-in showers, tubs, and fixtures in bathrooms.

They inspect floors, deck boards, and trim.

They seek windows with good insulation and clarity.

They notice the condition of fireplaces and fireboxes.

They look at ceilings and walls for water stains and settlement cracks.

They guess the general age of HVAC units and water heaters.

They peer into crawl spaces and basements for signs of water intrusion or the presence of vapor barriers and dehumidifiers.

They look how water runs off a property and make assumptions about its impact to foundations. Today's Buyer has viewed so many Home Fix-it and Flip-it shows, they have gained some perspective on things to look out for and are more cautious than prior generations. As a Seller, you are far better off to eliminate as many "negotiating points" that would fall in the buyer's favor as possible. That's part of wisely "Investing at 4118 Ft."

• *John Sheehan is a Broker at Mountain Life Properties serving the luxury real estate sales market. The Mountain Life Properties team welcomes all to stop by their log cabin office at 134 Maple Street, visit our website MountainLifeRE.com, or reach us at 828-239-8814.*

• Letter •

Western North Carolina doesn't need martial law

Dear Editor,

Here in Western North Carolina, we know the value of independence, personal responsibility, and limited government. That's why I'm deeply concerned about a quiet move coming out of Washington that doesn't seem to be getting the attention it deserves and that could affect every one of us.

After his inauguration in January, The President signed an executive order declaring a national emergency at the southern border. But the part no one's talking about is what came next: the order gives the Department of Defense and Homeland Security until April 20 to recommend whether to invoke the Insurrection Act—a law that would allow the president to deploy U.S. troops against civilians here at home.

No matter who we voted for or our affiliation, military force should never be used against the American people. Using the Insurrection Act to send troops into American towns and cities is not border policy. It's federal overreach, plain and simple. It bypasses governors, threatens our right to rally, and risks setting a precedent that could be abused by any future president.

I urge Congressman Chuck Edwards, and Senators Thom Tillis and Ted Budd, to speak out before the April 20 report is delivered. The people of North Carolina deserve to know where their leaders stand—not after the fact, but now.

Our Constitution was built to limit the power of government, not to concentrate it. Let's not let fear—or politics—erase the freedoms generations of Americans have fought to protect.

Constance L Neely
Scaly Mountain, NC

Holy Week Schedule 2025



Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church Highlands

April 17 - Holy Thursday Mass
St. Jude Sapphire Valley - 6 p.m.
April 18 - Good Friday Liturgy
St. Jude Sapphire Valley - 3 p.m.
April 19 - Holy Saturday Mass
St. Jude Sapphire Valley - 8:30 p.m.
April 20 - Easter Sunday Mass
St. Jude Sapphire Valley - 9 a.m.
Our Lady of the Mountains - 11 a.m.

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• OBITUARY •

Jeffrey (Jeff) Chamberlain Schenck



Jeff Schenck, former president of beer wholesaler Schenck Company and resident of Orlando, FL, and Highlands, NC, passed away from a heart attack on March 29, 2025, at the age of 71. Jeff leaves behind a rich legacy of business, philanthropic, and artistic contributions to the Orlando and Highlands communities and a large circle of family and friends who loved him dearly.

Jeff was born in Fresno, CA May 6, 1953, to Jay and Page Schenck, then moved to Central Florida when his father was appointed as a distributor for Miller Brewing Company. One of Jeff's earliest memories was crawling as a toddler across the wooden planks lining the floors of the family's first beer warehouse. Little did he know that he would become the president of Schenck Company, a company that became the 20th largest beer distributorship in the country under Jeff's leadership. Jeff's contributions to the beverage industry were widespread and lasting. He served on the Board of Directors for the Beer Industry of Florida in the 1980s and was instrumental in helping create and pass the Beer Franchise Law.

Yet his true passion was always music. A born artist, Jeff could play virtually any instrument he picked up yet never had any formal training. Jeff was happiest with a guitar, mandolin, fiddle, or harmonica in hand. Those who knew him in the late 1970s remember his first band, Budapest String Band, which played in local pubs around Orlando and Gainesville. Jeff returned to his musical roots in retirement, playing mandolin, fiddle, and guitar in Well Strung Band in Western North Carolina. It was through music that he met his longtime partner, Rachel, an upright bassist in the band.

In retirement, Jeff split his time between Winter Park and Highlands. He delighted in travel and continued to explore until the end, completing four transoceanic cruises in his last five years. Jeff spent his last day of life enjoying one of his favorite pastimes on a cruise ship with his partner off the coast of Spain. Those who knew Jeff will always remember his kindness, generosity, and humility.

Jeff leaves behind his partner Rachel Friday, children Taylor Schenck Murphy and spouse Mike Murphy of Orlando, Jay Hunter Logan Schenck and fiancée Lourdes Perez of Orlando, grandchildren Dylan and Andersen of Orlando, sisters Pat Schenck Robertson and spouse Randy Robertson of Winter Park, Martha Schenck of Vero Beach, and Virginia Schenck of Atlanta, GA, former spouse Minter Byrd of Winter Park, former spouse and mother of his children Chris Schenck of Orlando. He is predeceased by his parents Jay and Page Schenck of Winter Park and nephew Alex Robertson.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Monday, April 28, 2025, from 2pm to 5pm at Enzian Theater in Maitland, FL.

Memorial contributions in honor of Jeff may be made to: Blue Bamboo Center for the Arts -- bluebambooartcenter.com; Support Our Scholars -- supportourscholars.org; Highlands Emergency Council -- highlandsemergencycouncil.com

...LIBRARY continued from page 1

In 2023-'24, North Carolina received $5 million in federal funds through grants to 90 organizations. The funds were used to digitize local history materials, purchase statewide e-books and e-audio books for adults and youth as well as statewide access to them, digital skills training, website hosting and event support, professional development and scholarships and grants for library staff and the NC Cardinal Consortium.

The NC Cardinal Consortium of North Carolina enables public libraries to share an online catalog and resources with other member libraries.

The program's mission is to maintain and continually develop a working, efficient, and sustainable Integrated Library System for public libraries and library staff within North Carolina.

The number of NC residents served by a Cardinal member library – like those in the Fontana Regional Library system (FRL) -- Albert Carlton-Cashiers Community Library, Hudson Library (in Highlands), Jackson County Public Library (in Sylva), Macon County Public Library (in Franklin), Marianna Black Library (in Bryson City), and Nantahala Community Library – is 44% of the population which represents 234-member locations across 66 counties. Monthly, 988 thousand items are borrowed by NC library users on average each month.

Hudson Library librarian Carlyn Morenus said one of the great strengths of Hudson Library, as part of Fontana Regional Library system, is its membership in the NC

• See LIBRARY page 15



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...MAYOR from page 2

done before seasonal residents returned to town. Unfortunately, the construction will now begin sometime around the summer months. We also signed a contract to run the new transmission lines for a third electric circuit. That line will be installed running down US 64 in the north of town. The good news is that this project should get away in the next few weeks and be completed by early summer at the latest.

Finally, let me make a major disclaimer. I communicate information based on the best information available at this time. Many times, unforeseen circumstances occur that generate a delay or change in plans. That phenomenon sometimes frustrates me to no end, but it is always a looming factor.

I will continue to try to keep everyone updated as best I can.

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...MIRROR LAKE continued from page 1

maintain the water quality for the watershed and drinking water for Highlands and to restore historic recreational activities – fishing and canoeing the "riverines" upstream.

Currently, during Phase 1 sediment immediately downstream and upstream of the bridge is being hydraulically removed, placed in permeable bags to slowly dewater so the water can return to the lake and then the sediment is deposited off-site.

That's basically the process for the subsequent phases, too, but as McGill's Mike Hanson said from the start, how much sediment can be removed and where it can be deposited is driven by funding. The closest and therefore the least expensive sites are the old Highlands landfill which would have to be reopened for this purpose and the Macon County landfill.

Sediment studies have determined the sediment is "safe" to deposit in either of those spots without pollutants or toxins that would hamper the disposing of the sediment.

According to Hanson, the original lake was more than 20 feet deep in some areas – less in others – the area where Mill Creek flows into the lake, which is now a bona fide wetland at Bruner Lane and Cullasaja Drive, and the riverine up stream were both originally 4-5 feet deep.

Currently water depths range from 0-4 feet in river section and exceed 18 feet in some areas of the lake and less than 2 feet in the wetland areas.

Sediment depths range from 0-4 feet in the river and wetlands section and exceed 24 feet in some areas of the lake.

How much the town and the association can remove for $5 million is the question and the timeline for subsequent phases depends on permitting from the state since wetlands exist.

McGill suggested removing 8-10 feet of sediment in the lake and less in the riverines.

Permitting timelines which can take 30-90 days vary depending on the proposed dredge equipment – hydraulic versus mechanical – spoil handling, and disposal of the sediment.

Permitting for hydraulic dredging is faster than mechanical dredging and/or wetland mitigation which can take 8 to 12 months.

Wetland mitigation is where a "1:1 buyout" is done with the state with the town paying the state $77,000 per wetland acre removed. The state would use the money to buy wetlands in another area.

The 1:1 buyout isn't a guarantee – McGill said buyouts can be 1:4 which costs a lot more.

Mayor Pat Taylor said homeowners around the Mill Creek wetland area feel "cheated" regarding the dredging, but he said dredging the five-acre wetland would be cost prohibitive at this point.

With the $5 million in mind, Hanson presented three options that would reduce the dredge volume, minimize wetland impacts and be more affordable.

Option 1 with full-depth sediment removal of 113,614 cubic yards of sediment in the lake, upstream, downstream and in the Mill Creek wetland corridor would be $6,067,320.

Option 2 which would preserve more of the wetlands upstream, downstream and in the Mill Creek wetland corridor would remove 89,955 cubic yards with less shoreline impact for $4,590,120.

Option 2A, is a hybrid, which would remove the same amount and cost the same, but would optimize recreation. He suggested a "canoe path" along the outskirts of the upstream wetlands, rather than dredging through the middle of it, which would be less costly and require less permitting.

Hanson said this option extends dredging from Option 2 to include wetlands near docks to optimize recreational access by residents.

"The increased dredge volume is offset by reducing the dredge depth in the open water areas to maybe 8 feet rather than 10 feet with a fully connected perimeter channel in the Mill Creek/wetland area which could be constructed for a minimal cost for wetland mitigation," he said.

Phase 1 is expected to be completed June or July of this year and if the town moves forward with the next phases – dredging the lake and then the riverines – work could be completed by the fall of 2026.

Hanson closed his presentation by stressing the importance of funding a maintenance program so the town doesn't have to do this again.

"It took 70 years to get this way, and you don't want to have to do this again," he said. "Dredging could be done every 2-3 years at a minimal cost."

To that end, Pat Gleeson who has spearheaded the dredging program, suggested a "special assessment district" be designated for Mirror Lake property owners whereby they would donate a certain amount of money each year for a maintenance fund.

The Town Board was inclined to move forward as soon as possible but said time was needed to digest all the information.

• Here's the Thing •

Bringing the Carnage Home



Bud Katz

The Trump administration's Department of Government Efficiency's slash-fest is already being felt around the country. I have no doubt, and neither should you, that we haven't seen all of what is going to take place.

There's no doubt the bloated United States government is more than ready for a haircut. Any bureaucracy, business or government, needs to be examined regularly, to ensure it's not growing beyond its needs. Corporations, with the mandate to be profitable and to manage expectations of shareholders, do this all the time. The federal government, which operates on an annual deficit in the trillions of dollars doesn't do this at all.

My concern continues to be, not with the "what" of what's happening. It's with the "how." There is no evaluation of what or where to cut because of the speed with which these actions have occurred.

I'm also concerned with the misconception that it's not going to impact us very much here in Western North Carolina. It already has.

We don't know all of what's going to be cut and who is going to be affected because several of the over one hundred executive orders already signed by President Trump are being contested. Some will head to the U.S. Supreme Court. But let's consider what we do know, and how it impacts us.

The Social Security office in Franklin is set to close. Everyone who works there can expect to be told to find other employment. These are our neighbors. They all have families. Our area also has many recipients of earned Social Security benefits. Sure, many of us can do whatever business we have with Social Security online, but many others, all older Americans, aren't comfortable with that. We prefer sorting things out by talking to another human being.

The Great Smoky Mountain National Park is our nation's largest, with over 200 permanent, and 140 seasonal employees. It has already lost some and stands to lose many more as things progress. What many call simply, "the Park" is a major tourism draw to Western North Carolina. It attracts visitors, who fill hotel rooms and restaurants. It brings campers, hikers, along with locals who flock to the Park regularly. Those employees are also our neighbors and have families.

The Veteran's Administration Hospital in Asheville has already cut some jobs in the wake of the DOGE announcement that over 80,000 jobs, or 20% of the VA's national work force, are going away. There's been no announcement yet regarding the VA clinic in Franklin, but it's hard to imagine it and other smaller VA outposts avoiding the axe. Never mind that there are tens of thousands of veterans living in Western North Carolina.

Here's the thing; when significant reductions take place without a clear understanding of the roles people play and their responsibilities to those they serve, it's certain that services will suffer, and those requiring services will experience negative outcomes.

While we've focused on a few of the local ramifications of the effort toward getting federal spending under control, what's happening isn't being handled in a responsible manner, or with concern for those directly affected. The DOGE mentality seems to be to just cut, and deal with fallout later. Not smart, at all.

Maybe announce that plans are being implemented to a) examine all functions of the federal bureaucracy with a goal of reducing waste, fraud and corruption; b) reduce responsibly by, say 15% of jobs from EVERY function of the federal government, and c) make sure all individuals affected by job cuts will be treated fairly and humanely. Do this and the administration would gather immense, bipartisan political capital.

By doing what they're doing, not in some ugly, arbitrary manner, but in a smart and considered way, they'd succeed, just without the carnage.

Eliminating waste, fraud and corruption, where it actually exists, is a noble and necessary goal. Just please, do it with a tiny bit of sensitivity toward those who actually face the chopping block.

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



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Spring Home Improvement 2025

Take the Life-Saving Step of Testing for Radon

(StatePoint) Radon—an odorless, tasteless and colorless gas found in homes and buildings at high levels throughout the United States—is the second leading cause of lung cancer, responsible for about 21,000 deaths each year, and the leading cause of lung cancer among people who don't smoke.

The American Lung Association is partnering with Protect Environmental to educate and empower communities nationwide to take action to prevent lung cancer. As part of the campaign, they are answering some frequently asked questions about radon:

What is radon? Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas emitted from the ground. Uranium in soil and rocks breaks down to form radium. As radium decays, radioactive particles (radon gas) are released into the air.

Why is radon found in buildings? Radon gas enters buildings through cracks in walls, basements, floors, foundations, and potentially, through water used in showers and faucets, trapping it inside.

Why is radon harmful? Radon gas particles can be inhaled in your lungs, attacking cells with dangerous, cancer-causing radiation. Radon exposure has no immediate symptoms; however, the long-term threat of health problems, including lung cancer, is serious.

How is radon detected? The only way to know the radon level in your home and workplace is to conduct a radon test. Dangerous radon levels have been found in every state, so every building should be regularly tested. Testing is the first step in reducing risk of radon-induced lung cancer and is recommended every two to five years, even if you have a mitigation system. The Lung Association and Protect Environmental are offering free radon test kits to homeowners in select communities across the United States. Visit Lung.org/protect-environmental to learn more and check your eligibility for receiving a test kit.

What should I do if I detect high radon levels? Radon gas is measured in picocuries per liter (pCi/L) of air. The Environmental Protection Agency recommends taking action to reduce radon if levels are 4.0 pCi/L or greater, and to consider similar actions when the radon level is between 2.0 and 4.0 pCi/L. If you discover high radon levels in your home, a radon mitigation system should be installed to reduce the amount of radon to a safer level. Just be sure you work with a professional who is certified in radon mitigation. Using unqualified professionals may lead to faulty installation, which can cause property damage and even increase indoor radon levels.

The American Lung Association's campaign to raise awareness on the importance of radon testing is supported by Protect Environmental. For more information, visit Lung.org/protect-environmental.

"I've been to too many homes where no one knew to test for radon until someone in the home got the devastating diagnosis of lung cancer," says Kyle Hoylman, chief executive officer of Protect Environmental. "Taking action to reduce radon through mitigation and regular testing is an investment in the lung health of everyone in the building and could be a lifesaving improvement."

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Construction often starts with excavating; but in 2025 there's more

In Highlands and elsewher, excavating property in 2025 will likely face challenges and opportunities within a construction industry that is experiencing a period of both growth and uncertainty, with factors like material costs, interest rates, and government policies playing a significant role.

Here's a breakdown of factors to consider for excavating property in Highlands, NC in 2025:

Construction Industry Trends:

• **Growth and Volatility:** The construction industry is expected to experience growth in 2025, but also face volatility due to factors like potential tariffs, policy changes, and economic shifts.

• **Material Costs:** Construction material costs are expected to continue rising, though at a slower pace than in previous years.

• **Interest Rates:** Interest rates are expected to remain relatively low, which could lead to increased construction activity.

• **Infrastructure Projects:** There will be increased investment in infrastructure projects, both new construction and repairs due to the increased frequency and severity of natural disasters.

• **Sustainability and Innovation:** The industry is expected to focus on sustainability and innovation, with a push for more environmentally responsible and resilient building practices.

Specific Challenges and Opportunities:

• **Workforce Shortages:** The construction industry may continue to face workforce shortages, which could lead to higher labor costs and project delays.

• See **CONSTRUCTION** page 13

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Spring Home Improvement 2025

How to Pick the Right Plants for Your Location

(StatePoint) When planning your yard or garden, you likely focus on the what and the where. After all, a beautiful plant in a prime location enhances curb appeal and even bragging rights.

You may pay less attention though to understanding how your location, or plant hardiness zone, impacts your garden's success. To help ensure your plants don't just survive, but thrive, the experts at lawn care equipment manufacturer Exmark are sharing the following insights about plant hardiness:

What is Plant Hardiness?

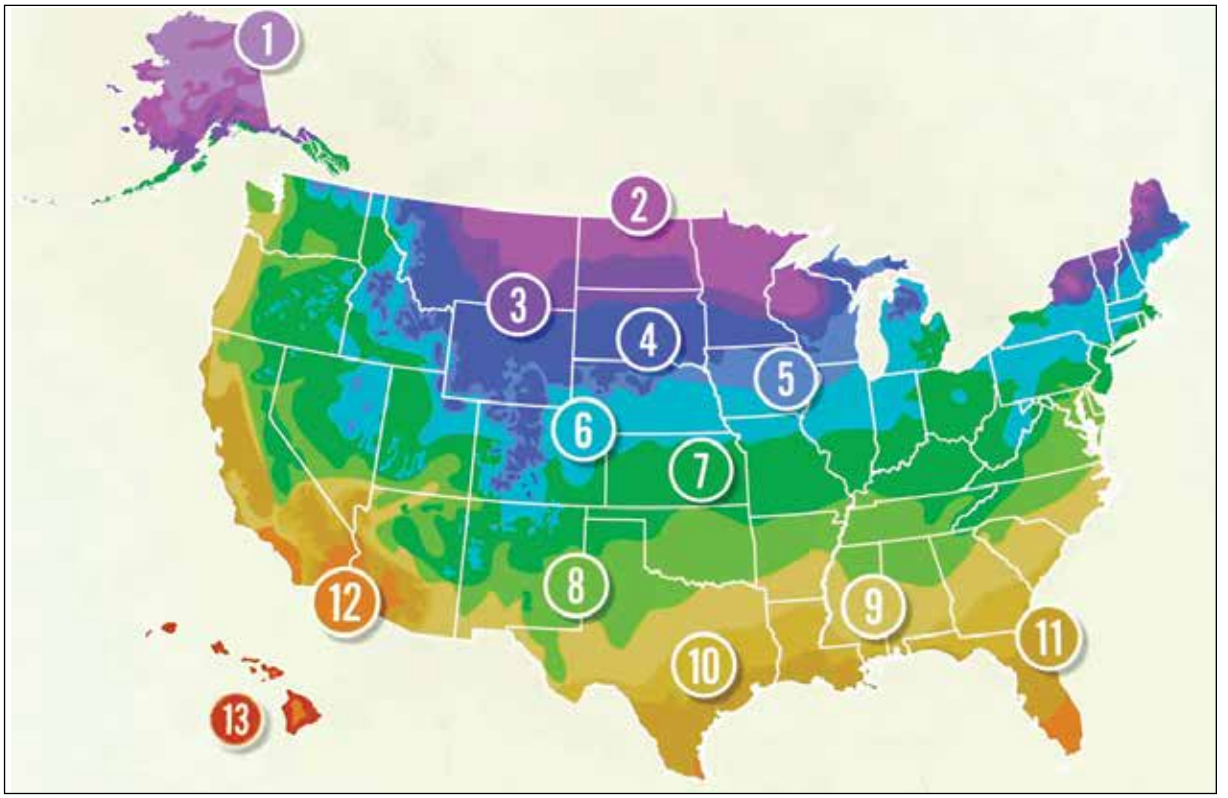
Plant hardiness is the secret sauce of any healthy outdoor space. Plant hardiness is the ability of a plant to survive adverse growing conditions such as drought, flooding, heat and cold. Have you ever watched with frustration as a late-season temperature dip leaves your beautiful buds with a serious case of frostbite? Plant hardiness zones were developed to help landscapers, gardeners and lawn care enthusiasts avoid this heartache.

American farming contributes billions of dollars to the gross national product annually, which is one reason why the USDA has long monitored weather data. If determining when the average final frost may occur for every region in the country is worth billions, what could that same knowledge mean for your garden? Well, choosing plants with hardiness levels appropriate to specific planting zones gives you the best chance of cultivating healthy, beautiful plants.

What is My Growing Zone?

The United States is divided into 13 zones. Zones 1-6 being the coldest, and 7-13 the warmest. Zone 1 averages -60 degrees F while zone 13 never drops below 70 degrees F. A general guideline is to plant anything designated for your zone or lower, but never higher. Know what zone you live in and make a point of checking the tag on the back of the plant or seed pack before planting.

• See **LOCATION page 13**



Hardiness zones can help you decide which plants will thrive in your climate.

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Perennials Versus Annuals

There's a reason you see palm trees in Sarasota, Florida, not Saginaw, Michigan. When it comes to perennials, it's not about when the first frost is, but how cold it gets, and whether that plant can survive and thrive through winter.

Plant hardiness zones are less important however when it comes to annuals. Because these plants are only meant to last one growing season; waiting until after the average first frost date will save you from having to re-plant. Know that even if your plant survives the frost, it may never match the photo you saw advertised at the nursery.

Planting Zone Rule of Thumb

Plant hardiness zone maps are, well, all over the map. Consider the number assigned to your zip code as a starting point. You may live right at the break between one zone and the other. When in doubt, guess too low, rather than too high. In the South, the heat stress a plant not made for the conditions. Your particular geography can also affect your hardiness zone, like if you live on a hill or in a valley.

For more insights, check out the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map, and watch "Find Your Plant Hardiness Zone," an episode of "Backyard Smart," an original series from lawn care equipment manufacturer, Exmark. To watch the video, visit Backyard Life, which is part of a unique multimedia destination with a focus on helping homeowners improve their outdoor living spaces. There you can also download additional tips and view other Exmark Original Series videos.

Understanding what plants will thrive in your climate is essential to a healthy landscape. Fortunately, free resources abound to help you plant successfully.

...CONSTRUCTION continued from page 11

• **Regulatory Environment:** Changes in regulations, especially related to environmental protection and building codes, could impact construction projects.

• **Political Landscape:** Political shifts and policy changes could create uncertainty in the construction industry.

• **Economic Conditions:** Economic conditions, including inflation and interest rates, will continue to influence construction spending and activity.

Advice for Excavating in Highlands, NC:

• **Plan Ahead:** Due to potential supply chain issues and material cost fluctuations, it's crucial to plan excavation projects in advance and secure necessary materials and labor early.

• **Consider Sustainability:** Explore sustainable excavation and construction practices to reduce environmental impact and enhance project resilience.

• **Stay Informed:** Monitor industry trends, economic forecasts, and regulatory changes to make informed decisions.

• **Seek Professional Advice:** Consult with experienced contractors, engineers, and other professionals to navigate the complexities of construction projects.

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Dogwood Health Trust and Affiliated Monitors to hold community meetings

Submitted

Dogwood Health Trust and Affiliated Monitors, Inc. announce the schedule for two community meetings with the Independent Monitor (IM) to be held in May 2025. Each community meeting will share updates about the IM's work and information about where community members can go with concerns and feedback about HCA.

As the Independent Monitor, Affiliated Monitors is responsible for monitoring and evaluating HCA's compliance with its commitments required by the 2019 Asset Purchase Agreement of the Mission Health System. Affiliated Monitors was engaged as the IM in 2024.

The community meetings are part of the IM's larger, ongoing engagement strategy that includes conversations with community groups, organizations and individuals. So far in 2025, the IM has held 14 meetings (three with organizations, three with groups of concerned citizens and eight with individuals) to collect feedback and reflections concerning health care delivery in Western North Carolina. In addition, the IM continues to receive concerns and feedback via its website.

While more details about the agenda will be shared closer to the community meetings, the locations, dates and times will be:

Monday, May 12 (5:30 to 7 p.m.) -- McDowell Technical Community College, Building 11, Room 113, 54 College Dr., Marion, NC

Tuesday, May 13 (5:30 to 7 p.m.), AB Tech Community College, Ferguson Auditorium, 340 Victoria Rd., Asheville, NC 28801

Doors will open 30 minutes prior to each scheduled meeting. The Asheville meeting will also be livestreamed.

"The Independent Monitor plays an important role in listening to the community. These meetings are opportunities to share about their findings and work and to connect community members with the best ways that they can share feedback and concerns about their experiences," said Dr. Susan Mims, CEO of Dogwood Health Trust. "Dogwood is responsible for offering opportunities like this through 2029 – 10 years after the Asset Purchase Agreement was signed – and we are committed to creating spaces for informative exchange."

The Independent Monitor will also be in Western North Carolina from May 5-14, 2025, and welcomes invitations from civic groups, organizations and community members who want to share their experiences with HCA and the Mission Health System. If you would like to schedule a meeting outside of the community meetings above, please email Mission@AffiliatedMonitors.com.

For more information about the work of the Independent Monitor, please visit https://independentmonitormhs.com/.



Highlands United Methodist Church

www.highlandsmethodist.org

April 13th – Palm/Passion Sunday

Service of Healing

April 16th - 6pm in the Faith & Fellowship Center

Holy Thursday Service

April 17th at 5:30pm in the sanctuary

Good Friday Service

April 18th at 5:30pm in the sanctuary

Easter Sunday

Sunday, April 20th

Sunrise Service at the Easter Cross on the front lawn at 7am

Easter Worship Services ~ 9:09 & 11am

Potluck Easter Brunch ~ 10am in in the F&FC

Easter Egg Hunt ~ 10:15am on the front lawn

...LIBRARY continued from page 7

Cardinal library consortium.

"We're a town of 1,000 population that has access to all the books in nearly 250 libraries in the state. In 2023-'24, nearly 1,200 library items came to Hudson Library from around the state through patron requests. That's a huge benefit to our residents," she said. "Another important service is NC Kids, which provides access to age-appropriate e-books and e-audio books to our youth. All of this, and much more, is made possible by funding from IMLS. "

Furthermore, Morenus said the service is free to patrons.

Macon County Librarian Abby Hardison said without IMLS funding of the state-wide catalog and resource consortium, NC Cardinal – a primary foundational resource that patrons use every day – patrons will be severely impacted.

"The Fontana Regional Library system has been part of NC Cardinal since 2012 which has opened up most of the libraries to sharing materials across the state of North Carolina. Losing this consortium would be a great loss for our communities and replacing it with some other kind of integrated library system would be cost prohibited."

Furthermore, Hardison said over the years FRL has applied for numerous grants and by securing this funding has been able to upgrade technology infrastructure, bandwidth, and computers.

In 2021, Macon County libraries were able to add adaptive technology to allow for virtual meetings for staff and patrons, as well as technology to help patrons with hearing, vision, or motor function problems, or those in need of telehealth access.

The Makerspace LSTA grant helped the FRL libraries purchase Maker Space tools, including 3D printers, coding and robotics and digital graphic design including a portable planetarium to bring this experience to children and adults in their service area, and mobile kitchen carts that provide fun and educational nutrition programs for all ages.

"There was also a separate grant to provide learning opportunities in digital literacy, computer skills, and homework help for children throughout the region by providing access to up-to-date technology resources," she said.

Last year, IMLS even awarded $267 million in grants across the country, with a focus on helping to organize book drives and museum field trips in areas without existing access to libraries or museums.

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MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS TRACK

From left: Mason Johnston, Jesus Damian, Todd Vilardo, Charlie Wilkes, Aleks Petric-Sakonjic ,Matthew Morales and Lincoln Perkins.





MIDDLE SCHOOL GOF TEAM

Jensen Bowers, Sam Conner, Knox Holbrooks, Blake Kenter, Alex Lopez, Brynn Mason, Skye Nelson, Aleks Petric-Sakonjic, Justinn Ott, Justin Powell, Harper Ramey, David Rogers, Walker Kittrell, Camden Westendorf, Charlies Wilkes.

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MAY 29





view details

• Spiritually Speaking •



Walk the Walk

Rev. Kirkland "Skully" Knight
The Episcopal Church of the Incarnation

It has become a bit cliché to say, "Be present," or "Live in the moment," but, for many of us, it is harder to do than we realize. As we get closer to Easter, we see images of bunnies, chicks, and other things that bring to mind springtime with new birth and new life, and that is all great. But we are not there yet.

The week that begins with Palm Sunday is known as Holy Week, the holiest of all the weeks of the year on the Church calendar. We worship all week. We are constantly in prayer. And as we come to the end of the week, we have Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. We walk with Jesus on his way to Jerusalem, and it is really difficult. There is only one path to Easter. It is by way of the cross, and there is no avoiding that. We cannot skip the parts of the story that are unpleasant and uncomfortable. They are not only meaningful and powerful, but they are necessary.

It is important for us to stay with Jesus and walk with him in these dark times. We hope and believe that he walks with us in our lowest moments, so the least we can do is walk with him in his. It is not fun nor is it joyous, and yes, and while we know those days are coming, they are not here yet. We have to go through the winter to get to spring, we have to weather the storm to see the rainbow, and we have to walk the way of the cross to get to the empty tomb.

I spent much of my life working in Episcopal schools, and one year at an in-service prior to school beginning, we had a consultant come and speak to us. And he said that we spend too much time preparing the path for the child, and not enough time preparing the child for the path. Truth. It is an issue in our culture that has created a desire to avoid difficult things, rather than cultivating confidence in our ability to persevere through them.

In these difficult days, Iet us "be present" and "live in the moment" even when it is painful and uncomfortable. Walk the walk that we have ahead of us. In a way, it is good for us. When we experience hard things and come out the other side, we are better. Recreated. Renewed. Easter is coming, but we are not there yet. Be patient. Wait. Walk.

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Sunday night services every 2nd & 4th Sunday at 7
Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting: 7 p.m.

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

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

CHAPEL OF THE SKY
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CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH
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Sunday: 9a Fellowship; 9:30a Adult Christian Ed; 10:30a Holy Eucharist;Wed. Bible Study & Compline Prayer 5p

CHRIST CHURCH OF THE VALLEY. CASHIERS
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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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5th and Main streets • www.incarnationwnc.org
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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
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Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.:7 p.m.

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Bazaar Barn is open Friday & Saturday 10a-2p
www.goodshepherdofcashiers.com

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Sunday School:10 am.Worship Service:11 am

• Police & Fire Reports •

Highlands Police entries from March 19. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.

• Cyberstalking of Bespoke Design & Consulting LLC on Main Street was first reported Dec. 2, 2024 and was reported as continuing this past week.

March 19

• At 5 p.m., officers responded to a call of misdemeanor larceny at Four65 Woodfire Bistro Bar where items were taken without permission – air pods, debit cards and $330 in cash.

April 2

• At 3:50 p.m., officers responded to a call at a residence on Upper Lake Road regarding a Burglary/Breaking & Entering, Theft from a building and trespassing where two weed eaters were stolen – and Echo and a Stihl – valued at $100.

• At 5 p.m., officers responded to a call for destruction to property on a town street where a T-post was bent and damaged.

April 5

• At 4:58 p.m., officers responded to a call of damage to personal property at a residence on Paul Walden Way where a fence with gate valued at $210 was damaged.

April 6

• At 2 p.m., a lost phone was reported.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from April 1

April 1

• At 2:11 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on NC 28 south (Walhalla Road).

• At 3:24 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on S. 4th Street.

• At 4:28 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Skyline Lodge Road.

April 2

• At 3 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance at a location on Country Club Drive.

April 3

• At 2:02 a.m., the dept. responded to a Co2 alarm at a residence on Maplewood Lane.

• At 9:15 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Pierson Drive.

• At 4:28 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance at a residence on Maplewood Lane.

April 4

• At 3:31 p.m., the dept. investigated the cause of smoke at a residence on Memorial Park Drive.

• At 3:41 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of a power line down on Shortoff Road.

• At 5:35 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Larkspur Lane.

• At 8:11 p.m., the dept. investigated the cause of smoke at a residence on US 64 west (Franklin Road).

• At 9:49 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Whiteside Mountain Road.

April 5

• At 2:31 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of a possible motor vehicle accident on US 64 west (Franklin Road), but nothing was found.

April 6

• At 5:35 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Goldmine Church Road.

• CHHS News •



Photo by Marty Boone

Allan is one year old and is still quite curious and playful but he has outgrown the "climbing the curtains" kitty stage. Allan loves other cats which makes him perfectly suited for Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society's feline adoption "BOGO" special. Adopt one cat or kitten and we will waive the adoption fee for the second kitty. For more information, please call (828)743-5752.

Apple Heritage Day is April 26 in Cashiers

On April 26, join the Cashiers Historical Society on Saturday from 11 am to 3 pm for the annual Apple Heritage Day Festival.

This event celebrates the apples of early settlers, offering a unique blend of history, tradition, and community. There will be hands-on activities for all ages, an apple baking contest, demonstrations, storytelling, and live music.

This event is free and open to the public. For more details, visit CHS on Facebook or by phone at (828) 743-7710.

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HOLY WEEK & EASTER

PALM SUNDAY
April 13 at 10:30am

MAUNDY
THURSDAY April 17 at
6:00 PM

GOOD FRID AY
April 18 at Noon

THE GREAT VIGI L
OF EASTER
April 19 at 8:00 PM

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April 20 at 9:00 AM & 11:00 AM

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HELP WANTED

ALLISON DIANE CLOTHING, upscale clothing. Stop by to pick up application. corner of Main and 4th St. 828-526-5404. (st. 3/20)

DONLEON'S IS HIRING FOR THE KITCHEN LINE Consider joining the crazy crew working for the craziest old guy in Highlands ... this is the most fun you can have without drinking! Eat anything you want and Dance with the Don .... no kidding. Drop by to chat with DonLeon or call 828-200-9334. (st. 3/13)

FOR SALE

1965 SUNBEAM TIGER – restored, great condition. Hard top, 5-speed. 59k. Call 404-966-0283. (st. 3/6)

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)

SEASONED FIREWOOD - Any size load. call 828-342-6806. (st. 1/25)

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)

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. $192,500. For more info call 828-421-1709 or email bobnnancync@gmail.com. (st. 1/25)

FOR RENT

FURNISHED 2BD, 2.5BA TOWNHOUSE IN SHELBY PLACE. Less than a mile from town. Long Term preferred. Call Jennifer at 828-371-2582 (st. 2/6)

WORKFORCE HOUSING - 2 bedroom/2 bath and 3 bedroom/2 bath with between Highlands & Cashiers. Includes hi-speed internet, water, & washer/dryer. No dogs. Inquires. (828)482-4239, (st. Jan. 2025)

SERVICES

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

JUNK REMOVAL SERVICE – We take anything. Call 828-200-0492 (4/30)

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MURPHY'S PAINT CO. - interior/exterior painting/sheetrock repair/wallpaper removal/log homes/decks. Insured. Free estimates. 828-332-0525 or 828-421-8600. (3/28)

NEED FURNITURE MOVED OR ANYTHING HAULED AWAY? Call or text James of Going Gone at 828-421-2655. (5/1)

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• Business/Organization News •



Randy Foster, President, Rotary Club of Highlands; with Jane and former Rotarian Selwyn Chalker.



Randy Foster, President, Rotary Club of Highlands; Rotarian and host Chief Andrea Holland, and Captain Leah McCall.

Rotarians learn about Haiti

Recently, the Rotary Club of Highlands welcomed Jane Chalker, wife of former Rotary President Selwyn Chalker as our honored guest speaker.

Jane started travelling to Haiti in 2002 and has made as many 50 trips to that country since that time. Jane spoke of the current conditions in Haiti, the lack of any type of government and the fact that the country has virtually been taken over by gangs. Aid to the country has all but stopped as any aid like food or essentials that comes into the country would likely be captured by the gangs.

Jane spoke glowingly of the many wonderful things, in spite of the turmoil currently existing in Haiti, that have continued to provide hope to Haitians. Like Rodolphe St Vil, a man from Cange, Haiti who had a deformity in his feet which kept him from walking normally but was an accomplished musician. He was awarded one of three scholarships to go to a musical university in Jacmel where he received a degree in sound production. He then returned to Cange and started a music school.

Jane had many stories of Haiti, many tragic, many uplifting that she shared with our club. But the main message she shared was Haiti along with its inhabitants is a wonderful place that could use more support during extremely difficult conditions.

Capt. McCall talks 'drunk driving'

Rotarian and Police Chief Andrea Holland introduced Captain Leah McCall, who gave an informative and moving presentation about the dangers of drunk driving. McCall joined the Highlands police force in 2014 after 30 years as a member of the North Carolina Highway Patrol. The Captain's extensive work on the road gave her eye witness experience with the heartbreaking effects of driving while under the influence of alcohol and drugs. She explained that one glass of wine, one beer or one shot amounts to .02 blood alcohol content and takes one hour to leave the bloodstream, so three drinks take three hours. Currently .08 blood alcohol content is a guaranteed arrest if the consumer is stopped by the police.

Captain McCall and Chief Holland described the Sober Operator Act of 2025, proposed NC bipartisan legislation which would lower the maximum allowed blood alcohol content from .08 to .05 while driving.

Rotarians in the meeting were especially impressed by an activity using "beer goggles" which simulates the difficulty of walking a straight line while under the influence of alcohol. Few volunteers were able walk even a wobbly line without intense concentration and arms out to the side for balance.

For information about the status of the Sober Operator Act see: https://lrs.sog.unc.edu/bill/sober-operator-act-2025

• 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, April 4-5 and 18-19.

SATURDAY MARKET

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

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 or to speak with a member of AA 24/7 at 828-349-4357.

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

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.

• At Wayfarers Chapel, Workshop for Writers – Tuesdays from 5-6:30 PM.

• 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@maconncliteracy.org

2nd Wednesdays

• Hudson Library, in partnership with VAYA Health, is hosting an educational series on adult mental health topics, 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 appts 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. 828-526-3556

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.

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 for more information or just join us at 9am .

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).

April 11-12

• At the Bascom, Clay Symposium. Free.

Fri., April 11

• Highlands Nature Center, Wildflower Walk 3-4 p.m. Join us for an easy stroll through the Botanical Garden to explore what spring ephemerals are blooming. Along the way, we'll learn tips for identifying them & a little about their unique characteristics. Free. No registration necessary.

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/

Thurs., April 17

• Grand reopening ceremony, for the new ABC Store on Oak Street at 11 a.m.

Fri., April 18

• Highlands Nature Center, Wildflower Walk 3-4 p.m. Join us for an easy stroll through the Botanical Garden to explore what spring ephemerals are blooming. Along the way, we'll learn tips for identifying them & a little about their unique characteristics. Free. No registration necessary.

Sat., April 19

• At Highlands Nature Center, Morning Bird Walk 8-9 a.m. Meet at 111 Lower Lake Road. Birders of all skill levels are welcome to join us as we take an easy walk around the garden to find our feathered friends. Binoculars available to borrow. Weather Dependent Free. No registration necessary.

• Annual Easter Egg Hunt at the Rec Park on N. 4th St. For ages 0-9 years. Begins at 10 a.m.

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/

Wed., April 23

• At Highlands Nature Center, Drawing Club 3-4 p.m. Supplies will be provided, or bring your own. We'll explore the garden trails, followed by an optional drawing prompt, time to sketch, and an opportunity to share our work. Free. No registration necessary.

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/

Fri., April 25

• At Highlands Nature Center, NC Bioblitz 3-4:30 p.m. The NC Bioblitz is part of the City Nature Challenge, a friendly citizen science competition between cities & regions all over the world. Upload observations to Naturalist, and help Western NC win against the rest of the state!. Visit scienceacrossnc.org to learn more. Free. No registration necessary.

Sat., April 26

• Plateau Pickup. Keep – a community-wide cleanup day dedicated to preserving the town's natural beauty. For more info, go to highlandschamber.org or call 828-526-2112.

• Join the Cashiers Historical Society on Saturday from 11 am to 3 pm for the annual Apple Heritage Day Festival. This event celebrates the apples of early settlers, offering a unique blend of history, tradition, and community. There will be hands-on activities for all ages, an apple baking contest, demonstrations, storytelling, and live music. This event is free and open to the public. For more details, visit CHS on Facebook or by phone at (828) 743-7710.

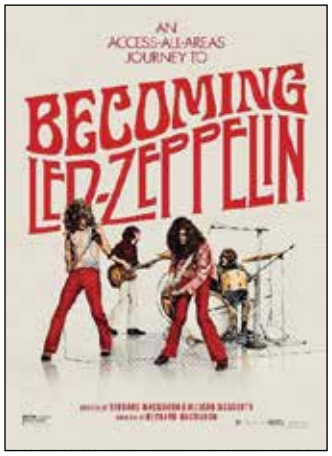
• Start-up funding to benefit Sol & Son DLA will be raised at the La Copa Primavera Inaugural Golf Tournament at Sky Valley Country Club. For information about the golf tournament, contact David@cbchighlands.com.

• The Pop-Up Pipers will appear in unexpected locations throughout downtown Highlands 4:30-5p

May-Sept.

• Outdoor Concert Series. Every Friday and Saturday evening 6-8:30 p.m. in Town Square and KH Founders Park.

MOVIES
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Fri., April 11 – 2pm and 5:30pm
Sun., April 12 – 2pm and 5:30pm
Mon., April 13 – 2pm and 5:30pm

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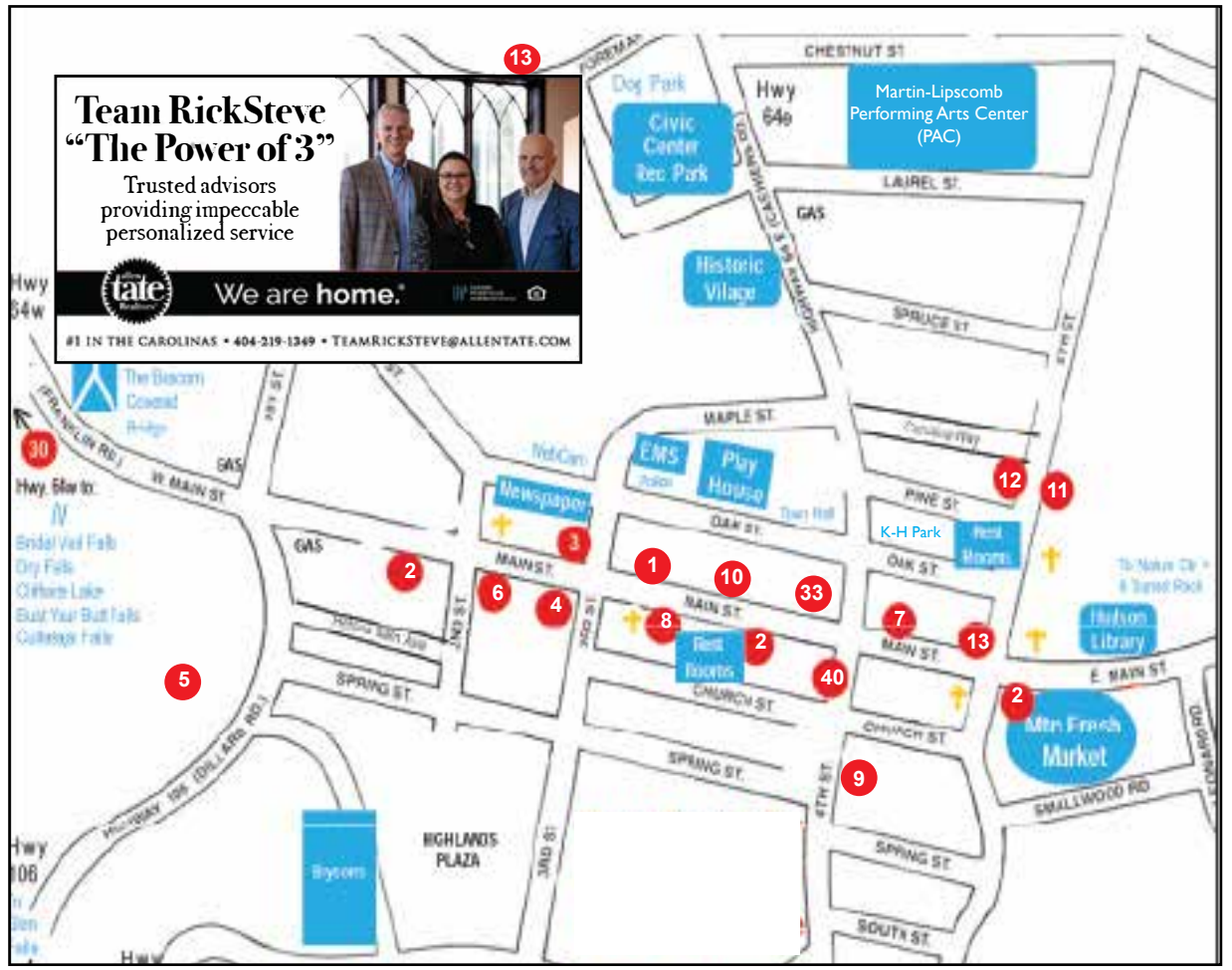


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