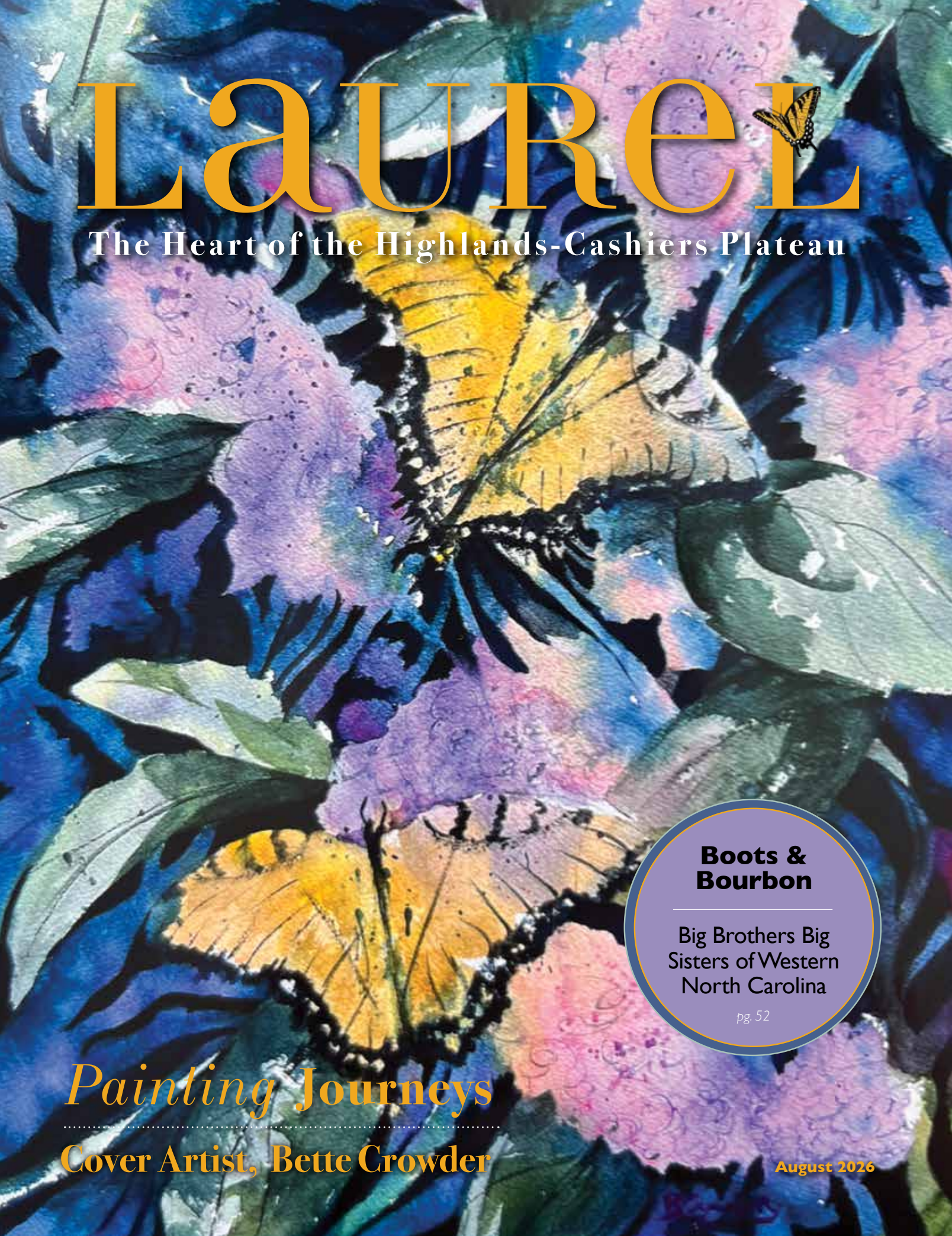


The background of the entire cover is a detailed watercolor painting. It features two monarch butterflies with bright orange and yellow wings and black markings. They are positioned on large, textured flowers in shades of purple, blue, and pink. The brushstrokes are visible, giving the artwork a soft, painterly quality.

LAUREL

The Heart of the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau

Boots & Bourbon

Big Brothers Big
Sisters of Western
North Carolina

pg. 52

Painting Journeys

Cover Artist, Bette Crowder

August 2026

CCP COUNTRY CLUB PROPERTIES



MLS #1004688 \$549,000

LOCATED IN DESIRABLE HIGHLANDS MOUNTAIN CLUB, this beautifully maintained, 2 bedroom 2 bath condo is furnished with some exceptions. With hardwood floors throughout, an updated kitchen and main bathroom, this unit is move-in ready. Enjoy great outdoor living on the covered porch or open deck looking out on a pond. A friendly adult community which features a clubhouse, pool and tennis court.



MLS #1003559 \$985,000

This adorable 3 bed, 2 bath cottage in the heart of Highlands, combines charming character with modern updates. Recent upgrades include fresh paint inside and out, fireplace renovation, basement encapsulation, whole house dehumidifier. The bright, airy rooms and original details create cozy indoor living, while a beautifully landscaped outdoor space, with private patio and firepit - is perfect for entertaining and relaxing.



MLS #1003430 \$2,900,000

PERCHED ATOP PRESTIGIOUS KING MOUNTAIN, this exceptional luxury home delivers jaw-dropping views that stretch for miles, sunsets here are truly unforgettable. Located in the exclusive gated King Mountain Club, the home is being offered fully furnished and tastefully appointed with high-end decor, including Ralph Lauren accessories. The dramatic octagonal great room is a showstopper, featuring floor-to-ceiling windows and a stunning stone fireplace, seamlessly connecting to the gourmet kitchen, dining area, laundry room and outdoor grilling space. Two expansive primary suites on the main level offer walk-in closets, deck access, and those same sweeping mountain vistas. Downstairs, you'll find two more guest rooms, a second fireplace in the family room, a game area or gym, an office, and garage. The wraparound deck invites you to relax and take in the epic scenery. Just minutes from Highlands, Cashiers, Franklin and Dillard, GA, and neighboring Burt Reynolds' former mountain estate, this home combines privacy with convenience. Community amenities include a clubhouse, pool, and tennis courts, mountain living at its most refined.



MLS #1001890 \$999,000

TRILLIUM PLACE. One level living with this fully updated 3 bedroom, 2 bath located off the Leonard road entrance to Trillium. This unit is ready to go and in move in condition. Shown by appointment.



MLS #1002169 \$654,900

MAKE AN APPOINTMENT to view this almost new 2-bedroom, 2 bath home that sits on a lovely wooded .31 acres lot that is all usable land. Split bedroom plan with lovely baths, open great room with peninsula kitchen that features stainless appliances, quartz countertops, gray kitchen cabinets. This home is move in ready and can be year-round, summer, or can be an income producer.



MLS #1001680 \$6,200,000

LOCATED LESS THAN 2 MILES FROM TOWN, this one-of-a-kind generational estate is composed of 10 acres, with a top quality 3 bedroom 4 1/2 bath home has over 5,000 sq ft with roughed in rooms for additional living area below. Beautiful grounds feature gardens, trails, potting shed, greenhouse, and lovely water features. Enter the front foyer to a vaulted, country French Living room with Dalle de Bourgogne French limestone floors, a fireplace, and stunning wrought iron doors to access the patio and drink in the stunning, layered, southern vistas. Open dining with adjacent Chef's Kitchen of the highest quality appliances and finishes. Primary suite flows into the opposite wing of the house with a double bath and full office library. There is an elevator and a stairwell that leads to 2 guest bedroom suites, and a bonus room completes the upstairs. A rear porch with pet fence and a 2-car garage complete this family home. Additional goodies are a generator, push button multi control lighting systems, pure well water, huge boulders and landscape walls.



MLS #1003438 \$2,625,000

BEAUTIFUL 3-BEDROOM, 4-BATHROOM HOME offered fully furnished, situated on 2.23 acres with +/- 300 feet of creek frontage and year-round flowing water. Conveniently located just 2.3 miles from Main Street.



MLS #1002455 \$1,625,000

HARRIS LAKE AREA ON LEONARD ROAD This move in condition 3-bedroom, 2 bath is a stone's throw to Harris Lake and 2 blocks to main street. It features an open kitchen living area that has a stone fireplace with gas logs. The wing plan is easy living on one level and opens from the bedrooms onto a huge wrap around deck. There is a one car garage and a full slab floored basement for expansion possibilities. It is grandfathered as a short-term rental and shows good potential to help pay for some of the ownership costs. A great Highlands home in a great location. Shown by appointment.



MLS #1002894 \$3,900,000

PRIVATELY SITUATED IN HIGHLANDS COUNTRY CLUB, overlooking the 14th, 15th, and 16th greens, this custom home offers beautiful landscaping, several small water features, a gated entrance, and outstanding views of the golf course. A dramatic entryway opens into the central living space that features a soaring wood and beam cathedral ceiling, hardwood floors, and a floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace. The home has four bedrooms: the master and an ensuite guest bedroom on the main floor; and upstairs, two ensuite bedrooms offer guests privacy and views of the property. A screened Carolina room with a stone fireplace opens off the dining area and the adjacent decks showcase the golf course. The gated drive has generous parking in front of the garage and there is golf cart storage behind the house. An adjacent lot is included in the sale of this property.



MLS #1002204 \$685,000

DISCOVER THE PERFECT BALANCE of privacy and convenience in this beautifully wooded property located just beyond the city limits. Nestled among mature trees and bordered by a gentle creek, this home offers a serene escape with the comfort of nearby city amenities. Enjoy evenings by the fire pit next to the creek where you can unwind and listen to the soothing sounds of nature. Inside you will find an inviting living area perfect for gatherings or quiet nights in. Recent updates include a new roof.



MLS #100210 \$5,800,000

RAVENEL RIDGE. Check out this Quality home located in the gated community of Ravenel ridge, a 31 lot enclave in the heart of Highlands. The house is spacious. 4 bedrooms, 4.5 baths and has a detached garage with guest apartment. Heart of Pine Floors in the main level with vaulted, high scales to give it a spacious warm feel. The Great room, Family/Kitchen room has an entire wall dedicated to the stone fireplace and opens onto a huge covered gazebo porch with fireplace to enjoy the mountain view. Primary has a large limestone floored bath with double vanities. Upper level has 3 guest suites separated by a catwalk bridge for guests' privacy. Great entertaining house and the most reasonably priced in Ravenel.



MLS #1003081 \$4,200,000

LOCATED HIGH ATOP A RIDGE about 7 miles from Main Street in Highlands, this diamond in the rough is sitting upon 15 acres with stunning mountain vistas. The land is flat and usable, limited to one lot for a private estate. The house is ready to make to your own personal tastes and has great charm with heart of pine floors, huge antique beams in the coffered ceiling, and a stone fireplace that graces the living room. The Living room opens up to a full wraparound porch to enjoy the breeze and mountain vistas from several directions. Kitchen is functional and ready to be renovated to your personal tastes. Main floor Master with ensuite bath. Upper level has 2 additional guest rooms with views and ensuite baths. Detached garage has a bay with workshop storage room and a full upstairs efficiency apartment.

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The holidays arrive gently at Lake Toxaway—first as a whisper of pine on the breeze, then as a warm glow spilling from the windows of The Greystone Inn. Guests step inside and are welcomed with mulled wine that perfumes the air with spice, that melts the chill from their hands. Live pine trees glitter with soft lights, mantels flicker with reindeer and wreaths, and every corner feels touched by a bit of mountain enchantment.

As the season unfolds, hearty meals simmer in the kitchen, the kind that warm the soul and gather people close. Blankets wait by the fireside for slow, cozy evenings where stories stretch long and laughter lingers. Here, the holidays aren't rushed—they're savored.

But what truly makes this time of year unforgettable are the people we share it with. Families reunite, friends return to familiar traditions, and the mountains become a backdrop for moments that matter. Whether you're welcoming loved ones from afar or planning a festive gathering, The Greystone offers a setting that feels both timeless and intimate.

And while the holidays may seem far off, the most memorable celebrations are the ones planned with care. Guests are encouraged to reserve accommodations and event space early—these cherished moments deserve a place to unfold.

This year, let the season find you surrounded by the quiet charm of Lake Toxaway, where every visit feels like coming home.

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CONTENTS

August 2026

15

What To Do

42 Paws & Boots

89

Recreation & Creation

102 Preserving a Highlands Landmark

115

Arts

138 Behind Every Hit Song

151

Dining

172 Dusty's Marks 75 Years

185

Shopping

194 Imagination's Training Wheels

211

Lake Toxaway

214 Legacy of Lake Toxaway

223

Wellness, Beautifully

234 Anne's Path to Healing

239

Homes & Lifestyles

260 What the Hats Hold

273

Giving Back

284 Double Your Impact for Justice



162



142

Grace and Glorie



38

A Roaring '20s Evening

At a Glance Guides

76 Calendars | 91 Waterfall Guide | 180 Dining Guide | 182 Accommodations Guide | 204 Highlands Map
206 Cashiers Map | 220 Lake Toxaway Map | 270 Service Directory | 286 Advertiser's Index



LAUREL

The Heart of the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau

VOLUME TWENTY-FOUR, ISSUE SEVEN



Publisher's Note

August brings our history into focus, with traditions and milestones that reflect an enduring appreciation for the past.

The Cashiers Annual Antique Show (page 20), the Kirkin' o' the Tartan (page 32), and the Highlands Historical Society Gala (page 38) all honor the traditions that built us.

Long-held landmarks mark meaningful moments: Dusty's turns 75 (page 172), the Nature Center begins a phase of preservation (page 102), and the Cashiers Historical Society opens a new permanent exhibition (page 247).

Personal histories add their own depth, including a restoration of heirloom hats (page 260).

Blue Ridge School's 50th graduating class (page 268) and Summit Charter School's 30-year milestone (page 248) reflect decades of learning that continue to enrich local life.

August shows how our history continues to guide the present, strengthening the community we build together.

*With appreciation,
Janet and Marjorie*

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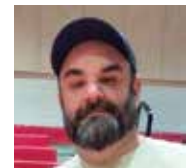
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WHAT TO DO

Pages 16-77



Photo by Susan Renfro



Shane Meade *at* Orchard Sessions



Shane Meade and The Sound bring their soul-infused folk-rock to Orchard Sessions on Wednesday, August 5, offering an intimate evening of live music beneath the orchard trees.

Some musicians arrive at a venue and fill it. Shane Meade does something different – he tends to shrink it, pulling the room in until it feels like something more private than the evening started out to be.

That quality makes him a natural fit for Orchard Sessions at The Farm at Old Edwards. On Wednesday, August 5, Shane Meade and The Sound bring their brand of soul-infused folk-rock to The Orchard, powered by sing-along choruses, easy grooves, and the notion that live music is best experienced together.

Shane Meade is a self-taught singer-songwriter from Elkins, West Virginia, who borrowed a guitar from his father and began writing songs in 2000 before leaving the corporate world in 2005 to pursue music full-time. The band he formed that year has never

really stopped moving.

Through a combination of acoustic and full-band performances, Shane Meade and The Sound has built a loyal following through relentless touring across the Southeast, the Virgin Islands, and cities around the country.

The band's reach is evident in who they've played alongside. Their touring history includes shared bills with Edwin McCain, Michael Glabicki and Rusted Root, Yonder Mountain String Band, Tim Reynolds, Graham Sharp, and Robert Randolph & The Family Band – artists who collectively span folk, jam, funk, and Americana. That range isn't accidental. It reflects the band's own elasticity: they move between styles without the seams showing.

What gives Shane Meade and The Sound staying power isn't

genre loyalty – it's songwriting that holds up across different formats. Meade's lyrics trade in the recognizable rather than the obscure: love, doubt, momentum, the feeling that some things are worth holding onto. The band can perform those songs stripped down or with full instrumentation and lose nothing essential in either approach.

Orchard Sessions has always favored performers who know how to work with a setting rather than overpower it. Shane Meade and The Sound have spent two decades learning to read a room. Here, the room just happens to sit beneath orchard trees.

The evening runs from 6:00 to 8:00 P.M. and includes complimentary light bites and a cash bar. Tickets are \$25 for Old Edwards Inn, Half-Mile Farm, and 200 Main guests and members, and \$50 for the general public.

In the event of rain, the concert moves indoors to Orchard House for continued enjoyment.

by Marlene Osteen



Shane Meade and The Sound



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Left to Right: Molly Westfall, Laura Deffenbaugh, Susan SanSouci, Rebecca Anderson, Robyn Mitchell



Rebecca McCracken



Highlighting Our Designers

Cashiers Historical Society's 29th Annual Designer Showhouse runs August 28 through September 5, highlighting the work of designers from Cashiers and Highlands alongside creatives from across the region.

Cashiers Historical Society's 29th Annual Designer Showhouse, which runs August 28 through September 5, is made possible by a barrage of volunteers, skilled craftspeople, and expert architectural and interior designers. A few of the designers whose creativity is on display this year in the Cashiers Lake neighborhood home call the Plateau their home.

In fact, Highlands' Holly Watson and Rebecca McCracken, as well as the design team at The Designer's Market in Cashiers, are among the dozen-plus interior designers involved in the Designer Showhouse project.

Designers lent their touches to the décor of the modern mountain house planned by Thomas & Denzinger Architects, constructed by Turnkey Construction Group, and landscaped by Tate Landscaping Services. For example, Watson focused on the Designer Showhouse's gear room, which is a dedicated space for storing all types of outdoor equipment, etc.

"I imagined the gear room as a place for a fisherman to hold their rods and tackle box or an artist to house their easels and paints for easy access to paint the scene right outside their front door," explained Watson.

Watson gleaned experience in design through her role as

director of retail at Old Edwards Inn's Acorns. She has lent her distinct touch to the store's merchandising, curation, and visual presentation.

Additionally, Watson's eye for originality and balance has been honed as the owner of Dead Artists Gallery. It's in this space that she curates a presentation of vintage and antique art that has interested collectors, homeowners, and designers alike.

Also based in Highlands, Rebecca McCracken is a designer with The Summer House by Reeves. She focused on the Showhouse's events barn. McCracken has enjoyed a career in the home furnishings industry, making her a quality choice for determining adequate selections for the space. She makes it her goal to provide both practicality and elegance in her design projects.

"The space has a great mix of dark tones from the paint color, and light with all of the open walls," said McCracken. "It has a beautiful view of Cashiers Lake."

With its collaborative team of around 15, The Designer's Market of Cashiers tackled the Showhouse's terrace and grilling porch. For the last 18 years, the firm's expert designers, overseen by owner Susan SanSouci, have presented clients' individuality, while also achieving livability, in countless homes.

Said Molly Westfall of The Designer's Market. "Outdoor kitchens are one of our specialties! Our NatureKast cabinetry is uniquely engineered for outdoor living, but with the timeless beauty of real wood."

She added: "As we designed the space, we imagined how homeowners and guests would naturally gather, entertain, and relax on the terrace to take in the home's spectacular surroundings. Our palette draws inspiration from the landscape itself, incorporating rich browns, warm taupes, and layered greens that reflect the natural beauty of the Cashiers area."

The annual Designer Showhouse is the primary fundraising effort of the Cashiers Historical Society. Tickets must be purchased to visit the Showhouse. An opening night party, A Mountain Affair: Celebrating Cashiers & Its Outdoor Traditions, is Thursday, August 27, from 5:30 – 10:00 P.M., at The Village Green in Cashiers. Tickets for the opening night party are available exclusively through Sponsorship and select Benefactor packages.

Other events surrounding the Designer Showhouse include informative lectures by design experts, craft, cooking, and gardening demonstrations, an informative bourbon session, a book signing, and more. To learn details, visit cashiershistory.org/cds-events-2026. For general questions about tickets, etc., call the Cashiers Historical Society office at (828) 743-7710.

by Deena C. Bouknight



Holly Watson



Modeled by Katie Nicholson and Beth Townsend.
Beth is in a Mycra Pac Raincoat with
Daniella Lahavi handbag and Katie is in a
Tyler Boe top and pants with a Hammitt handbag.

Sashay Around

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Antiques *on the* Green



The 48th Cashiers Annual Antique Show runs August 7–9 at The Village Green, offering fine antiques, knowledgeable exhibitors, and a lively crowd in one of Cashiers' most beloved summer traditions.

This year marks the 48th Cashiers Annual Antique Show, a long-loved tradition known for fine antiques, knowledgeable exhibitors, and an eager, well-informed crowd.

And yes, it all happens in what I consider one of the most beautiful mountain settings on earth – I'll admit I'm slightly prejudiced. Join us at The Village Green at Cashiers on Frank Allen Road, from 9:00 A.M. Friday, August 7, to 4:00 P.M. Sunday, August 9.

Exhibitors come from across the Northeast, Midwest, Southwest, and Southeast, and even from the United Kingdom, making this a lively and wide-ranging show.

You'll find treasures from the 18th century through the mid-20th century, including furniture, porcelain, fine crystal and pattern glass, Oriental carpets and textiles, paintings, engravings, etchings, maps, needlework, and exceptional Americana.

There is also silver, brass, copper, bronzes, mirrors, sconces, toys, sporting

items, Black Forest carvings, decorative frames, barometers, garden ornaments, wrought iron, books, pottery, and fine European and Asian porcelain. And I must mention the jewelry – it's truly a remarkable collection.

Advance tickets are available at CashiersAnnualAntiqueShow.com by clicking the blue bar for early buying or regular admission. Whether you purchase online or at the door, please enter through the Lewis Hall front entrance. We accept cash and credit or debit cards.

Each paid visitor receives a blue wristband, which allows return admission on any day of the show at no extra charge. Reminder cards are available at the Chamber of Commerce and at many businesses in Cashiers, Highlands, and surrounding towns, and can also be downloaded from our website, Facebook, or Instagram – just be sure the card says "48th Annual," as a few of last year's versions may still be circulating.

Pictured with this article is our beautiful door prize quilt, hand-quilted and hand-appliquéd. Each paid attendee receives an entry card, and the drawing will be held at the close of the show at 4:00 P.M. Sunday.

We're also delighted to have Rachel Lewicki's The Secret Garden at the show, serving Southern summer fare with comfortable seating in the shade or the sun.

Children are welcome, and so are dogs, provided their people are responsible for them, along with the exceptionally well-trained bird – sorry, no felines. Accredited service animals are, of course, welcome.

by Hazel Giles





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-Jennifer Blake, Broker

”



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Jennifer Blake and Ed Hillis provide both, advising buyers and sellers throughout Highlands and Cashiers while offering unparalleled insight into Old Edwards Club at Highlands Cove, and GlenCove. Their understanding of these communities extends beyond the market to the lifestyle, the membership culture, and the opportunities that define long-term value.



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Bingo Night Supports Scholars

Highlands Rotary hosts its monthly Bingo Night on August 13, partnering this month with the Scaly Mountain Women's Club to raise funds for 16 local scholars.



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While there are so many charitable organizations in our region, there are two exceptional clubs that shine this summer: the Scaly Mountain Women's Club and the Highlands Rotary Club. When those two team together, a whole lotta WOW is sure to happen.

On the inevitably lucky August 13, join this benevolent duo for an evening of family fun, food, and a stack of 15 bingo cards, only 1 dollar each, for a whole lot of winning in 15 rounds. If you've attended "B4," you know the drill.

Bee (Barbara) Wilson is the chair of this year's event.

She says, "Every year bingo promises to be even better than ever and 2026 is no exception."

Doors open at 6:00 P.M. at the Highlands Community Building. That's when good food at a good price is served for adults and kids. Bingo games start at 6:30 P.M., ending at 8:30 P.M.

"Fifty percent of the evening earnings at the door funds the jackpots," says Bee. "The remaining 50 percent goes to our charity. The proceeds support our great cause. We are funding 16 scholars in our area."

Through the end of this fall, a total of \$38,000 in proceeds will have been distrib-

The remaining 50 percent goes to our charity. The proceeds support our great cause. We are funding 16 scholars in our area.

uted to support up to eight semesters of each student's choice: a tech school, a four-year university, or a community college.

In addition to bingo winnings, there will be gift basket raffles, which will likely include a spa night. Silent auctions offer gift cards and tickets to cultural events. Beautiful live flower planters await your patio or dining table. And there's plenty more.

In closing, Bee says, "God bless the Highlands Rotary. The Rotary keeps nothing for themselves. They are a blessing!"

P.S., a message from the recipients of winnings and scholarships: God bless Bee and Scaly Mountain Women's Club!

Here's a handful of contact information if you need more details: Club cell: (615) 495-1110; email: Blueridgebee@yahoo.com; club email: Scalymountainwomen@gmail.com; or visit the Highlands Rotary Calendar online at highlandsrotary.org/Calendar.cfm.

by Donna Rhodes



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A Conversation *on* Caring for Place

The Village Nature Series returns August 18 with a free community program led by Brett Treadway of The Center for Native Health. The evening explores Indigenous stewardship, cultural continuity, and climate resilience through Cherokee-led conservation and education initiatives.

The Village Nature Series returns Tuesday, August 18, with an evening program that invites the community to consider land stewardship through the lens of Indigenous knowledge, cultural continuity, and climate resilience.

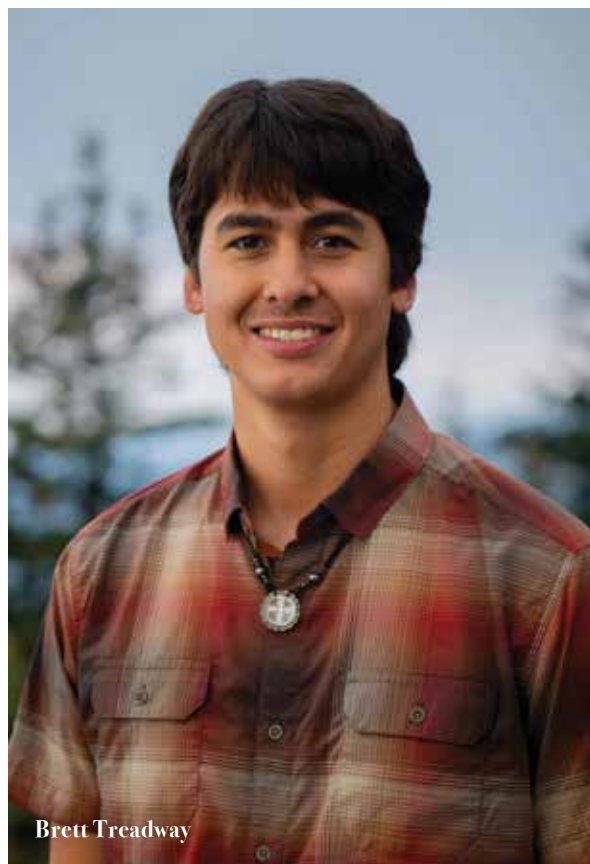
Presented by The Village Green and Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust, the free, family-friendly program will be held from 5:30 to 6:30 P.M. inside Lewis Hall at The Village Green in Cashiers. The August presentation, *Indigenous Stewardship: Weaving Together Culture, Climate, and Land*, will be led by Brett Treadway, Program Director with The Center for Native Health in Cherokee.

For those who love the mountains of Western North Carolina, the conversation promises to be both timely and deeply rooted. Founded in 2009, The Center for Native Health is a Native-led nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting the balanced wellbeing of Southeastern Native communities. Its work centers on the preservation and respectful application of Native Knowledge, empowering people, land, and culture while strengthening connections that have sustained communities for generations.

During the program, Treadway will share how the Center for Native Health advances conservation and stewardship efforts that are culturally grounded and community-focused. Among those efforts is the Revitalization of Traditional Cherokee Artisan Resources program, a grant initiative funded through the Cherokee Preservation Foundation. Working with regional partners, the program helps protect traditional artisan resources through land conservation, stewardship, and restoration —

work that is essential to preserving both the natural materials and the cultural practices connected to them.

The Center's Youth Conservation Initiative also reflects this commitment to future generations. Through culturally



Brett Treadway

grounded, hands-on learning opportunities, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (ECBI) youth are encouraged to explore environmental curiosity, leadership, and stewardship. By blending Indigenous knowledge systems with modern conservation science, the initiative helps young people understand the landscapes around them while recognizing their own role in caring for those places.

Treadway will also discuss emerging work

through the Center's Climate Resilience Project and Equitable Water Monitoring Program. These pilot projects focus on climate action and the growing risks of climate impacts, bringing together traditional ecological knowledge and western science to strengthen local preparedness.

Through policy advocacy and environmental stewardship, the Center hopes to develop planning tools that can help the EBCI community better understand how climate change may affect Tribal lands and what mitigation efforts may be needed in the years ahead.

Treadway brings both professional experience and personal commitment to the topic. A citizen of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, he serves as Director of the Arts, Language, and Healing program, as well as the Revitalization of Traditional Cherokee Artisan Resources program, for The Center for Native Health. Before joining the Center, he worked with First Nations Development Institute, where he supported tribal co-stewardship and co-management projects with public land agencies and Tribal partners across the country.

The Village Nature Series is designed to bring neighbors together around topics such as wildlife, conservation, and local cultural heritage. Programs are free, open to all, held rain or shine, and require no reservations.

On August 18, community members are invited to gather at Lewis Hall to learn more about how Indigenous-led stewardship can guide the care of land, water, culture, and community.

by Luke Osteen



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Wandering Hours *on the Green*

Groovin' on the Green welcomes The Wandering Hours for a free August 14 concert on the Commons Lawn, offering handcrafted string music from 6:00 to 8:30 P.M. at The Village Green.

By mid-August, Cashiers has a sound all its own: the hush of the mountains at evening, the murmur of neighbors settling onto the lawn, and, on Friday, August 14, the bright, rootsy lift of The Wandering Hours tuning up on the Commons Stage.

The August installment of Groovin' on the Green welcomes the Tampa Bay-based string band for a free concert from 6:00 to 8:30 P.M. at The Village Green. It's an evening tailor-made for lawn chairs, picnic blankets, coolers, and the easy pleasure of hearing handcrafted music under the open sky.

Formed in 2018, The Wandering Hours bring an original, spirited approach to traditional American string music. Their sound draws from old-time, early bluegrass, and folk, blending fiddle, mandolin, banjo, guitar, and upright bass into songs that feel both timeworn and fresh. The

band writes its own material in that tradition while also honoring important songs and tunes from earlier eras, creating a set that can pull in devoted string-music fans and first-time listeners alike.

What makes them such a natural fit for Groovin' is the way their music moves. There is lyrical depth in the storytelling, but also a danceable pulse that keeps the evening light on its feet. One moment may carry the sweet ache of a mountain ballad; the next may tumble forward with the communal energy of a front-porch jam. Their songs look backward with reverence, then lean forward with warmth, wit, and momentum.

That balance has earned The Wandering Hours a growing reputation beyond Florida. They have shared bills with nationally known roots and bluegrass artists and have appeared at festivals across the region, carrying with them a sound that

feels as comfortable in a listening room as it does on a summer lawn.

For Cashiers, that means a night with plenty of texture: close harmonies, nimble picking, sturdy bass lines, and melodies that seem to drift naturally into the mountain air.

As always, Groovin' on the Green is free and takes place rain or shine on the Commons Lawn. Food and beverage vendors will be available, and concertgoers are welcome to bring their own picnics and coolers. Please bring lawn chairs and blankets; well-behaved, leashed dogs are welcome (children do not need to be leashed). Personal tents are not allowed, though 10×10 tent rentals are available for groups, with proceeds helping support The Village Green's nonprofit programming.

by Luke Osteen



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Honoring Lineage and Legacy

First Presbyterian Church of Highlands hosts its annual Kirkin' o' the Tartan service on August 16, a gathering that honors Scottish heritage through music and ceremonial tradition.



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On Sunday, August 16, First Presbyterian Church of Highlands will once again honor its Scottish roots with the beloved Kirkin' o' the Tartan service. Held during the 11:00 A.M. Sunday Celebration, this annual event is a stirring tribute to heritage, faith, and family – woven together in a tapestry of music, ceremony, and community spirit.

The Kirkin' o' the Tartan, which loosely translates to “blessing of the tartans,” began as a way for Scottish-Americans to celebrate their ancestry and the Presbyterian faith that shaped their homeland. At First Presbyterian, the tradition has become a cherished part of the church's seasonal rhythm, drawing worshippers and visitors alike into a moment of reflection and celebration.

During the service, participants carry banners representing their clan's tartan, each one a symbol of lineage and legacy. The sanctuary fills with the sound of bagpipes – often pealing out hymns from the Highlands – and the congregation joins in a litany that praises God

for the families represented and the lands from which they came.

The service also includes a Necrology and Memorial Prayer, honoring members of the congregation who have passed into the Church Triumphant since the previous year. It's a poignant reminder that while traditions

“It's a poignant reminder that while traditions endure, they are made meaningful by the lives that shape them.

endure, they are made meaningful by the lives that shape them.

The Kirkin' o' the Tartan is more than a nod to history – it's a living expression of faith and fellowship.

All are welcome to attend. Whether you carry a tartan or simply a love for music and meaning, you'll find yourself embraced by the warmth of this Highlands hallmark.


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A Roaring '20s Evening *for* Highlands History

The Highlands Historical Society invites the community to a Roaring '20s Gala on August 16, an evening of Jazz-Age celebration supporting the organization's ongoing work to preserve Highlands' historic homes, stories, and cultural landmarks.

Highlands Historical Society is inviting the community to step back in time for an evening of Jazz-Age style, music and merriment at its upcoming Roaring '20s Gala, set for Sunday, August 16, from 5:00 to 7:00 P.M. at Highlands Inn on Main Street.

The festive fundraiser will bring the glamour of the 1920s to the heart of Highlands, complete with heavy hors d'oeuvres, desserts, bubbly, wine, beer and a signature cocktail. A four-piece jazz band will provide the soundtrack for the evening, and guests are encouraged to dress in their best Gatsby-inspired attire – or simply come in their Highlands best. The celebration will also include dancing and a raffle.

Tickets are \$120 and may be purchased at highlandshistory.com/events. Proceeds support the Society's ongoing work to preserve and share the stories, structures and artifacts that help define Highlands' past.

That mission has deep roots. The organization traces its beginnings to June 22, 1979, when a small group of residents concerned about rapid change and the loss of historic structures formed the Highlands Historical Preservation Society. Their early work included a survey of 173 historic homes completed in 1981. After a period of inactivity, the effort was revived on April 7, 1999, as the Highlands Historical Society, with an expanded mission to promote all aspects of Highlands history.

By 2000, the Society had acquired a fitting home: the Elizabeth Wright Prince House, the oldest existing house in Highlands. Built in 1877 by millwright Arthur House, the Prince House now serves as a living history museum and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2017.

Today, the Society's Historic Village at 524 N. 4th Street includes the Prince House,

the Highlands Historical Museum and Archives, and the Highlands Sanatorium Tent, also known as Bug Hill Cottage. The museum building, originally constructed in 1915 on Main Street for the Hudson Library, was moved to the Village in 2002. Bug Hill Cottage preserves the story of Dr. Mary E. Lapham's early 20th-century tuberculosis sanatorium, one of the first in North Carolina.

The Society's preservation work has earned statewide recognition. In 2002, it was honored by the Society of North Carolina Historians for its progress in building an active organization dedicated to Highlands heritage, and in 2019, historian Ran Shaffner received the group's highest award.

The August 16 gala offers a lively way to support that work while celebrating in true 1920s fashion. For tickets and additional information, visit highlandshistory.com.

by Luke Osteen

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This summer, the Highlands Community Fund is inviting friends and neighbors to celebrate a milestone 30 years in the making. The Summer Party, set for 5:00 to 7:00 P.M. Thursday, August 20, at Hudson House at Highlands Country Club, will benefit the Highlands Community Fund, an affiliate fund of The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina. Event chair Colleen Kerrigan said the evening is both a celebration of local philanthropy and an investment in Highlands' future.

"This summer's event is to celebrate 30 years of the Highlands Community Fund," Kerrigan said. "We will have photos and highlights from our three decades of philanthropy serving Highlands."

Kerrigan said the party also demonstrates how local generosity becomes steady, lasting support for the nonprofits that serve the community year after year. "The beauty of it all is that we never spend the principal," she said. "It is just the inter-

est and market increase in value that we spend in grants to the nonprofits, so donations and bequests are held in perpetuity."

She noted that the endowment grows through proceeds from this event, annual gifts, planned gifts, and year-round sponsorships – a long view that has defined the fund from the beginning.

Founder Moyna Monroe, who spent childhood summers in Highlands, returned full-time in the mid-1990s determined to give back to the place she loved. With help from The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina, Monroe launched the fund in 1996 and built a board that reflected the wider community. She envisioned the fund as "a way for people to band together, to pool their resources when special needs or opportunities arise, and to create a perpetual resource for current and future needs."

What began with an initial gift of \$10,000 has grown to more than \$3 million. Over the years, the Highlands Community Fund

has awarded 226 grants totaling \$1,416,686 to 40 nonprofits serving Highlands.

Since fundraising through what was previously called Rise and Shine began in 2015, proceeds have been added to the endowment, strengthening the fund's ability to give each year. Last year's Rise and Shine event raised nearly \$70,000, and last fall the fund awarded 14 grants totaling \$105,605.

For Kerrigan, those numbers reflect something simple and powerful: neighbors investing in neighbors. The August 20 Summer Party offers a chance to celebrate what has been accomplished while helping secure the fund's next chapter — honoring an idea that has endured for three decades: when a community pools its generosity, the benefits can last for generations.

For more information, Kerrigan can be reached at (615) 400-5498. To learn more or to donate and buy tickets, please visit highlandscommunityfund.org.

by Luke Osteen

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Paws & Boots Summer Sendoff

A summer-evening celebration at Mountain Base on August 21 invites guests to pull on their boots and help fund the new Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society Veterinary Clinic.



Sneak Peek at the 2026 Lineup

Highlands-Cashiers Film Festival: September 17 - 20, 2026



Papertown



A feature documentary following the closure of the Canton paper mill and what it means for the people of Haywood County and Western North Carolina. When the paper mill that sustained a small Appalachian town for over a century shuts down, its people face not only economic collapse, but a deeper question — who are they without it? Grammy-winning musician Dave Matthews is on the film as an Executive Producer.

Hold Onto Me



2026 Sundance Audience Award Winner. It's summer, and 11-year-old Iris is running wild through the streets with her older friend Danae when she learns her estranged father, Aris, is back in town for his own father's funeral. Determined to get to know him, Iris tracks Aris down to a dilapidated shipyard where he has been keeping to himself. What begins as a stubborn attempt to reconnect develops into a complex yet powerful bond.

The Last Class



This film is a nuanced and deeply personal portrait of master educator Robert Reich teaching his final course and reflecting on a period of immense transformation, personally and globally. It is a love letter to education. The former Secretary of Labor might be famous for his public service and best-selling books, but he always considered teaching his true calling. Now, after over 40 years and 40,000 students, Reich is preparing for his last class.

Film Festival Passes Available at www.HighlandsCashiersFilmFestival.com

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It's been a long summer. You've worked hard. You've welcomed family and friends. You've supported causes that matter to you. You've dressed up for gala after gala, opened your heart, opened your home, and somehow found room on your calendar for one more event.

Now it's time to trade black tie for blue jeans. We've been looking forward to this since Memorial Day.

On a lively Friday, August 21, the Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society invites you to Paws & Boots from 5:00 – 10:00 P.M., an unforgettable country-themed evening at Mountain Base, a remarkable private “hangarminium” near Lake Glenville in Cashiers that few people ever have the opportunity to experience.

Spend one last unforgettable summer evening surrounded by spectacular

mountain views, enjoying award-winning barbecue from Highlands Smokehouse, beer and wine, live country music by Ricky Young, unique pop-up shopping, and the excitement of our live and silent auctions.

Leave the formalwear behind. Pull on your favorite boots. Laugh with friends. Celebrate another wonderful Plateau summer before it gently gives way to autumn.

And while you're making memories, something even more meaningful will be happening.

Your evening will help build another remarkable place.

Proceeds from Paws & Boots will help complete the construction funding for the new Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society Veterinary Clinic, opening in 2028. The clinic will expand access to affordable veterinary care and strengthen programs to provide local families with the resources they need to keep the pets they love. Because after all, for nearly 40 years, CHHS has not only helped build families,

we've helped keep them together.

Tickets are available now at chhuanesociety.org/pawsandboots. Join us on August 21 at Mountain Base. Say goodbye to summer in your favorite boots, with your favorite people, while helping build something that will make a positive difference for animals and the people who love them for generations to come.

Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit animal welfare organization located at 200 Gable Drive in Sapphire, one-and-a-half miles east of the Cashiers Ingles in between Cedar Creek Club and Lonesome Valley on Highway 64. Tax-deductible donations to support our lifesaving work can be mailed to: CHHS, P.O. Box 638, Cashiers, NC 28717.

*by David Stroud,
Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society*



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A Simple Act with Big Impact

Highlands' annual Community Shredding Event returns August 21, offering free onsite document shredding at Highlands Plaza while collecting optional donations to support the Highlands Emergency Council and Highlands Food Pantry.



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Every now and then, a Plateau event comes along that's equal parts practical, neighborly, and quietly heroic.

Highlands' annual Community Shredding Event, sponsored by the Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands NC, is exactly that kind of morning – a simple gathering with an outsized impact.

On Friday, August 21, from 9:00 A.M. to noon, Highlands Plaza (right near Bryson's Food Store) will turn into a bustling hub of good intentions as residents bring boxes, bags, and armfuls of sensitive documents to be safely shredded onsite.

It's free, it's easy, and it's one of the most satisfying ways imaginable to clear out old paperwork while keeping your personal information secure.

But the event is more than a tidy-up for your filing cabinet. It's also a small but

meaningful gift to the Plateau's environment. By shredding and recycling paper responsibly, Highlands reduces waste, supports sustainable practices, and keeps unnecessary materials out of landfills. It's a win-win: your clutter disappears, and the

“By shredding and recycling paper responsibly, Highlands reduces waste, supports sustainable practices, and keeps unnecessary materials out of landfills.”

mountains breathe a little easier.

As always, Highlands adds its signature touch of generosity. While shredding is free, any donations received during the event will directly support the Highlands Emergency Council and the Highlands Food Pantry – two organizations that quietly and consistently care for neighbors in need. A few dollars dropped in the donation box can help provide groceries,

heating assistance, or emergency support for families facing tough times. It's a small gesture that ripples outward in big ways.

The morning tends to take on a cheerful rhythm: cars pulling in, volunteers greeting familiar faces, the steady hum of the shredder doing its work, and the easy conversations that happen when local people gather with a shared purpose. It's the kind of event that reminds you how strong and connected Highlands truly is.

by Luke Osteen



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A Mountain Bash *with* Purpose



Brookings Bash returns September 6 for a full day of music, food, and mountain camaraderie — all fueling vital support for Transylvania Habitat for Humanity.

The 2nd Annual Brookings Bash comes back to Brookings Anglers at 88 Cashiers Lake Road on Sunday, September 6, with gates opening at 11:30 A.M. for a full day of live music, food trucks, local vendors, craft brews, and wine set against one of the most beautiful mountain backdrops around.

What makes Brookings Bash especially meaningful, though, is that the good feeling does not end when the music does. It carries well beyond the stage and into the lives of families throughout our mountain communities through its support of Transylvania Habitat for Humanity.

Brookings Bash grew from a straightforward mountain idea: bring friends together, add music, and let the day serve a larger purpose. Chris and Jenn Douglass, Billy Catlin, and Patrick Hurley convinced Brookings owner Matt Canter that an easygoing Saturday gathering could grow into a front-yard concert with a real mission. They selected Habitat as the beneficiary after Hurricane Helene made clear just how urgently local families needed help.

In its first year, Brookings Bash sold 800 tickets, sold out its VIP offering, and raised \$200,000 for the cause.

This year's lineup, featuring Upstream Rebellion, Jammy Buffet, and Clay Street Unit, will give the day the feel of a mountain gathering rather than a formal event, with plenty of space for all ages to settle in and enjoy it. Happ's Place, Grand Ole Station, and Fork Grove Barbecue will keep guests well fed, while local vendors bring their own character to the celebration.

At the center of the event is Transylvania Habitat for Humanity. Brookings Bash is more than a beautiful Sunday in Cashiers; it is a celebration with purpose, one that helps build safe, affordable homes for local families. In a region where rising costs make it increasingly difficult for working families to remain, Habitat's work offers stability, dignity, and the opportunity to put down roots.

On concert day, food trucks Happs, Grand Ole Station, and Fork Grove Barbecue will be on site, along with a handful of local

vendors offering their specialty items.

Every ticket bought, every sponsorship made, and every happy hour spent at Brookings Bash helps carry that mission forward. It is a reminder that community is built in more than one way: sometimes with hammers and hard hats, and sometimes with generosity, music, and a shared afternoon beneath the open sky. In a place like this, home is not only a structure, but a sense of belonging – and Brookings Bash offers a joyful way to help make more of that possible.

For information and tickets, visit transylvaniahabitat.org/brookings-bash or call (828) 884-3464.

by Luke Osteen



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Dahlia Days in Highlands

The Bascom's Dazzling Dahlia Festival arrives September 10–12 with floral art, a single-bloom competition, workshops, and an ecology-focused Dahlia Dialogue.



It is time to be dazzled by the Dazzling Dahlia Festival on the campus of The Bascom at 323 Franklin Road in Highlands held this year on September 10–12.

This celebration of botanical design and visual art is a weekend of public events including a reception, floral installations, a juried single bloom competition, studio pottery offerings, hands-on workshops, and educational presentations.

In advance of the festival, The Bascom will present an educational talk on Saturday, August 29, at 11:00 A.M. by Dahlia Festival Directors Peggy Boruchow Arnette, Libby Eustis, and Kim Daugherty which will clarify what makes a bloom competition ready. The festival kicks off on Thursday, September 10, with an opening reception at 5:00 P.M. Visitors will enjoy light bites and preview the weekend's floral events.

The festival's signature event, the single bloom competition, begins on Friday,

September 11, from 3:30 until 5:00 P.M., and again on Saturday, September 12, from 10:00 A.M. until 4:00 P.M. Dahlia growers of all ages enter their carefully cultivated single blooms.

A festival highlight will be the Dahlia Dialogue on Saturday presented by Sonya Carpenter, who considers the garden from the perspectives of the other species who share it. Her presentation will explore how the bright, showy forms of dahlias are perceived by wildlife and asks whether those qualities draw pollinators, birds, and other creatures into the landscape – and what gardeners can do to keep them there. Drawing on her background in ecology, Carpenter examines how color attracts pollinators and how thoughtful planting choices can create greater abundance, food, and shelter for the full community of life on the Highlands Plateau.

Sonya is a passionate advocate for the natural world. She and her husband Canty Worley co-own Co-Habitate, a

Highlands-based landscape company dedicated to creating and maintaining gardens in balance with nature. She studied ecology at the University of Florida and has applied that foundation to the design of planned natural communities, including pollinator gardens. She served nine years as Director of the Highlands Biological Foundation and currently assists HBF with its north campus improvement project at the Highlands Biological Station. She is also President of the Highlands Plateau Greenway and the local coordinator for Bee City USA, an initiative focused on expanding knowledge of and habitat for native pollinator species.

Thanks to the generosity of festival sponsors, there is no entry fee this year.

All events are free and open to the public, however; the workshops may have associated fees and limited capacity. For more information, visit thebascom.org or follow @TheBascom on social media.

by Mary Jane McCall

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Boots & Bourbon Event Returns

Boots & Bourbon returns on Thursday, August 6, offering an evening of music, food, and community support to raise funds for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Western North Carolina.



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Boots & Bourbon returns for its third annual celebration on Thursday, August 6, inviting the community to come together for an evening of music, food, drinks, and generosity in support of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Western North Carolina.

Held from 5:30 to 8:00 P.M. at scenic Chimney Pond Farm, 240 Chimney Pond Road in Glenville, the lively summer gathering will raise critical funds for youth mentoring programs serving children and families across the region.

The evening will offer a memorable blend of mountain charm and meaningful impact. Guests can enjoy live music from talented local youth musicians, creating a warm backdrop for a night of connection and celebration.

Guests will also have the opportunity to sample specialty bourbons, handcrafted cocktails, and local beers, all paired with a delicious Southern-inspired dinner by The Village Pantry of Cashiers that reflects the

warmth and hospitality of Western North Carolina. Live and silent auctions will add to the excitement, giving guests the chance to bid on unique items and experiences while directly supporting an important cause.

While the event promises plenty of fun, its mission remains at the center of the evening. Every dollar raised through Boots & Bourbon helps Big Brothers Big Sisters of Western North Carolina connect local children with trained, caring mentors who provide encouragement, consistency, and support.

Through one-to-one, school-based, and group mentoring programs, the organization builds life-changing relationships that help young people gain confidence, develop resilience, and recognize their full potential.

The need for these relationships is especially urgent in Macon and Jackson counties, where many children are currently waiting to be matched with a mentor. By attending Boots & Bourbon,

supporters are doing more than enjoying a beautiful evening out—they are helping create brighter futures for local youth and strengthening the community as a whole. It is a chance to come together in a spirit of generosity and help ensure that more young people have someone in their corner to listen, guide, and believe in them.

Whether you are a bourbon enthusiast, a fan of live music, or simply someone who believes in the power of community, Boots & Bourbon offers the perfect blend of entertainment and purpose. Organizers invite guests to dust off their boots, raise a glass, and take part in a night that celebrates both the beauty of Western North Carolina and the lasting impact of mentorship.

Tickets are available now at secure.qgiv.com/for/boobou202, and each ticket helps bring a child one step closer to a life-changing connection.

by Luke Osteen



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Porchfest Takes Over Highlands

Downtown Highlands will come alive September 20 as Porchfest 2026 brings five hours of free music, expanded venues, and a lively mix of returning favorites and new performers.



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On Sunday, September 20, downtown Highlands will once again come alive with the joyful sounds of Highlands Porchfest, a free community music festival organized by the Highlands-Cashiers Center for Life Enrichment.

From 1:00 to 6:00 P.M., porches, parks, storefronts, balconies, and gathering spaces throughout town will become informal stages, inviting neighbors and visitors to stroll, listen, linger, and celebrate the creative spirit of the Plateau.

This year's festival is shaping up to be one of the most exciting yet, with at least 15 venues planned across downtown Highlands and several additional locations still awaiting final confirmation.

Returning venues include beloved community anchors such as Founders Park, Town Square, First Presbyterian Church, Mountain Life Properties, High Dive, Highlands Smokehouse, High Country Wine and Provisions, Park on Main, Stubborn Bull, Stubborn Buddha, and

Western Carolina Brew and Wine.

New additions for 2026 will bring even more variety to the day, including Town Hall, Trailborn, the Highlands Historical Society, and the balcony of First Bank.

As always, the heart of Porchfest is its music. Audiences can expect an energetic mix of genres, from folk, singer-songwriter, country, and Latin pop to rock, jazz, steelpan, oldies, blues, and more.

The lineup will feature both familiar favorites and fresh voices. Confirmed returning artists include Andrew Wooten, Lindsay Beth Harper, Madison Owenby, Breeze Cable, Jerius Duncan, Zorki, Ernest Bonilla, and others. Newcomers such as Lillie Syracuse, Mick Mayer, and 64 & Down will add new sounds to the festival's lively atmosphere, with more performers still to be announced.

The Highlands-Cashiers Center for Life Enrichment is also pleased to announce The Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands, NC as this

year's Headliner Sponsor for Highlands Porchfest. Their support helps make it possible to offer this event free of charge and to welcome the entire community into an afternoon of music, connection, and downtown discovery.

A full schedule of musicians and venues will be released later this month, giving festivalgoers time to plan their route and choose their must-hear performances. Part of the magic of Porchfest is wandering from one stop to the next and discovering something unexpected: a songwriter on a quiet porch, a jazz set in the sunshine, or a crowd gathered around a band that makes everyone pause and smile.

Porchfest would not be possible without the generosity of local venues, artists, sponsors, and volunteers. Anyone interested in helping with the event is encouraged to contact office@clehighlands.com.

by Audra Bullard, CLE Programs and Communications Director



118

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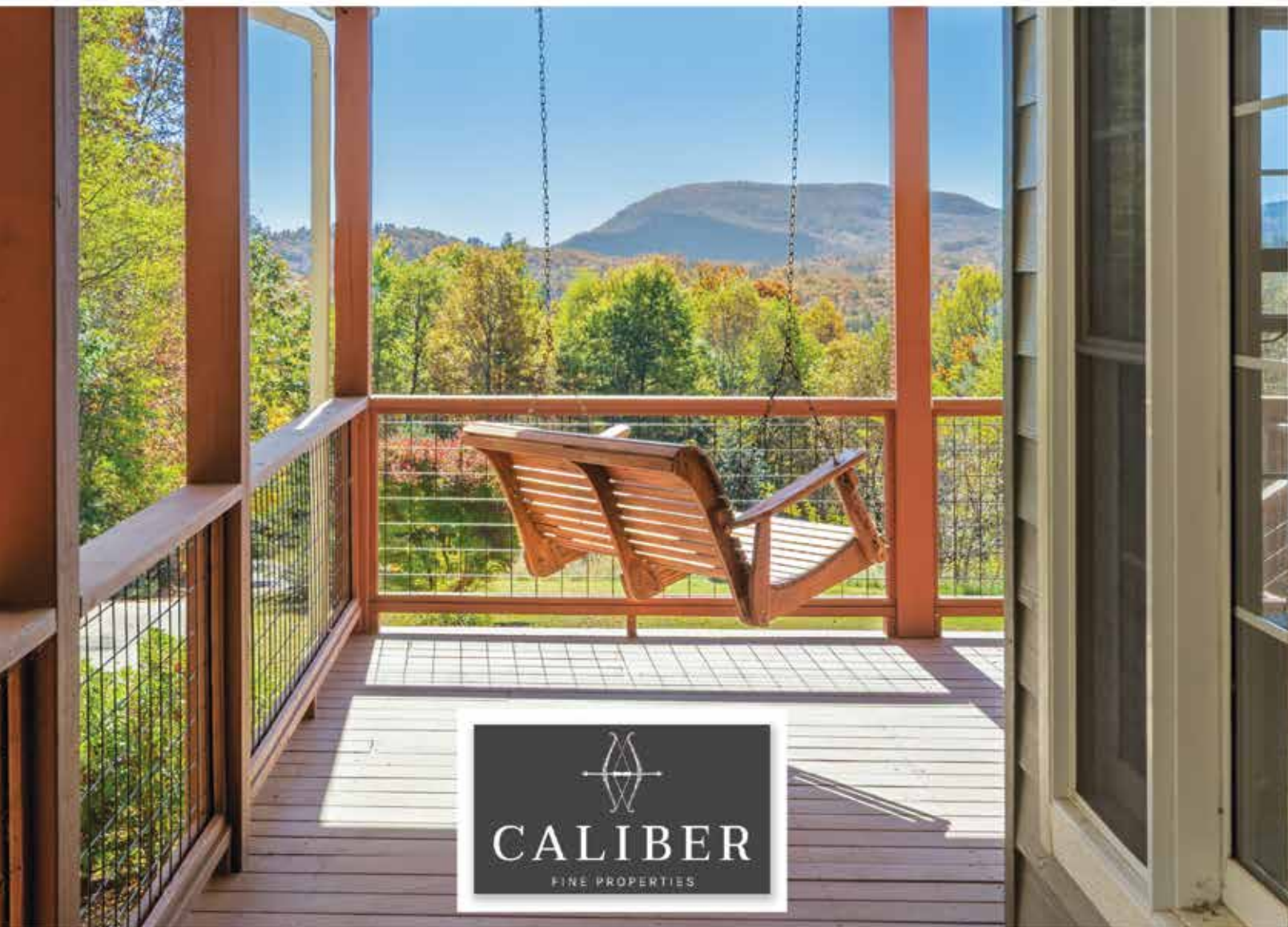
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offers 2 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, a bonus room, full kitchen, and its own gas-log fireplace, creating comfortable accommodations for guests and extended stays. A detached 2-car garage and private well with substantial capacity provide the infrastructure to enjoy the property immediately. The acreage is what truly distinguishes this offering. Whether the vision is a thoughtfully updated mountain retreat, an equestrian property, or a signature estate residence. While many large-acre properties require years of planning before

they can be fully enjoyed, this one offers the opportunity to settle in from day one while thoughtfully considering what comes next. Just minutes from Mountaintop, Glen Cove, Old Edwards Club, and the heart of Cashiers, the setting feels worlds away while remaining close to the area's most sought-after amenities. Timeless, enduring, and remarkably versatile, this is the kind of property that grows more meaningful with time. A place to gather, explore, and create a lasting legacy on the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau.



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Music and Memories *in the Park*

Highlands celebrates its mountain heritage September 26 with a free, family-friendly Jamboree featuring music, barbecue, and historic displays.

There's a particular kind of music that belongs to the Plateau.

You hear it in the lilt of a fiddle tune, in the bright cry of bagpipes rolling across a green lawn, in the steady rhythm of feet moving through an old square dance at Helen's Barn (or if you've only been here for a couple of years, the barn dances at The Bascom).

It's the sound of memory, of neighbors gathering, and of a community pausing long enough to remember where it came from.

On Saturday, September 26, from 1:00 to 7:30 P.M., that spirit returns to Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park as the Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands, NC presents the fifth annual Highlands Heritage Jamboree.

The free, family-friendly celebration honors the traditions, music, food, and stories that have shaped this little slice of heaven we call home.

Highlanders have always been deeply proud of their mountain heritage. Generations before us worked hard, sacrificed much, and carried a vision for building a life in these hills.

They knew, perhaps better than anyone, that community was not something extra added to life after the work was done. It was

part of what made the work worthwhile. When neighbors gathered, they brought music, dancing, stories, laughter, and food to the table.

The Jamboree continues that tradition with an afternoon designed for all ages. Festivities begin at 1:00 P.M. with the stirring sounds of the Highlands Bagpipers, setting a proud and celebratory tone for the day. The Highlands Historical Society will share a historic moonshine display, offering guests a glimpse into one of the region's most colorful mountain traditions.

From 1:30 to 3:30 P.M., the U.S. Fleet Forces Navy Band: Four-Star Edition will take the stage, bringing a lively and polished performance to the park. *Read more about the Navy Band on page 62.*

Later in the afternoon, the Foxfire Boys will fill the air with bluegrass mountain music, carrying forward the sounds that have long been at home on front porches, church lawns, and community gatherings throughout the Southern Appalachians.

Of course, no true mountain celebration would be complete without something good to eat. Highlands Smokehouse will begin serving barbecue at 4:00 P.M., and a moonshine tasting will also be available during the afternoon. Together, the food, music,

and fellowship create the kind of easygoing gathering that invites guests to slow down, settle in, and enjoy the company of friends and neighbors.

The celebration builds toward an evening finale with the Darren Nicholson Band performing from 5:00 to 7:30 P.M. Known for blending bluegrass, western swing, classic country, folk, and gospel, the band brings an authentic mountain sound that feels both timeless and fresh. A special guest square dance caller will invite attendees to step in, join hands, and take part in a tradition that has brought people together for generations.

Admission to the Highlands Heritage Jamboree is free, and guests are encouraged to bring lawn chairs or blankets. Whether you come for the music, the barbecue, the history, or simply the pleasure of spending a September afternoon in the park, the Jamboree offers a warm reminder of what has always made Highlands special.

At its heart, this celebration is more than an event. It's a homecoming of sorts: a chance to honor the people who came before, celebrate the traditions they loved, and keep the music of the mountains playing for the generations still to come.

by Luke Osteen

VISIT Highlands



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Saturday, September 26, 2026
Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park

1pm	Highlands Bagpipers
1:30pm	U.S. Fleet Forces Navy Band: Four-Star Edition
3:30pm	Foxfire Boys
5pm	Darren Nicholson Band

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Highlands welcomes the U.S. Fleet Forces Navy Band: Four-Star Edition as the featured performers at the Heritage Jamboree.



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There are performances that feel special because of the music – and others that feel special because of the musicians. When the U.S. Fleet Forces Navy Band: Four-Star Edition comes to Highlands, it's both.

This ensemble is part of the official Navy music program, a tradition dating back to 1925 when The U.S. Navy Band was formally established to boost morale, strengthen community ties, and represent the Navy at public events across the country. Today, U.S. Fleet Forces' musicians perform thousands of times each year, from military ceremonies to national celebrations, carrying forward a legacy of service through music.

Four-Star Edition is one of the Navy's premier contemporary ensembles, known for its bright, polished sound and its ability to move seamlessly across genres – modern hits, Latin rhythms, country favorites, and classic rock and roll. Their mission

is simple and deeply rooted: to connect with audiences of all ages, to represent the Navy with excellence, and to bring people together through music.

Highlands rarely gets the chance to host



Four-Star Edition is one of the Navy's premier contemporary ensembles...

a military ensemble of this caliber. Their appearance on the Plateau is both an honor and a reminder of the long tradition of military bands traveling into communities large and small, offering moments of joy, pride, and connection.

On Saturday, September 26, from 1:30 to 3:30 P.M., Four-Star Edition will take the stage at Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park, delivering a spirited performance that promises to be one of the day's standout moments.

And while their performance is the centerpiece of the afternoon, it's also part of a larger celebration. The Highlands Heritage Jamboree continues throughout the day, offering music, food, and community traditions that honor the Plateau's history. The Navy Band's appearance adds a special note to that celebration, blending the sounds of service with the sounds of the mountains.

Whether you come to hear Four-Star Edition, to enjoy the Jamboree, or simply to spend a September afternoon outdoors, the Navy Band's performance is a rare opportunity – a chance to welcome extraordinary musicians whose work carries meaning far beyond the stage. *Read more about Highlands Heritage Jamboree on page 60.*

by Luke Osteen

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August Concerts in Highlands

Highlands' August concert lineup delivers a full month of free outdoor music, from bluegrass and country to soft rock and high-energy performances in Town Square and Founders Park.

Spare Parts Bluegrass Band



Blake Ellege

A large advertisement for C. Orrico. It features a woman with dark hair, wearing a white dress with a vibrant floral pattern, sitting on a wooden lounge chair. She is positioned next to a swimming pool with several colorful inflatable rings floating in the water. In the background, there are wooden lounge beds with patterned covers. The entire advertisement is framed by a thick pink border. In the bottom left corner, there is a pink and white striped box containing the text "C. ORRICO" in white. Below this box, the address "343A Main St Highlands" and the phone number "828-526-9122" are listed in a pink, stylized font. At the very bottom, the website "www.corrigo.com" is written in a pink, stylized font.

In Highlands, August weekends arrive with the sound of fiddles, guitars, harmonies, and happy crowds settling into the cool mountain air. The town's Outdoor Concert Series continues with Friday Night Live in Town Square and Saturdays on Pine at Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park, offering residents and visitors two easy ways to enjoy live music downtown.

Best of all, these concerts are free to attend and are sponsored by the Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands, NC.

The month opens Saturday, August 1, with Yacht Rando at Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park. The band brings a breezy, retro mood inspired by the golden age of soft rock, mixing high-energy fun with laid-back "yacht rock" nostalgia for a summer evening on the lawn.

On Friday, August 7, John Webb takes the Town Square stage for Friday Night Live. Webb is known for a relaxed country style, pairing timeless classics with heartfelt storytelling and Southern charm.

The following night, Saturday, August 8, Blake Ellege + The Resonators bring classic country to Saturdays on Pine. With fiddle, guitar, doghouse bass, and pedal steel, the group celebrates country music from its golden age through the 1990s. Ellege, an American Idol Golden Ticket winner and 2022 Josie Music Awards "Outlaw Country Artist of the Year," adds award-winning showmanship.

Friday, August 14, brings the McLain Family Band to Town Square. Founded in Berea, Kentucky, in 1968, the family band is celebrated for spirited bluegrass performances. With appearances in all 50 states and dozens of countries, plus performances at Carnegie Hall and the Grand Ole Opry, the McLain Family Band offers a world-traveled sound rooted in mountain tradition.

On Friday, August 21, the Shawn Lane Trio continues the Friday Night Live series. Lane, a founding member of Blue Highway, is a three-time GRAMMY nominee and 28-time International Bluegrass Music

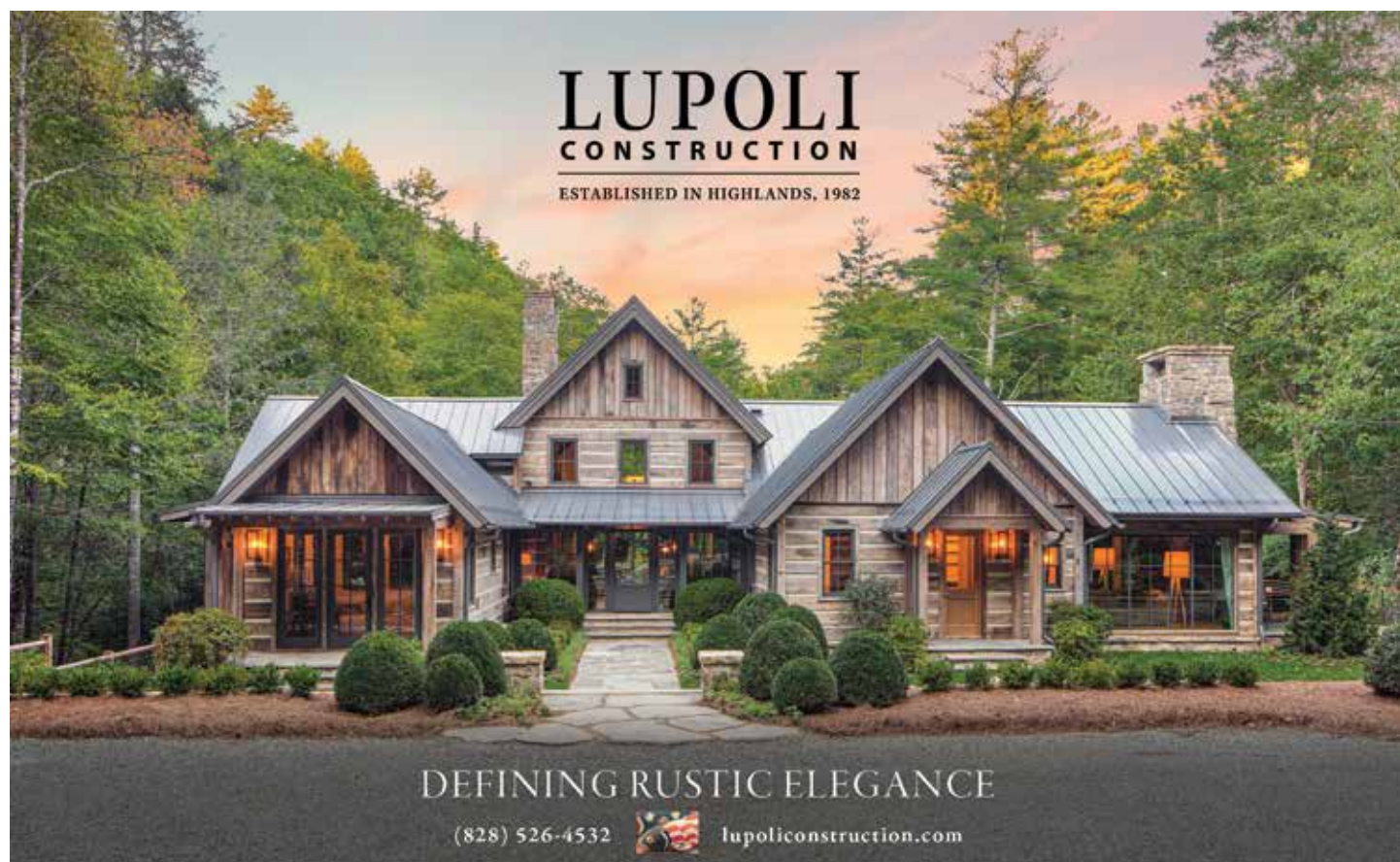
Association Award winner. Known for soulful vocals, acclaimed songwriting, and masterful work on fiddle, mandolin, and guitar, he brings high-energy bluegrass to downtown Highlands.

Saturday, August 22, shifts back to Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park with the Will Thompson Band, known for high-energy performances, polished live sound, and the easy joy of professional musicians playing confidently in their element.

The August lineup closes Friday, August 28, with Spare Parts Bluegrass Band in Town Square. Based in Walhalla, South Carolina, Spare Parts blends delicate harmonies with high-energy bluegrass "barn burners," backed by more than 50 years of combined experience.

Together, these Friday and Saturday concerts make August an easy invitation to enjoy Highlands at its most welcoming: outdoors, downtown, and filled with music.

by Luke Osteen



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Chloe Powlas



Farm-Fresh Delights *by* Chloe



Hill Top Pantry brings a fresh, farm-driven menu to the August markets, offering handmade meals, soups, salads, and sandwiches crafted from locally sourced meats and produce.

August brings the Plateau's late-summer abundance into full view. Stone fruits are ripening, heirloom tomatoes are at their peak, and early apples are beginning to appear. Freestone peaches are in their final, juicy days. Melons, berries, sweet corn, and mushrooms remain weekly favorites, with fall roots and pumpkins only a few weeks away. It's the moment to savor summer's last gifts, all waiting at the Plateau's farmers markets.

One of the season's most anticipated attractions is Chloe Powlas of Hill Top Pantry, whose farm-to-table meals have become a highlight for market regulars. Having spent her younger years in Highlands before training at Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Austin, Chloe blends professional technique with mountain sensibility. Her business, Hill Top Pantry, is built on a simple promise: meals that taste as good as they look, made with ingredients from nearby farms and homesteads.

Hill Top Pantry's late-summer lineup is a feast of comfort and craft. The Chicken and Vegetable Soup is pure nourishment – slow-simmered chicken bone broth layered with cabbage, fennel, celery, and carrot, each spoonful bright and restorative. The Brisket Stew is rich and deeply flavored, combining tender beef brisket with cabbage, shiitake mushrooms, and gochujang miso for a subtle, savory heat. And her Mushroom Enchiladas bring a vegetarian twist, filled with earthy mushrooms, creamy Chihuahua cheese, and a touch of lime zest for balance.

Each dish is packaged with care, ready to defrost and reheat – a thoughtful blend of convenience and craftsmanship. Chloe's ingredients come from trusted partners: 3 Barn Farms in Franklin for produce and Ole Rustic Barn Homestead for meats. Her flavors are grounded in the Plateau's rhythm, changing with the season and shaped by what's fresh each week.

Beyond the menu, Chloe's mission

is rooted in service. One of her lifelong dreams is to help feed her community, and she has already begun forming partnerships with local food banks. She hopes to establish a brick-and-mortar Hill Top Pantry in the not-too-distant future – a place where her culinary training, farm partnerships, and community spirit can come together under one roof.

To follow her evolving menu or learn more about Hill Top Pantry, visit hilltoppantry.com or find her on Instagram @hilltoppantry.

Both Plateau markets are in full swing. Highlands Farmers Market runs Saturdays, 8:00 A.M. to 12:30 P.M., at Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park, and Locally Grown on the Green in Cashiers is open Wednesdays, 11:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M., through October 28. Fresh produce, baked goods, local meats, honey, mushrooms, and other seasonal offerings round out each week's selection.

by Donna Rhodes

The Dazzling Dahlia Festival

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Funding for the Dahlia Festival is provided in part by:



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August at CLE: **Inspired Learning**

CLE's August lineup blends suffrage history, political music, and colorful art workshops to close out the 2026 season.



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August has arrived, bringing with it a compelling lineup of programs at the Highlands-Cashiers Center for Life Enrichment. As the 2026 season draws to a close, this month's highlights include an exploration of the women's suffrage movement through a culinary lens, a look at the intersection of music and politics, and hands-on art workshops designed to inspire creativity.

Have you ever stopped to consider what it would have been like to be arrested for voting? Not too long ago in our nation's history, that was the reality for most women. Author Laura Kumin will join CLE on August 5 for her presentation, "From Seneca Falls to the Ballot Box: The Battle for Women's Suffrage." Drawing from her extensive research and her book, *All Stirred Up: Suffrage Cookbooks, Food, and the Battle for Women's Right to Vote*, Kumin will trace the more than 70-year fight for women's suffrage, reveal how food played a surprising yet crucial role in the

movement, and explore why women's battle for the vote still matters today.

Then, on August 7, join Laura Kumin for "All Stirred Up: A Women's Suffrage Culinary Demo." Part conversation, part cooking, Kumin will recreate many of the recipes featured in her book, which were derived directly from women's suffrage cookbooks. These cookbooks, as participants will learn, were imperative in advancing suffragists' agenda to win the vote.

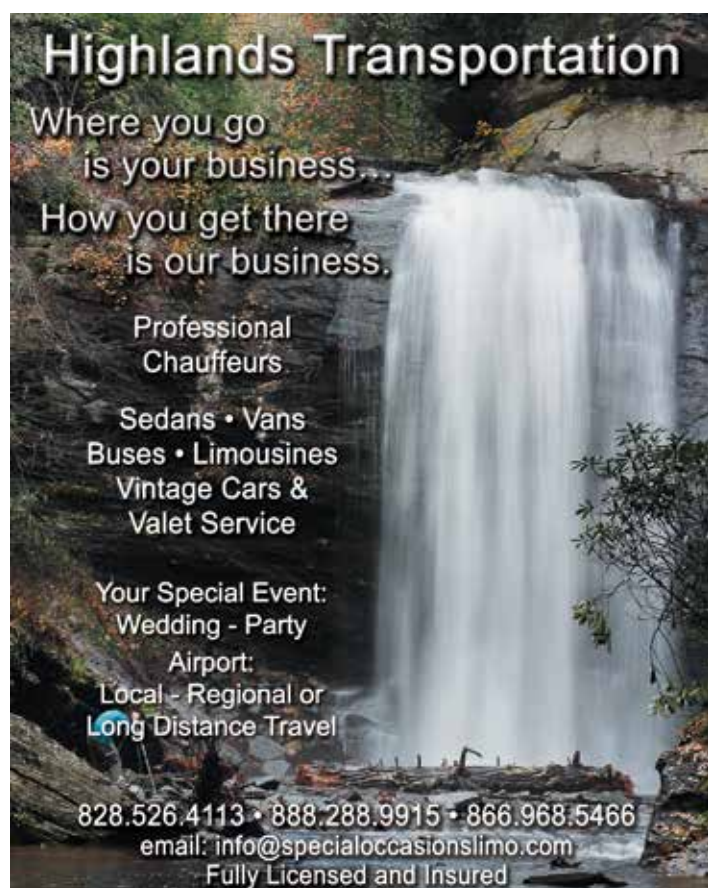
On August 12, Matthew Auer returns to CLE with "The Music of Politics." Music has long been a potent medium for political expression, mobilization, and resistance. Through fascinating case studies featuring figures such as John Williams, Bob Dylan, Oscar Peterson, and others, Auer will examine the many ways music and power intersect, from gaining influence to reinforcing it.

Get ready to turn up the color on August 12 at CLE instructor Mary Cavaoli's "Pop

Art Playground." Experimenting with repetition, contrast, color, and line work, participants will channel their inner Warhol or Lichtenstein with a punchy, modern twist. Artists will leave with several small pieces that pop with personality. Cavaoli returns on August 24 with "Watercolor, Pen, and Ink," an all-levels workshop where participants will explore the expressive combination of fluid watercolor washes and crisp pen-and-ink techniques while building confidence, refining their skills, and creating beautiful original artwork.

For more information on all of CLE's 2026 programs, times, pricing, registration, and membership, please visit clehighlands.com or call (828) 526-8811.

by Audra Bullard, CLE Programs and Communications Director



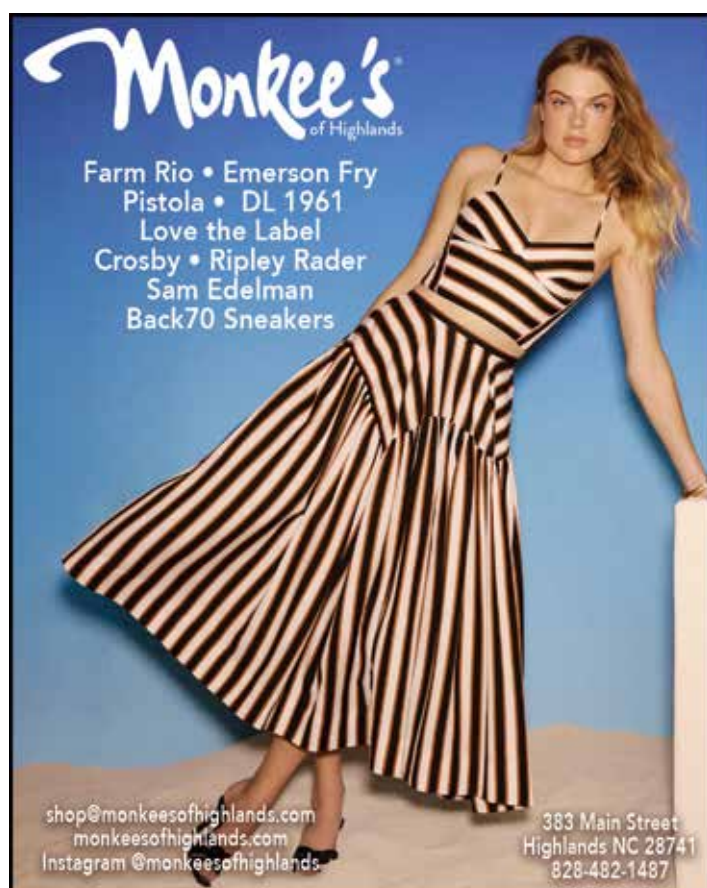
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Library Life in August

The Highlands and Cashiers libraries fill August with reading, discovery, and hands-on creativity for all ages.



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If August has a signature sound on the Plateau, it may well be the turning of pages. But at the libraries in Highlands and Cashiers, those pages are often accompanied by drums, conversation, children's laughter, and the occasional burst of scientific chaos.

As summer begins its slow turn toward fall, both libraries continue to prove they are far more than repositories for books – they are among the community's liveliest gathering places.

At Hudson Library in Highlands, August marks the final stretch of the Summer Reading Program, which continues through August 31. This year's theme, *Unearth a Story*, has inspired readers all summer long, with children ages 0–17 logging 20 minutes of reading each day while adults tackle Summer Reading Bingo. There is, after all, something about an approaching deadline that makes a stack of unread books suddenly look irresistible.

August's Kids Zone programs offer

a lively mix of science, creativity, and mountain heritage. The Macon County Arts Council opens the month on August 6 with an interactive drumming program – rhythm as its own kind of discovery. On August 13, the 13th Mountain Heritage Day will introduce children to the region's rich Appalachian traditions. Creativity takes center stage August 20 during Rock Painting, when young artists can transform ordinary stones into miniature works of art. The month concludes August 27 with another installment of the always-popular Mad Science with Jessica, where experimentation, excitement, and a bit of controlled chaos reliably arrive together.

For younger children and caregivers, Story Time remains a weekly fixture, continuing every Thursday morning at 10:40 A.M.

Meanwhile, Albert Carlton-Cashiers Community Library is devoting August to the visual arts. Beginning August 14, the library's Meeting Room will host an

exhibition by Western North Carolina artist Mia Loia. A figurative painter and muralist who works primarily in oils and watercolor, Loia has become a familiar presence in the region's arts community and currently serves as Gallery 1's first resident artist in Sylva.

Visitors may view the exhibition during regular library hours, transforming a familiar community space into a temporary gallery. A Meet-and-Greet reception with the artist is scheduled for September 5 from 5:30 to 7:30 P.M., an opportunity to experience the work in conversation with the artist rather than simply in front of it.

Together, the Plateau's libraries continue to demonstrate that curiosity doesn't take a summer vacation. It simply changes form.

by Marlene Osteen



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Wine, Women, and Song

On August 18, On the Verandah hosts *Wine, Women, and Song*, a lively celebration of the 19th Amendment created and emceed by songwriter Lisa Rankin – blending music, wine, and community storytelling.



Lisa Rankin



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On August 18, On the Verandah will trade its classic white-tablecloth atmosphere for something more spirited. The restaurant will host *Wine, Women, and Song*, an evening honoring the anniversary of the 19th Amendment and celebrating the many ways women's voices continue to shape culture, art, and community.

The event is the creation of Highlands resident and award-winning songwriter Lisa Rankin, who will emcee the evening. Rankin envisioned a night that moves fluidly between music, storytelling, art, and conversation – a celebration of women's rights expressed through creativity rather than ceremony.

Music will anchor the experience. Rankin will guide guests through a playlist spanning generations of female artists, from Ella Fitzgerald's swing to Billie Eilish's modern edge, weaving in personal stories and welcoming guest

performers. She will also perform her original song *Strong Women*, a historical anthem tracing the suffrage movement from its earliest sparks to the ratification of the 19th Amendment. A raffle will be held for a CD single of the song, and the CD will also be available for purchase that evening.

“...and celebrating the many ways women's voices continue to shape culture, art, and community.”

The evening invites participation. Guests will be encouraged to share reflections on women's rights, personal experiences, and the ongoing legacy of the vote. Rankin's approach transforms the restaurant into a communal space for dialogue – a place where stories can be exchanged as freely as songs.

Rankin's background adds depth to the night's message. Her history as a protest

songwriter – including *Children of the Dragon*, inspired by the Tiananmen Square demonstrations, and *Steinbeck Blues*, centered on migrant grape workers – underscores her long-standing commitment to social justice through music. *Wine, Women, and Song* continues that tradition with a celebratory tone that welcomes all ages and perspectives.

This year's event runs from 6:00 to 8:30 P.M. Guests can make regular dinner reservations, enjoy the full menu, and choose how deeply they want to engage with the celebration.

On the Verandah, once a 1930s speak-easy and now a beloved lakeside institution, has always been a place where stories are shared. This August, one of those stories will be about the power of song, the legacy of the vote, and the women who continue to shape what comes next.

Reservations available at ontheverandah.com. When booking, guests are encouraged to note they are attending the event.

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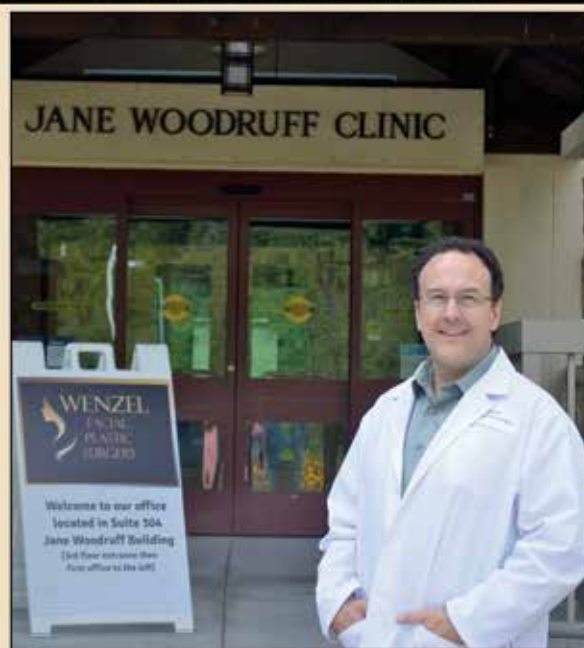
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Local Author Spotlight

Meet Jim Stephenson

“It feels like God has put a finger on you...”

Something About
a House on a Lake

poems



James E. Stephenson

Nearly two decades after a gas explosion destroyed his family's beloved Lake Rabun home, Jim Stephenson reflects today on what has endured: family, community, and a relationship with the natural environment of Lake Rabun he calls “medicine.”

Jim's story is both deeply personal and familiar to many in the lakes community who remember the explosion and its aftermath. In this conversation, Stephenson traces his family's connection to the lake, recalls the phone call that changed everything, and shares how the experience eventually found its way into “Something About a House on a Lake,” the epic title work in his first collection of poems exploring memory, grief, gratitude, and the places that shape us.

This Q&A is the final installment in our four-part series leading up to Stephenson's book launch and reading on Aug. 15 at Tlmpson Creek Gallery, where he'll read the poem, chat with guests, and sign copies of his book.

How did you come to call Lake Rabun your summer home?

My first connection to Lake Rabun was in the early days with [my wife] Donna. We used to visit the lake homes of the families of her childhood friends – Candy Morgan and Susan Lundeen Smith. Now, I grew up in small towns and had come to Atlanta for city life. But what struck me about Lake Rabun was the green and the coolness, and the placidity of a lake environment. The medicine it was for city life.

When we would visit the lake, I could see the things that I wanted our children to experience that they were not getting in the city: freedom of movement, opportunity for adventure in a safe, natural environment. It was something that I wanted for our children.

So you bought a house on the lake.

Yes, we bought our house in the late '90s, I want to say '96ish. And we were there until the explosion; that was in 2007.

Take us back to that phone call.

We were down in Florida for the holidays, and the house up here was empty. It was the Friday night before New Year's Eve weekend, and we had just finished dinner out. Just as the valet brought the car to the restaurant door, my phone rang. It was Dave from the mountain patrol, who asked if I was sitting down.

So I said, “Hold on a minute.” I sat down in the car, and he told me, very calmly but with appropriate gravity, that he was Dave from the mountain patrol and our house had exploded, and was on fire, and was fully involved. We immediately started thinking about how we would get up there to look at it.

How do you process something like that in the moment?

Well, you don't, in the moment. At the time, the feeling was shock. I had kind of an absence of feeling, waiting for feeling to return.

And in the meantime, you pick up pieces, let dust and debris settle – literally.

Yes. We had some neighbors who were able to get over there and take photos of what was left. A few neighbors located some of our belongings that had strewn far and wide. One of particular note was a pastel by Jake Fernandez that he managed to restore, to our great delight. Maybe my most humorous recollection of a reaction is about a month later, we got a bill from the Lake Rabun Homeowners Association for about \$850 for the cost of cleaning the debris from our house out of the lake.

When you think about making an impact in a community, this is not what usually comes to mind. But as shaken as people were, it seems they were also quite supportive.

We heard a lot of stories from people who were concerned first that everyone was all right, which we were. And then we heard stories of how far the vibrations of the blast carried. I remember one particular fella who lives some way down the lake who said he was on the couch asleep and woke up on the floor, that the explosion had shaken him off the couch and onto the floor. The response from the community was quite sympathetic, and we were grateful for that.

It's been almost 20 years now since you lost your house. How have you maintained your connection to the lakes community?

We rented homes there for a few years afterwards, and thought hard about rebuilding. When the explosion happened, our children were grown, and the place had served the very specific purpose that had been central to our lives as a family. We've since bought a house in Highlands, but my daughter now owns the property on Lake Rabun, and Donna and I will get to watch our grandchildren grow up there.

How did this poem come to you?

I started writing poems more seriously about five or six years ago, and this had been lingering in the back of my mind for some time. It is the longest poem I've written by far.

And I wrote it in one sitting. I have gone back and edited it and expanded it, but 95 percent of it came in a one-hour blurt. The loss of the lakehouse was – you kind of feel like God put his finger on you in a really hard way. But all of the time there, and the memories there that we shared with family and friends, were such a gift. Writing the poem, I think, is a reconciliation of those two things. Grief and love. The happy memories, the sudden and unequivocal end, and the moving on. And putting it all down.

From "Something About a House on a Lake"

On a hill, almost a hundred feet up above the water, it was amazing how sounds reflect and carry up off the surface of the lake.

In the evenings, when the thick blanket of
cicada song settled to a low hum,
sitting quietly outside with our friends,
we could take a census of neighbors in residence
from their quiet conversations
and laughter and night splashes and soft music,
washing their own cares away,

bathing us in the sounds of an evening
at our lake house.



An Evening of Poetry, Art, and Remembrance at Timpson Creek Gallery

On Saturday, August 15, from 5:00 until 7:00 p.m., Timpson Creek Gallery will welcome the community for a special author reception and book release celebrating Jim Stephenson's new collection of poetry, *Something About a House on a Lake*.

The evening promises to be much more than a traditional book signing. Guests will have the opportunity meet the author, and hear Jim Stephenson read the poem that inspired his book. The collection is a heartfelt reflection on lake life, cherished friendships, treasured memories, and the moments that shape us.

Adding to the evening's significance, artists Libby Mathews and Jake Fernandez, whose artwork is featured throughout the book, will also be in attendance. Their beautiful creations complement Stephenson's words, making the book a unique collaboration of poetry and visual art that captures both the beauty and emotion of life.

Hosts Dwayne and Cecile Thompson are especially honored to welcome friends and visitors to Timpson Creek Gallery for this memorable occasion. As longtime personal friends of Jim and Donna Stephenson, they are delighted to share in celebrating the release of a work that is deeply personal and meaningful.

Guests are invited to enjoy light refreshments while visiting with the author and artists in the warm, welcoming atmosphere of the gallery. Whether you are a lover of poetry, fine art, or simply appreciate stories that celebrate life's enduring connections, this will be an unforgettable evening.

Timpson Creek Gallery is located at 7142 Highway 76 West, just seven miles west of downtown Clayton. Everyone is warmly invited to attend this special gathering celebrating friendship, creativity, and the release of *Something About a House on a Lake*.

Please RSVP to 706-782-5164.

AUGUST

"August is a gentle reminder to be present for the good while it lasts." – Unknown



View the complete
Highlands Cashiers
Plateau Calendar



1 Arts and Crafts Festival, 10 AM-4 PM, SV Community Center.
Bazaar Barn, 11 AM-3 PM.
Kokedama Moss Planting Workshop, 10 AM, Lucy Clark Gallery, Brevard.
Paint (by numbers) and Sip, 12 PM, Trailborn Highlands.
Live Music, 3-5 PM, Blue Line Bar at Brookings Anglers.
Saturday Sound Bath, 4 PM, Unfurl Wellness Spa.
Pop-Up Pipers, 4:30 PM, Highlands.
HCCMF Concert, 5 PM, PAC.
Music, 5:30 PM, Hummingbird Lounge.
Live Music, 6 PM, Happs Place.
Live Music, 6 PM, KH Park.

2 Sapphire Valley Arts and Crafts Festival, 10 AM-4 PM, SV Community Center.
Bluegrass, 10:30 AM, Highlander Mountain House.
Live Music, 3 PM, The Vineyard at High Holly.
Music Bingo, 6:30 PM, Ugly Dog Pub.

3 Highlands Food Pantry, 10 AM-5 PM, Highlands Methodist Church.
Studio Alive, 10 AM, The Bascom.
HCCMF Concert, 5 PM, PAC.
Karaoke, 6 PM, Happs Place.

4 Highlands Food Pantry, 10 AM-5 PM, Highlands Methodist Church.
The Bookworm, 11 AM-4 PM.
The Laurel's Cover Artist Celebration, 5:30 PM, High Country Wine and Provisions.
Free ESL Classes, 6 PM, The Literacy & Learning Center.

5 The Bookworm, 11 AM-4 PM.
Science on the Rocks, 4 PM, Highlands Nature Center.
Live Music, 5 PM, Cashiers Celtic Table.
Live Music, 6 PM, Happs Place.
Orchard Session, Shane Meade and The Sound, 6 PM, The Farm at Old Edwards.
Bluegrass Wednesday, 6:30 PM, Ugly Dog Pub.

6 Bazaar Barn, 11 AM-3 PM.
Beth Poindexter Luxe Trunk Show, 11 AM, Josephine's Emporium.
Community Barn Dance, 5:30 PM, The Bascom.
Boots & Bourbon, 5:30 PM, Chimney Pond Farm.
Live Music, 6 PM, Highlander Mountain House.
Live Music, 6 PM, Happs Place.
Live Music, 6 PM, Trailborn Highlands.
Blues Night, 6 PM, Ruffed Grouse, Highlander Mountain House.
Zahner Conservation Lecture Series, 6 PM, Highlands Nature Center.

7 Dana Kelly Pop-Up Show, Village Hound.
Dead Artists Gallery Show, Acorns.
48th Cashiers Annual Antique Show, 9 AM, Village Green.
Beth Poindexter Luxe Trunk Show, 11 AM, Josephine's Emporium.
Bazaar Barn, 11 AM-3 PM.
Gallery Walk, 5 PM, Lucy Clark Gallery, Brevard.
Community Barn Dance, 5:30 PM, The Bascom.
Music, 5:30 PM, Hummingbird Lounge.
Live Music, 6 PM, Town Square.
Live Music, 6 PM, Happs Place.
Karaoke, 9:30 PM, Ugly Dog Pub.

8 Pancake Breakfast, 8 AM, Scaly Community Center.
Dana Kelly Pop-Up Show, Village Hound.
Dead Artists Gallery Show, Acorns.
48th Cashiers Annual Antique Show, 9 AM, Village Green.
Beth Poindexter Luxe Trunk Show, 11 AM, Josephine's Emporium.
Bazaar Barn, 11 AM-3 PM.
Live Music, 1-3 PM, Ruffed Grouse, Highlander Mountain House.
Live Music, 3-5 PM, Blue Line Bar.
Music, 5:30 PM, Hummingbird Lounge.
Live Music, 6 PM, KH Park.
Live Music, 6 PM, Happs Place.

9 Dana Kelly Pop-Up Show, Village Hound.
Dead Artists Gallery Show, Acorns.
Bluegrass, 10:30 AM, Highlander Mountain House.
Live Music, 3 PM, The Vineyard at High Holly.
Community Jam Sessions, 2 PM, Albert Carlton Community Library.
Gershoni/Cohn Final Gala Concert and Dinner, 5 PM, PAC.
Music Bingo, 6:30 PM, Ugly Dog Pub.

10 Highlands Food Pantry, 10 AM-5 PM, Highlands Methodist Church.
Studio Alive, 10 AM, The Bascom.
Karaoke, 6 PM, Happs Place.

11 Highlands Food Pantry, 10 AM-5 PM, Highlands Methodist Church.
Introduction To Mahjong, 10 AM - 12 PM, Cashiers Celtic Table.
The Bookworm, 11 AM-4 PM.
Free ESL Classes, 6 PM, The Literacy & Learning Center.

12 Mahjong Refresh, 10 AM - 12:30 PM, Art Highlands.
The Bookworm, 11 AM-4 PM.
Locally Grown Farmers Market, 11 AM-3 PM, Village Green.
Science on the Rocks, 4 PM, Highlands Nature Center.
Live Music, 5 PM, Cashiers Celtic Table.
Mahjong Inter-Club Open Play, 5:30 PM, Art Highlands.
Bluegrass Wednesday, 6:30 PM, Ugly Dog Pub.
MTC's Showstoppers, 7 PM, PAC.

13 Mountain Findings, 10 AM-1 PM.
Mahjong Back to Basics Guide Play, 10 AM - 12:30 PM, Duck Hawk Provisions.
Bazaar Barn, 11 AM-3 PM.
The Bookworm, 11 AM-4 PM.
Mahjong Inter-Club Open Play, 5:30 PM, Art Highlands.
Live Music, 6 PM, Happs Place.
Live Music, 6 PM, Trailborn Highlands.
Blues Night, 6 PM, Ruffed Grouse, Highlander Mountain House.
Rotary Club Bingo, 6 PM, Highlands Community Building.
MTC's Showstoppers, 7 PM, PAC.

14 Kinross Cashmere Trunk Show, Wit's End.
Mountain Findings, 10 AM-1 PM.
Bazaar Barn, 11 AM-3 PM.
Live Music, 3 PM, The Vineyard at High Holly.
Live Music, 6 PM, Happs Place.
Live Music, 6 PM, Town Square.
Groovin' on the Green, The Wandering Hours, 6 PM, The Village Green.
Karaoke, 9:30 PM, Ugly Dog Pub.

15 Kinross Cashmere Trunk Show, Wit's End.
Killer Bees Honey Pop-up Tasting, Acorns.
Bazaar Barn, 11 AM-3 PM.
Live Music, 1 PM, Western Carolina Brew & Wine.
HCFF: The Gardener Film + Garden Visit, 4 PM, PAC.
MTC's Showstoppers, 2 PM and 7 PM, PAC.
Live Music, 3-5 PM, Blue Line Bar.
Music, 5:30 PM, Hummingbird Lounge.
Live Music, 6 PM, Happs Place.
Rotary Club of Highlands' Twilight SK, 6 PM, KH Park.

16 Bluegrass, 10:30 AM, Highlander Mountain House.
Kirklin' o' the Tartan, 11 AM, First Presbyterian Church of Highlands.
Live Music, 3 PM, The Vineyard at High Holly.
Paint & Sip Class, noon, The Vineyard at High Holly.
HCFF: Never Not Yours, 2 PM, Village Green.
Roaring '20s Gala, 5 PM, Highlands Inn on Main Street.
Music Bingo, 6:30 PM, Ugly Dog Pub.

17 Highlands Food Pantry, 10 AM-5 PM, Highlands Methodist Church.
Studio Alive, 10 AM, The Bascom.
Karaoke, 6 PM, Happs Place.

18 Highlands Food Pantry, 10 AM-5 PM, Highlands Methodist Church.
The Bookworm, 11 AM-4 PM.
Free ESL Classes, 6 PM, The Literacy & Learning Center.
Village Nature Series, 5:30 PM, The Village Green.
Wine, Women, and Song, 6 PM, On the Verandah.
MTC's Showstoppers, 7 PM, PAC.

19 The Bookworm, 11 AM-4 PM.
Locally Grown Farmers Market, 11 AM-3 PM, Village Green.
Live Music, 5 PM, Cashiers Celtic Table.
Live Music, 6 PM, Happs Place.
Bluegrass Wednesday, 6:30 PM, Ugly Dog Pub.
MTC's Showstoppers, 7 PM, PAC.

20 Mountain Findings, 10 AM-1 PM.
Bazaar Barn, 11 AM-3 PM.
The Bookworm, 11 AM-4 PM.
Wine Tasting, 5 PM, Historic Toxaway Market.
Summer Party, 5 PM, Hudson House at Highlands Country Club.
Blues Night, 6 PM, Ruffed Grouse, Highlander Mountain House.
Live Music, 6 PM, Trailborn Highlands.
Live Music, 6 PM, Happs Place.
MTC's Showstoppers, 7 PM, PAC.

21 Mountain Findings, 10 AM-1 PM.
Bazaar Barn, 11 AM-3 PM.
Music, 5:30 PM, Hummingbird Lounge.
Paws & Boots, Mountain Base, 5 PM, Lake Glenville.
Live Music, 3 PM, The Vineyard at High Holly.
Live Music, 6 PM, Happs Place.
Live Music, 6 PM, Town Square.
MTC's Off the Record Benefit Concert, 7 PM, PAC.
Karaoke, 9:30 PM, Ugly Dog Pub.

22 Bazaar Barn, 11 AM-3 PM.
Suzy Landa Trunk Show, Peak Experience.
Encounters with Creatives, noon, Lucy Clark Gallery, Brevard.
Live Music, 1 PM, Western Carolina Brew & Wine.
MTC's Showstoppers, 2 PM and 7 PM, PAC.
Live Music, 3-5 PM, Blue Line Bar at Brookings Anglers.
Music, 5:30 PM, Hummingbird Lounge.
Nashville Songwriters' Round, 6 PM, Keller Pavilion.
Live Music, 6 PM, Happs Place.
Live Music, 6 PM, KH Park.

23 Bluegrass, 10:30 AM, Highlander Mountain House.
Live Music, 3 PM, The Vineyard at High Holly.
Jam Fundraiser, 6 PM, Happs Place.
Music Bingo, 6:30 PM, Ugly Dog Pub.

24 Highlands Food Pantry, 10 AM-5 PM, Highlands Methodist Church.
Studio Alive, 10 AM, The Bascom.
Art League of Highlands-Cashiers Meeting, 4:30 PM, The Bascom.
Karaoke, 6 PM, Happs Place.

25 Highlands Food Pantry, 10 AM-5 PM, Highlands Methodist Church.
The Bookworm, 11 AM-4 PM.
Free ESL Classes, 6 PM, The Literacy & Learning Center.

26 The Bookworm, 11 AM-4 PM.
Locally Grown Farmers Market, 11 AM-3 PM, The Village Green.
Live Music, 5 PM, Cashiers Celtic Table.
Live Music, 6 PM, Happs Place.
Bluegrass Wednesday, 6:30 PM, Ugly Dog Pub.

27 Mountain Findings, 10 AM-1 PM.
Bazaar Barn, 11 AM-3 PM.
The Bookworm, 11 AM-4 PM.
HCP Grace & Gloria, 7 PM, PAC.
Blues Night, 6 PM, Ruffed Grouse, Highlander Mountain House.
Live Music, 6 PM, Trailborn Highlands.
Live Music, 6 PM, Happs Place.

28 Mountain Findings, 10 AM-1 PM.
Bazaar Barn, 11 AM-3 PM.
Live Music, 3 PM, The Vineyard at High Holly.
Music, 5:30 PM, Hummingbird Lounge.
Live Music, 6 PM, Happs Place.
Live Music, 6 PM, Town Square.
MTC's On Broadway Benefit Concert, 7 PM, PAC.
HCP Grace & Gloria, 7 PM, PAC.
Karaoke, 9:30 PM, Ugly Dog Pub.

29 Bazaar Barn, 11 AM-3 PM.
Cold Wax Alchemy Workshop, 10 AM, Lucy Clark Gallery.
Rotary Art and Craft Festival, 10 AM-6 PM, K-H Park.
Live Music, 1-3 PM, Ruffed Grouse, Highlander Mountain House.
Live Music, 1 PM, Western Carolina Brew & Wine.
MTC's Showstoppers, 2 PM and 7 PM, PAC.
Live Music, 3-5 PM, Blue Line Bar at Brookings Anglers.
HCP Grace & Gloria, 5 PM, PAC.
Music, 5:30 PM, Hummingbird Lounge.
Live Music, 6 PM, Happs Place.

30 Rotary Art and Craft Festival, 10 AM, K-H Park.
Bluegrass, 10:30 AM-1 PM, Highlander Mountain House.
Jam Fundraiser, 6 PM, Happs Place.
Music Bingo, 6:30 PM, Ugly Dog Pub.
HCP Grace & Gloria, 2 PM, PAC.

31 Highlands Food Pantry, 10 AM-5 PM, Highlands Methodist Church.
Studio Alive, 10 AM, The Bascom.
Karaoke, 6 PM, Happs Place.

ON THE HORIZON

September Events

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6
The 2nd Annual Brookings Bash
 11:30 AM, Brookings Outfitters

A day of live music, food trucks, local vendors, craft brews, and wine set against one of the prettiest backdrops in the mountains, this event supports the Transylvania Habitat for Humanity.
transylvaniahabitat.org/brookings-bash



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10 - SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12
Dahlia Festival
 The Bascom

The Dahlia Festival, set for September 10 through 12 at The Bascom: Center for Visual Arts, is an endlessly enchanting celebration of this most astonishing blossom.
thebascom.org



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 - SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20
Highlands-Cashiers Film Festival
 Highlands Performing Arts Center
 The Highlands-Cashiers Film Festival is a annual film festival, showcasing influential & classic movies ranging from 1930 - present, as well as independently produced movies, submitted worldwide.
highlandscashiersfilmfestival.com



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20
Porchfest
 1-6 PM, Highlands
 Downtown Highlands will transform into a stage for the third annual Porchfest - a one-day, family-friendly musical event that'll see musical acts performing across the town. An impressive event presented and organized by the Center for Life Enrichment.
highlandsporchfest.com

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26
Highlands Heritage Jamboree
 1-7:30 PM, Kelsey-Hutchinson Founder's Park
 Highlands Heritage Day returns with live music and a lively celebration of the stories, sounds, and traditions that define our mountain community. Visitors will also enjoy a performance by the U.S. Fleet Forces Navy Band: Four-Star Edition.
visithighlandsnc.com



October Events

SATURDAY-SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3-4
Sapphire Valley Arts and Crafts Festival
 Sapphire Valley Community Center
 Featuring booth after booth of handmade artwork and crafts, the festival also offers live music and tasty food each day. Rain or shine, the festival goes on from 10 AM until 4 PM each day. Free admission and free parking. All proceeds benefit the Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society.
sapphirevalleyresorts.com



FRIDAY-SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9-11
Cashiers Valley Leaf Festival

The Village Green
 Celebrate the changing of the leaves. This popular and free event welcomes 100 artisans to the park. Visitors will find unique handcrafted wood, pottery, jewelry and much more on display and for purchase throughout the weekend. Food, drink, and live music add to the festive spirit of this event.
villagegreencashiersnc.com

SATURDAY-SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17-18
Fall Colors Fine Art Show
 10 AM-5 PM, Highlands Civic Center
 This event features the original artwork of talented regional artists. Paintings, photographs, glass, wood, one-of-a-kind jewelry and other original artwork will be on display and for sale.
artleaguehighlands-cashiers.com



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30
Goblins on the Green
 6-8 PM, The Village Commons
 A frightfully fun family-friendly Halloween event! The Village Green is going old school this year and taking the Halloween party back to the Commons Lawn. Enjoy trick-or-treating, a pumpkin carving contest, spooky tunes, and other fun Halloween activities.
villagegreencashiersnc.com

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31
All Hallows Eve - Halloween in Highlands
 6-8 PM, Highlands
 Creating a safe, fun experience for ghosts and goblins of all ages, Highlands' Main Street (from 2nd to 5th Streets) will be open to pedestrians with participating area merchants distributing candy.
visithighlandsnc.com



EVENT SERIES

Weekly

Locally Grown On The Green Wednesdays | 11 AM-3 PM | The Village Green
Friday Night Live Fridays | 6-8:30 PM | Town Square
Highlands Farmers Market Saturdays | 8 AM-12:30 PM | KH Park
Saturdays on Pine Saturdays | 6-8:30 PM | KH Park

Monthly

Pop-Up Pipers Select Dates | 4:30-5 PM | Around Highlands
 Aug. 1, Sept. 5, Oct. 3
Orchard Sessions Select Dates | 6-8 PM | The Farm at Old Edwards
 Aug. 5, Sept. 9, Oct. 7, Dec. 17
Village Nature Series Select Dates | 5:30 PM | The Village Green
 Aug. 18, Sept. 15

Old Edwards Chef Dinners Select Dates | 6:30 PM | The Farm at Old Edwards | Sept. 27, Nov. 13, Nov. 14
Groovin' On The Green Select Fridays | 6:30 PM | The Village Green | Aug. 14, Sept. 4

Liz Harris & Jessica Hoheisel

TWO SISTERS, ONE GOAL: YOUR REAL ESTATE SUCCESS

As sisters and brokers, we bring a powerful blend of synergy, passion, and market expertise to the Cashiers-Highlands area. With deep roots in the community and a shared commitment to excellence, we've combined our individual successes to create a powerhouse real estate duo—offering our clients twice the knowledge, strategy, and personalized service.

Liz, has been a leader in the region's luxury real estate market for over 20 years and is currently the top ranked broker in Cashiers and the 2nd ranked broker on the Highlands/Cashiers plateau for 2024. Specializing in exclusive club communities, land and estates, and lakefront properties, she pairs strategic marketing with a keen eye for staging, ensuring every listing reaches its full potential.

Jessica's solution oriented attitude is the driving force behind her career. Mentored by Liz Harris over the past five years, she's quickly becoming an expert in high-end real estate, seamlessly navigating transactions and building strong client relationships. Possessing an innate ability to understand and connect with people, and a sharp eye for market trends, she helps buyers and sellers navigate the real estate process with confidence and ease.

Together, we offer a full-service real estate experience, combining elite marketing, expert negotiation, and an extensive network of industry professionals. Whether buying, selling, or investing, we ensure a smooth, strategic, and rewarding process. With us, you don't just get agents—you get trusted advisors, relentless advocates, and a sister-driven team committed to your success. Let's find or sell your place together.

LIZHARRISBROKER.COM & JESSICAHOHEISELBROKER.COM



"Liz and Jessica have guided us through the purchase and sale of several homes in Cashiers and we could not speak more highly of their expertise, attention to detail or the care and services they provided us as clients. You would be hard pressed to find a more knowledgeable agent; they have led us to a few of our best investments. This team will just about bend over backwards to find you the perfect real estate for your family. We are so grateful for their professionalism and assistance." —KELSEY A.

"Liz has successfully been my Broker on two occasions. First, she coordinated with other Brokers to get top-dollar for my home in Mountaintop. Next, she was able to secure a property I really wanted after it was just sold to someone else, and find a solution that satisfied everyone. In a word she is tenacious, and gets the job done." —CHRIS E.

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Mountaintop Golf & Lake Club

Offered for \$12,750,000



6 BR / 5.5 BA / 2.32 ACRES — Nestled in the prestigious Mountaintop Golf & Lake Club in Cashiers, NC, this exceptional estate offers mountain chic luxury with breathtaking views of Whiteside Mountain. The property features a gently sloping yard, surrounded by beautiful terraces and multiple outdoor spaces to take in the stunning scenery. Crafted with the finest materials, the home boasts reclaimed wood and stone accents throughout the ceilings, walls, and floors. Large floor-to-ceiling windows bathe the home in natural light, accentuating its exquisite craftsmanship. Four masonry stone fireplaces, custom doors, intricate trim details, and high-end finishes throughout create a sophisticated yet inviting atmosphere. This residence includes six spacious bedroom suites, with a primary suite on the main level, four guest suites upstairs, and a bunk room suite on the lower level—providing privacy and comfort for family and guests. The top level features a spectacular lookout with sweeping mountain views and a cozy sitting room with a bar, perfect for relaxation or entertaining while soaking in the panoramic landscape. On the main level, the great room offers a striking stone fireplace, reclaimed wood beam details, and floor-to-ceiling windows. Entertaining flows seamlessly from the great room into the expansive kitchen and dining areas, and out to the adjoining covered and open stone patios,

complete with a fireplace—ideal for enjoying cooler mountain evenings. The lower level is designed for exceptional entertainment, featuring a spacious family room, game room, sitting room, artist studio, and a covered stone patio with a built-in firepit. This estate is the ultimate blend of luxury, nature, and mountain living, both within the home and at the Mountaintop Golf & Lake Club. Mountaintop is an exclusive, invitation-only retreat offering a refined North Carolina mountain experience. Members enjoy world-class golf, lake recreation, and unforgettable outdoor adventures in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The mountain lodge-inspired clubhouse is the centerpiece of the community, featuring luxurious amenities including a fine-dining restaurant with golf course views, a renovated spa, a state-of-the-art fitness center, resort-style pool, tennis courts, and more. The Outdoor Pursuits center offers a range of activities for all ages, including croquet, indoor basketball, pickleball, volleyball, a kids' treehouse playground, and a dog park. Just a short drive away, the Mountaintop Lake Club provides boat rentals, dining, private beach access, and fishing. Escape to the mountains and experience the refined mountain lifestyle this home offers — the ultimate in mountain living. **MLS 1003067**



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Community Pool & Poolhouse



THE MEADOW HOUSE
Community Clubhouse



THE WATER PLANT
Activity & Fitness Center



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RESIDENCES

5 BR / 5.5 BA | +\$4.8M



COTTAGES

4 BR / 4.5 BA | +\$3M



CABINS

3 BR / 3 BA | +\$2M



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Highlands

Offered for \$8,700,000



4 BR / 4 BA / 2 HBA / 3.60 ACRES — Welcome to Foxhill. Just minutes from the charm of downtown Highlands, yet worlds away in presence and privacy, this estate rises with quiet confidence against the dramatic backdrop of Whiteside Mountain. Recently reimagined, the residence unfolds with architectural drama and intimate moments in equal measure. A soaring two-story library lined floor to ceiling with custom bookcases anchor your entry into the home, evoking the romance of an English country manor. Beyond, the kitchen is both statement and sanctuary, appointed with Kingdom Woodworks custom cabinetry, a full marble island, and an adjoining wet bar designed for effortless entertaining. Stone fireplaces warm the adjacent dining and family rooms, while a great room opens to sweeping mountain vistas that command attention in every season. Five interior fireplaces lend warmth and atmosphere throughout. Two primary suites offer flexibility without compromise: a main-level retreat with spa bath and covered porch overlooking the mountains, and an upper-level sanctuary complete with en-suite bath, private laundry, morning bar, and what many consider the most

breathtaking view in the home. A private guest suite invites extended stays with comfort and discretion. The terrace level continues the narrative of refined hospitality, featuring a catering kitchen that serves the expansive stone patio and wood-burning fireplace, a state-of-the-art media room, a view-framed office, wine cellar, and generous laundry suite. Outdoors, Foxhill truly distinguishes itself. An arched, covered stone family room with an outdoor kitchen and fireplace extends the living experience seamlessly into the landscape. A 17th-century fountain imported from Paris anchors an intimate courtyard, lending old-world romance to evenings beneath the stars. Every detail, from Rocky Mountain Hardware to Waterworks fixtures, reflects uncompromising craftsmanship. A charming carriage house completes the estate as an inviting private haven for guests. Foxhill is where timeless European influence meets the natural majesty of Highlands creating a residence as memorable as the mountain it overlooks. **MLS 1002622**



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Cashiers

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Lonesome Valley

Offered for \$7,995,000



6 BR / 6 BA / 2 HBA / 1.91 ACRES — Nestled within the beautiful community of Lonesome Valley and only minutes from Cashiers, this exceptional six bedroom en-suite and two half bath home—comprising a main residence and guest house—offers the perfect fusion of mountain modern elegance and comfort. On the main level, the primary en-suite is a true retreat: framed by sweeping rock-face views, it boasts a spa-like bathroom and generous his-and-her closets. A private study offers a quiet haven for reading, relaxing, or remote work. The open layout links the living room, dining area, and designer kitchen seamlessly, anchored by a stone fireplace and floor-to-ceiling windows that draw the stunning views in. Step outside to the Carolina Porch, where you'll find an outdoor kitchen, living and dining areas, and a second stone fireplace — perfect for al fresco entertaining across seasons. Below, the terrace level hosts three guest suites, a large family room centered on a fireplace, multiple lounge and game-table zones, and a wet bar — an ideal space for gatherings, movie nights, or casual entertaining. Step outside onto the terraced lawn space with a firepit for

evenings under the stars. Linked by a breezeway, the guest house offers a second primary suite and an artist studio / secondary office on the main level and on its upper floor, a spacious guest suite with its own living room and kitchenette. This layout gives flexibility for multigenerational living, creative use, or hosting extended guests. Life in Lonesome Valley is defined by natural beauty and an active, family-friendly lifestyle. Residents enjoy a pristine four-acre lake, trout pond, and over nine miles of scenic trails through meadows, streams, and waterfalls. Amenities include a state-of-the-art fitness barn, racquet sports complex, heated pool, disc golf, community gardens, and family activity spaces — all designed to bring neighbors together while embracing the wonder of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Homeowners also enjoy close proximity and priority member access to Canyon Kitchen and the Canyon Spa, two of the community's most celebrated destinations.

MLS 1002002



Cashiers

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Wade Hampton

Offered for \$6,900,000



6 BR / 6 BA / 2 HBA / 1.07 ACRES — Nestled within the prestigious Wade Hampton Golf Club and just five minutes from the heart of Cashiers, this home offers an exceptional mountain retreat designed for gathering, relaxing, and enjoying the beauty of the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau. Framed by views of iconic Whiteside Mountain, this six-bedroom en-suite residence blends refined mountain architecture with a gracious, highly functional floor plan ideal for multi-generational getaways and effortless entertaining. The main level features a spacious primary en-suite, a cozy library, an inviting great room, a formal dining room, and a functional mudroom designed for everyday mountain living. In the great room and dining room, dramatic floor-to-ceiling steel and glass windows capture the surrounding landscape and

fill the interiors with natural light. A generous Carolina porch with a fireplace extends the living space outdoors, creating a beautiful setting for year-round enjoyment. The upper level includes three bedroom en-suites, a comfortable sitting room, and a private office, offering family and guests their own retreat. On the terrace level, two additional bedroom en-suites include a family suite with built-in bunk beds, along with a large family and game room, full bar, and wine cellar. With multiple gathering spaces, six private en-suites, and an exceptional setting in one of Cashiers' most sought-after golf communities, this home is perfectly suited for creating lasting mountain memories.

MLS 1003347



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The Fox Estate

Offered for \$6,895,000



5 BR / 4.5 BA / 4.80 ACRES — This is a legacy estate, entirely irreplicable in today's building environment, recently elevated through a meticulous, architecturally-authentic restoration guided by Jim Fox himself during the twilight of his illustrious career. It represents an unrepeatable opportunity to own a residence where the boundary between structure and nature has been permanently dissolved. The home is a masterclass in biophilic design, intentionally crafted to foster well-being through a profound connection to the landscape. While the soul of the home remains historic, the estate has been thoughtfully modernized through a comprehensive capital improvement project. The chef's kitchen features Jenn-Air Pro-Series appliances, two-inch mitered granite counters, Dornbracht fixtures, and a Fox-designed Scandinavian wood-burning stove that creates a charming breakfast snug. Luxurious baths with Victoria & Albert fixtures, granite slab showers and vanities, three new HVAC systems, smart thermostats, an artesian well, updated plumbing and wiring, and closed-cell spray foam insulation bring

modern comfort and efficiency to this architectural masterpiece. The main residence is thoughtfully designed with three bedroom suites including a generously sized primary suite, a family room, office, and gracious main-level living spaces created for both effortless everyday living and elegant entertaining. The adjoining guest house extends the estate's accommodations with two additional bedrooms, one bath, a full kitchen, and a comfortable living room, offering privacy and flexibility for family and guests. Asbury Lake is an experience designed for all ages to enjoy. Spend the afternoon diving in for a refreshing swim, taking the rowboat out for a quiet cruise, or enjoying trout fishing in the fully stocked lake. This is a rare opportunity to own a Fox masterpiece and its vanishing architectural pedigree that cannot be replicated. It's more than a home: it's an irreplaceable legacy.

MLS 1003543



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Big Sheepcliff

Offered for \$6,739,000



4 BR / 4.5 BA / 6.27 ACRES — Perched majestically atop the mountains of Cashiers, NC, this remarkable estate boasts an elevation of 4,500 feet and offers a rare opportunity to experience magnificent mountain living. Sweeping vistas from nearly every room stretch across the expanse of Cashiers and beyond to the neighboring states of South Carolina and Georgia. Commanding over six acres within the gated community of Big Sheepcliff, the privacy and exclusivity of this estate is just a short drive from the town's center. The handsome home has been meticulously remodeled from top to bottom, marrying modern luxury with timeless elegance. Rich warmth of antique timber accents infuses the home with a sense of history and authenticity. The expansive great room and adjoining family room are both graced by majestic masonry stone fireplaces that invite you to unwind and soak in the breathtaking scenery surrounding you. The expansive chef's kitchen beckons culinary enthusiasts with its generous proportions and top-of-the-line amenities. Entertain with ease in the elegant formal dining room

featuring a beautiful masonry stone fireplace, or casually on the generous back deck which offers yet another stone fireplace, spacious sitting and dining areas, cool breezes and stunning endless views. Two luxurious primary suites on the main level offer a peaceful sanctuary complete with a cozy fireplace, lavish bath, and private porch retreat. Upstairs, two additional generously sized suites, each with their own private sitting room, provide comfort and seclusion for family and friends. Handsomely landscaped grounds showcase the fabulous views, extensive rock work and stone patios, creating inviting spaces for entertaining and relaxation. A large grilling/dining patio welcomes an evening grill-out and the nearby firepit is the perfect spot to gather under the starlit sky, for memories that will last a lifetime. Embrace the serenity of this mountain home where every moment is infused with the magic of the mountains. **MLS 1001976**



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Highlands Cove

Offered for \$5,495,000



6 BR / 6.5 BA / 0.79 ACRE — Poised at the end of a quiet cul-de-sac in the prestigious, gated community of Highlands Cove, this exceptional new construction home blends modern mountain luxury with timeless design. Perfectly located between Cashiers and Highlands, the property offers sweeping, panoramic mountain views and convenient access to the best of both towns. Thoughtfully designed across three spacious levels, the home will feature 6 bedrooms, 6 full baths, and 1 half bath—providing generous space for hosting family and guests in comfort and style. A beautiful porte cochere and motor court creates a gracious arrival, setting the stage for the refined interiors within which feature wide plank hardwood flooring, shiplap detailing throughout and wood beam accents that add warmth and character to the mountain aesthetic. The chef's kitchen showcases custom cabinetry and elegant quartzite countertops, while the great room, anchored by a stone fireplace and wall of windows, offers a welcoming place to gather and take in the views. The vaulted ceiling in the primary suite adds a sense of retreat, and each space is thoughtfully positioned to maximize natural light and mountain vistas. Outdoor living is a highlight, with an expansive deck and a

large Carolina Porch complete with its own fireplace—perfect for enjoying cool mountain evenings and the surrounding beauty year-round. Only weeks from being completed by July 2026, this is a rare opportunity to own a new construction home in one of the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau's most desirable gated communities. Highlands Cove residents enjoy 24-hour gated security, underground utilities, community water and sewer, and high-speed fiberoptic internet. Optional club membership grants access to the Old Edwards Club's world-class amenities, including a Tom Jackson-designed 18-hole golf course, fine dining at the clubhouse, a heated mineral pool, hot tub, tennis courts, and a well-appointed fitness center. At GlenCove by Old Edwards, members enjoy an organic garden and farm, a recreational lake for paddle sports and fishing, a 12-hole par-three course, pickleball, a state-of-the-art wellness center, and an entertainment barn complete with restaurant, bar, bowling alley, arcade, and golf simulator. Crafted for elevated mountain living, this home offers a rare blend of new construction, panoramic views, and access to a vibrant club lifestyle—inside one of the Plateau's most coveted gated communities.

MLS 1001243



Cashiers

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Silver Run Reserve (LOT ME-1) \$2,500,000

9.36 ACRES — Welcome to your very own mountaintop within the exclusive Silver Run Reserve. This remarkable 9+ acre estate homesite offers a rare combination of panoramic, year-round 180-degree long-range mountain views, enhanced privacy, and nearly level building sites. Bordered along its eastern edge by protected Nature Conservancy land, the property enjoys an added sense of seclusion and natural serenity. A roughed-in driveway leads to the spacious, gently sloping building areas ideal for crafting a legacy estate or multi-generational family compound. **MLS 1001249**



Silver Run Reserve (LOT ME-11) \$2,495,000

5.71 ACRES — Discover an exceptional estate homesite within Silver Run Reserve, offering breathtaking panoramic views, including a commanding perspective of iconic Whiteside Mountain. The driveway has been roughed in and the homesite thoughtfully positioned to maximize both view corridors and privacy, creating an effortless path toward building your mountain retreat. **MLS 1002713**



Highlands \$2,100,000

221 N. 4TH STREET — Situated in one of the most coveted commercial corridors in Highlands, this prime retail offering presents a rare opportunity to acquire over 3,000 square feet of highly visible shop space just steps from Main Street. The property is currently home to the beloved Highland Hatter, a long-standing and well-recognized business whose existing lease adds immediate income stability and enhanced investment value. **MLS 1002365**



Silver Run Reserve (LOT RT-6) \$725,000

2.42 ACRES — This exceptional estate lot offers gentle sloping topography with a flat knoll, providing an ideal location for a stunning custom residence. Perched along a scenic ridgeline, the property boasts year-round, short-range mountain views, creating a beautiful backdrop in all seasons. **MLS 1000152**



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RECREATION & CREATION

Pages 90-110



Photo by Susan Renfro



A Half-Mile *to* Beauty

Big Laurel Falls offers a quiet half-mile hike to a 35-foot cascade deep in the Standing Indian Basin.

Big Laurel Falls is a beautiful waterfall located southwest of Franklin in the Standing Indian Basin. It flows over an outcropping and drops 35 feet. From there it flows into the headwaters of the Nantahala River. From the trailhead, the easy-to-moderate hike is only about a half-mile to the falls.

Chances are you will not find the trail and falls crowded with people so you can enjoy the solitude of the forest.

Directions

From Highlands, take Highway 64 West to the intersection of US441/23 and US64 in Franklin, continue west on 64 for 12 miles and turn left on West Old Murphy

Rd. Drive just under 2 miles and turn right on FR67 at the sign for Standing Indian Campground. In 1.7 miles the road forks. The right fork leads into the campground but stay left and drive an additional 5.1 miles to a pullout on the right. The last section of the route is gravel but generally maintained. There's a sign here for Laurel

At a Glance *Waterfall Guide*

Enjoy this sampling of area waterfalls, for a deep dive visit thelaurelmagazine.com/recreation.

HIGHLANDS

Bridal Veil Falls

From NC 106 in Highlands, drive 2.3 miles west on US 64. Waterfall GPS: N35.07180 W-83.22910. **Difficulty:** You can park your car in a little parking area and walk 50 feet.

Dry Falls

From NC 106 in Highlands, drive 3.15 miles west on US 64 to a parking area on the left. Waterfall GPS: N35.06884 W-83.23869. **Difficulty:** There are lots of steps you must go down to get behind Dry Falls.

Bust Your Butt Falls

From NC 106 in Highlands, drive 6.35 miles west on US 64 to the pullout on the left. Waterfall GPS: N35.09268 W-83.26573. **Difficulty:** Don't stop on the road itself!

Glen Falls

From the junction of US 64 and NC 106 in Highlands, drive 1.75 miles south on NC 106 and bear left at the sign for Glen Falls. Take Glen Falls Road, not Holt Road. Drive 1.05 miles to the parking area. Waterfall GPS: N35.03128 W-83.23829. **Difficulty:** There's some climbing involved here.

Upper Middle Creek Falls

From the intersection of NC 106 and US 64, follow NC 106 South for 9.3 miles. Exactly 1 mile before you reach the Georgia state line, and about 0.3 miles after NC 106 crosses Middle Creek, a yellow School Bus Stop sign will be on the right. Park on the right side of the road. Waterfall GPS: N35.00714 W-83.32916. **Difficulty:** The four-tenths of a mile hike is not strenuous but it can be confusing.

CASHIERS

Silver Run Falls

From US 64 in Cashiers, head south on NC 107 for 4.05 miles – there's a pullout area on the left. Waterfall GPS N35.06599 W-83.06558. **Difficulty:** No difficulty.

Whitewater Falls

From US 64 west of Lake Toxaway, take NC 281 for 8.5 miles and turn left at the sign for Whitewater Falls into a parking area. **Difficulty:** Not strenuous, though the paved path is a bit uneven.

Cashiers Sliding Rock

Cashiers Sliding Rock, a million miles from the cares of the 21st century, is easy to get to. From the Cashiers Crossroads, travel south on NC 107 to Whiteside Cove Road. Head down the road for 2.6 miles to where the road crosses the Chattooga River and pull over just across the bridge. **Difficulty:** A piece of cake.

Spoonauger Falls

From Cashiers, travel on NC 107 8.2 miles. The name changes to SC 107 – travel for 4.9 miles. Turn right onto Burrells Ford Road. Drive approximately 2.0 miles to the Chattooga Trail parking area on the left (look for the Forest Service Bulletin Board). Hike north on the Chattooga Trail, which roughly parallels the Chattooga River for 0.25 mile, then cross Spoonauger Creek. Immediately on the right will be a side trail. **Difficulty:** There's nothing tricky.

Schoolhouse Falls

From US 64, take NC 281 North for 0.85 miles and bear left on Cold Mountain Road. Stay on the road. When it becomes unpaved, travel about 0.1 miles. Take the road on the right and travel for 0.1 miles to a parking area. Take the trail to the right of the information kiosk. At the intersection, proceed straight on Panthertown Valley Trail. Turn left onto Little Green Trail. Schoolhouse Falls is about 0.15 miles ahead. Waterfall GPS N35.16330 W-83.00674. **Difficulty:** The hike isn't challenging.



Falls and Timber Ridge.

Trail description

The trail begins at the pullout on the right. It descends to Mooney Creek and crosses a footbridge. When the trail splits, go right to get to Big Laurel Falls. There is a section where you will have to encounter roots and rocks.

by Ed and Cindy Boos



Scan for more information on the many waterfalls in the Highlands and Cashiers area.



Life *in the* Air

Chimney Swifts, once reliant on old-growth forests, now seek refuge in chimneys and conservation-built towers, a story highlighted by the Headwaters Bird Alliance's Swift Soiree on August 29.

The Chimney Swift spends much of its life airborne, only ever roosting to sleep and nest. They bathe and perform courtship rituals midair, swooping down to wet themselves in a pond or bird bath, then rinsing their feathers as they rise.

They also perform a seldom-seen courtship ritual in which a male and female form a V with their wings and fly close together, like figure-skating partners gliding behind one another. During the day they can often be found flitting through the air over rivers and lakes where they enjoy catching insects, eating up to 12,000 in a day.

Their specialized legs don't allow them to perch like most birds, but instead they use their long claws to hold onto vertical walls. They can roost in caves, on cliff faces, and inside hollow trees, but with the logging industry destroying much of the old-growth forest they once called home, they adapted to roost in chimneys. This

is where they got their iconic name, but their sickle-shaped wings and blunt, short bodies earned them the nickname "The Flying Cigar."

Unmated Chimney Swifts can roost together in groups, forming large tornado-like flocks as they pile into a chimney. Mated pairs, however, prefer a space to themselves and will build a nest directly on the side of a wall using interwoven sticks. They adhere nesting materials to the vertical surface with their sticky, glue-like saliva.

In the summer they can be seen in most of the eastern half of the continental United States and southern Canada. In early September, they migrate to their wintering range, the northwest corner of South America in countries such as Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador, and Peru.

The Chimney Swift has seen its population decline by 74 percent since the mid-sixties. Much of this is due to loss

of suitable roosting locations, as modern homes and buildings often don't use the traditional brick chimneys that served as ideal roosting spots. Swifts now must rely on historic buildings and remaining old-growth forests, which is leading local conservation groups to build swift towers. These specialized birdhouses accommodate the Chimney Swift's unique roosting style.

The Headwaters Bird Alliance is hosting a Swift Soiree on Saturday, August 29, from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M. at the Cowee School Arts and Heritage Center in Franklin. The potluck-style dinner will allow birders to observe the swifts as they roost in the chimneys preserved as part of the building's original architecture. Visit headwatersbirdalliance.org for more details about the event.

*by Matt Salerno,
Headwaters Bird Alliance*

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Shade Gardens **Beyond Hostas**

A gentle invitation to look beyond hostas and build shade gardens inspired by the layered beauty of our mountain woodlands.



by Debby Hall





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When people think of shade gardens, one plant usually comes to mind – hostas. And for good reason. They're dependable, easy to grow, and their big, beautiful leaves brighten up those darker corners of the yard. I have plenty of them myself.

For a long time, I assumed hostas were about all that would grow in the shade. That changed when I started paying closer attention on my walks around Highlands. Once I really looked, I realized our mountain forests are filled with plants that thrive beneath the trees. It made me wonder why I wasn't using more of them in my own garden.

Living here on the Plateau, we're surrounded by some of the most beautiful woodlands anywhere. A walk on one of our trails reveals what grows naturally beneath the canopy: layers of ferns, wildflowers, shrubs, mosses, and groundcovers working together to create a landscape that's peaceful, textured, and quietly dramatic.

Borrowing a few of those ideas for our own gardens makes perfect sense.

One of my favorite shade plants is the fern. Whether you choose our native Christmas fern or the colorful Japanese painted fern, they add softness and movement that hostas simply can't. Coral bells (*Heuchera*) are another excellent choice, with leaves in shades of burgundy, lime green, caramel, and silver that provide color even when the plants aren't blooming.

Foamflower is a wonderful native option, producing delicate white flowers in spring before settling into an attractive groundcover for the rest of the season. Solomon's seal is another plant worth knowing. Its graceful, arching stems and dangling white flowers bring an elegant look to any shady border.

Shrubs deserve attention, too. Oakleaf hydrangeas thrive in part shade and offer something to enjoy nearly every season. Mountain laurel, one of our native treasures, fits naturally into woodland

gardens and reminds us that some of the best plants are the ones that have always belonged here.

One mistake many gardeners make is trying to keep shade gardens too tidy. Nature doesn't work that way. A layer of fallen leaves feeds the soil, keeps roots cool, and holds moisture during dry spells. Moss growing around rocks or stepping stones often adds more charm than another bag of mulch ever could.

Before anyone thinks I'm declaring war on hostas, don't worry. Mine aren't going anywhere. But instead of planting another dozen this year, consider adding a few companions – a fern here, a clump of coral bells there, maybe a patch of foamflower tucked beneath a tree.

Before long, your garden will feel less like a collection of plants and more like a small piece of the mountain forest we all love.

*As always,
Happy Gardening!*






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Understanding the **Timber Rattlesnake**

Timber Rattlesnakes are often misunderstood, yet they play vital ecological roles and are a protected species in North Carolina.



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The advertisement for ELENA'S features three models in different outfits. On the left, a woman wears a wide-brimmed straw hat, sunglasses, a brown t-shirt, and a striped skirt, holding a colorful woven basket. In the center, a woman in a dark grey activewear set (long-sleeved top and pants) is running on a sandy beach. On the right, a woman in a black and white checkered dress stands on a white staircase. The background of the central image shows a beach with dunes and a blue sky.

It's the time of year when hikers and other nature enthusiasts may encounter one of our area's most misunderstood animals, the Timber Rattlesnake. Also known as Canebrake Rattlesnakes, these ectothermic (cold-blooded) animals actively seek out warm, sunny rocky outcrops throughout our area, particularly those with a south or southwest exposure and little tree cover. These fascinating creatures play vital ecological roles, including controlling rodent populations.

Timber Rattlesnakes are thick-bodied and can reach lengths of up to six and a half feet, although about four feet is more common. They usually have a black tail and are characterized by dark crossbands on a lighter background, typically yellow, dark gray, or sometimes almost black. Timber Rattlesnakes seek dens, often in rocky habitat near feeding and warming locations, and are frequently communal hibernators as they seek to share warmth.

Timber Rattlesnakes mate in the late

summer or fall, and with a gestation period of almost a year, females will give birth to five to twenty young the following summer. In our area, females will not usually reproduce until they're nine or ten years old, and then, due to the burden it places on their bodies, only again every three or four years. This slow reproduction cycle is only one reason for the decline of the species; loss of habitat, as well as misconceptions about their importance to the ecosystem, have played a role as well. North Carolina has listed the Timber Rattlesnake as a species of Special Concern.

Timber Rattlesnakes have long played a role in our area's culture; the Cherokee, for example, called the rattlesnake *u-tsa-na-ti*, or "he has a bell," a reference to its noisy rattle, and attached rattles to bottle gourd medicine rattles used in spiritual healing practices.

Timber Rattlesnakes, while possessing highly toxic venom, are generally not aggressive and only strike when provoked

or stepped on. They have developed color patterns that provide excellent camouflage within our timber habitat, and rattle when threatened. If encountered on the trail, simply observe their unique beauty from a safe distance – and leave them to continue their important functions in our ecosystem.

The Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust has been protecting our unique places – and the animals and plants that call them home – since our first property in 1909. Follow HCLT on Instagram and Facebook for current information on our fun, educational, and free outings.

*by Lance Hardin,
Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust*

photos by Andrew Renfo

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PICKLEBALL ON THE PLATEAU

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To the Top *of* Pisgah

This sweeping climb rewards hikers with rich forest life, steady elevation, and some of Western North Carolina's most expansive mountain views.

“Go up to the top of Pisgah ...” (Deuteronomy 3:27)

The biblical Mt. Pisgah, in modern-day Jordan, is a noteworthy site referenced in the Old Testament because Moses climbed to the top of it to view the “promised land.”

Yet in Western North Carolina, Mt. Pisgah is considered a top hiking destination for its stellar views.

Located within the 500,000 acres of Pisgah National Forest, the 5,721-foot summit has been a favorite 360-degree viewing spot for centuries. The Cherokee climbed Mt. Pisgah, as did early settlers.

Truly putting Mt. Pisgah “on the map” as a must-see and must-do was George Vanderbilt in the late 19th century. He purchased thousands of acres that included Mt. Pisgah, and then he made sure one of the verandas on his now-famous home – Biltmore Estate in Asheville – had a direct view of the mountain.

A few decades later, the U.S. Forest Service acquired the land, and Mt. Pisgah and the surrounding area became part of one of the first designated national forests in the country.

Just about an hour-and-a-half drive from Highlands or Cashiers, the Mt. Pisgah trailhead parking area is at Milepost 407.6 on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Venturing off the Plateau and taking in the stunning vistas on the popular 1930s-era roadway is a treat. But the cherry on top of this excursion is actually standing at the top

of Mt. Pisgah and looking out in all directions.

That said, once at Milepost 407.6, look for Mt. Pisgah signs and drive to the end of the road. The trailhead is obvious. Lace up those hiking shoes or boots, grab a hiking stick, and set off on the 1.5-mile hike to the pinnacle.

It is a steady climb but doable. Everyone from little children to octogenarians has traversed this path. Along the wide trail are rocky outcroppings, plenty of unique foliage – like the otherworldly American cancer-root – and stone steps that were painstakingly placed by the Youth Conservation Corps in the 1970s.

Birds are plentiful as well. The flute-like trill of the wood thrush and the drink-your-teaaaaa song of the eastern towhee resonate through the woods from spring through summer.

Take the climb slow and steady to absorb the sensory experience, and stop along the way to peek out through cleared areas at the view beyond.

But the whole reason for the climb is the top. Once there, immediately obvious is the television tower, which rises approximately 350 feet in the air. It was installed 70 years ago. However, in June of this year, it was announced that the station WLOS will transmit from a new tower on Pinnacle Mountain instead of from the one on Mt. Pisgah. The transmitter tower on Mt. Pisgah will no longer



be in service.

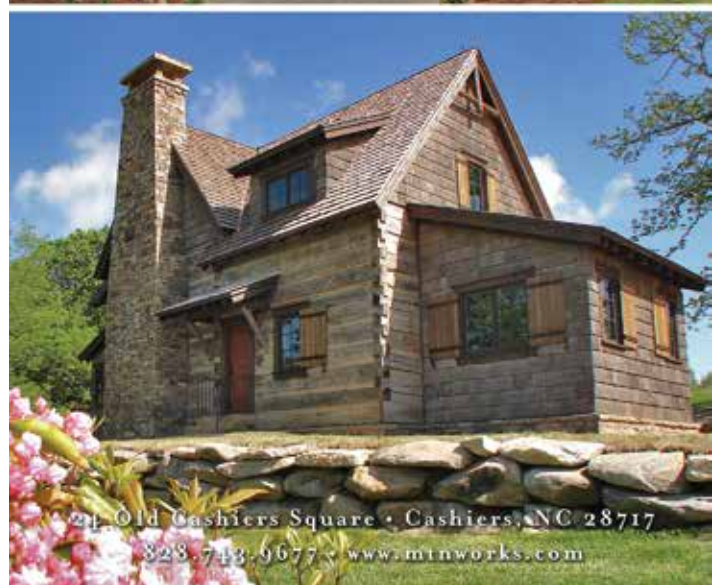
While the tower is fascinating to see, it is the spectacular and expansive views from the Mt. Pisgah viewing platform that make the hike up truly worth it. On a clear day, hikers can see the French Broad River Valley, Shining Rock Wilderness, and the City of Asheville.

Also, several peaks are easily identified with the phone app PeakFinder. The most prominent is 6,030-foot Cold Mountain. This conical peak was made famous by author and Asheville native Charles Frazier in the best-selling 1997 book of the same name. Plus, the 2003 *Cold Mountain* movie, starring Jude Law, Nicole Kidman, and Renée Zellweger, was based on the book.

Pause to soak in the surroundings before descending the mountain. A bonus to this half- or full-day jaunt off the Plateau is a visit to the historic Pisgah Inn, where a glass of wine, an appetizer, and/or a full meal can be enjoyed in the restaurant. Shop for locally made crafts at the Inn's Country Store, or hang out and absorb the view from chairs on the back deck or back lawn.

Mt. Pisgah may not be right around the corner from Highlands and Cashiers, but it is certainly not too far to enjoy all that this renowned area treasure has to offer.

by Deena C. Bouknight





Race Night *in* Highlands

Highlands' Rotary Twilight 5K returns August 15 with a familiar course, strong community support, and an evening that blends running, music, and celebration.

Lace up those precisely engineered running shoes, strap the toddler in the stroller, and leash up the dog – it's time for Highlands' beloved Rotary Twilight 5K.

On August 15, runners will head out from Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park and make their way through Highlands' in-town neighborhoods for the annual Rotary Twilight 5K.

Race Director Bill Grubb expects more than 250 registrants this year, though that number only tells part of the story.

People typically come in from a dozen or more states, and it's common to see families moving together at the back of the pack while more experienced runners set the pace up front, with the whole field spread out across the same neighborhood streets.

The course hasn't changed, and that's by design. It winds through in-town roads past Harris Lake and other familiar landmarks, and while it's relatively flat by Highlands standards, it's still just challenging enough to keep runners honest.

"We don't intend to change that," Grubb says.

That consistency is part of what keeps people coming back: returning runners know the rhythm of the route, where they can settle in and where they might want to push, while first-timers get a course that feels approachable right away.

The race started in 2013 as a modest fundraiser with an \$8,500 goal, and it has grown steadily ever since in both turnout and impact. Last year, 294 runners registered and the event brought in more than \$35,000 for the Highlands Community Child Development Center.

This year, the race is backed by more than 40 local businesses and individual patrons.

Proceeds for 2026 will go to the Gordon Center for Children, a program of Highlands United Methodist Church focused on child development.

The race begins at 6:00 P.M. By then, the heat of an August day has usually backed off a bit, and runners can settle into a pace that feels manageable. (People from off the

Plateau may chuckle about our "August heat," but if you've been here a while, it's something that feels real.) Spectators line parts of the route, and by the time the first finishers make it back to the park, a crowd is already waiting.

There's complimentary beer for finishers of legal age, light-up necklaces for kids, and awards for the top male and female runners overall, plus age-group winners in five-year increments.

After that, the evening shifts into something more relaxed. The park fills up for an all-ages concert by local favorite ABC Combo, and the finish line turns into the kind of place people want to stick around and enjoy.

Registration is open through RunSignUp at runsignup.com/Race/NC/Highlands/HighlandsTwilight5K.

You can run it hard, walk it, or push a stroller the whole way. However you do it, you're part of the same evening.

by Luke Osteen



Life is a GAME best played with friends.



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Preserving a **Highlands Landmark**

The Highlands Nature Center begins a new phase of preservation this fall, reinforcing its historic structure while enhancing conservation-minded features for future generations.



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For nearly a century, the Highlands Nature Center has served as a place of discovery, education, and connection to the natural world. Founded in 1927 as the museum of the Highlands Biological Station, it has welcomed generations of residents and visitors eager to learn about the rich biodiversity of the Southern Appalachians.

Originally housed as an annex to the Hudson Library, the Nature Center later moved into the historic Clark Foreman Museum building, constructed between 1939 and 1941 by the Works Progress Administration. Built with native granite from a local quarry and wormy chestnut salvaged from the Nantahala National Forest, the building reflects the natural heritage it was created to celebrate.

Over the decades, the Highlands Nature Center has remained an important part of the community, evolving to meet the needs of science and education. Its last major renovation was in 2001, when the original

chestnut roof beams were reinforced and a covered entrance was added.

The Nature Center begins its next phase of preservation and improvement this month, with renovations continuing through late fall. The work focuses on three priorities designed to strengthen the building while honoring its historic character.

First, aging chestnut support columns along the outer walls, which have begun to deteriorate at their bases, will be replaced with metal beams for long-term stability. To preserve the building's familiar appearance, the original chestnut columns will be salvaged and used to cover the interior-facing metal supports.

The project will also replace all exterior windows with updated, energy-efficient models featuring bird-friendly etched glass. Designed to reduce bird collisions—one of the leading causes of bird mortality in North America – this improvement addresses a problem that kills nearly one billion birds each year.

In addition, portions of the foundation will be excavated and sealed to protect against water intrusion, while modest grading in front of the Nature Center and the rear parking lot will help redirect rainwater away from the building.

Before renovations begin, the Nature Center will remain open for regular summer hours, Monday through Saturday from 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., through Saturday, August 15. Visitors are encouraged to stop in, explore the exhibits, and enjoy the Nature Center during the height of the season.

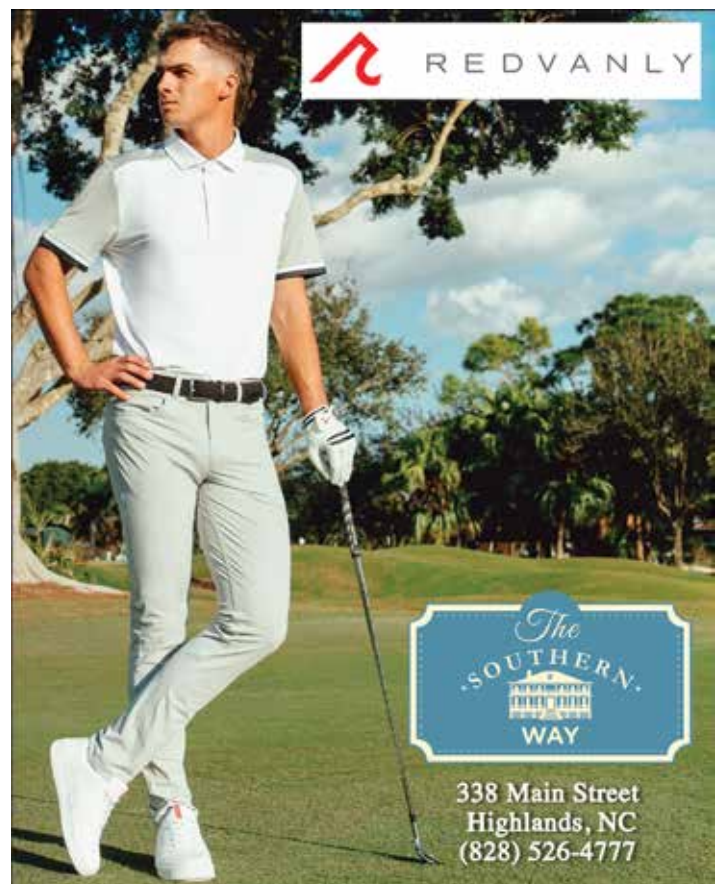
After August 15, the building will temporarily close, with plans to reopen in the new year. While construction is underway, the surrounding grounds will remain open, and educational programming will continue through outreach opportunities and fall programs at the Pavilion and on the grounds.

*by Marissa Nieddu
Highlands Biological Foundation*



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Teeing Up **for Good**

Cashiers Cares hosts its Charity Golf Event on September 14, rallying community support for nonprofits that provide essential care, advocacy, and resources across Jackson County.

With its signature golf tournament, Cashiers Cares continues its mission of compassion.

For nearly 20 years, this grassroots organization has turned generosity into action, helping support trusted nonprofits that serve children, families, seniors, and neighbors facing hardship throughout Southern Jackson County and the surrounding area.

On Monday, September 14, Cashiers Cares invites golfers and supporters to tee up for good at its Charity Golf Event at Trillium Links. Check-in begins at 9:30 A.M., with a shotgun start at 10:30 A.M. The day promises mountain views, friendly competition, and the satisfying knowledge that every swing helps strengthen the safety net for local residents in need.

Cashiers Cares is a 501(c)(3) organization run entirely by volunteers. Proceeds from the event support a broad network of nonprofits, including AWAKE Children's Advocacy Center, the Literacy Council

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of Cashiers, Cashiers Valley Preschool, Hampton Preschool & Early Learning Center, Community Care Clinic of Highlands-Cashiers, Fishes and Loaves Food Pantry, Four Seasons, Pisgah Legal Services, SAFE, and United Christian Ministries of Jackson County.

Together, these organizations touch nearly every part of community life. AWAKE advocates for children affected by abuse and helps coordinate care in a child-friendly setting. The Literacy Council helps adults and children overcome barriers created by illiteracy, while Cashiers Valley Preschool and Hampton Preschool give young learners nurturing foundations for kindergarten and beyond.

Other beneficiaries meet urgent daily needs. Community Care Clinic provides free primary medical care for those who might otherwise go without. Fishes and Loaves and United Christian Ministries help stock pantries and tables for families

experiencing food insecurity. Four Seasons offers hospice and palliative care regardless of ability to pay. Pisgah Legal Services pursues justice for low-income neighbors, and SAFE works to eliminate domestic and sexual violence through prevention, advocacy, protection, education, and healing.

“What sets Cashiers Cares apart is its direct impact: donations are channeled to the agencies doing the work on the ground...”

What sets Cashiers Cares apart is its direct impact: donations are channeled to the agencies doing the work on the ground, where resources can quickly become groceries, medical visits, legal help, classroom support, safety, and comfort for those who need it most.

Last year, it was able to locally distribute a little more than \$160,000.

Whether you register a foursome, be-

come a sponsor, volunteer, or simply help spread the word, your participation helps Cashiers Cares continue building a legacy rooted in empathy, action, and enduring community care.

In a place celebrated for its natural beauty, Cashiers Cares reflects something even more profound – a commitment to people. And thanks to those who give generously, that commitment grows stronger with every swing, every smile, and every life touched.

If you'd like to learn more about this organization and the way that it enriches lives throughout Southern Jackson County, visit cashierscares.org or email Cathy Peacock at ccpeacock@protonmail.com.

by Luke Osteen



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Awake to Small Wonders

Grayson Chase

A young Highlands naturalist reminds his family – and his viewers – how much wonder returns when you slow down, pay attention, and stay curious.

When we're kids, growing up feels simple: we want the freedom to decide how many Oreos count as breakfast, how long we can stay in the lake before our lips turn blue, and whether sleep is worth missing a single adventure.

Time is better spent hunting “treasure” in Grandma’s crawlspace or staging a naval battle in the rainwater trench left by Dad’s tire. But somewhere along the way, that clarity dulls. We stop noticing the wonder hiding in ordinary things, and we forget how effortlessly curiosity once came.

That’s why adults who keep a childlike sense of wonder stand out. They move through the world awake to it.

Little Grayson is one of those people

– a young naturalist who makes it easy to remember what genuine fascination feels like.

Many adults might admire his easy courage. Petting a polyphemus moth, handling a ring-necked snake, or catching a determined praying mantis are everyday activities for him – guided more by curiosity than fear.

He “is naturally fearless,” said his mom, Cara Chase.

Grayson loves insects and animals because they’re “cool,” Cara said. He watches how they move and live, and he’s drawn to what makes each one different – “something to learn from.”

That openness also comes with a parent’s job: teaching him to recognize what’s

dangerous and to treat every creature with respect. “We try to guide him in a way that keeps both him and the wildlife safe,” she said.

Grayson shares that approach on his YouTube channel, *Catching Up To Nature With Grayson*, offering bite-sized lessons from the woods and fields and showing that attention and respect can go hand in hand.

In Highlands, he’s become a small but spirited naturalist, and his love of wildlife runs in the family. Cara says Grayson’s grandfather and great-grandfather passed their knowledge down to her first, during a childhood spent barefoot and outdoors.

“That connection to the land really stayed with me,” Cara recalled. “The childhood I hoped to create for my kids

was rooted in that same freedom – being outside, getting dirty, learning through that experience.”

“We’re continually amazed by the beauty and wildlife around us, and we feel so fortunate to call this mountain home,” she added. “Highlands is such a special place because of its rich biodiversity. Living here has given Grayson endless opportunities to discover, learn, and share the incredible diversity of nature right outside our door. That’s really why he’s so passionate about the outdoors.”

Catching Up To Nature With Grayson is playful, but it’s also quietly educational. Grayson loves sharing facts he’s picked up from encyclopedias or discovered on his own. His younger sister, Opal, doesn’t share his fearlessness, but watching him has helped her meet the outdoors with a little less fear.

Watching a small boy happily hold a spider, it’s hard not to feel your perspective shift. What once seemed frightening begins to look, instead, like one more small wonder.

“Grayson and Opal have absolutely changed the way we (parents) see the world,” Cara said. “They slow us down, make us notice what we would’ve walked past, and remind us how much there is to learn when you stay curious.”

Viewers can expect the same reminder: the vivid world of childhood hasn’t disappeared – we’ve just stopped paying attention.

by Daryna Thiemann



Weekend on the Courts

Mountaintop Rotary hosts its 3rd Annual Highlands Pickleball on the Plateau tournament September 25–27, raising funds for youth programs through a weekend of spirited play, community support, and family-friendly fun.




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Mountaintop Rotary is bringing the fun and energy of pickleball back to the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau with its 3rd Annual Highlands Pickleball on the Plateau tournament, set for September 25–27 at the Highlands Recreation Park.

This year's event promises to be bigger and better than ever, with players of all ages taking part. Spectators can expect to see both spry youngsters and seasoned veterans showing off their skills, all while helping raise money for community youth programs. Last year, competitors traveled from as far away as Florida, Alabama, and Virginia, and organizers expect an expanded field of 150 to 175 entrants this year.

Camaraderie, fun, and friendly competition will keep the energy high throughout the weekend. It will not be hard to imagine the familiar pop of paddles meeting balls and the squeak of sneakers as players hustle across the courts for the perfect shot.

On Friday, September 25, the tourna-

ment opens with an afternoon youth event, giving young players from across the Plateau and beyond a chance to join the fun. Mountaintop Rotary event chair Dr. Sue Aery is especially excited about this new addition, which encourages more young people to get involved in this lively and growing sport.

On Saturday, September 26, men's and women's round-robin play begins at 8:00 A.M. and continues until all matches are complete. The tournament wraps up Sunday, September 27, with mixed doubles round-robin play. Each division is organized by skill level, from beginner to advanced.

Mountaintop Rotary encourages the entire community to come out and enjoy the weekend. Food trucks will be on hand, making it easy to watch a little pickleball, enjoy a picnic at the park, and take in a day filled with community spirit, athleticism, and pure pickleball fun. Community members and businesses have also supported this important cause by becoming event

sponsors or donating raffle prizes.

Mountaintop Rotary raises money throughout the year to support its charitable work, and every dollar raised through this event benefits local youth programs. In past years, the club has supported the Highlands School Fund, the Boys & Girls Club of the Plateau, PAC Educational Theatre, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Cashiers-Highlands, scholarships for local high schoolers, Shop with a Cop, Gordon Youth Center, The Kids Place, and more.

Enjoy a beautiful autumn weekend, join the pickleball craze, and plan to compete or cheer from the sidelines while supporting area youth. For more information or to register, visit Mountaintop Rotary's Facebook page or the Facebook page for Highlands Pickleball on the Plateau.

*by Mary Jane McCall
photos by Colleen Kerrigan*



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Burrowing Bees Beneath Us

These ground-nesting bees power North Carolina's landscape, and the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission explains how to stay calm, safe, and neighborly during their short time above ground.

We've spotlighted the bee-friendly activities of Rose Mary Achey several times over the years.

In fact, our writer Daryna Thiemann has made it her goal to don a beekeeping suit and step into the center of Rose Mary's beekeeping enterprise – those beautiful white hives in her backyard.

I could have taken the assignment, but the thought of having hundreds of those buzzing bandits swift past my head gives me the willies.

This natural reaction was permanently imprinted on my brain pan last year when my dog Skylar and I stepped directly upon a nest of burrowing bees. Their retaliation was immediate and targeted to our most sensitive body parts.

Wiser and sufficiently chastised, I contacted my friend Anna Gurney at the NC Wildlife Commission and she spilled the honey on the burrowing bees that surround us:

"Believe it or not, most of the more than

500 native bee species in North Carolina nest underground. (Hopefully you haven't discovered that the hard way! Shoes are your friend when outdoors!)

"Burrowing bees are solitary insects; however, they often nest in masses, resulting in hundreds (possibly thousands!) of little burrows clustered across small areas. Some people believe the solution is to pour gasoline into their burrows or spray them with insecticides to rid them of an area. But bees provide a crucial pollinator role to our ecosystem. And there are alternatives to the "elimination route."

"More than 80 percent of flowering plants rely on pollination services provided by wild bees. Furthermore, they contribute billions of dollars to our economy by pollinating crops. While it may be startling to see so many bees on your front lawn, here are a few facts to consider for coexisting with these ground dwellers:

Solitary bees are not aggressive. They do not have a hive or colony to defend so their inclination will be to fly away from

perceived danger. In addition, only female bees can sting as males do not have the anatomical features to sting.

Most ground-nesting bees are only above the surface for a very short time. They spend most of their lifecycle below ground in some phase of development. If you're seeing bees on your front lawn today, chances are they will be mostly gone within two-to-three weeks, not to emerge again until next year.

"Some examples of ground-nesting bees in North Carolina include mining bees (*Andrena* spp.), cellophane bees (*Colletes* spp.), and sweat bees (*Lasioglossum* spp.). Different species emerge at various times throughout the growing season, but many do typically emerge in the spring. They are often mistaken for other insects, including yellow jackets and even ants.

For bee questions or concerns, contact bee expert Gabriela.Garrison@ncwildlife.gov or NC Wildlife's Helpline at (866) 318-2401.

by Luke Osteen

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94 Netsi Place, Highlands, NC 28741

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94 Netsi Place is an inviting mountain retreat nestled in the heart of Highlands, offering the perfect blend of privacy, convenience, and timeless charm with beautiful views overlooking Mirror Lake. Located just minutes from the upscale shops and dining of downtown Highlands, this exceptional legacy property offers a rare opportunity to experience peaceful mountain living against a scenic Blue Ridge backdrop.

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378 Hurrah Ridge, Scaly Mountain, NC 28775

BEDS: 3 | BATHS: 3 | ACREAGE: 4.58 | MLS# 1003420 | \$1,100,000

Perfectly positioned halfway between Clayton, Georgia, and Highlands, North Carolina, this beautifully crafted retreat blends classic mountain craftsmanship with mid-century modern style. Whether utilized as a peaceful weekend getaway or a permanent residence, this unique property offers an unparalleled mountain lifestyle defined by seclusion, convenience, and timeless design.

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ARTS

Pages 116-147





Painting Journeys



Our August Cover Artist Bette Crowder turns her love of landscapes, gardens, and butterflies into vivid watercolor stories shaped by curiosity, travel, and a touch of magic.

Bette Crowder loves landscapes more than anything.

But not on weekends. That's when butterflies are her numero uno.

Or did she say gardens are her faves? Hostas and dahlias. While foliage and flowers paint smiles all over her heart, she splashes watercolor gardens all over

Ampersand panels.

Truth is – any day, any moment, any display of Mother Nature – at her homes in Florida or North Carolina, is Bette's favorite vista and time.

She says, "Do what you love." And, boy, does she capture her loves beautifully!

The Plateau provides one of the world's

most magnificent photo ops for artists. The scenery is her library of aesthetic reference.

Beyond Highlands and Cashiers, Bette and her husband explore the splendor of Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia and beyond, looking for the next visual prize. Lately it's a grist mill in West-by-god-Virginia, a favorite visit for photo studies

and hours of inspiration.

Bette's phone is a godsend. She marvels at almost every pose it snaps, especially those that capture the character of the images.

On one of their photo adventures, they came upon a swarm of cars and people at a stream. Turns out, it was opening day for fishing season. The site was energetic, but the paintings of family members told the real stories.

That's part of Bette's skill. She is as much a storyteller as a visual artist.

She says, "I got three satisfying paintings. Fishing and painting were infectious

with the first day of casting lines."

One of her favorite painting stories is dripping in magic.

"I painted a garden scene," she says. "It was an old gate opening uphill to a house. All of a sudden, I saw a face in this painting I'd made. The features were in the mouth of another face. Where did I come up with that? I didn't see it initially, so where and how did this happen? We concluded it was a mystical painting within a painting."

Bette has taken occasional classes in abstract, plein air, and more. She absorbs all that's new and applies what fits into her

style. As you look at the butterfly paintings, for example, you can see she played with shape and color and pattern in ways that are influenced by the abstract, but just a sprinkle, not a flood.

To see more of Bette's work, visit Jeanie Edwards Fine Art and Gallery, 223 South 4th Street in Highlands. You can also send her a note – bettecrowder@gmail.com.

Join us on Tuesday, August 4, at 5:30 P.M. at High Country Wine & Provisions to meet Bette and celebrate her *Laurel* cover.

by Donna Rhodes





Season of Making *at* The Bascom

The Bascom's fall season offers a full slate of workshops in ceramics, painting, and floral arts, all shaped by the landscape and community that make creating here distinctive.

As summer's heat gives way to fall, the studios at The Bascom are still bustling. Classes run year-round on the six-acre campus in Highlands, and the fall season brings a rich mix of offerings in ceramics, oil painting, figure drawing, and floral arrangement, each shaped by the understanding that to make art here is to make art in a special place.

The instructors The Bascom draws are working artists with active studio practices.

Pat Fiorello, a past president of the Georgia Watercolor Society and author of *Bella Italia: Italy Through the Eyes of an Artist*, leads a three-day workshop on painting flowers in oil this August.

Marc Chatov returns in late September with a still life intensive built around the fundamentals of composition and value.

Larry Moore's four-day workshop on the abstracted landscape, offered in October, invites participants to find their own level between representation and abstraction, guided by the mountain terrain surrounding campus.

The ceramics program brings some of the most place-specific opportunities on campus. Thaddeus Erdahl's *Head Games: Building Bold Sculpted Heads* (Aug. 24–28) includes a firing in The Bascom's soda kiln, housed in the Virginia and Mike Campbell Soda Kiln Pavilion. Hand-built and gas-powered, the kiln produces rich, atmospheric surfaces by spraying a sodium solution into the chamber at high temperature. The results can't be replicated in a standard kiln, and they can only be experienced here.

The fall workshops build toward two signature events. The 16th Annual Dazzling Dahlia Festival (September 10–12) gathers horticulture and the visual arts across a weekend of floral installations, a juried Single Bloom Competition, a Studio Member Pottery Show, and free gallery exhibitions. Three workshops are woven directly into the festival: a floral arranging session with Christy Curcuru on opening morning, a beginner collage class with Caryn Raming on the closing afternoon, and a dahlia-inspired painting workshop with Cath Connolly Hudson on September 5,



each centered on locally grown mountain dahlias.

Two weeks later, on September 26, the 16th Annual Bascom Clay Symposium brings Alexander Thierry, Andrew Godfrey Shaw, and Tiffany Thomas to the Dave Drake Studio for a day of demonstrations and conversation on surface treatment in contemporary ceramics. The symposium is free and open to all.

The Bascom's workshop program is one expression of its broader mission, to keep the visual arts accessible and alive on the Plateau. The full schedule is available at TheBascom.org or by calling (828) 526-4949.

by Bianca Mitchell

The Bascom: A Center for the Visual Arts



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A peddler of beauty, Lucy Clark, resides there. She adores Brevard as much as you will adore her and her business. She's the charisma behind her namesake: Lucy Clark Gallery & Studio, located at 51 West Main Street. It's a don't-missable experience, filled with showings, ongoing exhibitions, curated events, demonstrations, workshops, world-class displays and so much more.

If you've not seen Lucy's website, check out the 3,000+ creations online at lucyclarkgallery.com. Sixty consummate artisans crank out magic every day. Touch your order key and beauty will find its way to your welcoming wall, table, window or garden.

Better yet, visit the gallery in person. Lucy makes people feel right at home.

She says, "I love showing guests what we do, what we have, what we love to share. I am mindful about curation. Everything we offer is seen through a lens of softness. The artwork is staged in decor vignettes. Art comes to life, making it easy to envision beauty right in your home."

Lucy tells buyers, "Your purchase might be a \$7 hand-crafted greeting card or a \$10,000 masterpiece. No matter what you choose, if it pleases your heart, it's a magnum opus."

Buyers need time to have an experience without the pressure. It may take a visit or two to discover the perfect piece that touches one's soul – or hits one's tickle-spot.

"I love it when first-time customers come in the door," says Lucy. "It gives me joy to see people's eyes light up like starlight."

Relationships and connections are important to the gallery.

Lucy says, "I have been a business-woman since I was 25. I had a massage therapy business for a number of years and a retail shop before that. My gallery was a dream that came true nine years ago."

It's no surprise that excellent business and Lucy's peddler's dream of beauty are the finest of combinations. You will get not just a piece of art – but a whoosh-of-wonder that changes your home and life milieu.

Next time you are visiting The Brevard Music Center, come early, have a taste of fine dining and a big bite of beauty at Lucy's Gallery for dessert.

If you are fond of photography and poetry, visit Lucy's website at 7:15 A.M., every Sunday and enjoy her latest entry.

To learn more, lucyclarkgallery.com, or email lucy@lucyclarkgallery.com.

by Donna Rhodes

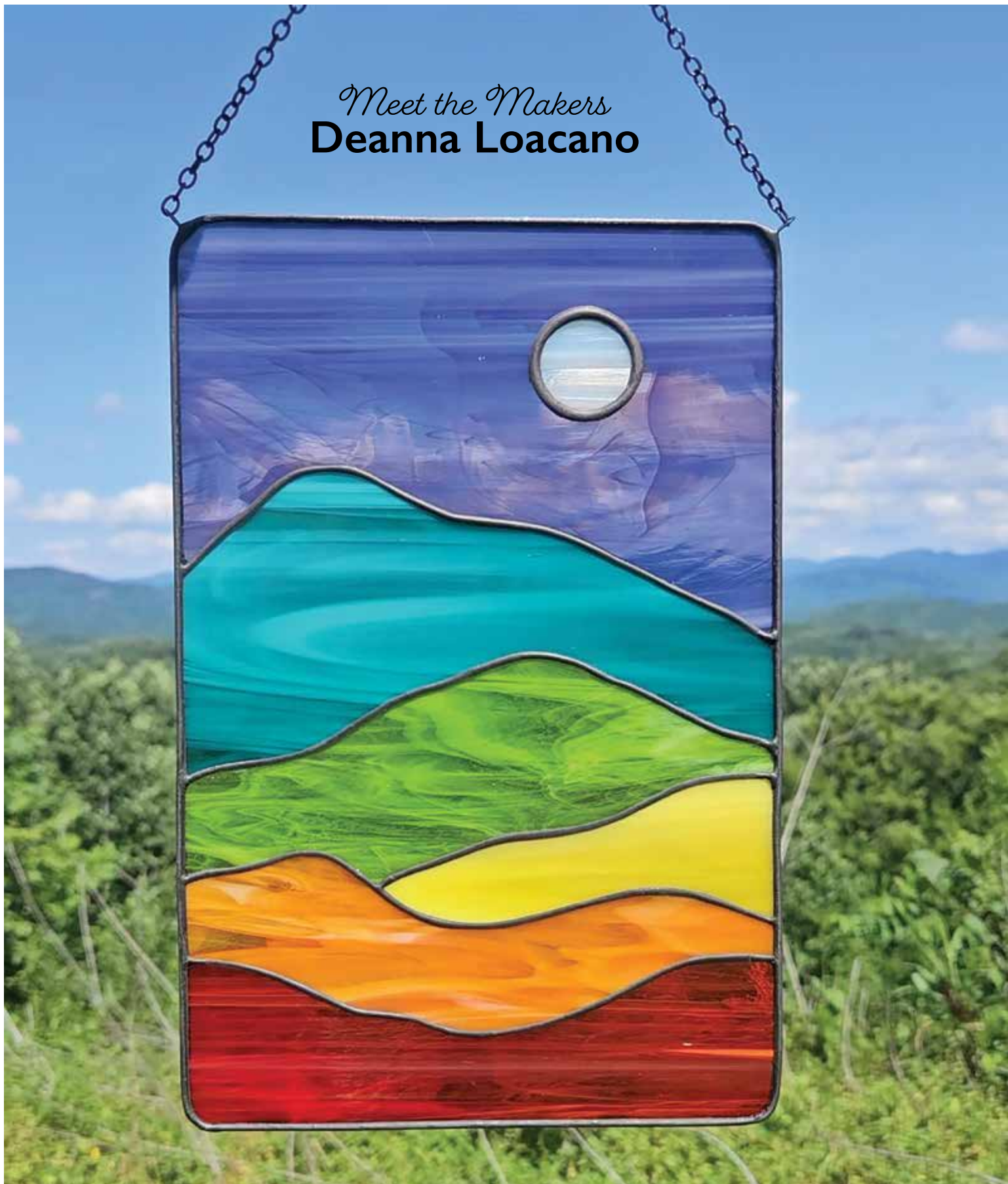


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Meet the Makers
Deanna Loacano





Stained glass artisan Deanna Loacano transforms sunlight into luminous, color-rich works of art shaped by curiosity, and a Renaissance spirit.

Deanna Loacano, stained glass artisan, definitely makes the cut. She creates a lovely interplay of texture, color, luminosity, opalescence, iridescence, and reflection – she’s an interior designer of light. She builds windows of color and lets the sun deliver the glow.

Though she loves fashioning her glass designs, Deanna is truly a Renaissance woman, exploring a zillion ventures: fishing, snowboarding, paddleboarding, kayaking, hiking, quilt-making, painting, sewing, watercoloring, mosaics, cooking, mountain biking, backpacking. And that’s just Tuesday.

But stained glass is her deepest love. Its endless possibilities intrigue her – even the occasional danger (oops, Band-Aids) or tricky chemicals. “I love the surprises at the end of a project,” she says. “You plan your piece, and by the project’s end, you’ll have something unexpected. Sometimes the surprises are clashing colors or a glass crack from heat or loose lead came strips. But the cool thing is you can take it apart and redo

it or change it entirely.”

She often incorporates patina – that aforementioned chemical – applied to the metal solder lines to create a deep black or bright copper richness.

Her studio is currently based in the basement of her Franklin home, though she hopes one day to move into a dedicated space where she can welcome visitors and share her passion for stained glass through workshops and classes.

See her latest studio creations at needmoreglassnc.com. Follow her on Instagram at @needmoreglass. Email: needmoreglass@gmail.com. Commissions are welcome.

“The best part is the very end,” Deanna says. “After the final polish, I hold the piece up to the light for the first time. That’s the moment it finally comes alive. Seeing all those separate little pieces become one finished piece never gets old. And I say ... ‘I need more glass!’”

by Donna Rhodes





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A Season of Music *at the* PAC

The Highlands Performing Arts Center's 2026 concert season brings Motown, bluegrass, Broadway, and classic rock to Highlands with world-class performers and unforgettable live experiences.

The Highlands Performing Arts Center has become a destination for exceptional live entertainment on the Plateau, welcoming acclaimed performers from across the country while creating memorable evenings for residents and visitors alike.

This year, the PAC continues that tradition with a concert series that celebrates legendary music, outstanding musician-ship, and the joy of shared experience.

The series continues with *Memories of Motown* on September 11, a high-energy celebration of the artists and songs that defined an era. Featuring the music of The Temptations, The Supremes, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, and more, the performance captures the spirit and soul of Motown's greatest hits.

Next on September 26, Nu-Blu, a bluegrass and Americana band from Siler City, brings a blend of traditional roots and contemporary storytelling. For more than two decades, the group has built a loyal following with thoughtful songwriting and

a modern take on Appalachian-influenced sound. Their work includes five Top Ten *Billboard* albums and collaborations with artists such as Rock and Roll Hall of Fame vocalist Sam Moore on *Jesus and Jones*, an acclaimed tribute to George Jones.

Broadway fans won't want to miss The Barricade Boys on October 9, an internationally renowned vocal quartet known for powerhouse harmonies, charismatic performances, and a signature blend of musical theater, pop, rock, and swing. Featuring veterans of London's West End and the international touring production of *Les Misérables*, the group delivers soaring vocals, humor, and audience interaction that has earned standing ovations around the world.

On October 17, Classic rock takes center stage with Chi-Town Transit Authority, a premier tribute band honoring the music of Chicago. Complete with dynamic horn and woodwind sections plus exceptional vocals, the group faithfully recreates favorites including *Saturday in the Park*, *25 or 6 to*

4, and *You're the Inspiration*.

"Our goal is to present artists and performances that appeal to a wide range of audiences while continuing to elevate the cultural experience available here on the Plateau," says Jeanne Piazza, Executive Director of the Highlands Performing Arts Center. "Each concert offers something unique, and we love seeing friends, neighbors, and visitors come together to enjoy music in our theater."

With its comfortable, state-of-the-art venue and an ever-growing reputation for presenting outstanding talent, the PAC continues to enrich the cultural life of Highlands. This year's concert season is another opportunity to experience world-class entertainment close to home.

Tickets are available through the PAC Box Office at (828) 526-9047 or online at highlandsp PerformingArts.com.

*by Charlotte Muir
Highlands Performing Arts Center*

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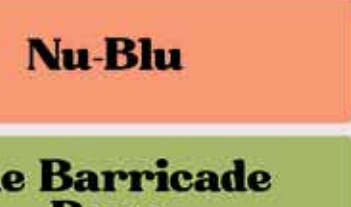
JULY
17

Three American Troubadours



SEP
11

Memories of Motown



SEP
26

Nu-Blu

OCT
9

The Barricade Boys



OCT
17

Chi-Town Transit Authority

NOV
1

Chris Norton



NOV
7

Hotel California

NOV
21

**Mark O'Connor's
An Appalachian
Christmas**



NOV
27

Candlelight Celtic

The Festival's Grand Finale

The Highlands–Cashiers Chamber Music Festival concludes its 45th season with two masterworks, standout soloists, and dinner at Highlands Falls Country Club.



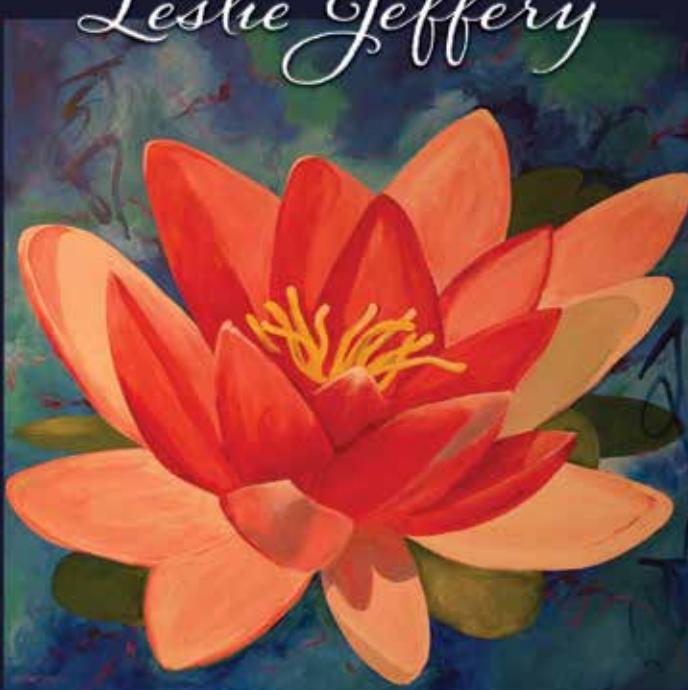
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For the final act of its 45th season, the Highlands–Cashiers Chamber Music Festival closes 2026 with characteristic ambition and elegance: a program built around two works that reshaped the concerto form. The Gershon/Cohn Final Gala Concert and Dinner, “Concerto Night,” arrives Sunday, August 9, at 5:00 P.M. at the Martin Lipscomb Theatre. Internationally acclaimed pianist Anton Nel performs *Beethoven’s Piano Concerto in G Major, Op. 58*, while violinist Abigel Kralik takes the spotlight in Mendelssohn’s *Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64*, both accompanied by the Festival’s Chamber Music Orchestra.

The evening opens with Beethoven’s *Piano Concerto in G Major, Op. 58*, one of the composer’s most luminous and inward works. Where Beethoven’s other concertos announce themselves with fanfare, the *G Major* opens with the piano alone – a quiet, almost radical gesture that signals music that prizes depth over spectacle. A Grammy

Award winner and longtime collaborative artist of international standing, Nel is the kind of musician who makes technical mastery look like an afterthought, freeing him to get on with the business of expression.

The program turns to Mendelssohn’s *Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64* for its second half – a work so perfectly constructed that it’s easy to overlook how revolutionary it was when it premiered in 1845. The solo part flows without a break from the orchestra’s opening bars, pulling the listener forward on a current that never quite lets up. Violinist Abigel Kralik takes the solo role, bringing a playing style that combines technical precision with emotional directness.

Behind both soloists stands the Chamber Music Orchestra, assembled from the season’s roster of festival artists – Charae Krueger, Jessica Wu, Joseph Skerik, Guang Wang, Emily Daggett Smith, Yinzi Kong, Helen Kim, Kenn Wagner, Jonathan Colbert, Joli Wu, Alice Hong and Juan Ramirez.

Together, these musicians embody what has always made the Highlands–Cashiers Chamber Music Festival distinctive: the chance to experience world-class artists not as distant stars, but as collaborators engaged in a shared artistic conversation.

The evening continues with dinner at Highlands Falls Country Club, where patrons and performers can linger over a season well spent.

Named in honor of longtime supporters Ruth Gershon and Sandy Cohn – whose vision and generosity have helped sustain the Festival across decades – the gala is both celebration and benediction, a fitting close to a 45th season built on extraordinary music and the community that gathers around it.

Festival Finale Gala – Concert and Dinner: \$200 per person. Concert only: \$100 per person. Reservations required; call (828) 526-9060 or visit h-cmusicfestival.org.

by Marlene Osteen



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Perhaps there was a goddess-muse overseeing the feminine line of Annell Metsker's ancestry. Her paternal great-grandmother, grandmother, mother, Annell herself, and her granddaughter were – and are – artistically gifted, drawn to the maidenly, the graceful, the intuitive.

"My great grandmother was a painter. I have a painting of her self-portrait in her bedroom, sitting up in a four-poster bed in her nightgown, reading," says Annell. (See photo at far left.) "My grandmother started painting landscapes at 80.

"My mom was an artist and photographer too," Annell adds. "I am encouraging my 12-year-old granddaughter, mentoring her with painting. She's got the genes."

Art is not merely running through Annell's veins – it feels biological. Throughout her painterly life, she has tried her hand with all kinds of paint styles: brushes (hair and handle), encaustic tools, and on occasion, fingers and daubers.

Along the way, she stepped into the world of digital possibility through Corel. With a stylus, she could paint, draw, sketch, and create photo-art that gave her a shivery thrill. Photographs of family, weddings, and children became her artistic delights. Using freehand strokes, she created sprays, lines, and brush-marks in the spirit of Impressionism. Then she printed the scene on canvas and switched from digital to hand brush, finishing with traditional oil paint for award-winning romantic, charming tableaux. "Taking a photograph and making it into an impressionistic art piece gives me great joy, especially when I see how it delights my subjects."

Annell studied in San Francisco and Louisiana to become proficient with portrait painting and transformed her photography studio into a painting studio. She had 16 commissions at her first unveiling party.

The family muse applauds – and so does the Art League of Highlands-Cashiers, to which she loyally belongs.

Among her influential instructors were local painters Sue Fazio and Karen Weihs, along with educators throughout Europe and America. She has shown at many galleries. Locally, you can view her work at Whiteside Art Gallery and The Bascom.

Over the years Annell has been honored by Professional Photographers of America, Kodak Gallery, Fuji Masterpiece Award, the Master of Photography Degree by PPA, and more.

Consider commissioning Annell to capture your family's essence with a photographic portrait or painting of your children, pets, family, or memorable travels.

She and her muse now commune at her home on Lake Glenville and her studio in Charlotte. Visit her at photographybyannell.com, call (704) 996-0559, email annellmetsker@gmail.com, or find her on Facebook and Instagram @annellmetsker.

by Donna Rhodes



GEAR UP FOR ADVENTURE

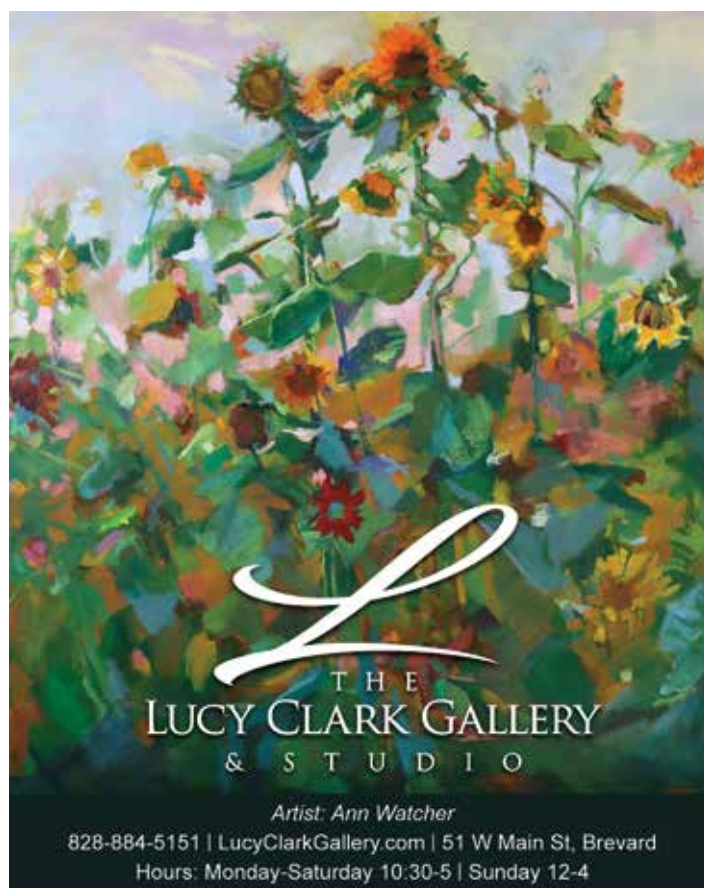
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August at MTC: Big Shows, Big Heart

Mountain Theatre Company follows its world-premiere musical with *SHOWSTOPPERS!* and two benefit cabarets, creating one of the most exciting August seasons in its 88-year history.

As the curtain falls on Mountain Theatre Company's world premiere production of *Dancin' in the Street*, we are filled with gratitude for the incredible support of our audience, volunteers, donors, sponsors and artists who made this landmark production such an unforgettable success.

Night after night, the theatre came alive with laughter, dancing, and standing ovations as audiences embraced this brand-new musical and celebrated the timeless songs that brought generations together. Your enthusiasm helped make *Dancin' in the Street* more than just a production – it became a shared summer celebration and an exciting milestone in Mountain Theatre Company's history.

The excitement continues as Mountain Theatre Company presents *SHOWSTOPPERS!*, playing August 12 – 30. Designed as the ultimate musical celebration, this high-energy, 90-minute multimedia spectacular races through Broadway and Hollywood's most beloved musicals.

From the timeless romance of *West Side Story* and the power of *Dreamgirls*, to the splashy excitement of *Singin' in the Rain*, to the razzle-dazzle of *Chicago*, and the infectious fun of *Mamma Mia!*, this fast-paced revue delivers one unforgettable number after another.

Audiences can expect dazzling costumes, stunning cinematic visuals, thrilling vocals, and dynamic choreography performed by Mountain Theatre Company's world-class professional cast. Every moment has been crafted to immerse audiences in the magic of musical theatre while celebrating the songs and stories that have captivated generations.

Whether you're a lifelong Broadway enthusiast or introducing your family to musical theatre for the very first time,

SHOWSTOPPERS! offers something for everyone. Filled with recognizable songs, spectacular production numbers, and nonstop excitement, it's the perfect way to experience the joy, energy, and heart that only live theatre can provide.

Additionally, this August, Mountain



Theatre Company also presents the *MTC Benefit Cabaret Series*, a pair of intimate experiences that give audiences an entirely new way to enjoy the incredible artists of the 2026 season while supporting an important cause. Best of all, 100% of proceeds benefit Mountain Theatre Company's Community Club Fund in partnership with Cullasaja Women's Outreach, helping make professional theatre more accessible throughout the region.

The series begins with *Off the Record* on August 21 at 7:00 P.M., featuring Executive Artistic Director Scott Daniel and members of the *Dancin' in the Street* cast. This electrifying concert shines a spotlight on the unforgettable '70s and '80s folk, Motown, and disco favorites that almost made it into

the hit world premiere musical. Audiences can simply sit back and enjoy powerhouse vocals, a live concert atmosphere, and the hidden gems that deserve their own moment in the spotlight.

Then, on August 28 at 7:00 P.M., audiences can experience *On Broadway*, an evening inspired by the legendary cabaret venues of New York City. Featuring the Broadway songs that didn't make it into *SHOWSTOPPERS!*, this stripped-down performance puts the focus exactly where it belongs: on extraordinary performers and unforgettable music. Without elaborate costumes or theatrical effects, every lyric and melody takes center stage, creating a deeply personal concert experience that celebrates the power of Broadway's greatest songs.

With a blockbuster MainStage production and two exclusive benefit cabaret events, August promises to be one of the most exciting months of Mountain Theatre Company's 88-year history. Tickets are expected to be in high demand, so audiences are encouraged to reserve their seats early. Whether you're planning a family outing, a date night, or a summer getaway to the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau, don't miss your chance to experience these unforgettable performances. From the blockbuster excitement of *SHOWSTOPPERS!* to the one-night-only intimacy of *Off the Record* and *On Broadway*, there's no better way to celebrate the music you love while supporting the future of live theatre in our community. Purchase your tickets today at mountaintheatre.com and be part of another unforgettable chapter with Mountain Theatre Company.

by Erin Leigh Knowles,
Mountain Theatre Company



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One Night Only: MTC BENEFIT CABARET SERIES

The MTC Benefit Cabaret Series is a collection of intimate evenings celebrating the music of our season with 100% of proceeds benefiting the Community Club fund.



Art Rooted in Nature

Artist and educator Margie Bauer brings her whimsical, nature-inspired work to the August 24 Art League meeting at The Bascom, sharing her passion for botanical art across multiple mediums.



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Margie Bauer, a botanical and scientific illustrator, “zendoodler,” fabric artist and a teacher in watercolor, pen, fabric art and mixed media, works out of her studios in Cashiers and Coral Gables, Florida.

When she chooses her subject (oh, so hard to narrow it down!), the hardest part is figuring out the most whimsical way to get people as excited about our natural world as she is. Is it from a hand-dyed fabric that she has quilted, a zentangle, a gelli plate creation, dried plant specimens, or a watercolor? She loves to hear the stories and memories that her work invokes in others, especially when it puts a smile on their face.

Her art enters her gardens as well, where she creates focal points to highlight the beauty and wonder of nature. A new pond lined with mosses and native plants just for frog tadpoles and salamander larvae; a root ball of a fallen tree “painted” with

the flowers of native vines; or, a garden full of milkweed in Coral Gables where the year-round monarch butterflies and caterpillars are used to teach the neighbor children and their parents the monarch’s life cycle.

Ms. Bauer, an ALHC member, will be the guest speaker at the August 24 Art

...is figuring out the most whimsical way to get people as excited about our natural world as she is.

League meeting at The Bascom. Social time begins at 4:30 P.M., with the monthly meeting and presentation following at 5:00.

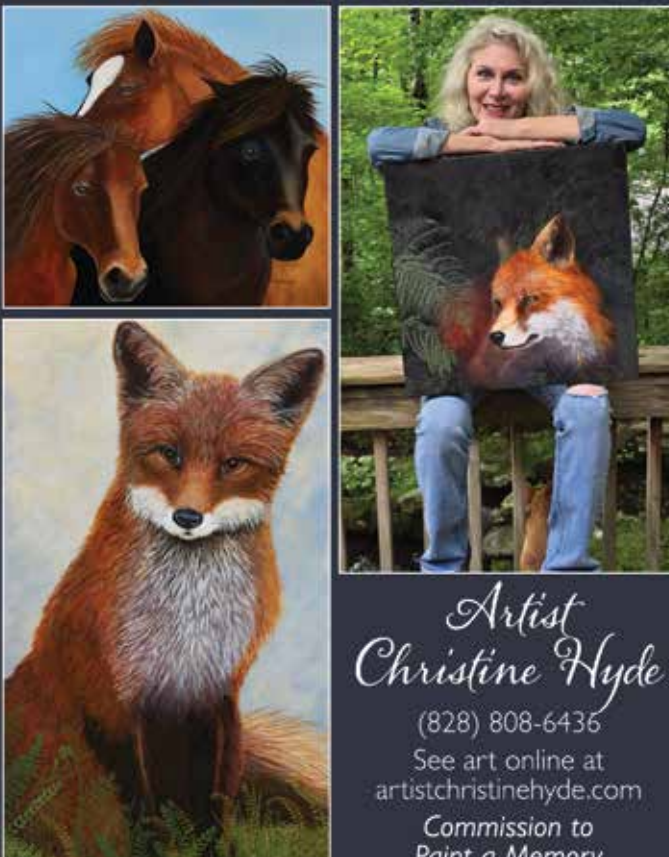
She’s taught art classes through Western Carolina University, University of Miami and many other venues, including Cashiers Quilters, Half-Mile Farm, and Fusion House. Ms. Bauer exhibits at the Art League of Highlands-Cashiers events and

at the Bascom. With the Tropical Botanic Artists group in Miami, she exhibited at more than fifty venues in private galleries and national, state and local parks. Her artwork is available at many retail outlets in south Florida and the Smoky Mountains region.

We hope you will be able to attend this free presentation, which promises to be both entertaining and instructive. Who knows, you may learn a new art form during the presentation? For more information about the Art League, visit artleaguehighlands-cashiers.com.

by Zach Claxton

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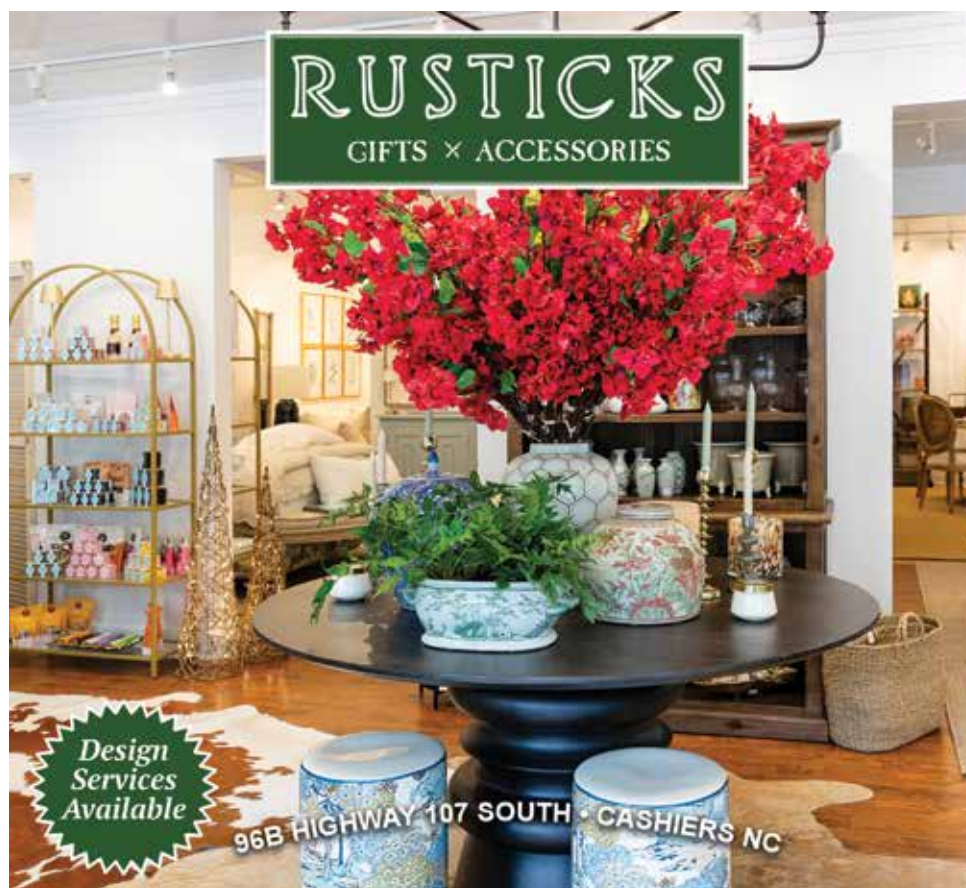


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A Handmade Summer Tradition

The Sapphire Valley Arts and Crafts Festival returns August 1–2 and October 3–4 with handmade art, family fun, live music, and community spirit, all benefiting the Cashiers–Highlands Humane Society.





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It's August, and many of us are enjoying one last vacation or thinking about back-to-school so it's a great time to put our cares on the back burner for a bit and enjoy one of the Plateau's most beloved festivals.

That would be the Sapphire Valley Arts and Crafts Festival, which returns for two more weekends this year after a successful June show: on August 1-2, and October 3-4.

Festival hours run from 10:00 A.M. until 4:00 P.M. each day. Rain or shine, the festival goes on. The August shows are held outside on the athletic field, and the October show is in the SV Community Center.

There's something for everyone here, and it's especially fun for families with room to roam. Stretch those legs, frolic in the sun, enjoy food and drink, and find a handmade treasure. We feel a bit like the carnival barkers of yore – come one, come all, and enjoy this festive event.

And it's all free – free admission and free parking. This festival is a winner. Families can enjoy games and activities for the kids while adults browse booth after booth of handmade artwork and crafts. Adding to your enjoyment are live music and tasty food available throughout each day.

Handmade arts and crafts remain the main draw of this festival, with many visitors returning year after year to see what their favorite artisans have created or to discover a new favorite. Many exhibitors are local artists from right here on the Plateau, while others travel from throughout the Southeast to participate in this well-loved event. The festival is a vivid reminder of the creativity and craftsmanship that define our mountain communities, and it's an ideal place to find a one-of-a-kind piece for your upcoming fall gatherings.

And while you browse, you may find inspiration for the seasons ahead – from

early Christmas shopping to Halloween and Thanksgiving décor – all waiting among the handmade works that make this festival such a delight.

Gather your friends, bring the family, and make plans now to spend the day exploring the Sapphire Valley Arts and Crafts Festival. Come for the fun, leave with the memories.

All proceeds benefit the Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society, and they'll be on hand at the August 1 show, so if you're looking for a new furry friend, this is your chance.

For more information, please contact Sapphire Valley Resorts at (828) 743-7663.

by Mary Jane McCall

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On August 22, the 20th Annual Nashville Songwriters' Round returns to the Keller Pavilion, offering a rare chance to hear hit songs in their first life – shared by the writers themselves, unscripted, intimate, and full of the stories that shaped them.



UPCOMING EVENTS



August 28, 29 & 30
Cashiers Designer Showhouse
(Vendors are open to the public)
Cashiers, NC

October 9, 10 & 11
Cashiers Valley Leaf Festival
Cashiers, NC

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Every hit song has two lives. The first begins quietly in a Nashville writing room, where an idea is chased across a yellow legal pad, a guitar, or the corner of a coffee-stained notebook. The second begins when the rest of us hear it on the radio, at a concert, or woven into the soundtrack of our own lives.

The Blue Ridge School Education Foundation's 20th Annual Nashville Songwriters' Round offers something increasingly rare: a chance to experience that first life. Returning Saturday, August 22, to the Keller Pavilion at the Boys & Girls Club of the Plateau in Cashiers, the evening takes audiences behind the hit, where the stories are every bit as memorable as the songs themselves.

The format has remained remarkably unchanged over two decades. A handful of Nashville's most accomplished writers gather in a loose circle, guitars in hand, taking turns performing the songs they've written. But the music is only half the attraction. The real

show happens between the songs.

One writer recalls the lyric that almost never made the final cut. Another laughs about the title everyone in the room initially dismissed. A longtime collaborator jumps in with a different version of the story, drawing laughter before the guitars come back into play. The audience isn't simply hearing familiar hits – they're discovering the wonderfully unpredictable journey those songs traveled before anyone outside Nashville knew they existed.

"It's always on the fly," says Ali Moody, vice president of the Blue Ridge School Education Foundation and coordinator of the event. "That's what makes it so unique and entertaining every year." These writers have spent decades crossing paths in Nashville writing rooms, and their easy camaraderie transforms the evening into something that feels less like a performance than being welcomed into an ongoing conversation among old friends.

This year's circle reunites annual favorite

Rivers Rutherford with Tim James, Kelley Lovelace and Dave Turnbull. Together, they've written songs recorded by Brooks & Dunn, Toby Keith, Brad Paisley, George Strait, Kenny Chesney, Chris Stapleton, Luke Combs and many others.

Perhaps Rivers' son, Rhys, will wander into the circle. Nothing is tightly scripted, and that's exactly why no two Songwriters' Rounds are ever alike. The best moments aren't planned. They simply happen.

Dinner begins at 6:00 P.M. with a buffet from The Local, along with a silent auction and cash bar, followed by the performance at 7:30 P.M. Every dollar raised benefits Blue Ridge School and Early College students, helping provide classroom resources, educational travel opportunities, and scholarships beyond what public funding alone can provide. Sponsorship opportunities – including Harmony and Spotlight levels – remain available for businesses and individuals wishing to support the event.

by Marlene Osteen

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Highlands Creative Summer Weekend

On August 29-30, Mountaintop Rotary's 20th Annual Art and Craft Festival returns to Kelsey-Hutchinson Park, bringing back its mix of standout artisans, live entertainment, and family activities.





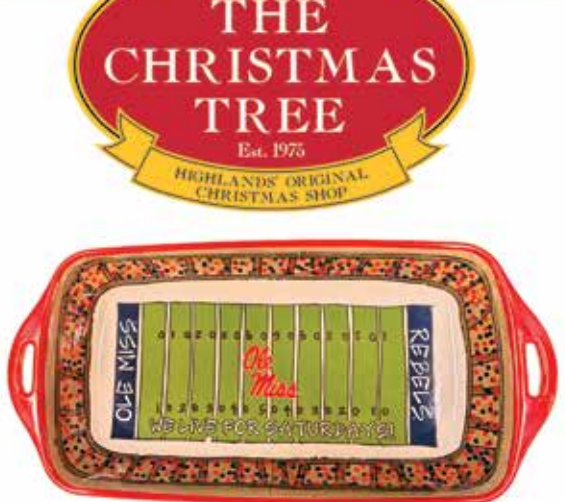
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Mountaintop Rotary's 20th Annual Art and Craft Festival kicked off the summer with a fun-filled weekend in June as more than 5,000 visitors gathered to browse the work of over 120 of the Southeast's most talented artisans. Add in live music, children's performances, hands-on activities, and the ever-popular Sip and Stroll, and it was easy to see why this festival has become one of Highlands' favorite traditions.

The good news is the fun isn't over yet. The festival returns to Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park on Saturday, August 29, from 10:00 A.M. until 6:00 P.M. and Sunday, August 30, from 10:00 A.M. until 4:00 P.M.

If you've attended before, you already know what makes this event so special. If you haven't, this is the perfect opportunity to discover why it's become a can't-miss weekend on the Plateau.

Newcomer Julia Hunt of Julia's Fine Art in Black Mountain, North Carolina,

captured Best in Show honors in the juried show with her soft, whimsical textured oil paintings. Hunt said she was especially impressed by the festival's festive atmosphere, where visitors of all ages were enjoying themselves, and by the community's enthusiastic support of the arts. She also appreciated the warm welcome she received from Highlands.

Local artists and organizations are represented as well.

Jessica Lammers, retail manager for The Bascom, says, "This is such a wonderful event for Highlands with so many talented artists participating. We also appreciate the opportunity to introduce people to The Bascom and represent some of our artists in the heart of the community during the show."

The crowd-favorite Sip and Stroll returns Saturday from 1:00 until 6:00 P.M., featuring wine and local brews from Western Carolina Brew and Wine. Food will also be available.

Entertainment begins Saturday at 11:00 A.M. with PAC Educational Theatre performing scenes from its hit production of *Shrek, The Musical*. Mick Mayer performs from 1:00 until 3:00 P.M., followed by Lisa Rankin from 3:00 until 5:00 P.M. On Sunday, The Standard Elevation Trio brings its smooth jazz sound to the park from 1:00 until 3:00 P.M.

Families won't want to miss the expanded Kids' Zone, featuring free hands-on activities including the Teddy Bear Hospital, creative projects, more than 30,000 LEGO bricks for budding builders, and Taylor Swift-inspired pop bead bracelets to make and take home.

Admission is free, although donations are always appreciated. As Mountaintop Rotary's largest fundraiser of the year, proceeds support local youth programs, making this a wonderful opportunity to enjoy a weekend of art, music, food, and family fun while giving back to the community.

by Mary Jane McCall

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Grace and Glorie **Take Stage**

From August 27 – September 6, *Grace and Glorie* arrives with a warm, humorous, and deeply felt story of two women whose unlikely friendship becomes the heart of this touching dramatic comedy.



Left to right: Carol Atwood and Lee Lyons





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It's almost time for the opening curtain on the Highlands – Cashiers Players latest production, *Grace and Glorie*, which runs from August 27 – September 6. This touching dramatic comedy about the emerging friendship between two dramatically different women explores deeply emotional subjects with warmth and humor. It strikes a perfect balance between laughter and reflection so audiences will be drawn into the lives of these two remarkable women.

The story centers on Grace Stiles, a strong-willed 90-year-old woman who has spent her entire life in a rural mountain community and is now facing terminal cancer. After leaving the hospital, Grace chooses to spend her remaining days at home, surrounded by the comfort of the life she has always known. Glorie is a hospice volunteer that recently retired as a busy corporate executive who is assigned to visit and care for Grace.

Lee Lyons is taking on the role of Grace.

No stranger to HCP audiences, Lee has appeared in *Dearly Departed*, *Welcome to Mitford*, *Crimes of the Heart*, and her favorite, *The Dixie Swim Club*. Lee, a natural storyteller, was new to acting when she saw an audition call for *Dearly Departed*, a play about a redneck funeral, and thought, “heck, I’ve been to enough of those, so I should be a natural.”

Lee is excited to bring Grace’s determination, humor, and spirit to the stage, although she admits she had one concern – how they were going to make her look 90 years old. Assistant director Cathy Myers quickly put her mind at ease by saying, “Don’t worry, it’ll be easy to make you look old.” Lee wasn’t exactly thrilled with that reassurance, but if the backstage banter is any indication, audiences are in for plenty of laughs along with the heartfelt moments.

Glorie will be played by Carol Atwood, new to the Highlands stage, but a seasoned theatre professional with a master’s in theatre arts from Georgia State University.

Carol says that “*Grace and Glorie* is a beautifully written play filled with both poignancy and humor. As I have long wanted to become involved with the Highlands-Cashiers Players, I am honored to be cast as Glorie.”

At first, the two women couldn’t seem more different, and they get off to a rocky start, but as they gradually begin sharing their stories, fears, regrets, and hopes, they forge a remarkable friendship.

Tickets can be purchased by calling (828) 526-9047, visiting the PAC box office at 507 Chestnut Street, or at HighlandsCashiersPlayers.com. *Grace and Glorie* promises to be a production you won’t want to miss.

by Mary Jane McCall
photo by Susan Renfro



Grace & Glorie
A play by Tom Ziegler
Directed by Jayne Pleasants and Cathy Myers

Highlands Cashiers
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An Afternoon of Bel Canto



The 34th annual Bel Canto Recital returns September 13, bringing world-class vocalists to Highlands and continuing a tradition that has raised more than \$900,000 for arts and education.

On Sunday, September 13, at 4:00 P.M., the Highlands Performing Arts Center will once again be transformed into a sanctuary of sound as the 34th annual Bel Canto Recital takes center stage. For more than three decades, this beloved event has enchanted audiences and uplifted the community – raising more than \$900,000 to support The Bascom, fund scholarships, and nurture music education in local preschools and public schools.

This year's program promises an unforgettable afternoon, featuring five world-class vocalists whose artistry has graced opera houses across the globe.

Ashley Milanese, a lyric soprano with a voice described as “velvet” and capable of “heart-stopping soft effects,” brings a résumé that includes performances with the Metropolitan Opera, Sarasota Opera, and the LA Philharmonic. A graduate of The Juilliard School and the Curtis

Institute of Music, her presence is as radiant as her tone.

Abi Levis, a fearless mezzo-soprano with a dazzling vocal range, arrives with accolades from Berlin to Toronto. Her performances span the Mirror Visions Ensemble to Opera Philadelphia, and her academic pedigree – Eastman, Houston, and Bard – speaks to her musical depth.

Christopher Bozeka, a tenor with a “beautiful, piercing tone,” joins the lineup following his Metropolitan Opera debut. His voice has lit up stages from New York to Houston, weaving magic in both concert halls and opera houses.

Brian James Myer, a handsome, charming, stage-savvy, and polished baritone, follows with a presence as compelling as his sound. He has captivated audiences around the world with his rich, buttery, and velvety voice. His opera credits are innumerable, and he is in high demand as a recitalist.

Matthew Anchel, a commanding bass praised by *The Wall Street Journal* as “a voice to watch,” brings more than a decade of experience with the Met and a solo debut at Carnegie Hall. His rich resonance anchors the ensemble with gravitas and grace.

At the helm is Dr. Stephen Dubberly, Bel Canto's guiding maestro for all 34 years. His musical stewardship has become inseparable from the recital's heart and soul.

Following the performance, guests will gather at Highlands Country Club for a celebratory gala dinner – a fitting finale to an evening that honors not only music, but the spirit of generosity and community.

Bel Canto is more than a recital. It's a Highlands tradition that reminds us that when voices rise in harmony, hope rises with them.

For more information, call The Bascom at (828) 526-4949.

by Luke Osteen

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Cinema Across **the Mountains**

This year's Highlands-Cashiers Film Festival blends regional stories with global perspectives, offering films that explore place, identity, and community ties.



Hold Onto Me

As the Highland-Cashiers Film Festival moves toward its September 17-20 season, the shape of this year's program is coming into sharper focus, and the signs suggest a festival with both mountain roots and international reach.

Artistic Director Joy Jorgensen reports that nearly all of the films have been selected, with only one title remaining in each category while contracts and distribution permissions are finalized. Of the eight films confirmed so far, she believes each will hold strong interest for *Laurel* readers. Films will begin appearing on the festival website soon, with passes available for purchase online.

Two titles already outline the range of what audiences can expect. The first is *Papertown*, a feature-length documentary directed by Jeremy Seifert about the sudden closure of the Canton paper mill and the consequences for Haywood County and Western North Carolina. For more

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than a century, the mill helped define Canton's economy, rhythms, and sense of itself. When it closed, the community faced not only the loss of jobs, but a deeper question: who are we when the work that shaped us disappears?

The film's regional urgency is matched by remarkable reach. Grammy-winning musician Dave Matthews serves as an executive producer and contributes an original closing-credits song performed with alternative country artist Sierra Ferrell. Jorgensen says the festival is honored to host the North Carolina premiere "right here in the mountains the film calls home," making *Papertown* a particularly resonant selection for a festival built around the power of place.

Another confirmed film, *Hold Onto Me*, travels much farther geographically while exploring emotional terrain that is just as intimate. The feature follows 11-year-old Iris, who learns that her estranged father, Aris, has returned for his own father's

funeral. Determined to know him, she finds him at a dilapidated shipyard, where a fragile bond begins to form.

Hold Onto Me is a powerful scripted drama that uses a carefully written screenplay and professional actors to deliver a deeply intentional and emotional narrative. Directed by Cypriot filmmaker Myrsini Aristidou, the film won the 2026 Sundance Film Festival Audience Award in the World Cinema Dramatic category, and Jorgensen notes that the festival is proud to showcase it in September.

Those selections expand on the spirit introduced to *Laurel* readers this summer. On August 15, audiences can enjoy a screening of *The Gardener* followed by a book signing with the director, Dabney Day. Then, step inside the world of *The Gardener* with a visit to the real Highlands garden where the film was shot.

The film, which premiered at last year's festival, follows a powerful cosmetics heiress who retreats to a remote mountaintop

garden cottage while fighting to protect her family legacy. An unexpected connection with a mysterious gardener leads her on a soulful journey of healing, self-discovery, and transformation. Tickets for the film include access to the garden, and transportation will be provided solely by the PAC.

As Jorgensen describes the festival as born from "a love of film, creativity, and community," this year's emerging slate reflects that mission. Whether examining Canton after the mill, a local garden where the movie was filmed, or a young girl reaching for connection across generations, the festival is asking audiences to look closely at the places and relationships that shape who we are.

by Luke Osteen



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DINING

Pages 152-181



Summer Evenings *at* Stubborn Bull

Stubborn Bull channels Spanish roots and Mediterranean brightness into a confident, summer-driven menu that matches the restaurant's lively, unmistakable buzz.

On a summer evening, Stubborn Bull Restaurant, in Highlands' former Bridge location overlooking Mill Creek, is exactly where everyone wants to be. The dining room crackles with conversation, the bar is shoulder-to-shoulder, and every seat on the patio is taken. At the horseshoe-shaped bar, the enthusiastic staff serves up cleverly concocted cocktails while affable servers weave gracefully between the tables. The restaurant seems

to oscillate between neighborhood joint, date-night destination and sceney hot spot. Somehow, the multiplicity works. There's an unmistakable buzz – as though everyone has landed exactly where they ought to be.

That atmosphere didn't happen overnight. After losing their former restaurant, Midpoint on Main Street, to a gas explosion, partners Clarissa Emily and Kiki Donikian opened Stubborn Bull, drawing on Kiki's years of living in Madrid and

her deep appreciation for Spanish cuisine.

There's another kind of excitement unfolding here – one that's arriving from the kitchen. Under the direction of Vijay Shastri, Director of Operations, the menu is widening its lens, embracing lighter Mediterranean influences while holding fast to the dishes that built its following. Longtime favorites like the pork tomahawk and churrasco remain, while seafood and seasonal produce increasingly shape the

restaurant's evolving identity.

A recent visit confirmed that the kitchen is playing summer to the hilt. A Moroccan salmon is striking, surrounded by carrot and rosewater couscous. The chutney around it, made with apricot and roasted onion, touched with garlic, honey and red wine vinegar, is tart and savory.

One of the menu's most popular additions is the Western North Carolina rainbow trout. Pan-seared and finished with *beurre meunière*, it arrives adorned with chunky slivers of cracked almonds, fresh herbs and bright lemon – a perfect bite of summer.

The Local Melon Salad seems to bottle the season itself, the sweetness of the melon playing against the salinity of crumbled feta, while a lively vinaigrette brightened with basil and mint gives the dish a fresh lift. The burrata may be the quiet star of the new menu – a cloud of creamy cheese accompanied by South Carolina peaches, peppery arugula and pickled onion, finished with extra virgin olive oil. Indulgent and luscious, the ingredients shine.

Spanish influences continue to weave through the menu in crisp Serrano and pressed ham croquettes served with salsa Vizcaína, while traditional caviar service

with *crème fraîche*, chives and house-made potato chips offers a decadent way to begin the evening.

There is a well-earned confidence at Stubborn Bull these days. It's evident in the easy rhythm of the dining room, in a menu that's willing to stretch beyond familiar borders without losing sight of its roots, and in a kitchen that understands how to pamper and delight.

*by Marlene Osteen
photos by Susan Renfro*



The Science of Hospitality

In this month's feature, Clarissa shifts from the July issue's focus on the emotional craft of hospitality to the tangible, curated elements of atmosphere, showing how lighting, sound, texture, scent, and pacing work together to shape the dining experience.

A restaurant is never just serving food. It's designing an experience. Long before a guest takes their first bite, the restaurant has already begun shaping how they will feel that evening. Lighting, music, sound, spacing, and textures work together in harmony to guide the rhythm of the night. In many ways, a restaurant operates like stage design. The dining room is the set. The staff are the cast. The evening unfolds scene by scene. When done well, the guest never notices the design – they simply feel it.

This is a peek behind the curtain, a journey through each of the senses, exploring how every detail, from what we see and hear to what we touch, smell, and ultimately taste, is orchestrated to shape emotion, influence perception, and transform a simple meal into a memorable experience.

Sight: The First Signal: The experience begins the moment someone walks through the door. Sight is the first sense engaged,

and it immediately communicates what kind of evening lies ahead. Is the lighting warm and inviting, or bright and energetic? Are the tables thoughtfully preset, or cluttered and chaotic?

Order matters more than we realize. Neatly arranged tables signal something important to our subconscious: someone has prepared this space for us, and we will be taken care of.

Lighting plays a particularly powerful role. Softer lighting encourages people to relax and linger. Brighter environments signal speed and activity. Restaurants manipulate these cues carefully to match the experience they want to create. A candle flicker or warm glow can slow time just enough to make you want to stay for dessert.

Sound: The Rhythm of the Room: Music and sound shape the social energy of a restaurant more than almost any other factor. If the music is too loud, guests lean forward and strain to hear each



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other. Conversations become shorter and more transactional. If it's too quiet, every word carries across the room and people instinctively lower their voices, making the space feel stiff.

The right sound level creates a gentle buzz – the hum of conversation that signals a lively room without overwhelming it. Faster tempos encourage quicker turnover. Slower music relaxes guests and lengthens the experience. When done right, the room feels alive without ever feeling chaotic.

Touch: The Quiet Language of Materials: Touch communicates subtle signals about quality and care. It's part of how a restaurant tells its story. The weight of silverware. The softness of a linen napkin. The texture of a chair's upholstery. Even the shape of a glass or the thickness of a menu carries meaning. Heavier materials often signal craftsmanship. Softer textures create comfort and warmth. These cues help guests understand the environment without a single word spoken.

Smell: The Invisible Invitation: Scent is the most emotional sense of all. The aroma of garlic and butter drifting from the kitchen. Bread warm from the oven. A hint of wood smoke from a grill. Smell connects directly to memory, which is why certain restaurant experiences stay with us long after the night is over. A single familiar aroma can carry us back to a table shared years before.

Taste: The Centerpiece: Taste is the star of the evening, but even taste is influenced by the surrounding atmosphere. Studies show that lighting, music, and visual presentation can alter how people perceive flavor. The same dish eaten in different environments can taste completely different. This is why plating, pacing, and presentation matter. A beautiful dish under warm lighting, served at the right moment, surrounded by the soft hum of conversation doesn't just taste good – it feels memorable.

When all five senses work together, the restaurant becomes immersive. We are no

longer just eating dinner; we are stepping into a carefully designed environment that shapes how we feel throughout the evening. The lighting sets the mood, the music energizes the room, the textures comfort us, the aromas invite us in, and the food ties everything together. At that point, the restaurant is no longer selling just food and drink. It's selling a feeling – and that feeling is what people remember when they walk out the door.

The best restaurants understand this intuitively. Hospitality is not only about what arrives on the plate, it's about the invisible details that surround it. When every sense is engaged, dinner becomes something more than a meal. It becomes an experience people want to return to again and again.

by Clarissa Emily

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Left to right: Cesar Perrin, Jason Haas, and Francois Perrin



Tablas Creek's Rare Rhône Journey

Tablas Creek's decades-long commitment to Rhône varietals – once unfamiliar to American wine drinkers – has evolved into a defining legacy marked by purity, clarity and joyful, distinctive wines.

“We were making wines from grapes people didn't know, with names they couldn't pronounce, from a part of California they had never heard of.” That's Jason Haas, second-generation proprietor of Tablas Creek Vineyard in Paso Robles, describing the challenge the winery faced when it released its first wines in 1997.

Founded in 1989 by Haas's father, Robert Haas, and the Perrin family of Château de Beaucastel in France's Rhône Valley, Tablas Creek set out to establish in California the 13 Rhône varietals permitted

in the celebrated Châteauneuf-du-Pape blend. When those first wines reached consumers eight years later, however, the proprietors discovered an unexpected challenge. American wine drinkers gravitated toward familiar names – Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay and Merlot. The Rhône varietals that inspired Tablas Creek were virtually unknown.

For many wineries, that might have been reason enough to change course. Instead, Tablas Creek leaned into education. The winery began bottling single-varietal wines

as “teaching tools.” As enthusiasts embraced those wines, Tablas Creek expanded the program, eventually bottling some of the rarest Rhône varietals that comprise the Châteauneuf-du-Pape blend.

Today, those mono-varietal wines remain only a tiny part of the winery's production. “This is not the core of the business,” Haas says. “We make about 100 cases, but they are a point of differentiation for us. They establish Tablas Creek as the home for these Rhône varietals and the place people need to start if they want to explore them.”

Among the most intriguing are Vaccarèse, largely abandoned after powdery mildew devastated vineyards in the mid-19th century; and Clairette Blanche, which later fell from favor as richer, fruitier white wines came to dominate the marketplace. For Haas, Clairette evokes “all the parts of a citrus tree.”

My first taste of Clairette Blanche was a burst of mouthwatering tartness that soon yielded to delicate floral notes and a clean mineral finish. Lime and almond lingered throughout, joined by a pronounced salinity that, on a sweltering July afternoon in Charleston, felt as refreshing as wading into the cold waters off the coast of Maine. It was, quite simply, a most quaffable wine.

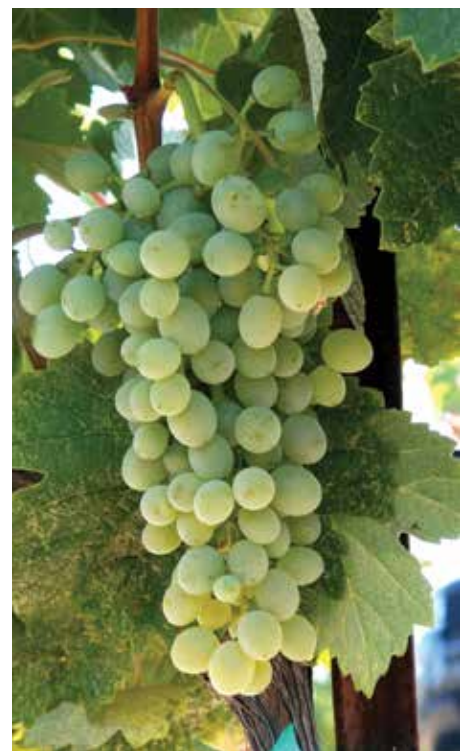
Haas describes Vaccarèse as “herby and spicy,” with cracked pepper, dried oregano, lovely blackberry fruit, bright freshness, firm tannins and the chalky minerality that reflects Tablas Creek’s limestone soils. I found Vaccarèse every bit as intriguing. Meaty and firmly tannic, it framed blackberry fruit lifted by hints of mint, pine and spice. Herbal and woody, it was reminiscent of a Beaujolais.

For all their differences, what lingered with me most was what the two wines had in common: vibrant acidity, remarkable clarity and, above all, an unmistakable sense of purity. If I had to describe them in a single word, it would be this: clean. More than that, they simply made me

happy. I found myself grinning after every sip. They are serious wines with a joyful spirit. Where that remarkable clarity comes from – Tablas Creek’s regenerative organic farming, careful winemaking or both – I can’t say with certainty. But it was impossible not to notice.

Fortunately, discovering Tablas Creek isn’t limited to these tiny-production wines. The winery’s blends – including Esprit de Tablas and Patelin de Tablas – are widely available. Vaccarèse, Clairette Blanche and others can be purchased directly from the winery. To purchase them and sign up for the winery’s newsletter, visit TablasCreek.com.

by Marlene Osteen





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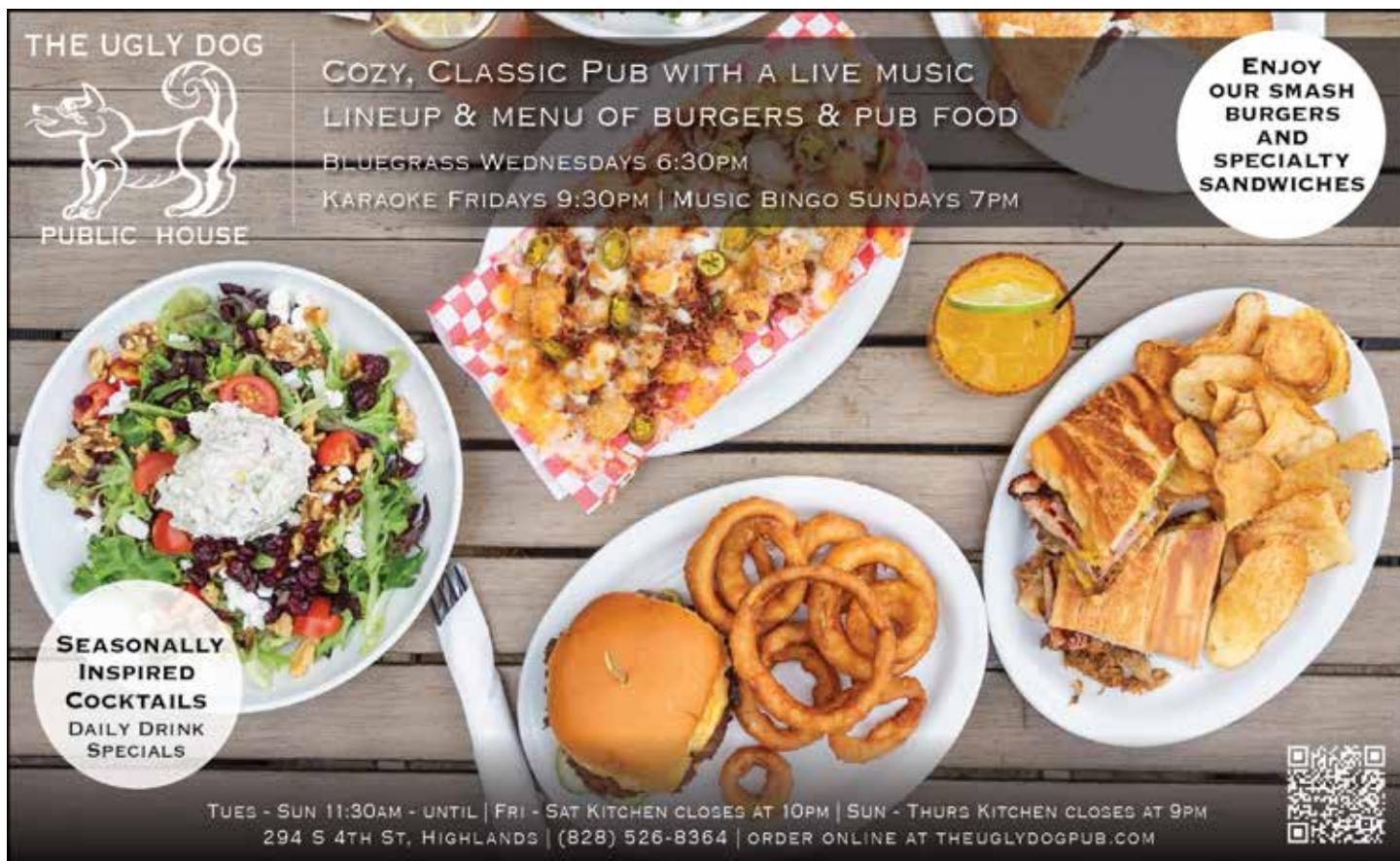
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Honors *for* Outstanding Cellars



Four area restaurants earned top *Wine Spectator* honors this year, celebrating curiosity, craftsmanship, and the joy of discovering a new favorite bottle.

Great restaurants feed our appetites. Great wine programs feed our curiosity. They're built on the belief that your next favorite bottle probably isn't the one you've been drinking for years – it's the one you haven't met yet, introduced by a passionate sommelier or wine director eager to share something extraordinary.

That spirit of curiosity is what *Wine Spectator* recognizes through its annual Restaurant Awards. This year, Madison's Restaurant & Wine Garden, High Hampton's Dining Room and Ristorante Paoletti each earned the magazine's prestigious Best of Award of Excellence, while The Greystone Inn received the Award of Excellence, further underscoring the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau's reputation as one of the Southeast's premier destinations for wine lovers.

At Madison's Restaurant & Wine Garden, one of the Southeast's most celebrated wine programs continues to evolve. Sommelier Ana-Paula Arecan oversees a wine list of more than 1,600 selections, supported by a cellar of over 10,000 bottles, spanning benchmark Bordeaux and Burgundy, California icons, Italy's great producers and emerging discoveries from around the world.

Yet even with a program of that breadth, Arecan remains every bit as passionate about learning as collecting. She's currently pursuing advanced studies through the Wine Scholar Guild with a focus on Champagne, bringing additional depth to Madison's already exceptional Champagne program through boutique grower-producers whose wines reflect the individuality of their vineyards and families.

"We want to set the tone for a remarkable dining experience," she says.

For Arecan, *Wine Spectator*'s recognition is not only a professional milestone but also a reflection of the standards upheld across the entire Old Edwards Hospitality Group.

At High Hampton, Wine Director Tyler Wesslund continues refining a program built around one guiding principle: wine should elevate the food. The cellar has grown to approximately 725 selections anchored by the classic regions of France, Italy and California, while increasingly emphasizing thoughtful food-and-wine pairings that complement Chef Scott Franqueza's seasonal menus.

Rather than chasing trophy bottles, Wesslund looks for wines that create harmony at the table, whether pairing a crisp Riesling with

trout or a robust Châteauneuf-du-Pape with pork. The recently opened Tavern, now serving dinner, extends that philosophy into another inviting setting where guests can further explore the restaurant's food and wine program.

For Wesslund, earning *Wine Spectator*'s recognition means guests can feel confident the work has already been done – that every bottle has been selected with purpose, reflecting classic regions, evolving tastes and, above all, the dining experience.

"It tells guests they can trust what's in the glass," he says, a philosophy that guides every addition to the list.

At Ristorante Paoletti, owner Arthur Paoletti's passion for wine has shaped the restaurant's identity for decades, giving Wine Director Kyle Tarczynski the freedom to continually seek out remarkable wines. The cellar has grown to nearly 8,000 bottles representing more than 1,900 selections, yet Tarczynski insists the numbers aren't the story. Every bottle is available to guests, and while the heart of the program remains unmistakably Italian, with an emphasis on small, family-owned wineries whose wines express the character of their regions, he spends countless hours searching for limited-production wines guests simply won't find at their neighborhood wine shop.

"When you're dining out, you're paying for an experience you don't get at home," he says.

At least one sommelier – and often two – guide guests through the list each evening, which also includes more than 275 wines priced under \$100. The restaurant's continuous run as a Best of Award of Excellence winner since 2005 reflects Arthur Paoletti's enduring commitment to making wine an integral part of every meal.

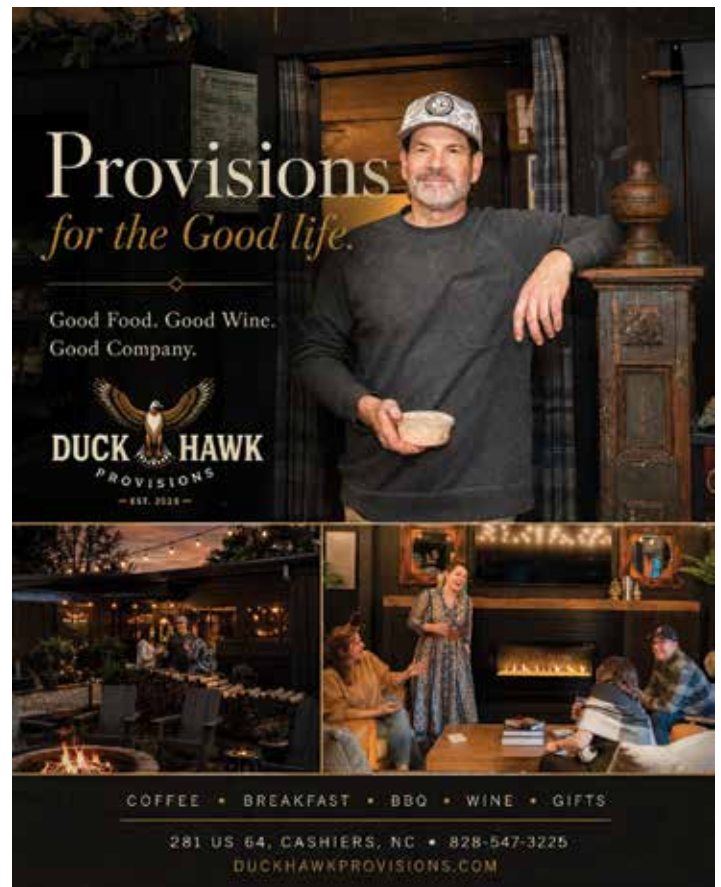
The Greystone Inn approaches wine with equal measures of adventure and hospitality. Food and Beverage Director Blake Porter, who laughingly credits his appreciation of wine to being raised by "a wine snob from Hickory," has broadened the Inn's award-winning list by introducing wines from emerging regions while maintaining a strong foundation in the classic producers he loves.

Alongside French favorites, guests may now encounter bottles from Croatia or thoughtfully crafted natural wines. His objective, however, isn't novelty for novelty's sake. It's making sure every guest feels comfortable exploring something new.

"I want there to be something everyone can try," Porter says. "More of a feeling that you'll be taken care of." It's a welcoming philosophy that has helped earn the Inn another Award of Excellence.

In the end, that's what these awards really celebrate. It's not simply thousands of bottles resting in temperature-controlled cellars, but the excitement of opening one that becomes a new favorite. On the Plateau, that's a discovery waiting at all four tables.

by Marlene Osteen



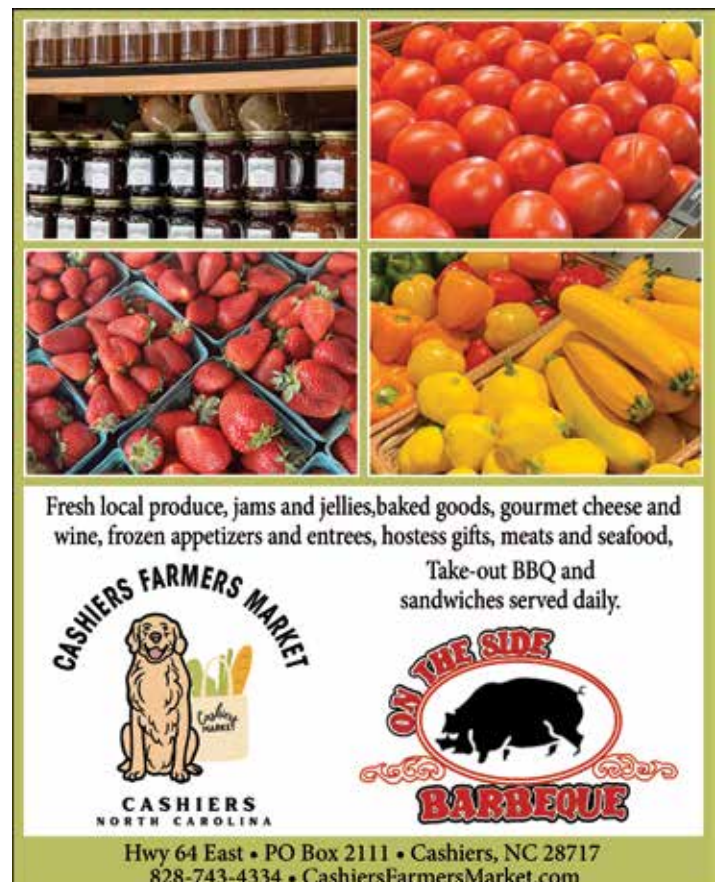
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Highlands Bistro's Chicken Marsala

Highlands Bistro blends longtime Don Leon's favorites with new dishes shaped by Juan Avila's decades in Italian kitchens.

When Juan Avila took over the longtime Highlands favorite Don Leon's earlier this year, he inherited one of the town's most beloved neighborhood restaurants.

Now, as Don Leon's takes on its new name – Highlands Bistro – he's preserving the longtime favorites while introducing dishes shaped by more than three decades in professional kitchens.

Few dishes better capture Juan Avila's culinary journey than his Creamy Chicken Marsala.

Long before he became a restaurant owner, Avila spent years working in Italian kitchens in New York City – including the iconic Patsy's Italian Restaurant – where he not only became fluent in

Italian but also mastered the classic dishes that generations of diners have come to love.

This timeless dish is one of his favorites. Tender chicken, earthy mushrooms, and Marsala wine come together in a velvety sauce that's luxurious without feeling fussy. It's the kind of Italian-American comfort food that never goes out of style – equally suited to a leisurely dinner with friends or a quiet weeknight meal at home.

Today, it's one of the dishes helping write the next chapter at Highlands Bistro.

Highlands Bistro's Chicken Marsala

Ingredients

4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 28 ounces), cut into bite-size pieces

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

½ cup all-purpose flour, for dredging

2 tablespoons olive oil

2 tablespoons butter, divided

8 ounces cremini mushrooms, sliced

1 small white onion, chopped

3 cloves garlic, minced

¾ cup dry Marsala wine

1 cup heavy cream

½ cup chicken broth

1 teaspoon fresh thyme (or ½ teaspoon dried thyme)

1 tablespoon chopped dried parsley, plus additional for garnish

Directions

1. Season the chicken with salt and pepper, then lightly dredge in the flour, shaking off any excess.
2. Heat the olive oil and 1 tablespoon of the butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat.
3. Add the chicken and cook for 4 to 5 minutes, turning occasionally, until lightly browned. Transfer to a plate.
4. Add the remaining tablespoon of butter to the skillet. Stir in the onion and mushrooms and cook for 6 to 8 minutes, until softened and lightly browned.
5. Add the garlic and cook for about 30 seconds, just until fragrant.
6. Pour in the Marsala wine, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom of the skillet. Simmer for 3 to 4 minutes, allowing the wine to reduce slightly.
7. Stir in the chicken broth, heavy cream, and thyme.
8. Return the chicken to the skillet and simmer for 5 to 7 minutes, or until the chicken reaches an internal temperature of 165°F and the sauce has thickened slightly.
9. Sprinkle with parsley and serve immediately over buttered noodles, pasta, or mashed potatoes.

*by Marlene Osteen
photos by Susan Renfro*





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Serving Evening Meals Tuesday-Saturday

By now, many of us have enjoyed the Scaly Mountain Pancake Breakfasts hosted by the Scaly Mountain Women's Club. If you haven't, there's still plenty of time to pull up a chair. Three breakfasts remain this season on August 8, September 19, and October 10 from 8:00 to 10:30 A.M. at the Scaly Mountain Community Center, the old schoolhouse at 41 Buck Knob Road.

These fluffy pancakes are served with or without delicious local blueberries, and accompanied by sausage patties, orange juice, hot coffee, and plenty of friendly conversation. Breakfast is just \$8 for adults, \$6 for children, and families never pay more than \$30.

While the pancakes may be what brings people together, the real reason these breakfasts have become a community tradition is what happens after the last plate is cleared. Every dollar raised goes back into the community, funding programs such as their scholarship fund for local students pursuing

higher education, whether they're recent high school graduates or adults returning to school.

Jaylin Raby, a recent graduate of Highlands High School, is this year's newest recipient. This fall, Jaylin will begin studying elementary education at UNC-Chapel Hill. Asked what makes growing up in a small community so special, Jaylin says it's the unwavering encouragement – "Everyone has your back. They're invested in your success, celebrate your accomplishments, and are always willing to help."

Thanks to the Women's Club, that encouragement includes financial assistance.

Katie Kenner also understands the value of that support firsthand. Now a registered nurse at Angel Medical Center, Katie pursued her nursing degree while balancing life as a young wife and mother. It wasn't easy, but the Scaly Mountain Women's Club stood beside her throughout the journey, helping ease the financial burden as she earned her associate degree from

Southwestern Community College and later her bachelor's degree in nursing from Western Carolina University.

Stories like Jaylin's and Katie's demonstrate how this scholarship program changes lives while strengthening the entire community. Many recipients remain in the area after graduation, becoming teachers, nurses, emergency personnel, and business owners who serve the very neighbors who helped them achieve their dreams.

Another way to support SMWC is to attend their fun-filled Bingo night on August 13 when they partner with the Highlands Rotary Club to raise funds for this scholarship program. Bingo Night is held at the Highlands Community Building at 869 North 4th Street, doors open at 6:00 P.M. and the games start at 6:30 P.M.

Whether you're craving hot pancakes or looking for an evening of fun, make plans now to show up and show your support.

by Mary Jane McCall

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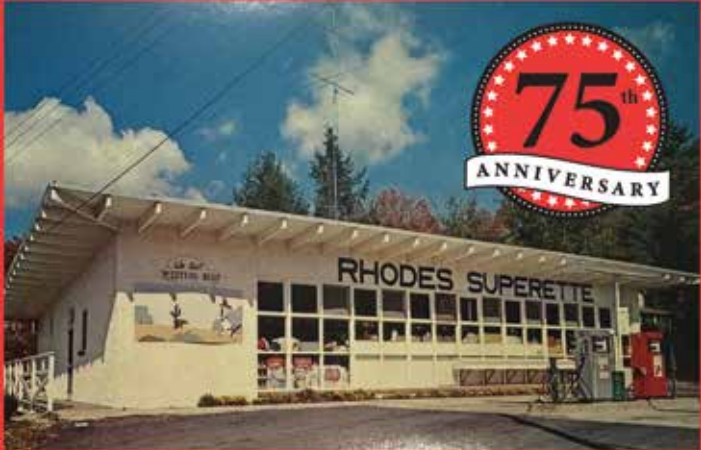
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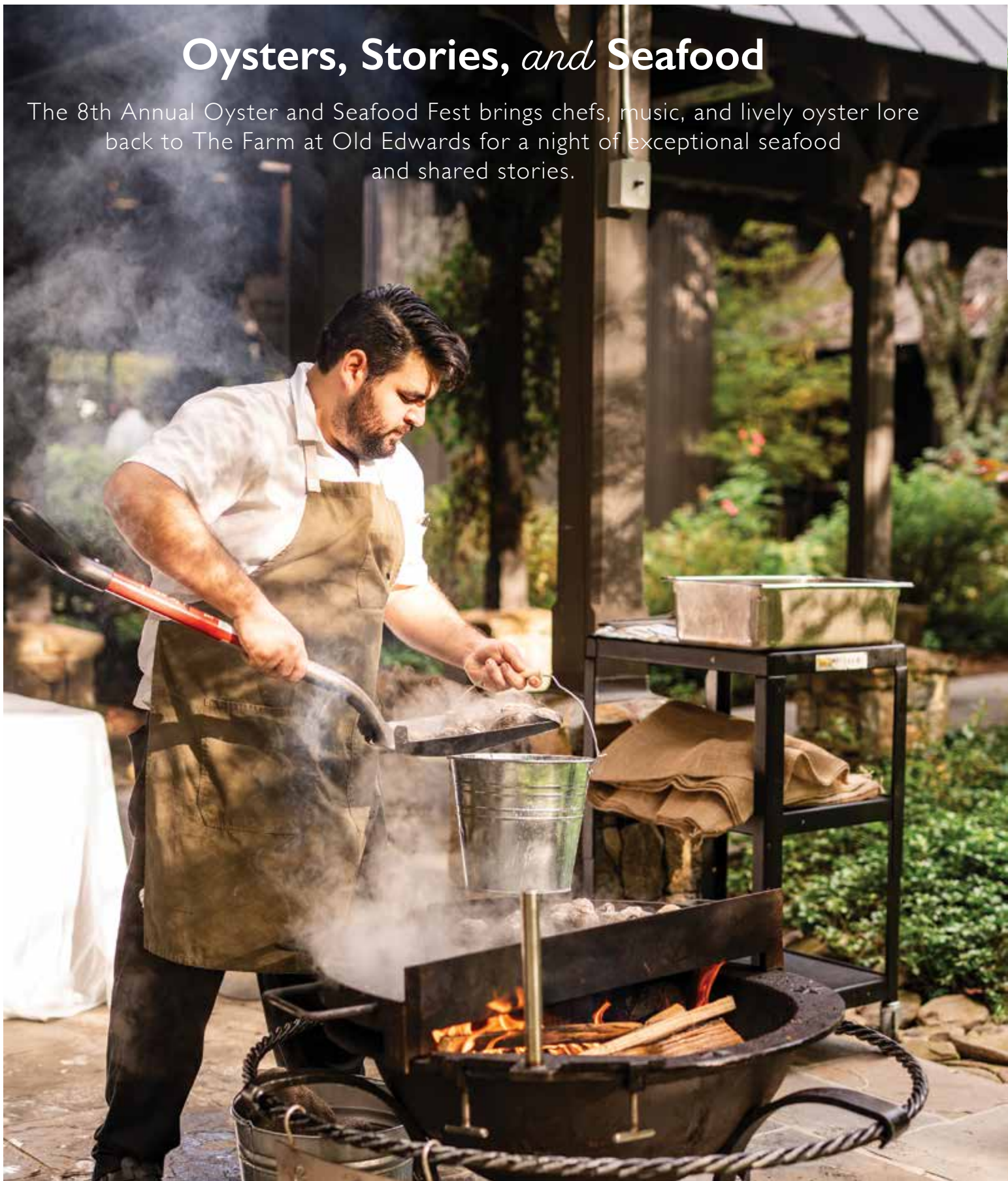
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Oysters, Stories, *and* Seafood

The 8th Annual Oyster and Seafood Fest brings chefs, music, and lively oyster lore back to The Farm at Old Edwards for a night of exceptional seafood and shared stories.





I can still remember those oysters.

Not just their briny sweetness, but the banter that drifted around the tables at last year's Oyster and Seafood Fest at The Farm at Old Edwards. Somebody was making the case for oysters harvested from South Carolina's pluff mud. Across the table, someone else insisted the broad, briny oysters of Louisiana's St. Bernard Parish and Gulf waters couldn't be matched. Before long, everyone had a favorite – and a story to go with it. I have a feeling I'll hear that same lively chatter again when the 8th Annual Oyster and Seafood Fest returns to The Farm on Sunday, September 27.

Oyster enthusiasts don't simply remember eating oysters – they remember where they came from, who they shared them with, and the stories that unfolded around the growing pile of empty shells. Like wine lovers discussing terroir, they debate estuaries, tides, salinity and provenance, convinced every body of water leaves its own unmistakable signature. Perhaps that's the enduring appeal of oysters. They've always been as much about gathering as

they are about eating.

That spirit is precisely what makes the 8th Annual Oyster and Seafood Fest at The Farm at Old Edwards such a memorable evening. The oysters may be what first draws guests to the festival, but it's the experience that brings many of them back – a celebration of exceptional seafood, accomplished chefs and the easy camaraderie that develops whenever fellow enthusiasts gather around the same table.

Returning favorite Chef Sara Prezioso of Charleston Bay Gourmet brings her Lowcountry seafood expertise back to the mountains. Joining her is Chef Sam Fore of Tuk Tuk Snack Shop, the nationally acclaimed Lexington chef whose cooking blends Southern traditions with the vibrant flavors of her Sri Lankan heritage. Together with the Old Edwards culinary team, they'll showcase seafood through distinct culinary perspectives, each honoring exceptional ingredients while reflecting the individual style of the chef preparing them.

The evening invites guests to wander among chef stations, sampling pristine

oysters alongside an imaginative array of seafood dishes, each thoughtfully prepared and designed to encourage discovery. Live music, handcrafted cocktails and wine complete an evening celebrating exceptional seafood and the pleasures of the table.

And perhaps that's fitting. Every oyster carries the memory of the waters that shaped it. By the end of the evening, guests will leave with a provenance story of their own. Sometime in the future, another conversation about favorite oysters will begin, and someone around the table will inevitably smile and say, "Well, I remember those oysters we had at The Farm..."

The 8th Annual Oyster and Seafood Fest takes place Sunday, September 27, at The Farm at Old Edwards. Tickets are \$234 per person and include dinner, beverages, shuttle transportation, and gratuity. Secure your seats and view the full line-up of Old Edwards 2026 Chef Dinners by visiting OldEdwardsHospitality.com/ChefDinners.

by Marlene Osteen

From Left to right:
Susan Wilson,
Elizabeth Dotson,
Benjamin DeMange,
Mason Baumgarner,
and Allison Sharp



Village Pantry's Surprising Evenings

Village Pantry celebrates its second anniversary with new lunch offerings, expanded programs, and surprise pop-up dinners that have become some of Cashiers' most coveted reservations.

Lunch may still be the main attraction at Village Pantry of Cashiers, but don't mistake it for the whole story. As the popular café celebrates its second anniversary, co-owners Elizabeth Dotson and Ben DeMange continue to find new ways to surprise their regulars. New menu additions, an expanded wine program, booming catering and wildly popular pop-up dinners have given guests plenty of reasons to keep coming back.

This summer brings fresh offerings, including a lobster roll, a grilled Monte Cristo and a hearty vegetarian melt. Longtime favorites remain firmly in place, from Dotson's Louisiana-inspired gumbo and shrimp po' boys to her unexpectedly popular vegan Tom Kha soup. The house-made chicken salad has become a local phenomenon, with Village Pantry selling 89 quarts in just four days. Expanded take-and-bake selections, a full wine and beer program, and a busy catering schedule continue to broaden the restaurant's appeal.

But perhaps the biggest surprise at Village Pantry isn't found

on the lunch menu at all.

Last winter, over a series of Thursday evenings, the bright café underwent a dramatic transformation. The lights were dimmed, the room took on the feel of an intimate supper club, and Dotson and DeMange unveiled a succession of themed prix fixe dinners that quickly became one of the season's most sought-after reservations.

Guests weren't told what would be served. They simply trusted the chefs.

"It was a surprise," Dotson says. "We wanted to show people what we were capable of and thought it would be fun for the chefs and staff to do something unusual."

What began as a creative experiment quickly became one of Cashiers' hardest reservations to secure. What followed became a culinary passport. "Thai Night" featured coconut and lemongrass-poached halibut, green mango salad and green curry tiger prawns with purple sticky rice. "Old Las Vegas" revisited classic American fine dining with shrimp cocktail, Caesar salad, beef tenderloin

Oscar and Cherries Jubilee. Dotson's own Louisiana heritage inspired "Bayou Meets Blue Ridge," complete with Gulf oysters prepared three ways, turtle soup finished with sherry, New Orleans barbecue shrimp and Bananas Foster bread pudding.

Created for the quieter winter months when many local clubs close, the dinners gave year-round residents something new to anticipate. Dotson sourced specialty ingredients from Asian markets and shipped Gulf oysters directly from Louisiana. By the final dinner, more than 100 people were waiting for reservations.

Among the early enthusiasts was chef Scott Alderson, who called the inaugural evening "Cashiers' newest dining destination," praising everything from the oysters to the polished service before offering perhaps the highest compliment of the night: "These kids can cook."

The popularity has ensured the experiment won't end with winter. Dotson says Village Pantry plans to host two surprise dinners for regular guests later this summer before reviving the pop-up series this winter, with themes inspired by whatever captures the chefs' imaginations.

Village Pantry has built its reputation one lunch at a time. Now it's quietly proving that, given the chance, it can transform an ordinary Thursday evening into one of the most memorable dinners of the season.

by Marlene Osteen



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Dusty's Marks 75 Years



Dusty's Rhodes Superette celebrates 75 years as a family-run Highlands landmark rooted in tradition and hometown hospitality.

Dusty's Rhodes Superette at 493 Dillard Road in Highlands is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year, and as someone who counts shopping at Dusty's among my first memories, I am here for the celebration.

This family-run grocery forms a foundational thread in Highlands history since its beginning 75 years ago, when Dusty and Manila Rhodes bought her family's grocery, Economy Grocery, which was then located across the street from its current location. Shortly thereafter, they built the current store building. Thinking ahead to their future family needs, the building was designed with the store at the front and family quarters at the rear.

Imagine how special it is to walk into today's vibrant specialty food store but be briefly whisked back in time when your feet hit that hardwood floor. Close your eyes, and for a moment you can almost imagine seeing Dusty, Sr. sitting at the cash register welcoming you with a warm smile,

often with his devoted beagle, Daisy, by his side. If you were lucky, his wife Manila might be passing through to chat a bit.

In the beginning and for many years thereafter, this welcoming store was a full-service grocery store. From staples to pet food to paper products, you could find it here, but always present was the specialty butcher shop, still the store's shining star.

Times changed; Dusty and Manila's children, Kitty and Dusty, Jr., took the reins after their parents passed. They were more than qualified, having grown up helping out in this family business from a tender age. Kitty recalls helping bag lettuce at six years old.

The appearance of big-box stores threatened many mom-and-pop grocery stores, but Dusty's remained true to their community roots, changing enough to stay relevant, but always holding their family values at its heart. It became impossible to offer everyday basics at a competitive price, so Kitty and Dusty adapted, adding

specialty food items, gift items, beer, wine, toys, their ever-popular deli and bakery items, and an impressive selection of take-and-bake items. Still central was the butcher shop, then under the watchful eye of Dusty, Jr.

Heartbreak struck when Dusty, Jr. unexpectedly passed, but Kitty knew how important it was to keep the flame burning. Today, Dusty's family includes Kitty and her employees, whom she considers extended family: Vince, Tommy, Mike, Barry, Karen, and Davis, as well as all of us who wouldn't trade a visit to Dusty's for all the big box stores in America.

Dusty's is a treasured gem, so stop by today and enjoy hometown hospitality, good eats, and the finest custom-cut meats on the Plateau.

*by Mary Jane McCall
photos by Susan Renfro*

August Program Highlights

(828) 526-8811 • 348 S. 5th Street, Highlands, NC



From Seneca Falls to the Ballot Box: The Battle for Women's Suffrage
August 5, 2-4 PM



Chocolate as Art: An Edible Expression Studio
August 11, 2-4 PM



The Summer Wind Up: Planning, Harvesting, and Looking Ahead
August 13, 10 AM - 12 PM



Say it Ain't So: Scandal in American Sport
August 14, 10 AM - 12 PM

History

August 6 - Mother Emanuel Church: Two Centuries of Race, Resistance, and Forgiveness in One Charleston Church

August 7 - "We Will Mobilize the Last Potato": Germany's Struggle to Feed the Nation and the Creation of the Modern World

August 13 - Save One Life: Resistance During the Holocaust

August 19 - Hamilton: How the Musical Remixes American History

August 19 - William Franklin: Divided Loyalty

August 25 - Why 1776 Matters

August 25 - Combined Double Lecture: The Twin Land Scandals of Early Georgia and The Lost Stone Mountain Memorial

For more information on program times and registration, please call (828) 526-8811 or email office@clehighlands.com

Law/Politics

August 12 - The Music of Politics

August 21 - The Press and the President: Trump's Second Term

August 24 - Will We Ever Trust the News Again?

Art/Workshops

August 10 - Alexander von Humboldt and American Democracy

August 11 - Why Art Matters in Understanding the Civil War

August 12 - Pop Art Playground: Bold, Bright, and Brilliant

August 14 - Leather Bookmarks, Keychains, and Bracelets

August 18 - John Singer Sargent: Painter of the Fashionably Rich and Culturally Acclaimed

August 24 - Watercolor, Pen, and Ink Workshop

Culinary Classes

August 7 - All Stirred Up: A Women's Suffrage Culinary Demo

August 20 - Beer, Beakers, and Big Ideas

August 20 - Signature Summer Sips: Mocktail Mix Up!

Literature

August 5 - Grandma Gatewood's Walk LIVE at the Highlands Biological Station

August 6 - Jesmyn Ward's "Salvage the Bones": The Search for Racial and Environmental Justice

August 26 - CLE Book Club: "Good Dirt" by Charmaine Wilkerson

Scan the QR Code with your smart phone to view all of CLE's 2026 programs!



SCAN ME

Erin Douglass



Artisans Behind Every Bite

Grey Fox Grocery celebrates the makers behind its foods, connecting shoppers with the artisans whose hands and stories shape every bite.

The opening of a new grocery store in Cashiers naturally stirs curiosity. So when Grey Fox Grocery owner Erin Douglass begins answering questions about her new business, she doesn't start with shelves or inventory. Instead, she talks about farmers, growers, bakers and ranchers. Ask where the produce comes from and she'll tell you about the farmers who grew it. Mention the bread and she's soon describing the baker who crafts it. Before long, you realize every product has a story – and usually a person behind it.

That philosophy grew naturally from Douglass's own journey. Although she and her husband have called Cashiers home for the past five years, her connection to the Plateau stretches back much further. Her family spent summers in Highlands while she was growing up, and after two decades building her Peacock Republic soap and candle company, she imagined a neighborhood market centered on organic foods, local producers, seed-oil-free products and foods whose stories she knew by heart. Even the store's name honors her great-grandfather, whose nickname was "Grey Fox."

The result is Grey Fox Grocery, a 1,200-square-foot specialty market that Douglass laughingly describes as "small but mighty."

"We've packed a lot into that little footprint," she says. Since opening in late June, she has filled the market with organic produce, grass-fed meats, wild seafood, artisan cheeses and fresh-baked breads. Nearly everything in the store is organic or naturally produced, and Douglass has built the market around foods that are free of seed oils, a commitment reflected in every product she stocks.

Spend a few minutes walking the aisles with Douglass and you'll quickly discover she knows every product's story. Highlands' Ole Rustic Barn Homestead supplies grass-fed beef and organic sourdough bread and baked goods, while Maddie and Me Baking in Cullowhee delivers gluten-free muffins, cookies and cakes. Honey comes from Bee Honey + Hive in Brevard, and fresh-pressed juices arrive in glass bottles from Deeply Rooted Juice in Franklin. Douglass speaks about each producer with genuine affection, as though introducing friends she's been eager for you to meet. Most recommendations come with the story of a farm, a family business or an artisan, revealing that what matters most to her isn't simply what's on the shelf, but the people who made it.

That same philosophy extends to the prepared foods. Chef Ken

Naron prepares seed-oil-free meals using ingredients sourced from regional farms – chicken salad so popular it requires twice-daily deliveries, wild salmon bowls, turkey wraps and fresh baguette sandwiches.

The response from the community has been overwhelming, fueled largely by word of mouth, and Douglass plans to stay open year-round. Located at 356 Valley Road, Grey Fox Grocery invites shoppers to discover the growers, bakers, ranchers and artisans whose work fills its shelves. For Douglass, every product has a story, and she's happy to tell it.

*by Marlene Osteen
photos by Ava Schmitt*





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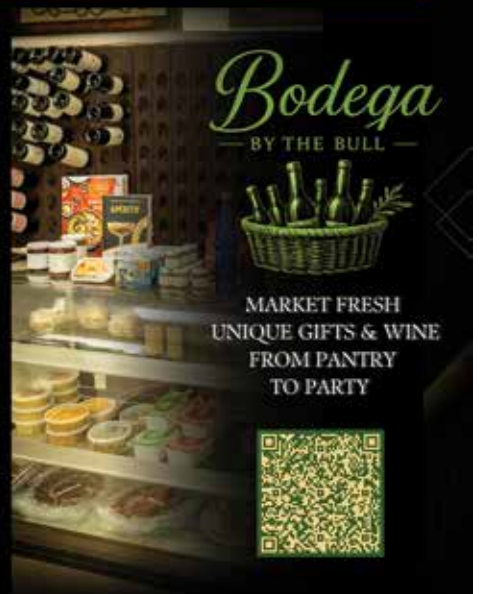
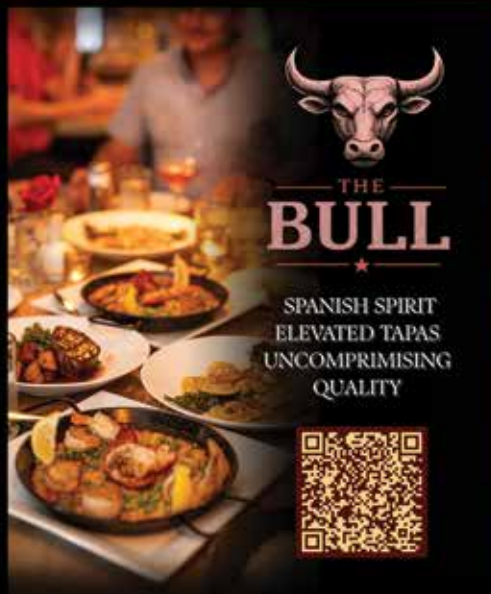
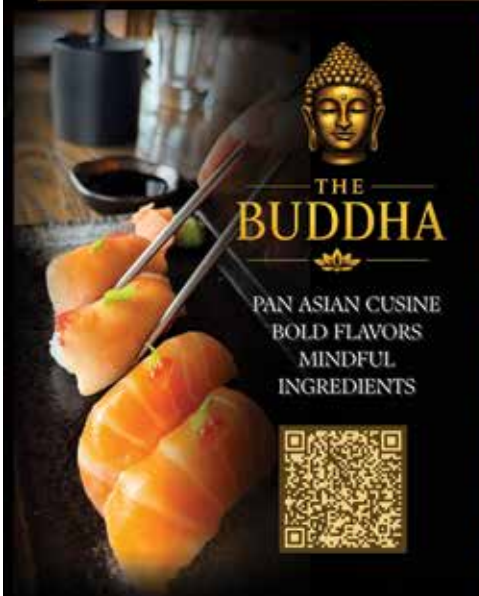
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Plateau Dining Guide

Restaurants of the Highlands Cashiers Plateau



Meals	Wine	Full Bar	Children's Menu	Vegetarian Selections	Reservations Recommended	Dress Code	Live Entertainment	Outdoor Dining	Take Out	Ad On Page
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HIGHLANDS AREA RESTAURANTS

4118 Kitchen + Bar	64 Highlands Plaza	(828) 526-5002	L, D	■	■	■	C		■	177
Calder's Cafe	384 Main Street	(828) 200-9308	B, L	■			C		■	159
Dusty's	493 Dillard Road	(828) 526-2762	L, D	■		■			■	165
Four65 Woodfire Bistro + Bar	465 Main Street	(828) 787-2990	L, D	■	■	■	C		■	154
The High Dive	476 Carolina Way		L, D	■	■	■	C		■	159
Highlands Bistro	462 Dillard Roads	(828) 482-1513	L			■	C		■	33
Highlands Burrito	226 South 4th Street	(828) 526-9313	L	■		■	C		■	176
Highlands Pizza Place	365 Main Street	(828) 305-7700	L, D				C		■	175
Highlands Smokehouse	595 Franklin Road	(828) 526-3554	L, D	■	■	■	C		■	155
Highlands Supper Club	96 Log Cabin Lane	(828) 482-1578	L	■	■	■	NC	■		5
Hummingbird Lounge	455 Main Street Highlands, NC	(828) 787-2525	L	■	■		NC		■	292
The Kitchen CarryAway & Catering	350 S. Fifth Street	(828) 526-2110	L, D			■			■	165
Lakeside Restaurant	Smallwood Avenue	(828) 526-9419	D	■	■	■	NC	■	■	171
Los Vaqueros	30 Dillard Road	(828) 482-7040	L, D,	■	■	■	C		■	181
On the Verandah	Highway 64 (Franklin Road)	(828) 526-2338	D, SB	■	■		C		■	179
Paoletti's	440 Main Street	(828) 526-4906	D	■	■		NC		■	177
Primary Restaurant + Bar	310 Main Street	(828) 526-3555	L, D	■	■		NC		■	176
*Rosewood Market	Main Street	(828) 526-0383	L, D	■			NC		■	179
The Stubborn Buddha	332 Main Street	(828) 200-0813	L, D	■	■	■	NC		■	178
The Stubborn Bull	445 North 4th Street	(828) 200-0813	D	■	■		NC	■	■	178
The Ugly Dog Pub	298 South 4th Street	(828) 526-8364	L, D, SB	■	■	■	C	■	■	158

CASHIERS AREA RESTAURANTS

Cashiers Celtic Table	341 US 64	(828) 482-2521	L, D	■	■	■	C	■	■	177
On the Side Barbecue	Crossroads	(828) 743-4334	L						■	161
Duck Hawk Provisions	281 US 64 East	(828) 547-3225	B, L, D	■		■	C		■	161
Happ's Place	5914 Highway 107, Glenville	(828) 743-5700	L, D	■	■	■	C	■	■	158
Las Margaritas	127 US 64	(828) 745-6900	L, D	■	■	■	C		■	177
The Orchard	Highway 107 South	(828) 743-7614	D	■	■		NC		■	164
Slab Town Pizza	45 Slab Town Road	(828) 743-0020	L, D	■			C		■	163
Zookeeper	45 Slab Town Road	(828) 743-7711	B, L, SB			■	C	■	■	164

SAPPHIRE/TOXAWAY/ROSMAN AREA RESTAURANTS

Casa Amigos	3638 US-64, Sapphire	(828) 866-3144	L, D,	■	■	■	C		■	150
The Dilly Deli	8879 Rosman Highway Rosman, NC	(828) 885-2400	B, L				C		■	218
Grand Olde Station	502 Blue Ridge Road. Lake Toxaway	(828) 966-4242	D	■	■	■	C		■	219
Greystone Inn	220 Greystone Lane, Lake Toxaway	(828) 966-4700	B, L, D, SB	■	■		NC	■	■	4
Micas Mountain Kitchen	25 Logan Creek Trail, Sapphire	(828) 743-5740	L, D	■	■		NC	■	■	178
Moondance Wine Bar	13481 Rosman Hwy #3, Lake Toxaway		L, D	■		■	C		■	216
Osteria del Monte	19131 Rosman Hwy., Sapphire	(828) 883-2551	D	■	■		NC		■	218

B Breakfast L Lunch D Dinner SB Sunday Brunch *Takeout Only Dress Code: C Casual NC Nice Casual J Jacket

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Chile Loco - (828) 743-1160
 Cornucopia Restaurant - (828) 743-3750
 El Manzanillo - (828) 743-5522
 Hotel Cashiers - (828) 743-7706
 Native Prime Provisions (828) 743-3743
 Subway - (828) 743-1300
 Ugly Dog - (828) 743-3000
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 Los Vaqueros - (828) 966-7662
 Sweetwater Perk & Creamery, LLC - (828) 577-0469
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 Sapphire Country Store - (828) 966-4011
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Plateau Lodging Guide

Accommodations on the Highlands Cashiers Plateau



On Site Restaurant	On Site Bar/Lounge	Pool	Whirlpool Rooms	Exercise Facility	In Room Microwave/Fridge	Cable/Satellite TV	Banquet Facilities	Wireless Internet	Pet Policy	Ad On Page
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HOTELS / MOTELS / BED & BREAKFASTS

Earthshine Lodge	1600 Golden Road Lake Toxaway, NC	earthshinenc.com (828) 862-4207	■	■				■		■	■	218
Greystone Inn	220 Greystone Ln Lake Toxaway	thegreystoneinn.com (828) 966-4700	■	■				■	■	■	■	4
Meraki Escape	400 Meraki Lane Brevard	merakiescape.com (828) 463-7440						■			■	217
Old Edwards Inn and Spa	445 Main St Highlands	oldedwardsinn.com (866) 526-8008	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		292
The Park on Main	205 Main St Highlands	theparkonmain.com (800) 221-5078							■	■	■	229
Satolah Creek Farms	2220 GA-28, Clayton, GA	satolahcreekfarm.com (706) 960-6190										276
Trailborn Highlands	96 Log Cabin Lane Highlands	staytrailborn.com/highlands (828) 482-1581		■				■	■	■	■	5

VACATION RENTAL AGENCIES

Landmark Vacation Rentals	17 US Hwy 64 E Cashiers	landmarkvacations.com (877) 926-1780										145
Rent in Highlands - CCP	507 Main Street Highlands	rentinhighlands.com (800) 684-2171 x 302										32
Sapphire Valley Real Estate	3065 Hwy 64 East, Suite A Cashiers	sapphirevalleyrealestate.com (828) 743-0466										10

BREVARD, NC:

Meraki Escape - (828) 463-7440

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High Hampton Resort - (800) 648-4252
 Hotel Cashiers - (828) 743-7706
 The Lakehouse - (904) 753-0247
 Landmark Vacation Rentals - (877) 926-1780
 Mountain Vacation Rentals - (828) 743-0258
 The Orchard
 Guest Cottage - (828) 743-7614
 Pebble Creek Village - (828) 743-0623
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SHOPPING

Pages 186-203





EMBOSSSED ELEGANCE

Croc-embossed leather gives the Jackie its sculpted relief – a surface that shifts gently with light and touch. The bamboo clasp adds a warm, natural counterpoint, settling the piece into the kind of understated elegance that suits our mountain evenings, whether at the club or a favorite restaurant.

Pamela Munson Jackie Handbag | \$395ea.

Wit's End | Highlands

Laurel Curated

A few of our favorite things



MORNING AFTER

Clayt Lennox's limited-edition bronze bear drapes lazily over its plinth, a moment of strength softened by rest and shaped with Clayt's signature balance of mass and humor. The piece settles naturally into our mountain rhythm, where even a bear can let the night catch up with him.

Cast Bronze | \$3,000

Whiteside Art Gallery | Cashiers



IMARI HEIRLOOM

An early-19th-century Derby porcelain basket with reticulated sides and graceful handles, painted in the classic Imari palette that defined so much of the period's tableware. Mint condition, circa 1815. Providence Virginia F. White Interiors sold to Edward Vason Jones for Iris Court in 1987. Accompanied with the original paperwork and receipt.

Derby Porcelain Basket | \$950

Edgewood Antiques | Cashiers



VINTAGE BLOOMS

This French Floral Button-Up carries a soft, nostalgic charm – vertical stripes of blue and violet florals on cream, finished with puffed sleeves and ruffled cuffs. It's an easy, feminine piece with a vintage sweetness that fits comfortably into our relaxed summer style.

French Floral Blouse | \$118

Nancy's Fancys | Highlands



SUNBURST IN MINIATURE

Just 10" in diameter this wonderful decorative gilded-wood sunburst mirror is a found piece from Provence, France. Its rays carved with the kind of hand-wrought irregularity that gives old pieces their charm. The gold leaf catches light softly against the grain of the wood – a small reflection of warmth and history, perfect for a Plateau wall.

Gilded Mirror

Joan Anderson Interiors | Cashiers

Fashion High *Children's Edit*



Children's Edit began with two friends, two mothers, and one simple observation: families don't need more choices—they need better ones. That philosophy now shapes the boutique's Cashiers location, where founders Megan and Claire offer a carefully curated collection of clothing, gifts, nursery décor, toys, and everyday essentials selected with equal measures of style and practicality. Their successful Birmingham concept has found a natural second home in Cashiers, where parents, grandparents, and gift-givers appreciate shopping that's thoughtful rather than overwhelming. Every item has earned its place, whether it's a baby's first outfit, a birthday surprise, or a keepsake marking life's milestones. Personal service, beautiful presentation, custom gift wrapping, and local delivery reflect the founders' understanding that convenience can be just as meaningful as quality. Children's Edit lives up to its name by editing out the excess and leaving only the pieces families will truly use, love, and remember long after childhood has passed.

Children's Edit | 36 Village Walk, Cashiers | (205) 600-6028

From L to R: James Gorrie, William Posey, Mae Posey, Joseph Posey, and Miller Gorrie. They are wearing sweaters by Duffield Lane, checked shorts by Lullaby Set, skirts by Mi Lucero and navy shorts by Minnow.

Fashion High *Highlands* Kids

Highlands Kids has a remarkable way of making grown-ups remember what it felt like to be young. Located in Highlands, the boutique's bright colors, irresistible plush animals, imaginative books, and beautifully coordinated clothing create a shop where childhood takes center stage. Behind every display is a team with an exceptional eye for children's style. Eden, Dulce, Amanda, Vlada, Nicole, and Sam carefully select the clothing, gifts, books, toys, and keepsakes that fill the store, choosing pieces that blend quality, comfort, imagination, and timeless appeal. Favorite brands, including Tea Collection and Deux par Deux, are complemented by playful discoveries for birthdays, baby showers, and everyday surprises. One customer favorite, the Story Time Puppet, pairs a cuddly hand puppet with a removable storybook, creating an interactive bedtime tradition families treasure for years. Highlands Kids celebrates the joy, curiosity, and wonder of childhood – and the thoughtful people who help bring that magic to every visit.

Highlands Kids
114 North 4th Street, Highlands
(828) 526-5799



Abby Hunter (left) is wearing dress by Hayden Girls and shoes by Mia Kids.

Axel Fielding (right) is wearing shirt, shorts, and hat by Properly Tied.

Fashion High *Bella Cotn*

Diane Brady understands something many retailers miss: comfort and elegance are perfectly capable of sharing the same closet. At **Bella Cotn** in Cashiers, luxurious Pima cotton sleepwear turns everyday evenings into small indulgences, while handcrafted Bee Bags fashioned from Italian and South American hides prove practical accessories can still make a statement. Renuar's rich colors and relaxed silhouettes seem made for mountain living, and Liverpool's polished California styling delivers effortless sophistication without sacrificing comfort. Brady chooses every collection with an experienced eye, favoring impeccable fabrics, thoughtful tailoring, and timeless design over fleeting trends. Nothing feels fussy, yet everything feels intentional. It's the kind of boutique where women discover pieces they reach for again and again because they simply feel right. Bella Cotn isn't interested in telling customers what's fashionable. Instead, it quietly offers clothing that becomes part of their own style story—graceful, confident, comfortable, and every bit as enduring as good taste itself.

Bella Cotn
236 107 N, Cashiers
(828) 743-9593



Jamie Becker (left) is wearing pants and top by Liverpool, shoes Frankie4, and purse by Bee Bag.
Mary Adair Trumbly (right) is wearing pants and top by Renuar, shoes Frankie4, and purse by Bee Bag.



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Match Pewter



Carol Misner



Artistry All August *at* Acorns

August at Acorns brings a month-long lineup of artists, makers, and designers sharing the craftsmanship, stories, and heirloom-worthy creations behind their work.

Listen up, collectors, aesthetes, design devotees and anyone who delights in discovering objects with character, craftsmanship and a history worth discovering: August belongs to you – and Acorns is exactly where you'll want to be.

Acorns, Old Edwards' home décor and furnishing store, has a knack for finding people who make extraordinary things.

This August, many of them are coming to Acorns. They bring with them botanical paintings, forgotten works of art with mysterious pasts, artisanal honey, heirloom-worthy pewter, handcrafted candles, and timeless jewelry. Better still, they bring the people behind them.

The month opens August 1 with Highlands favorite Carol Misner, whose botanical paintings are instantly recognizable for their ethereal beauty. Using delicate layers of acrylic, Misner transforms flowers, leaves and native flora into monochromatic studies that seem to glow from within.

Drawn from both the Plateau and her travels, her paintings have a way of making familiar plants look as though you've never really seen them before. It's a reminder that nature often rewards those willing to pause and truly look.

Acorns welcomes one of its most distinctive guests August 7

through 9: Dead Artists Gallery. Rather than showcasing contemporary artists, the gallery specializes in antique and vintage paintings rescued from estate sales, attics and forgotten corners before being thoughtfully curated for a new generation of collectors. Landscapes, portraits, still lifes and unexpected treasures each arrive with one thing no contemporary work can offer – a past. Who painted them? Where have they hung? Whose lives have they witnessed? Owning one means becoming the next steward in its story.

On August 15, artistry becomes something to taste when Killer Bees Honey hosts a pop-up tasting featuring its Appalachian artisanal honeys. One spoonful quickly settles the notion that honey is simply honey. Each variety reflects a different landscape, a different bloom and a different season, revealing surprising flavors shaped by the forests and wildflowers surrounding the hives. It's proof that craftsmanship sometimes begins with the landscape itself.

Not every heirloom begins as an heirloom. Match Pewter knew that from the beginning. On August 21 and 22, founder and CEO David Reiss visits Acorns to share the history behind his handcrafted, Italian-designed, lead-free pewter. Produced using

centuries-old techniques, every bowl, tray and candlestick reflects the work of skilled artisans who continue traditions passed from one generation to the next.

The month saves two of its biggest draws for the final weekend. Susan Center brings Southern Bungalow's hand-crafted candles to Acorns August 28 through 30. Her candles have a way of making people ask, "What smells so good?" before they've even taken off their coat. Inspired by Southern landscapes and memories, they create an atmosphere every bit as memorable as their fragrances.

That same weekend, August 29 through 31, Acorns welcomes celebrated jewelry designer Elizabeth Locke for a personal appearance showcasing her signature collections of Venetian glass intaglios and richly textured gold settings. Drawing inspiration from the ancient world while feeling effortlessly current, her creations are the kind of jewelry that begins as a purchase and ends as a family treasure.

August belongs to people who have an eye for the beautiful. Acorns simply offers them the chance to refine it.

Acorns is open daily from 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. and is located at 212 S. 4th Street in Highlands.

by Marlene Osteen



Killer Bees Honey



Southern Bungalow

beth poindexter luxe

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Imagination's **Training Wheels**

The Corner Store in Cashiers offers toys, books, puzzles, and Cashiers T-shirts curated by owner Natalia Belyshev, making it a go-to spot for locals and visiting families.



Natalia Belyshev



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It's been said that toys are training wheels for the imagination. They are the architecture of our childhood dreams. If you have gadgets and fidgets scattered about office and home, it's evidence the world still loves and needs toys.

If you agree with these notions, and are aged somewhere between kiddo and grandfolk, you need a visit to The Corner Store at the Village Walk in Cashiers.

Meet the owner, Natalia Belyshev. She'll introduce you to the latest toys, games, puzzles, cars, dolls, gadgets and more. Adults, check out their collection of Cashiers T-shirts and sweaters.

While a lot of families come in for shirts and toys, it's really the grandparents who are the prevailing buyers. Grandkids visit during the summer season. Nearby grandparents find The Corner Store a popular destination. She says she knows about 70 percent of her customers. That explains the store's popularity.

There's something for everyone. Need a

baby shower gift? A birthday card or present? Kid art supplies? ("Ooh, yes, please,"). Search for oodles of fidgets, author-signed children's books, and toys, toys, and more toys. It's a unique boutique for kids and the grandparents who adore them.

The Corner Store operates Monday through Saturday, 10:00-ish A.M. to 5:00 P.M. in the summer. The store is open during winter, but please call (828) 743-6267 in advance to be certain that weather isn't affecting business hours. The store address is 44 Village Walk Way, located behind Wells Fargo in Cashiers.

So bring the whole family. There's something for everyone.

by Donna Rhodes

photos by Ava Schmitt

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Inspired Spaces Begin Here



Highland Woods brings a bright, welcoming blend of mountain chic and coastal elegance to Dillard Road, shaped by Cici Moss's decades of design experience and a lifelong passion for curated beauty.

Highland Woods, located at 470 Dillard Road in Highlands, is the Plateau's newest home design destination, and owners Cici Moss and Rob Woods have brought a fresh perspective to the Plateau. Their bright, airy store welcomes you with an unmistakable sense of warmth, style, and possibility.

Discover beautifully curated furnishings, lamps, rugs, carpets, artwork, vases, florals, garden accents, candles, soaps, and home fragrances that come together to inspire new possibilities. They also have a collection of jewelry, totes, and personal accessories, making it just as easy to treat yourself as it is to find the perfect piece for your home.

The store blends mountain chic with coastal elegance in a way

that feels effortless. Neutral, earthy tones are paired with vibrant colors reminiscent of Palm Beach and coastal retreats, proving that these styles complement one another beautifully. Traditional artwork hangs alongside bold contemporary pieces, encouraging customers to mix classic and modern with confidence.

That distinctive style is the vision of Cici Moss, who brings more than 35 years of high-end residential interior design experience to Highland Woods. Her career began in Boston before she opened a successful design studio in Charleston, South Carolina, where she spent 10 years. She later owned another thriving studio in the Lake Norman-Cornelius area of North Carolina.

During those years, she, her two daughters Natalie and Stephanie,

and Rob made frequent visits to Highlands, dreaming of one day calling it home. That dream has become a reality.

Design has always been Cici's passion. She has a wealth of knowledge in all things design with a special love for the fabric industry, art and rug worlds. Throughout her career, she has designed multiple whole-home projects and enjoyed the pleasure of working with countless fabulous clients. Today she also enjoys assisting customers in finding a single piece or accent to transform a space.

Her passion for curating has led her all over the country on buying trips. She has attended over 40 international furniture shows in High Point, NC and many at her favorite Round Top Antique Market in Texas. Highland Woods is a culmination of all her favorite things.

An avid gardener, Cici's love of flowers and nature is reflected throughout the store. Her carefully chosen florals, botanical accents, and garden-inspired décor bring an extra layer of beauty and freshness to the collection.

Cici and Rob's love story is endearing as well. They first met in second grade, briefly dated in college, and then went their separate ways to raise families. Twenty-seven years later, they reconnected and built a life together.

Hours are Tuesday through Friday from 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. and Saturday from 10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. Highland Woods is well worth a visit.

*by Mary Jane McCall
photos by Susan Renfro*




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Vintage Style, Curated Well



Beth Poindexter Luxe brings vintage designer handbags, scarves, and accessories to Josephine's Emporium, curated through Beth's deep expertise and trusted collector ties – with her annual trunk show set for August 6–8, 11:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

One of the best things about shopping on the Plateau is that you never know what hidden gem you're going to discover. One of those treasures is Beth Poindexter Luxe, tucked inside Josephine's Emporium at 40 Burns Street in Cashiers.

If you've ever dreamed of carrying a classic designer handbag, tying on a vintage Hermès scarf, or finding that one extraordinary accessory that instantly elevates an outfit, Beth's showcase is worth a visit.

Her carefully curated collection features vintage handbags, scarves, jewelry, and accessories from iconic fashion houses including Hermès, Chanel, Dior, and Louis Vuitton, as well as other makers that may not be as widely known but nonetheless produce beautiful goods. Whether you're searching for a show-stopping handbag or simply a small touch of luxury – perhaps a vintage mink hair tie – you'll find something special waiting.

What truly sets Beth apart, though, isn't just the labels she carries. It's her expertise.

Like many collectors, Beth began by buying and selling antique furniture and accessories at various North Carolina antique shows when her son suggested that she consider specializing in something a little easier to transport. Women's luxury accessories turned out to be her niche.

Beth immersed herself in learning everything she could about the world of vintage designer fashion. She studied the history of the great fashion houses, learned how to authenticate luxury pieces, and became an expert on identifying rare, discontinued, and highly collectible items.

That knowledge has earned Beth an outstanding reputation. Through years of building trust, collectors and private owners now contact her directly when they're ready to part with cherished pieces. Many of the exceptional items in her showcase have never circulated through dealers or auctions

– they've come straight from their original owners, allowing shoppers to purchase authentic, beautifully preserved pieces.

Whether you're an avid collector, a vintage fashion enthusiast, or simply someone who appreciates timeless style, Beth Poindexter Luxe offers an experience that's as enjoyable as it is unique.

Beth will be hosting her annual trunk show at Josephine's August 6 - 8 from 11:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M. and by appointment. Please stop by and say hello. You can also find her on Instagram.

While you're visiting, be sure to explore everything else Josephine's Emporium offers, including fine artwork, prints, etchings, lithographs, antique maps, and more. Or talk to her about her picture-framing services.

You may come in looking for one treasure, but don't be surprised if you leave with two.

by Mary Jane McCall



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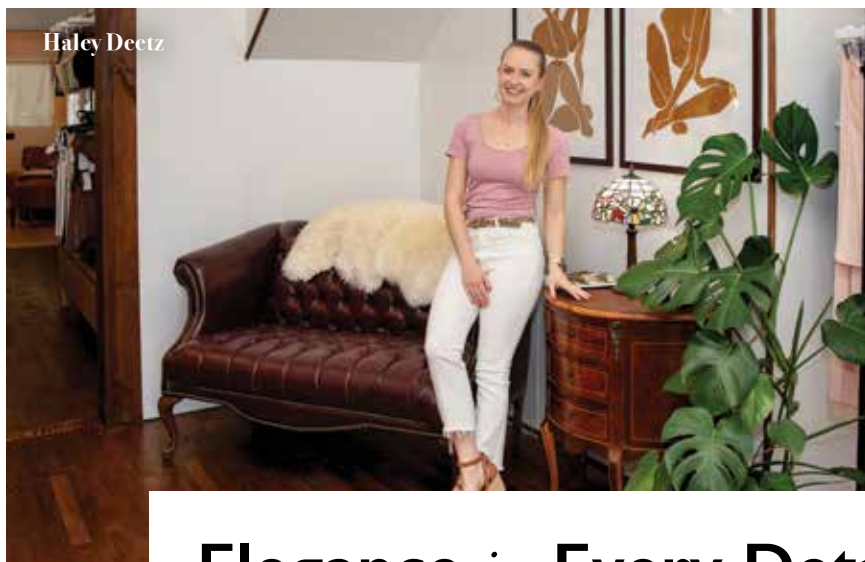
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Elegance *in* Every Detail



Haley's Fine Lingerie welcomes customers to its expanded Fourth Street boutique, offering custom fittings, private appointments, and a refined shopping experience.

Haley's Fine Lingerie is delighted to welcome customers to its beautiful new location at 201 South Fourth Street, formerly home to the Highlands Gem Shop. Just a short stroll from Main Street, the expanded boutique offers more space, more selection, and the same warm personalized service that has made it a favorite destination for women on the Plateau.

The elegant window displays still invite passersby inside, but once you step through the doors, you'll discover a thoughtfully designed boutique with expanded inventory, beautiful merchandising, and a welcoming atmosphere that encourages every woman to shop with confidence.

Haley Deetz has recreated and improved her warm, welcoming boutique where women of all shapes, sizes, and ages can shop for lingerie and undergarments in a way that feels comfortable, supportive, and empowering. She believes the first thing you put on in the morning and the last thing at

night should make you feel confident and secure. Her commitment to body positivity and confidence makes this a space where women can truly feel at ease.

Haley understands that lingerie is also a daily essential, and her shop offers plenty of comfortable and functional favorites alongside the beautiful pieces. Supportive and comfortable bras, shapewear, and everyday panties are well stocked, and she's happy to guide you toward the best options for your needs.

Haley's Fine Lingerie also offers custom bra fittings, along with private one-on-one appointments. For those who desire extra privacy, after-hours appointments are available as well.

The boutique itself is thoughtfully designed with refined elegance and cozy charm. But can we talk for a minute about the dressing rooms? They're spacious and private, and Haley says they have to be one of the new store's greatest features because she spends a

lot of time there helping customers find their perfect custom fit. The personal service here is what elevates this charming boutique and makes it stand above the rest.

Don't forget that if you're planning a girls' night out, they will arrange a private lingerie shopping event. She'll handle the wine and charcuterie, and you bring the laughter. Bridal parties, bridal showers, sorority reunions, or a friend's night out are the perfect occasion to plan one of these personalized evenings of fun.

Clients often leave feeling like friends, even after just one visit, and friends deserve the best.

Haley's Fine Lingerie is open Monday through Saturday from 10:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. and Sundays from Noon until 5:00 P.M. For more information, call (828) 371-7890, and be sure to follow them on Facebook and Instagram.

*by Mary Jane McCall
photos by Susan Renfro*

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Color, Craft, and Brilliance

Peak Experience hosts Suzy Landa's vibrant, artful jewelry trunk show on August 22 and 23.



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Peak Experience will host a trunk show featuring the stunning creations of jewelry designer Suzy Landa on August 22 and 23.

"This will be her eighth year holding her trunk show at Peak Experience in Highlands," says owner Victoria Ingate. "We were drawn to her jewelry – by the creative design and the gorgeous gemstones that she chooses to use. She has been featured in Town and Country and several other jewelry publications."

Landa's unique styles and color choices make her collection a masterful complement to Peak Experience, which has earned a reputation for showcasing unique works of art with timeless sensibilities.

"I create jewelry that marries an old world air with a modern flair," says Ms. Landa. "An admitted, committed colored stone junkie, I fall in love with a gem and work backwards to create something that makes the centerpiece appear as though it was born there. Reliance on warm gold alloys and a satin finish in order to highlight

the gems rather than the metal allows those stones to take center stage. In many cases, the resulting pieces are one-of-a-kind.

"I play with layers, negative space, movement, and dimension to create pieces that look different when observed from varying angles; and they often have

“I create jewelry that marries an old world air with a modern flair...

unexpected, surprise elements.

"My favorite pieces to design are rings: Whether an unusual engagement ring, a collection of stackers, or a single gemmy ring, rings are pieces the wearer can admire on her own, without looking in the mirror. As a jewelry artist, I am dedicated to uncompromising gemstone quality and expert craftsmanship of the finished product. My attention to detail is evident in the work.

"I design for a woman who favors timeless statement pieces over disposable, only temporarily 'hot' ones. She is confident in her own sense of style, doesn't follow 'mainstream' fashion, and knows what she loves the moment she sees it. She expects to love her pieces in 10 years as much as she does on that first day. I believe that the 'classics' I create for today's collectors will be valued by future generations.

"Handcrafted entirely in New York City, the 18k gold, diamond, and gemstone collection is designed to be worn, not stored. It is meant for effortless elegance and easy casual wear. Precious stones may be worn every day, bright colors can be surprisingly neutral, and diamonds...well, what are you saving them for?"

Peak Experience is located at 2820 Dillard Road in Highlands. For more information, call (828) 526-0229.

by Luke Osteen

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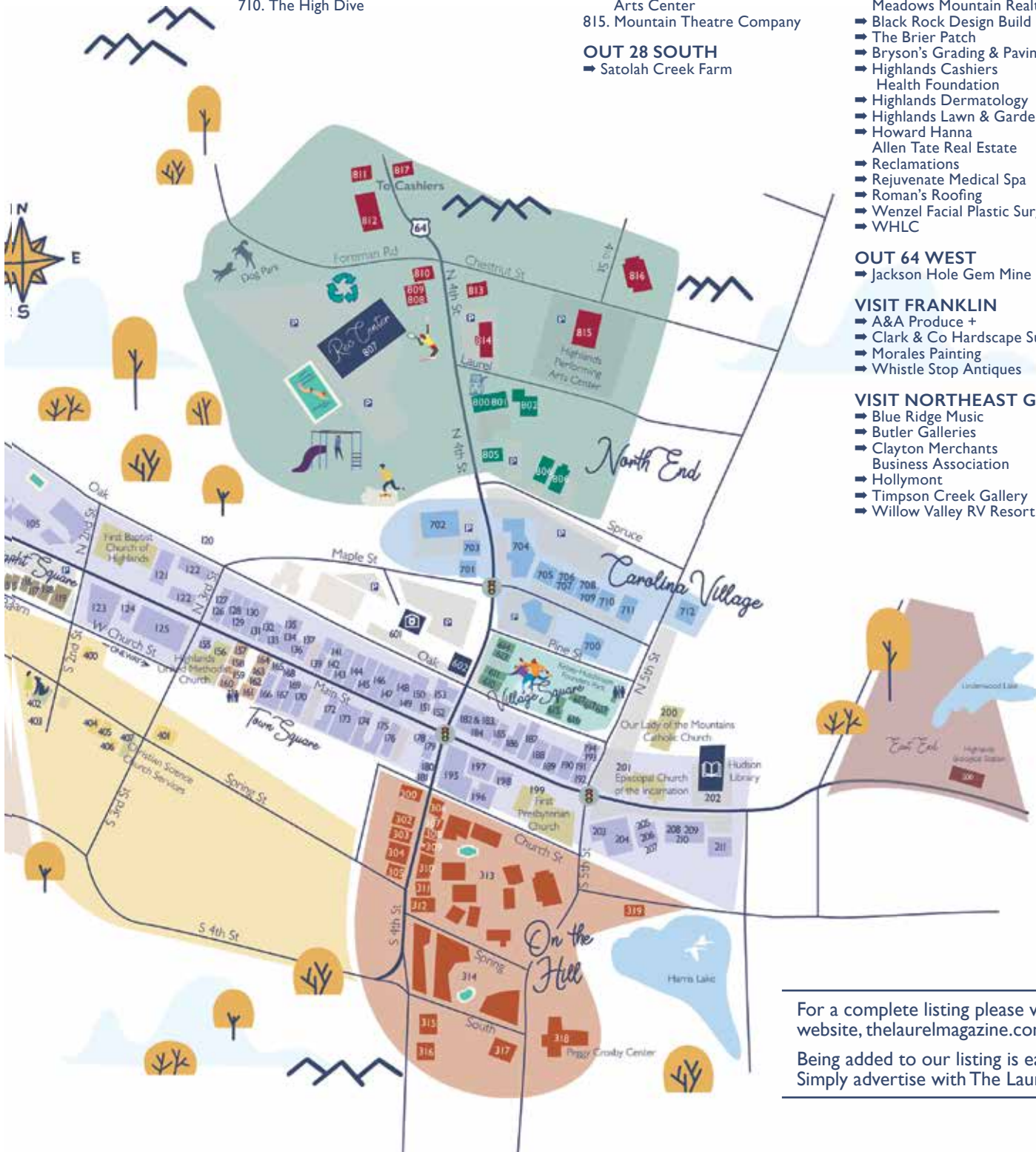
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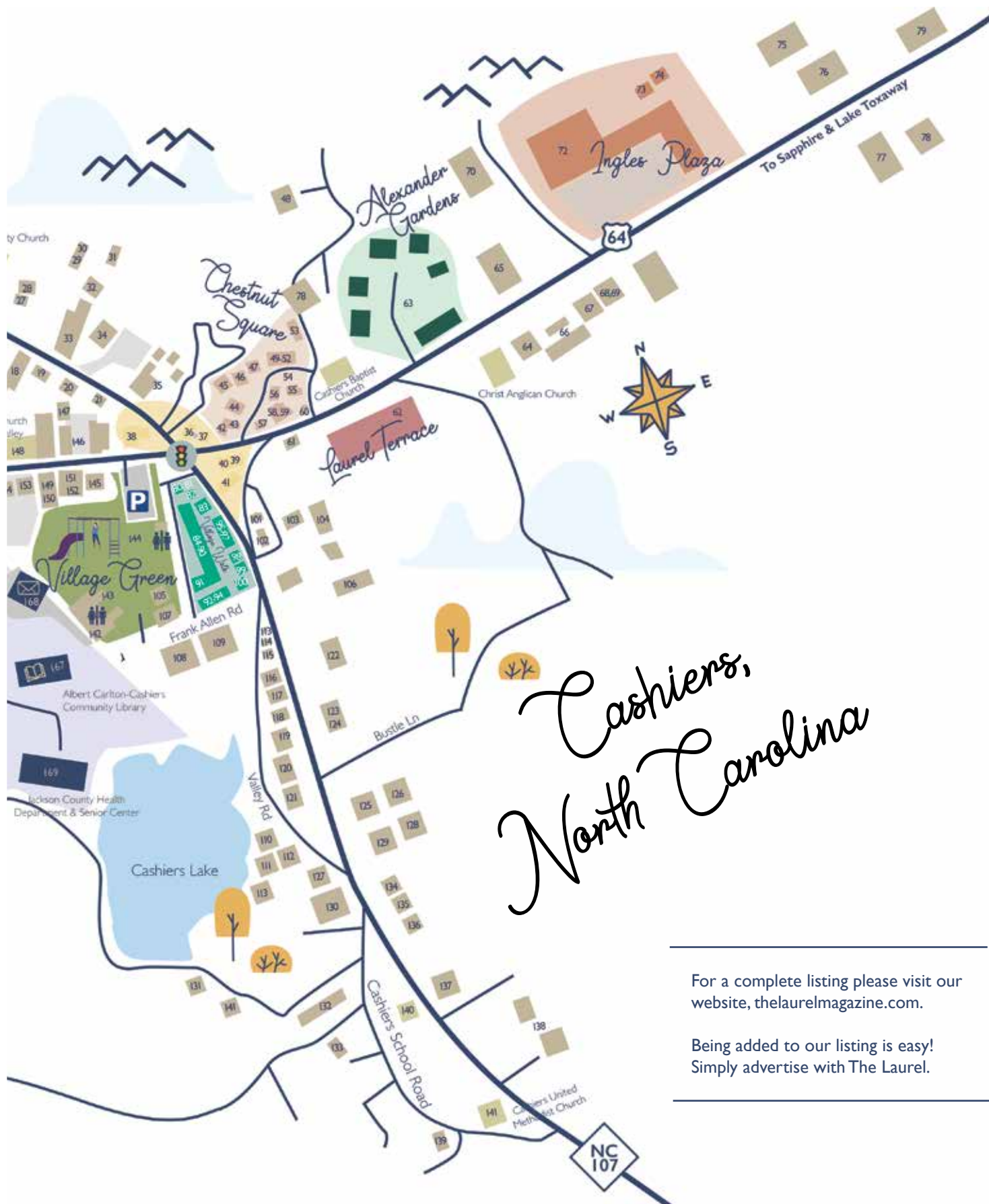
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Downtown Highlands Home with Dramatic View of Whiteside Mountain

Beautifully remodeled and filled with natural light, this exceptional home offers both mountain charm and modern luxury. The dramatic open floor plan features soaring ceilings, expansive windows, rich hardwood floors, and two stunning fireplaces that create warm, inviting gathering spaces. Come for the view... stay for the lifestyle. Just minutes from downtown Highlands!

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Estate Sized Lake Home With Mountain Views & Flat Lot



Across The Lake From The Greystone Inn 1747 Cold Mountain Road, Lake Toxaway

6 Bedroom, 7.5 Bath home on a gentle **double lake lot** with almost 200' of shoreline. This **gated** custom built home was designed by Al Platt, AIA. The large foyer opens to the spacious great room with floor to ceiling stone fireplace. The kitchen features a raised counter with extra seating, a built-in desk area, breakfast room, and pantry making this a wonderful gathering space. The formal dining room seats up to 12 comfortably with easy access to the covered deck (with fireplace), and the open deck. The private primary suite has a sitting area and a view of the lake. 2 additional suites on the main floor. There are 2 separate lakeside offices, one on each level. Upstairs there are 3 more suites, and a library/loft area. The lower level family room with fireplace, pool table, kitchenette, and full bath also provides walk-out to the covered patio and path to the boathouse, dock & beach area. Double porte-cochere and a side entry garage. Lots of extra parking. New roof and exterior paint.
List Price: \$8,900,000 MLS#1000598



535 Hawk Mountain Road, Lake Toxaway

NEW LISTING! Voluminous views and privacy from this **LIKE NEW** residence! This luxury home sits on 2.3 acres, and features 4 full suites; each with great views. The lush landscaping offers elegant curb appeal. The peaceful primary suite has a large den/office, gas-log fireplace, cathedral ceilings, breathtaking views and a private screened porch. The luxurious bath has amazing storage & views. The well appointed kitchen features an island with seating, a large pantry and breakfast room. Upstairs are 3 generously sized suites and a reading loft. The lower level family room with bar (possible theater/media room). There is also a large office plus a full bath. This home is exceptionally well maintained with many new components.
List Price \$3,495,000 MLS#1003488



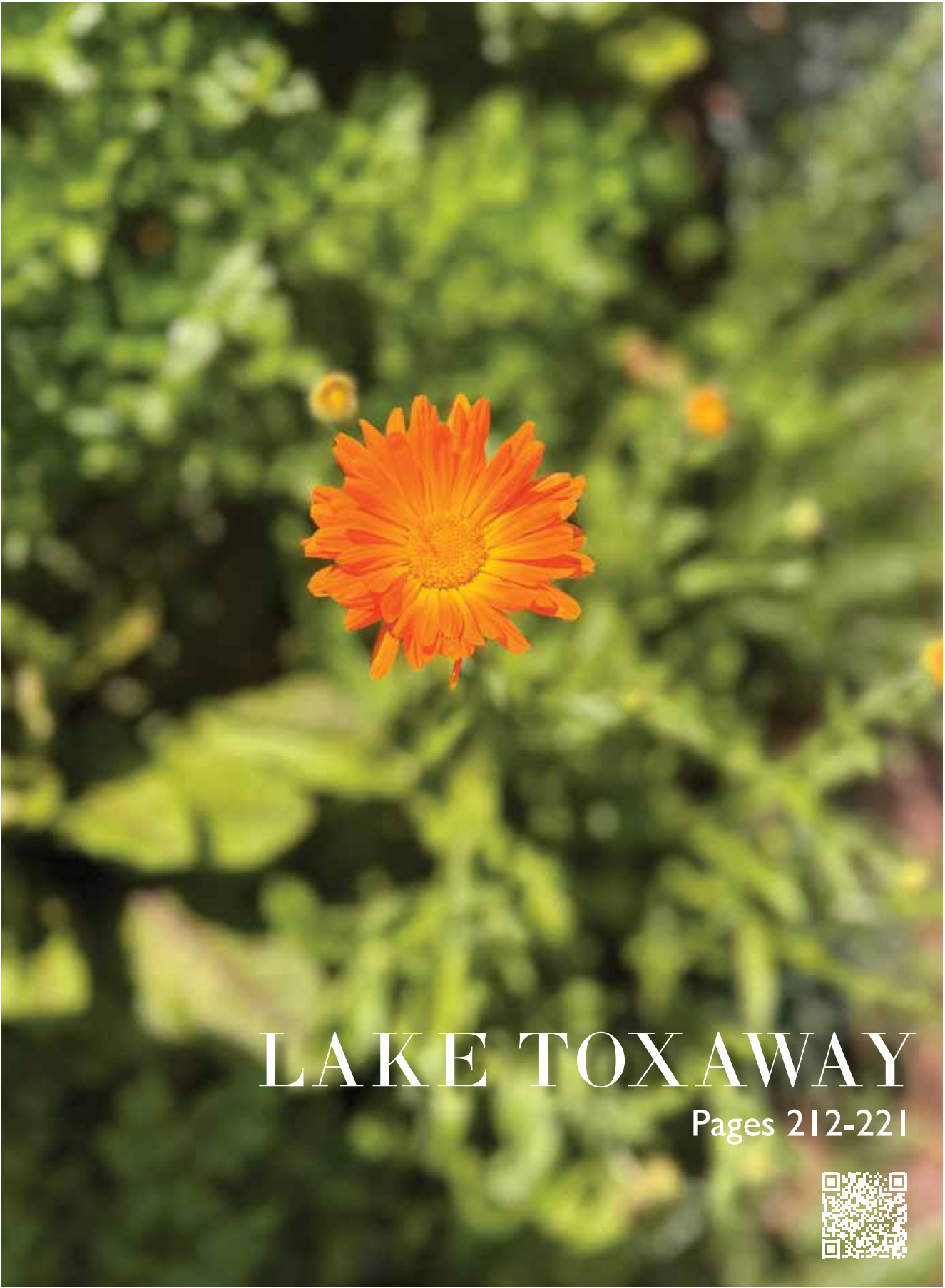
545 S. East Shore Drive, Lake Toxaway

Custom built 3 BR/4 BA home **on the lake**. Open floor plan with easy access to the large covered deck. Large private office. 2 suites and extra guest room and bath on the main level. The lower level features a family room with walk-out to the gentle yard, full bath, exercise room, hobby room that could be converted to media room. A workshop area. Lots of storage. Circular drive. 2- car garage, dock. Located on a private, quiet road; great for walking.
List Price \$3,800,000 MLS#1002517

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LAKE TOXAWAY

Pages 212-221





Romance *in the* Blue Ridge

A secluded Blue Ridge retreat designed for couples, Meraki Escape offers a stay shaped around connection in a quiet forest setting.

In the heart of the “Land of Waterfalls” – Brevard, North Carolina, sits a forest sanctuary built around a single idea: giving couples the time and space to remember why they fell in love.

Meraki Escape was recently named North Carolina’s Best Private Couples’ Wilderness Retreat 2026 and awarded the LUXlife Secluded Getaway Excellence Award 2026.

But ask Co-Creator Dana Antonuccio what the retreat is really about, and the answer has nothing to do with trophies.

“Meraki” means doing something with soul, love, and passion, and that philosophy is at the heart of everything we do,” she says.

Each stay begins in a cabin built for slowing down – French

doors that fold the mountain air into the room, a private hot tub beneath a covered porch, a stone walk-in shower built for two, and a fireplace that turns a quiet evening into an occasion. It’s less a place to stay than a place to disappear into together.

Step outside, and the same intention carries into every corner of the property. Three private waterfalls sit in the forest, each with its own personality – one for massages, yoga, and sound baths; another for chef-prepared dinners; and a third meant simply for sitting close together.

A wooded hiking trail connects it all, where couples gather wild ingredients bound for their own private dinner table. In the courtyard, they slow down further still, gathering for sun catcher

workshops, guided paintings, and quiet creative moments meant to be shared rather than perfected.

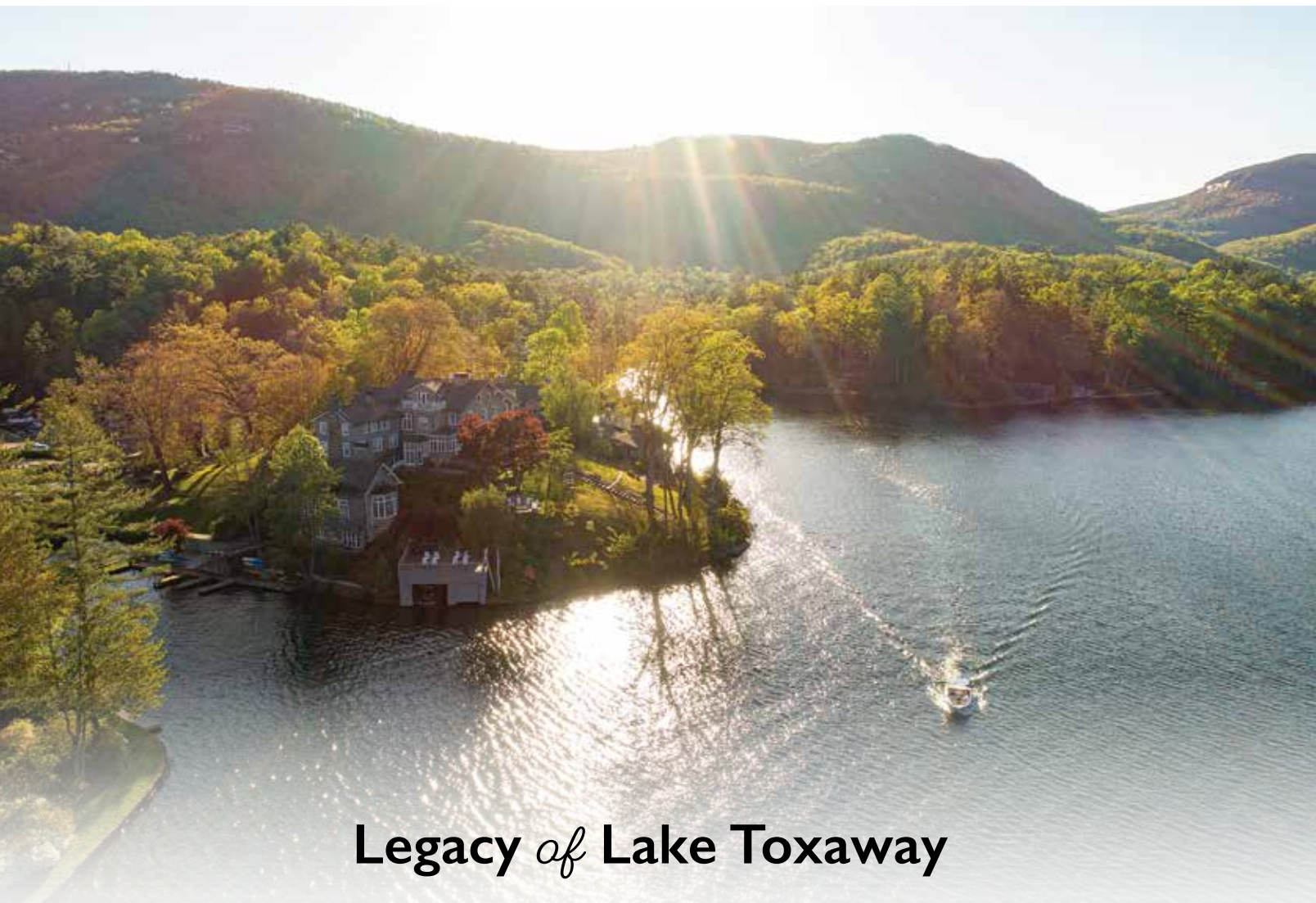
Stays range from à la carte add-ons to all-inclusive escapes, and the concierge team works with each couple to shape their stay into the escape they've been dreaming of – with nothing to plan once they arrive.

Behind that experience is a devoted circle of local chefs, massage therapists, artists, and guides who turn any escape into a love story in motion.

Meraki Escape has become a favorite for honeymoons, anniversaries, proposals, and elopements, but its guests will tell you it doesn't take a milestone to justify the trip. Sometimes it's just two people, worn down by the pace of ordinary life, choosing to remember what it feels like to sit beside someone and not need to say anything at all.

For couples craving a secluded, soulful escape into the Blue Ridge Mountains, Meraki Escape offers a rare kind of romance – one measured not in amenities, but in meaning. The mountains are ready whenever you are.





Legacy of Lake Toxaway

The Greystone Inn blends Lake Toxaway's storied past with refined dining, thoughtful hospitality, and exceptional event offerings, creating a destination that honors history while embracing contemporary mountain luxury.

The history of Lake Toxaway is one of vision and prosperity. In 1903, developers led by Edward H. Jennings dammed the Toxaway River, creating what was then the largest man-made lake in the Appalachian Mountains.

The lake quickly became the centerpiece of a luxury resort destination known as the "Switzerland of America." The grand Toxaway Inn welcomed distinguished guests including Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, members of the Vanderbilt family, and other prominent industrialists of the era.

In August 1916, torrential rains from multiple hurricanes caused the earthen

dam to fail. More than five billion gallons of water surged downstream, draining the lake and bringing an end to the area's booming resort economy. The lake remained largely dry for nearly 45 years until a new dam was constructed in 1960–1961, restoring Lake Toxaway and paving the way for the vibrant mountain community enjoyed today. The area remains one of North Carolina's most scenic destinations, preserving a remarkable story of ambition, resilience, and renewal.

Today, The Greystone Inn honors the legacy of Lake Toxaway while continuing to evolve. The Restaurant and Mansion Bar are open to the public and offer a

refined mountain dining experience that blends Southern hospitality with contemporary American cuisine. Floor-to-ceiling windows frame sweeping views of Lake Toxaway, creating one of the most picturesque dining settings in Western North Carolina.

The Mansion's all-day dining menu invites guests to enjoy meals throughout the Inn's elegant gathering spaces or on scenic terraces overlooking the lake.

A strong Farm-to-Fork philosophy guides the culinary program. Executive Chef Donnie Simmons is passionate about sourcing ingredients from local farms and regional producers throughout

Western North Carolina. Recognized in 2014 with a Farm to Fork Chef Award through North Carolina's Farm to Fork initiative, Chef Simmons combines classic Southern flavors with modern culinary techniques. His seasonally inspired menus change frequently to showcase the freshest ingredients available and celebrate the rich agricultural heritage of the region.

The Greystone Inn also offers exceptional options for weddings, celebrations, and private events. The historic Mansion is available for exclusive buyouts, creating an intimate setting for wedding parties and special gatherings. The Restaurant may also be reserved for private events, while full-property buyouts allow couples and their guests to enjoy an unforgettable weekend retreat surrounded by the beauty of Lake Toxaway. Ceremonies may be held

throughout the property, with the North Terrace and Boat Deck among the most popular locations, each providing breathtaking lakefront views.

For smaller gatherings, the Lovelace Room and Lakeview Deck offer an elegant setting overlooking the water. These versatile spaces are ideal for private dinners, cocktail receptions, business meetings, strategy sessions, bridal luncheons, and other special occasions.

Guests and visitors can also enjoy the Inn's day spa, which is open to the public year-round. Whether visiting individually or as part of a group, guests can relax and rejuvenate with a variety of treatments provided by the spa's experienced therapists.

Recognized as one of the Southeast's premier resort destinations, The Greystone Inn has received numerous accolades,

including recognition in the *Condé Nast Traveler* Readers' Choice Awards Top 20 Resorts in the South, *Travel + Leisure's* Best Resort Hotels in the South, *Southern Living's* Most Romantic Spots in the South, and OpenTable's Diners' Choice Awards.

The next time you visit the Lake Toxaway area, make time to experience The Greystone Inn.

Whether savoring a lakeside meal, celebrating a special occasion, relaxing at the spa, or simply enjoying the breathtaking scenery, you'll discover the timeless charm and warm hospitality that have made this historic destination a treasured mountain retreat for generations.

by Chad Moon



Wine all you want.



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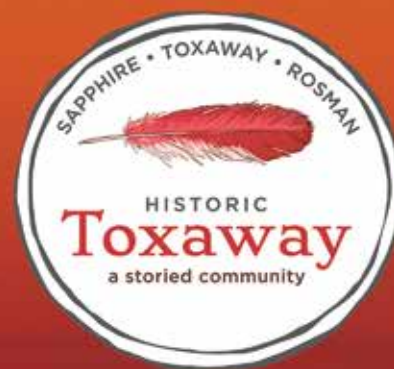
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The holidays arrive gently at Lake Toxaway—first as a whisper of pine on the breeze, then as a warm glow spilling from the windows of The Greystone Inn. Guests step inside and are welcomed with mulled wine that perfumes the air with spice, that melts the chill from their hands. Live pine trees glitter with soft lights, mantels flicker with reindeer and wreaths, and every corner feels touched by a bit of mountain enchantment.

As the season unfolds, hearty meals simmer in the kitchen, the kind that warm the soul and gather people close. Blankets wait by the fireside for slow, cozy evenings where stories stretch long and laughter lingers. Here, the holidays aren't rushed—they're savored.

But what truly makes this time of year unforgettable are the people we share it with. Families reunite, friends return to familiar traditions, and the mountains become a backdrop for moments that matter. Whether you're welcoming loved ones from afar or planning a festive gathering, The Greystone offers a setting that feels both timeless and intimate.

And while the holidays may seem far off, the most memorable celebrations are the ones planned with care. Guests are encouraged to reserve accommodations and event space early—these cherished moments deserve a place to unfold.

This year, let the season find you surrounded by the quiet charm of Lake Toxaway, where every visit feels like coming home.

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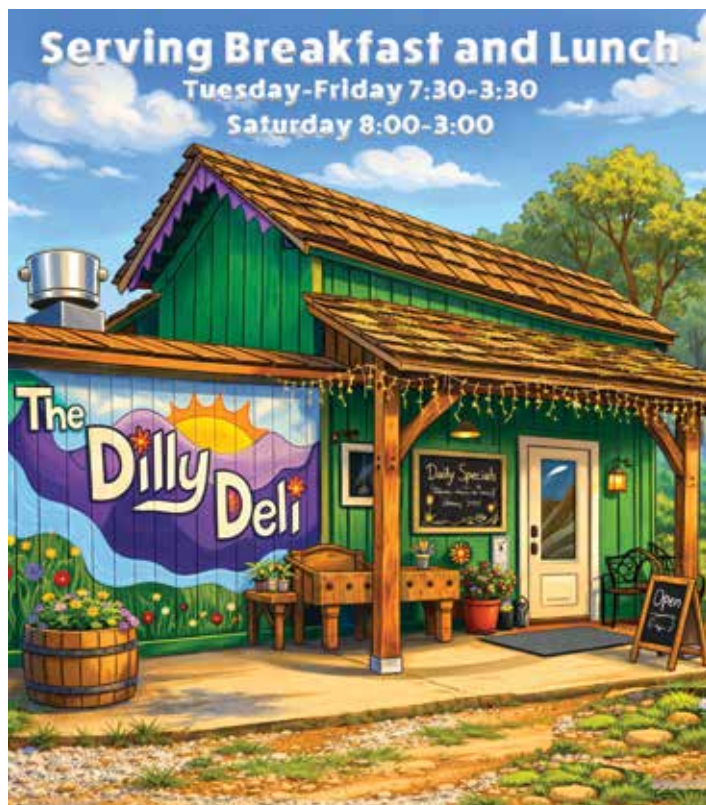
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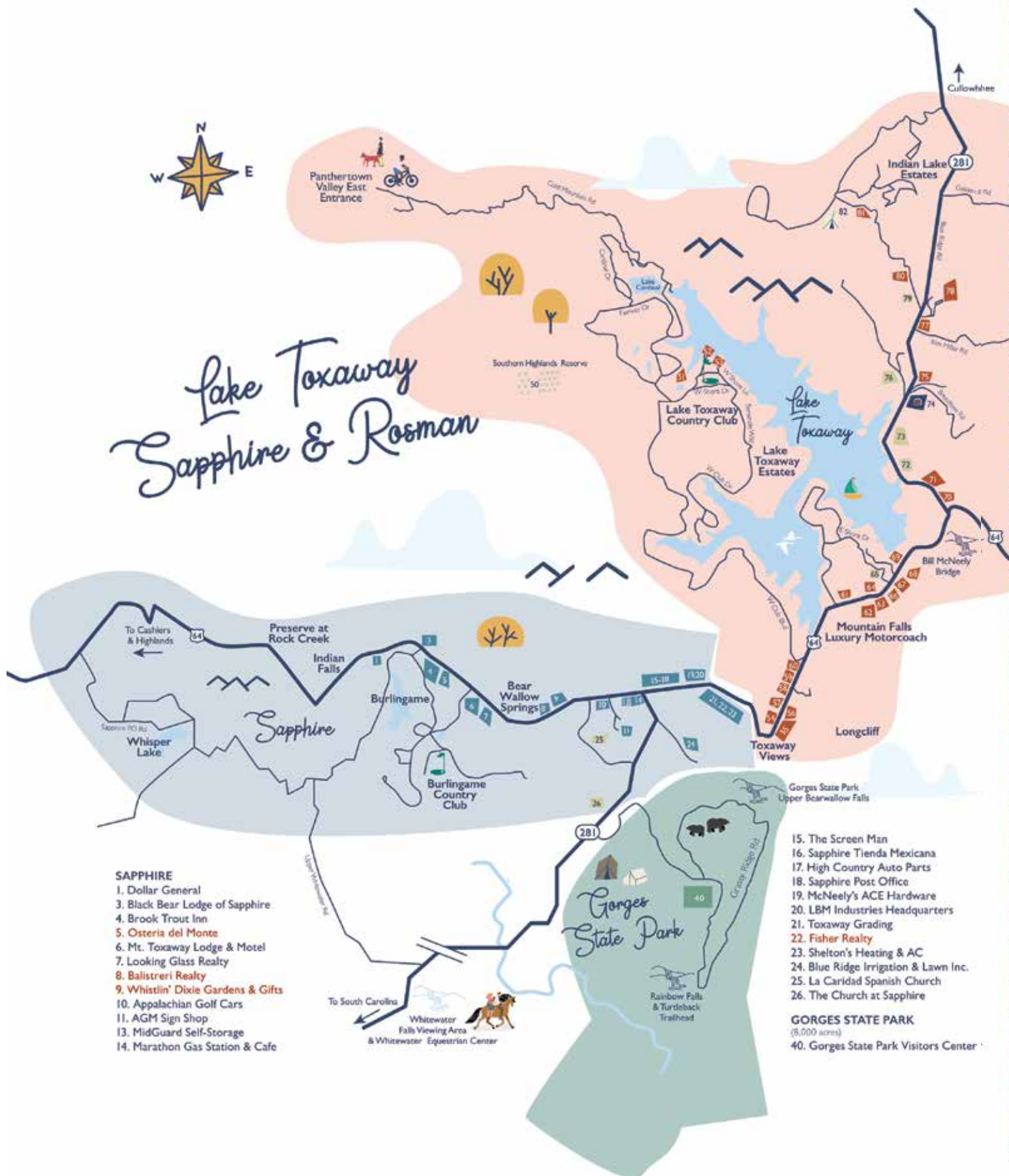
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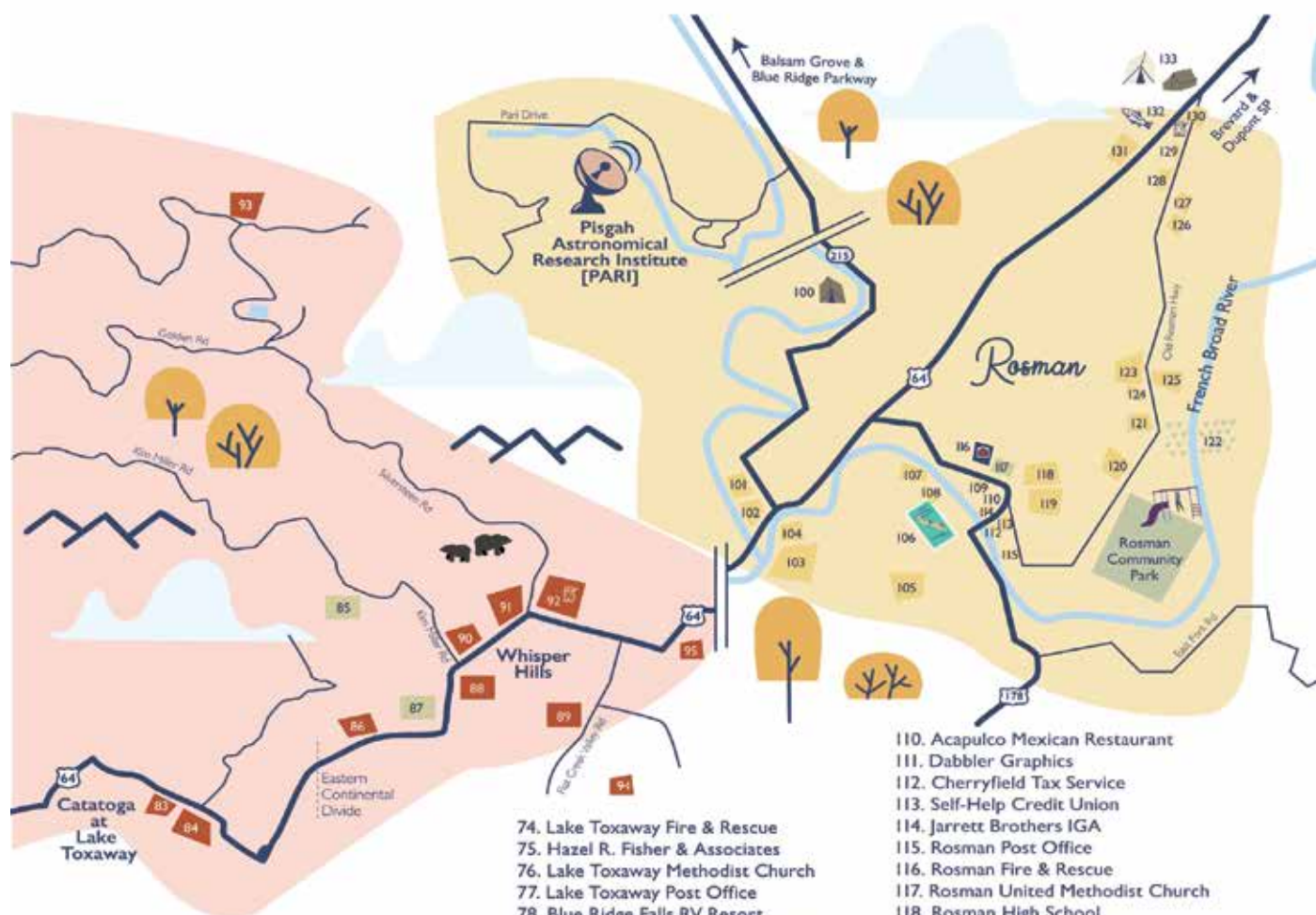
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- 73. Cornerstone Community Church

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- 91. Petit Properties & Quebec Stowaway
- 92. Citgo Travel Center
The Outpost at Toxaway
- 93. Earthshine Lodge
- 94. Meraki Escape
- 95. The Dilly Deli

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- 116. Rosman Fire & Rescue
- 117. Rosman United Methodist Church
- 118. Rosman High School
- 119. Rosman Middle School
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- 124. Transylvania County Animal Services
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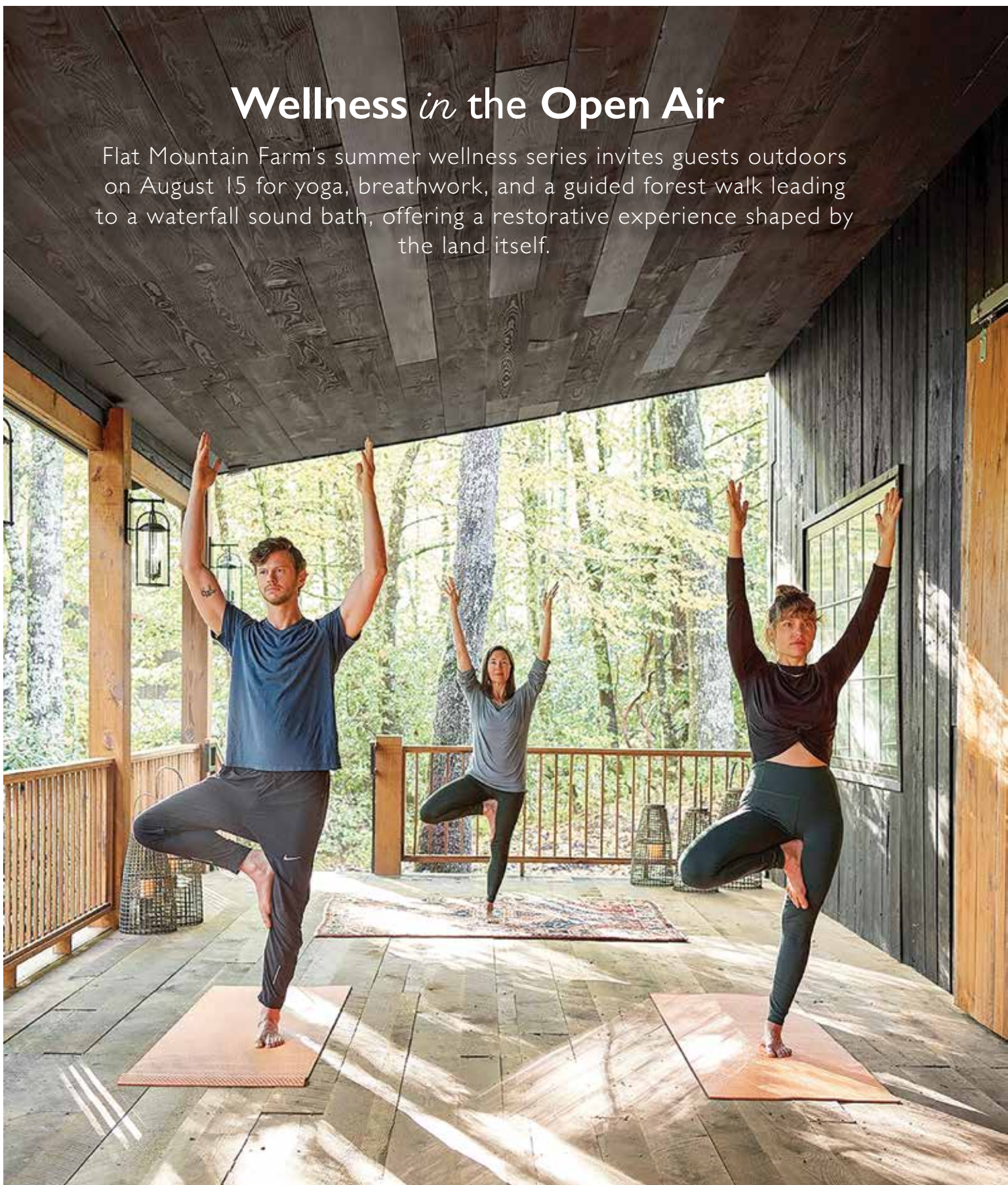


WELLNESS, BEAUTIFULLY

Pages 224-234

Wellness *in* the Open Air

Flat Mountain Farm's summer wellness series invites guests outdoors on August 15 for yoga, breathwork, and a guided forest walk leading to a waterfall sound bath, offering a restorative experience shaped by the land itself.



Some wellness experiences happen inside four walls. Others unfold beneath open skies, along woodland trails, and beside rushing water.

That's the idea behind Flat Mountain Farm's August wellness offerings, two outdoor experiences designed to help participants slow down, breathe a little deeper, and discover one of Highlands' most beautiful properties in an entirely new way.

On Saturday, August 15, Yoga & Breathwork begins at 11:00 A.M. on the farm's hilltop event lawn, one of Highlands' few event spaces with sweeping mountain views.

Rather than offering a conventional studio class transplanted outdoors, Yoga Highlands has created a practice that embraces the setting. Gentle yoga is paired with intentional breathwork, inviting participants to settle into the rhythm of the mountains while surrounded by open sky and fresh air. Suitable for beginners as well as seasoned practitioners, the one-hour class is \$30 and limited to just 25 guests, ensuring a personal, unhurried experience.

The second offering begins at 12:15 P.M. with Forest Walk and Sound Bath, led by Courtney Bowker of Heart of Qi. Participants gather at the hilltop before embarking on a guided meditative walk through the property's wooded trails. The path leads to one of Flat Mountain Farm's hidden treasures – a secluded waterfall – where yoga mats are unrolled beside the rushing water for an immersive sound bath.

If you've never experienced one, the name can be misleading. There is no water involved beyond the waterfall itself. Instead, participants "bathe" in resonant tones produced by handcrafted singing bowls. Bowker uses bowls of varying sizes, each producing distinct vibrations that many find deeply calming and restorative. Some guests simply relax; others describe surprisingly emotional moments or a renewed sense of clarity. The 75-minute experience is \$35 and, like the yoga session, is limited to 25 participants.

Since acquiring Flat Mountain Farm in April 2024, Koble Delmer and her family have been thoughtfully expanding the property's role in the Highlands community. While the farm remains a sought-after destination for weddings, corporate retreats, private celebrations, and overnight accommodations, Koble has also introduced experiences that invite locals and visitors to enjoy the land in new ways.

The wellness series is a natural extension of that vision – using the property's meadows, forests, waterfalls, and mountain views not simply as scenery, but as active participants in experiences that foster connection, reflection, and renewal.

At Flat Mountain Farm, the setting isn't an amenity. It's part of the curriculum.

Both wellness experiences will be offered again on September 12. For reservations and additional information, visit flatmountainfarm.com.

by Marlene Osteen



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Beyond *the* View

On the Highlands–Cashiers Plateau, natural beauty and community strength go hand in hand — and nowhere is that more evident than in the shared effort to protect access to rural healthcare.

There are few places more beautiful than the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau.

People come here for cool summer mornings, waterfalls, hiking trails, and a sense of community that has defined this place for generations. Those of us who are fortunate enough to call the Plateau home also know that when a neighbor is in need, our community shows up to help.

One of the unexpected gifts of my work has been the opportunity to gather around conference tables with physicians, hospital leaders, clinic directors, behavioral health providers, county health workers, and non-profit organizations from across Western North Carolina. Listening to their experiences has given me a deeper appreciation for the access we enjoy on the Plateau and a greater understanding of the fragility of rural health care.

Healthcare on the Plateau doesn't exist in isolation. The same network of providers serving Highlands and Cashiers is connected to communities extending across Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Jackson, Macon, and Swain counties. When one part of that network struggles, the effects are felt throughout the region.

And the challenges are significant. Enticing physicians, nurses, counselors, and other healthcare professionals to rural communities has become increasingly difficult. Recruiting a physician is rarely just about recruiting one person. It's often about whether a spouse can find meaningful work, children have access to good schools, and a family can envision building a life in a rural community. Many providers naturally gravitate toward larger cities that offer higher salaries, broader professional networks, and more opportunities. Rural communities must work harder simply to compete.

Geography presents another challenge.

In our mountains, twenty miles can easily become a 45-minute drive. For an older adult managing a chronic condition, a working parent seeking care for a child, or someone attending weekly counseling appointments, distance alone is a barrier to better health.

Some of our greatest shortfalls are in the area of behavioral healthcare. Throughout Western North Carolina, families often wait weeks or even months for counseling or psychiatric services, particularly for children and adolescents. Recent regional data identified provider shortages, transportation barriers, long wait times, and limited crisis resources as some of the greatest obstacles facing young people and their families.

Federal research further reinforces what local providers experience every day. Across Jackson, Macon, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, and Swain counties, each has been designated a Health Professional Shortage Area for both primary care, and behavioral health; several counties face the highest mental health shortage scores in North Carolina.

During one conversation, a healthcare provider told me about a family who drove nearly an hour each way so their child could receive behavioral health counseling. It wasn't the quality of care that challenged them, it was simply getting there. In rural communities, distance often becomes the deciding factor in how and when folks receive care.

Yet amidst these struggles, our communities consistently display their resilience. Across our region, hospitals, federally qualified health centers, free clinics, schools, churches, and nonprofit organizations are finding creative ways to expand access to care. Providers are integrating behavioral health into primary care.

Schools are bringing counselors closer to students. Community organizations are filling gaps where traditional systems cannot. These partnerships are making a real difference, even as demand continues to grow. The future of rural healthcare will depend on many things — talented providers, strong community partners, thoughtful public policy, and continued local investment. But perhaps most of all, it will depend on communities and people who believe access to quality healthcare is worth protecting.

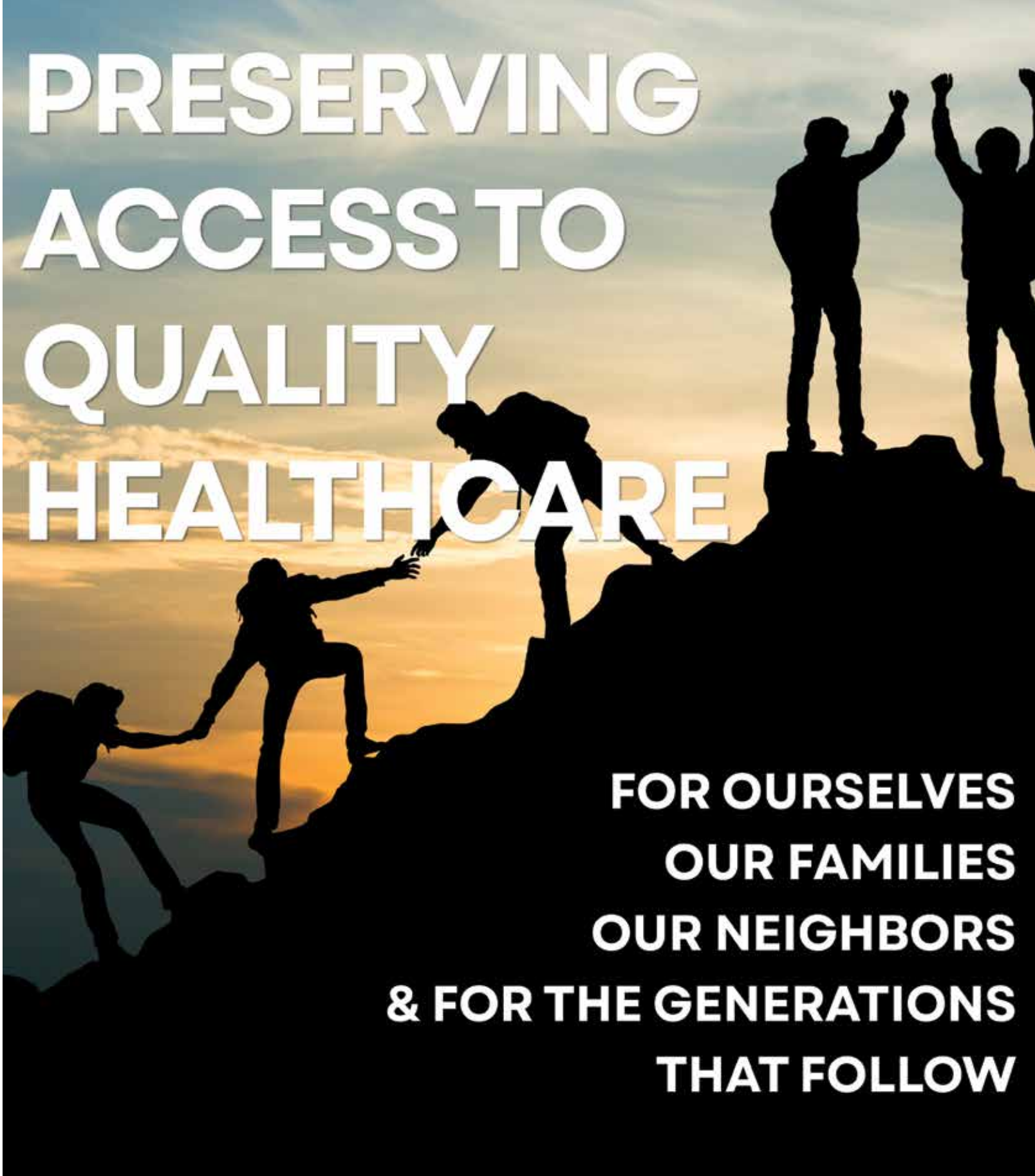
We understand that caring for one another is not simply an act of kindness; it's an investment in the future of our communities. As we look ahead, preserving access to quality healthcare for ourselves, our families, our neighbors, and for the generations that follow is one of the most important ways we honor and sustain the place we are fortunate to call home.

Dr. Myrle Grate serves as Executive Director of the Highlands-Cashiers Health Foundation, where he works with healthcare providers, hospitals, nonprofit organizations, and community leaders across Western North Carolina to strengthen access to primary care and behavioral health through strategic partnerships and philanthropy.

*by Dr. Myrle Grate,
Highlands-Cashiers Health Foundation*



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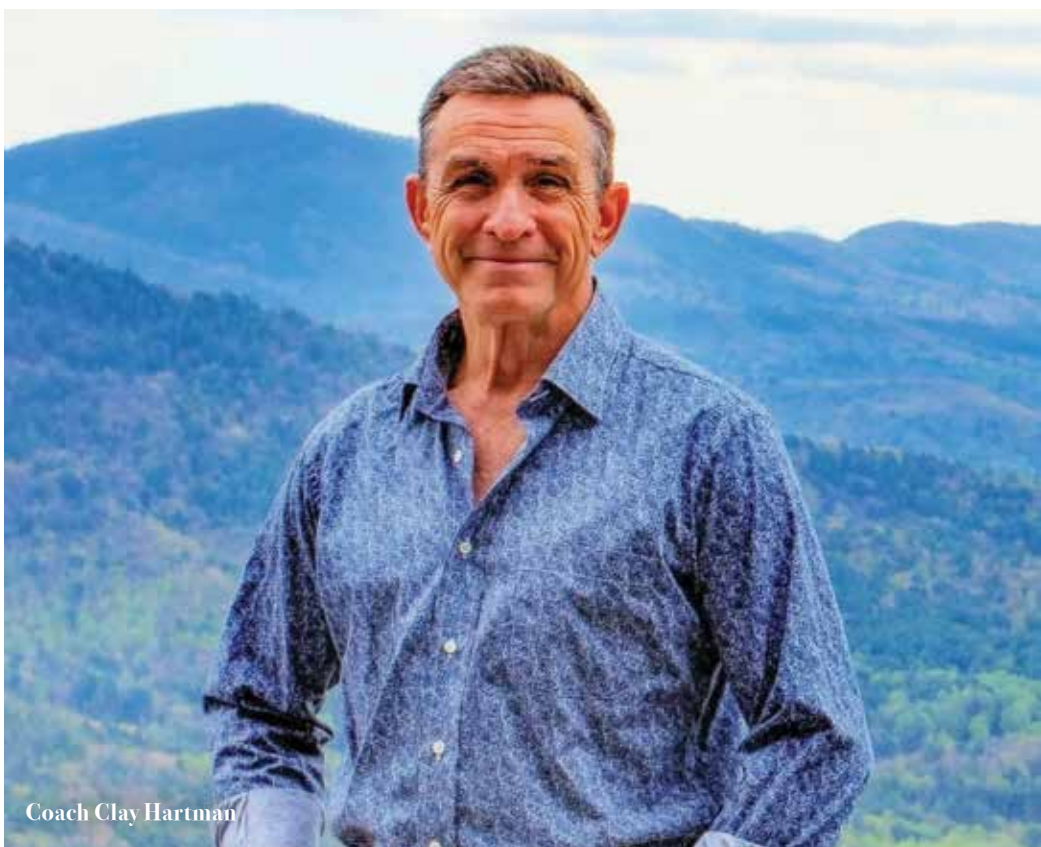


Highlands Cashiers
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Strength for the Season Ahead

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Coach Clay Hartman

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By August, many of us begin to shift our attention toward the coming fall. Vacations wind down, schedules become busier, and healthy routines often take a back seat with the promise that we'll "get back on track" later.

But what if August became your advantage instead?

Rather than coasting through the final weeks of summer, use them to build momentum. The habits you reinforce now can carry you into autumn and make the fall season far easier to navigate.

The good news is that staying healthy doesn't require a complete overhaul. A few consistent choices each day can have a lasting impact on your future health. Make time for a walk while the mountain air is still warm, explore a favorite trail or waterfall, enjoy the abundance of fresh seasonal produce, and give yourself the gift of a little more sleep after a day outdoors.

Most importantly, don't neglect your strength. Muscle and balance are among the greatest predictors of healthy aging. Strength and stability aren't just fitness goals; they're the foundation of longevity. Every small investment you make today helps build the resilience you'll rely on for years to come.



A few consistent choices each day can have a lasting impact on your future health.

Too often, we think of January as the season for new beginnings. In reality, August may be the better opportunity. You're not starting from scratch. You're simply choosing not to lose the progress you've already made.

As summer draws to a close, don't focus on what the season is ending. Focus

on what you're building. Every healthy choice, every walk, every strength session, and every good night's sleep is another investment in a longer, stronger, more independent life.

Finish summer strong, and you'll step into fall with greater strength, better stability, renewed energy, and a healthier foundation for everything that lies ahead.

Reap what you sow.

*by Coach Clay Hartman,
Mabon Edge Health, Vitality
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The Balance You Build

Balance reflects whole-body resilience, and protecting strength today helps preserve the active mountain lifestyle you want to enjoy for years to come.



Dr. Kristin Lander



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Most people don't think much about their balance until they nearly fall, or actually do.

But balance is about far more than preventing falls. In many ways, balance reflects overall health and resilience.

Every time you step onto a hiking trail, navigate uneven ground in your garden, climb a flight of stairs, or simply get up from a chair, your body is performing a remarkable coordination of systems. Your muscles, joints, eyes, inner ear, nervous system, and brain are all working together to keep you stable and moving safely through the world.

When balance begins to decline, it is often an early warning sign that one or more of those systems needs attention.

Many people assume balance problems are an inevitable part of aging. While aging certainly plays a role, loss of balance is often driven by factors we can influence: loss of muscle mass, reduced activity levels, chronic pain, poor mobility, vi-

sion changes, and decreased confidence in movement.

This is one reason I encourage patients not to ignore aches and pains. A sore knee may seem insignificant at first. But if that knee pain causes you to stop walking, hiking, exercising, or participating in activities you enjoy, the effects extend far beyond the knee itself. Strength begins to decline. Balance worsens. Confidence decreases. Independence slowly erodes.

“While aging certainly plays a role, loss of balance is often driven by factors we can influence...”

The good news is that balance can be improved at nearly any age.

Strength training is one of the most effective tools we have because stronger muscles help us react more quickly and stabilize ourselves when we stumble. Regular

walking, hiking, mobility exercises, and practicing simple balance challenges – such as standing on one foot for 30 seconds – can also help maintain these critical skills.

Perhaps the most important thing to remember is that balance is not something we lose overnight. It is something we either maintain or neglect over time.

By protecting your strength, staying active, and addressing limitations before they become major obstacles, you're doing far more than preventing a fall.

You're preserving your ability to continue enjoying the active mountain lifestyle that makes this community so special.

*by Dr. Kristin Lander, DC
Highlands Chiropractic & Wellness*





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Dr. Dyer was already calling Highlands home, having moved here from Auburn, Alabama, when the opportunity arose to continue the practice established by Dr. Fred Rodenbeck. He brought with him a wealth of education, experience, and a genuine passion for dentistry, a passion he discovered only after receiving a degree in chemical engineering from Vanderbilt University.

Realizing he was drawn to working with people, Dr. Dyer chose a different career path and earned his Doctor of Dental Medicine degree from the University of Alabama School of Dentistry in

Birmingham. His commitment to preventive care and his expertise in providing treatment options for both routine and complex dental needs continue to inspire his work every day.

He and his wife Rachel chose to make Highlands home because they loved the area's natural beauty, outdoor recreation, and close-knit community. They knew it was the perfect place to raise their family, which now includes three children – two in high school and one in college.

When he's not caring for patients, Dr. Dyer spends his free time coaching basketball, hiking, biking, swimming, spending time outdoors, and, most of all, making memories with his family.

Dr. Jones joined the practice in 2022. Originally from Jackson, Ohio, he completed both his undergraduate studies and dental school at Ohio State University. After graduation, he moved to Florida and opened a practice in Palm City, where he enjoyed serving patients

for over 30 years. During that time, he was able to gain expertise from advanced education programs such as the Dawson Academy, Pankey Institute in Miami, and the Spear Continuum.

While living in Florida and raising two children with his wife Patty, his family spent 20 summers at their Lake Glenville home. They were excited when they could finally make their dream of moving to the mountains a permanent reality. Now living in Highlands full-time, he takes pride in being involved in the community and is an active member of Mountaintop Rotary and his church.

He and Patty also enjoy hiking, kayaking, and boating on Lake Glenville, and they love exploring the great restaurants in Highlands and Cashiers, as well as getting away to visit their son and daughter in Austin and Seattle as often as possible.

Highlands Dental Care keeps us smiling, and we're thankful they're here.

by Mary Jane McCall

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Scan

Anne's Path *to* Healing

Anne Koenig-Shimsky joins the Counseling Center of Highlands with decades of experience, deep community roots, and a therapeutic approach grounded in humor, ritual, and lived wisdom.

When Anne Koenig-Shimsky, a former resident of Highlands, returned after being away for five years, she didn't slip quietly into town – she rooted herself here with the steadiness of someone who knows how to build a life from the ground up.

As our newest clinician at the Counseling Center of Highlands, she brings decades of experience, a deep respect for community, and a rare blend of humor, ritual, and grounded wisdom. She offers play therapy, family therapy, couples therapy, and individual therapy, each shaped by her warm, grounded approach.

Those who meet her quickly sense the Kansas farm girl still alive in her, the memoirist who listens for the story beneath the story, and the gardener who understands that healing, like growth, happens in seasons. We're delighted to introduce Anne to the wider community through this conversation.

Q&A with Anne

Q: Anne, what first drew you to the field of mental health?

I didn't come to this work through a straight line. I came through life – through loss, grit, and the kind of family stories that settle into your bones. I grew up on a Kansas farm where people didn't always have the language for what they were carrying, but they carried it all the same. I learned early how to listen beneath the surface. Over time, I realized I had a gift for helping people name what hurts and what's possible. Becoming a therapist felt like remembering something I already knew.

Q: You've practiced in many settings. What feels different about working in a community counseling center?

Community work feels like home. I've been in private practice, hospitals, and even a Spanish-speaking clinic in Atlanta – where, ironically, I was the only clinician who didn't speak Spanish. But community centers have a heartbeat I love. People walk in with real life in their hands: caregiving, grief, identity shifts, trauma, hope. There's no performance. There's just humanity meeting humanity.

Q: What do you hope clients feel when they sit with you?

I want them to feel like they can finally exhale. So many people have spent their lives performing – for family, for partners, for the world. My room is a place where they don't have to. I'm warm, direct, and a little mischievous. I bring humor, ritual, and embodied practices into the work. I want people to feel seen



as clever, resilient, and capable – not as a diagnosis.

Q: You're known for weaving ritual and narrative into therapy. What does that look like?

Ritual helps us mark the moments our culture rushes past – grief, aging, caregiving, letting go, becoming someone new. Narrative helps us reclaim authorship. I often tell clients, “Your story isn't finished. You're still writing it.” When people reconnect with their own voice, something shifts. They stop surviving and start belonging to themselves again.

Q: What excites you about joining the Counseling Center of Highlands?

This center feels like a place where compassion isn't a slogan – it's the culture. I'm excited to bring my experience with grief work, family systems, and creative therapeutic approaches. I'm also drawn to the center's commitment to accessibility. Healing shouldn't be a luxury. It should be something anyone can reach for.

Q: What nourishes you outside the therapy room?

Writing helps me braid together the spiritual, generational, and humorous threads of my life. Leaving Atlanta and the Spanish-speaking clinic opened a door I didn't know I was waiting for. I was able to buy a home from a beloved community member here in Highlands, and it came with an English garden that feels like it's been waiting for me.

You know, Linda, I like to say about my early life, “You can take the woman off the farm, but never the farm out of the woman.” Highlands is a gardener's dream – you can grow anything anywhere – so if I'm not in my own garden, you'll find me wandering Main Street Nursery or Highlands Lawn and Garden, plotting my next bloom.

Closing Note from Linda:

As you can see, Anne brings a rare combination of depth, humor, and lived wisdom to our center – the kind of presence that strengthens not only our clinical team but the wider Highlands community. We are grateful she chose to plant new roots here, to tend both her garden and the people who walk through our doors with equal care. Please join us in welcoming her to the Counseling Center of Highlands as she begins this new chapter of service, healing, and wholehearted belonging. (828) 482-7417.

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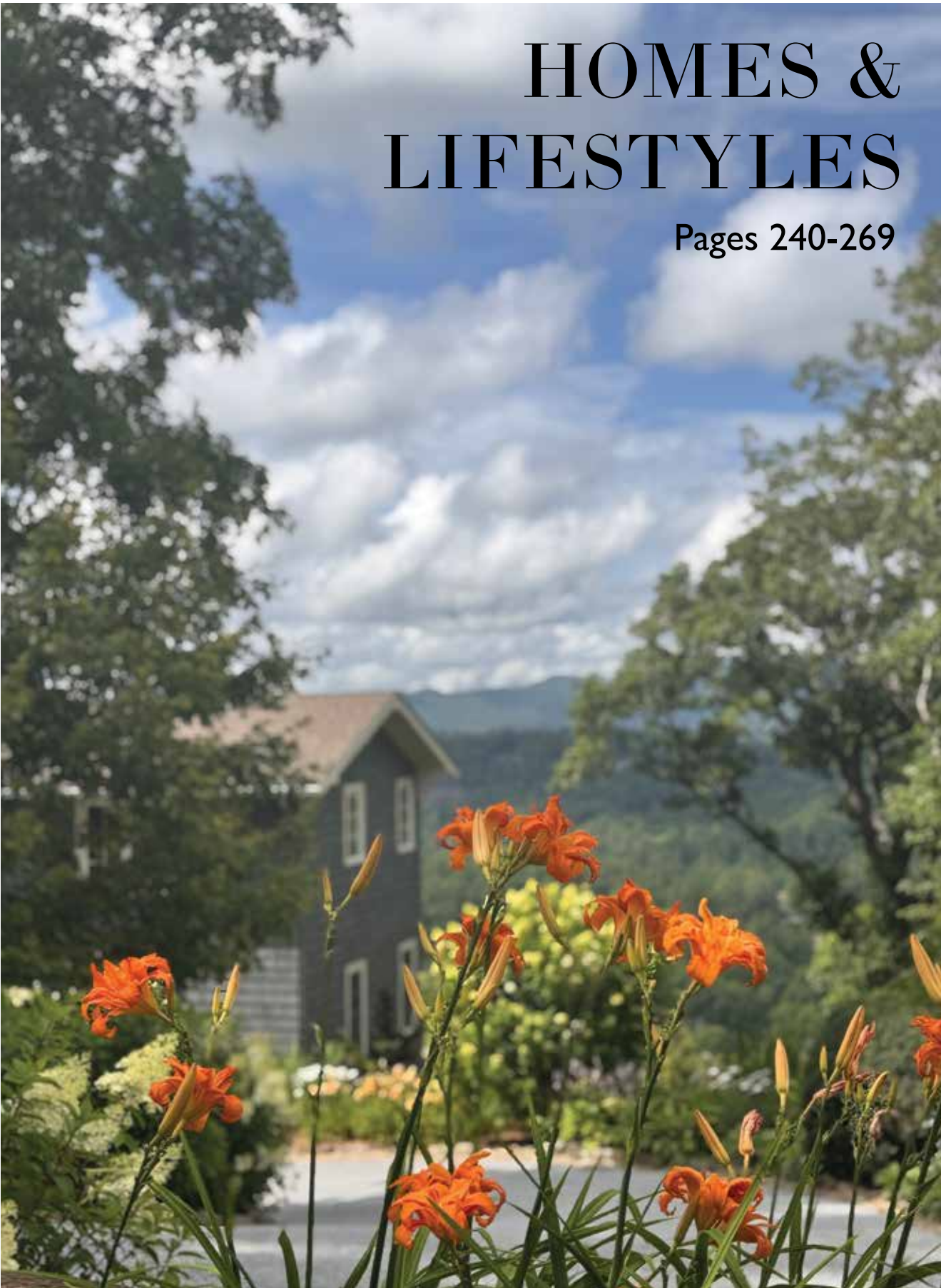
Hours are Monday through Saturday from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, and Sunday from Noon to 5:00 PM, offering ample time to browse and enjoy the full experience.

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HOMES & LIFESTYLES

Pages 240-269



All Aboard!

A youthful overnight train misadventure becomes a humorous reminder of how far rail travel has come. Today's luxury routes offer comfort, scenery, and adventure for travelers seeking something memorable on the rails.

When I was fresh out of college, my best friend and I decided to plan a three-week backpacking trip across Western Europe.

Looking at the map, we plotted the major highlights by starting in Edinburgh, where she was finishing a work-study program, then flying to Rome, where we could take advantage of the gift of Eurail passes that would whisk us to Florence, Venice, Cinque Terre, and Nice, so that we could visit the Musée Chagall.

As one does when they are 22 and trying very hard to stick to the *Frommer's From \$60 a Day* budget we allotted ourselves, we made the brilliant decision to take an overnight train from Nice to Paris, saving us a night in a hotel or hostel and a flight.

With visions of Agatha Christie's Orient Express, complete with fine fabrics and fancy bar cars, we boarded the train, anticipating a similar experience.

Spoiler alert: 'twas not the Orient Express!

We were first ushered into a dark compartment that contained

four large, already-snoring gentlemen who barked at us when we turned on the light. Panicked, we used our very bad French and a lot of exaggerated arm motions to beg the conductor to find us alternative arrangements.

What luck! We were placed in an empty car with "fresh" blankets and pillows (they were wrapped in plastic, and one of them had hair on it underneath the plastic, but who were we to complain?), where we could finally get some rest. Until...the party girls arrived way-too-early AM, literally falling into our compartment, rousing us from our slumber with eruptions of giggles.

Luckily for today's travelers not on a \$60 a day budget, there are many train experiences that provide the luxury we had hoped for, with accessibility to some of the most beautiful places in the world. Like cruise ships, travel by train offers the convenience of only unpacking once while enjoying a variety of stops at premier destinations.

The Venice Simplon-Orient-Express is now owned and oper-

ated by Belmond and still hosts an iconic journey from Istanbul to Paris. The five-night itinerary includes three nights on board in their beautifully appointed rooms and two nights at five-star properties in Bucharest and Budapest, where guests can explore with guided tours and specialized activities.

Recently, I've seen an increased interest in booking the Rocky Mountaineer, a rail line that operates only during the day and stops at local hotels as it traverses the Canadian Rockies. While the tracks are the same, there are upgraded experiences that include glass cars, fine dining, and more premium accommodations.

If long journeys are not your preference, the Belmond British Pullman combines elegant décor with white-glove service on their daily routes. With a variety of offerings – from Murder Mystery Lunches to day trips to Buckingham, and signature chef dinners – it's a great way to go back in time, even just for the day.



Anna and Hilary in Italy, 2000

Sometimes, much like our original strategy, a train ride is the perfect solution to get from Point A to Point B. On a trip to the Alps, I had a lovely time leaving Italy from Tirano and arriving in Switzerland on the Bernina Express. With panoramic mountain views, we passed across glaciers and gorges, all while enjoying our brown-bag lunch of charcuterie and wine.

As you plan your next trip, take out that map and consider hopping on the rails to add some fun and a little adventure to your itinerary.

Just make sure to check out the sleeping assignments first!

by Hilary Wilkes

Hilary is a local travel advisor and works personally with clients to plan trips around the world. She also plans and leads group trips through her family's store, Highland Hiker. Learn more at scouttravelco.com and highlandhiker.com.





The Art *of* Chocolate Weekend

Half-Mile Farm's Art of Chocolate weekend invites guests into an immersive celebration of craft and flavor led by chocolatier Jocelyn Debuke. It's a signature Hosted Event that blends learning with indulgence.

“What the heck is chocolate, anyway?”

It's an irresistible question. And it's one guests will answer at Half-Mile Farm during The Art of Chocolate, an immersive hosted weekend August 14 – 16.

Artisan chocolatier Jocelyn Debuke, founder of Jardi Chocolates, will pull back the curtain on chocolate, exploring its history, craftsmanship and endless possibilities before sharing the techniques behind her own vibrant, handcrafted confections.

Tastings, chocolate pairings, inspired breakfasts, hors d'oeuvres and live music come together in a weekend that's every bit as delicious as it is illuminating.

Beyond chocolate, the weekend offers a glimpse into what has become one of Half-Mile Farm's most distinctive offerings. Over the past several years, the adults-only retreat has developed a series of hosted experiences that invite guests to do more than simply relax.

The Hosted Events trace their beginnings to a visit from Allan and Sharon Benton, whose biscuit-and-bacon demonstration sparked an idea. Event Development Consultant Elizabeth McDonald suggested inviting other artisans and experts to spend time with guests, expanding the concept beyond a single event.

The pandemic slowed that momentum, but when Paige Tillung became Half-Mile Farm's Hotel Manager, she and McDonald started shaping the eclectic lineup of Hosted Events guests enjoy today.

Today, Tillung and McDonald brainstorm ideas together while McDonald reaches out to people she knows who simply do something fascinating – an accomplished fly fisherman, a winery, a distiller, a well-published author, a matcha producer or a gifted

chocolatier like Debuke.

Each brings a different expertise, but they all have one thing in common: an infectious enthusiasm that's impossible not to share.

That philosophy comes to life during The Art of Chocolate. Debuke's colorful, small-batch confections are beautiful to behold, but the real treat is watching an artist explain her process, answer questions and share the inspiration behind every creation. Her afternoon presentation flows naturally into Half-Mile Farm's Social Hour with hors d'oeuvres, chocolate pairings and live music by Paul Jones, while chocolate-inspired breakfast specialties extend the experience throughout the weekend.

For proof of the success of these weekends, look no further than last December's SEC Championship Tailgate with Chef Kyle Bryner. What began as a celebration of football and barbecue – with a smoker perfuming the air, boiled peanuts, a Bloody Mary bar and a Cowboy Cauldron crackling on the driveway – became one of Half-Mile Farm's most talked-about Hosted Events. Before the weekend was over, guests were already asking about Bryner's return this December and reserving rooms.

Looking ahead, Hosted Events include this December's SEC Tailgate Weekend and February 2027's collaboration pairing Sangiacomo Wines of Sonoma County with Chef Kevin Ouzts of Atlanta's The Spotted Trotter. To explore the complete calendar of upcoming Hosted Events and begin planning your next stay, visit HalfMileFarm.com/hosted-events.

Though exceptional accommodations may first draw guests to Half-Mile Farm, it's the people they meet and the stories they take home that bring them back.

by Marlene Osteen

1084 BIG BEAR PEN MOUNTAIN ROAD HIGHLANDS, NC

3 BR | 2 BA | .84 ACRE | \$1,975,000

Spectacular Whiteside Mountain views, luxury finishes, and an exceptional location in Highlands' coveted Big Bear Pen. Featuring an open floor plan with seamless indoor-outdoor living, this beautifully renovated home showcases a stunning chef's kitchen, elegantly updated bathrooms, designer fixtures, and quality craftsmanship throughout.

“It's rare to find a home that offers this level of craftsmanship, breathtaking Whiteside Mountain views, and one of the most sought after neighborhoods. Every detail has been thoughtfully designed, creating a home that's perfect for year round or seasonal living.

-Joy Rideout, Listing Broker



287 HIGHLAND MEADOWS DRIVE HIGHLANDS, NC

3 BR | 2 BA | 1.08 ACRES | \$825,000

Beautifully renovated modern mountain retreat blending contemporary style with the tranquility of nature. Featuring an open, light filled floor plan, covered porch, and effortless mountain living. High end finishes, modern fixtures, and timeless design make it ideal as a full time residence, weekend getaway, or investment property.

“This home perfectly captures what so many buyers are looking for today- beautifully updated, easy to maintain, and surrounded by the peace and beauty of our mountains. It's close to town yet feels private and off the beaten path.

-Joy Rideout, Listing Broker

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Financial Focus® You Have an Estate Plan – Whether You Know It or Not

Think estate planning is only for the wealthy or elderly? Think again. If you own anything – a home, a car, a savings account, even a pet – you already have an estate plan.

The only question is: Did you create it, or will your state do it for you?

When someone passes away without an estate plan, state laws take over, deciding who gets what and when. This legal process may not reflect your wishes. That's why taking control of your assets through a personal estate plan should be a top priority.

At its core, estate planning is about clarifying your wishes and making things easier for your heirs. It ensures your assets are distributed according to your preferences, designates who will make decisions on your behalf if you can't, and provides guidance for your care in a medical crisis.

Most plans include four key components:

A Will – This document outlines how your assets should be distributed after your death and names an executor to oversee

the process in probate court. It can also designate guardians for minor children. Keep in mind that a will doesn't cover everything – certain transfer on death (TOD) accounts and jointly held property may bypass your will entirely.

Power of Attorney – If you become incapacitated, you'll want someone you trust to be able to make decisions on your behalf. A durable power of attorney designates such a person, helping to ensure your bills are paid, your business continues (if you have one), and your wishes are honored.

Health Care Directive – Sometimes called a Living Will, this document spells out your preferences for medical treatment if you're unable to speak for yourself. It can also designate someone to make health care decisions for you.

Beneficiary Designations – Accounts like 401(k)s, IRAs, and life insurance policies transfer directly to the people you name, regardless of what your will says. It's essential to review these beneficiary



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**Alberto
Cappelletti, LCMHC**
Alberto focuses on supporting you on your growth journey whilst always honoring your personal identity and lived experience. He has extensive experience in addictions, life transitions, anxiety and cultural/identity issues. He strives to create an empowering relationship and deploys therapeutic modalities tailored to your specific needs.



**Anne
Koenig-Shimsky, LCMHC**
Anne brings decades of experience supporting individuals, couples, families, and children. Warm, direct, and deeply attuned, she blends narrative, ritual, and practical tools to help clients navigate grief, transitions, and relational challenges. Her approach fosters ease, clarity, and renewed resilience.



**Tracy
Franklin, LCMHC**
Tracy enjoys working with teens and adults and is trained in EMDR and specializes in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), helping clients improve communication and reduce anxiety, sadness and loneliness through altered thinking patterns.


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designations regularly, especially after significant life events such as marriage, divorce, death of a spouse, or the birth of a child.

One common myth is that a will is all you need. But wills only take effect after death; they don't help if you're alive but unable to make decisions. Another misconception is that estate planning is only for the wealthy. In truth, planning is about more than money – it's about making things easier for the people you love during difficult times.

An effective estate plan can prevent costly legal battles, reduce confusion, and give your loved ones a clear roadmap to follow. It also allows you to leave a legacy that reflects your values and priorities.

As your life changes, your estate plan should change along with it. Review your documents every few years or after major life events. It's often a good idea to seek help with such reviews. Your financial advisor or attorney can guide you through

the process, ensuring your plan fits your unique circumstances.

In the end, estate planning isn't just about planning for what happens when you are gone. It's about feeling confident, knowing that what matters most – your family, your purpose, your legacy – is protected.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

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Mary Lapham *and* Bug Hill

Dr. Mary E. Lapham transformed Highlands into a regional healing destination by pioneering modern tuberculosis treatment and founding the Bug Hill Sanatorium, leaving a lasting legacy in public health and community history.

By the turn of the start of the 20th century, the town of Highlands was already known for its natural environment, with early town advertisements boasting of healing mountain air.

Throughout the 1900s, people started to take these advertisements more seriously. In a time before antibiotics transformed the treatment of tuberculosis, patients suffering from the disease sought healing in places known for fresh air, sunshine, and healthy climates, such as the town of Highlands.

What really put the town on the map as a treatment destination for TB was the remarkable physician who helped establish the community as a destination for tuberculosis care. Dr. Mary E. Lapham, a pioneering woman doctor, founded the Highlands Tuberculosis Sanatorium, known to locals as “Bug Hill,” and left a lasting mark on the town’s history and its inhabitants.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, tuberculosis was one of the leading causes of death in the United States. Doctors had few medical treatments available, so many prescribed rest, nutritious food and extended stays in mountain or desert climates. Western North Carolina became a popular destination for health seekers because of its cool temperatures, clean air, and high elevations. It was Dr. Mary Lapham who recognized the potential of Highlands specifically as a therapeutic setting for tuberculosis patients.

At a time when relatively few women entered the medical profession, Mary Lapham attended nursing school in her home state of Michigan, despite her father forbidding her to pursue a career in

medicine. Dr. Lapham first visited the town of Highlands after receiving her nursing degree in 1893. She was drawn to the area’s climate and natural beauty and eventually settled in the town on Satulah Mountain but could not fully rest knowing public health crises were occurring.

Instead, she enrolled in the Women’s Medical College of Philadelphia, graduating with an M.D. in 1900. It was here that she realized her passion for tuberculosis treatment. Determined to learn the latest methods, she traveled to Europe, where physicians were experimenting with new approaches to combating the disease. Here she studied the pneumothorax procedure, a treatment that intentionally collapsed a diseased lung to allow it to rest and heal. Lapham was the first physician in the U.S. to successfully use the artificial pneumothorax treatment for tuberculosis, as well as the first to publish her results.

She believed Highlands offered an ideal environment for treatment and envisioned a facility where patients could benefit from both modern medical care and the restorative effects of the mountain climate.

In 1908, Lapham purchased approximately 140 acres on a hill overlooking Highlands (where the Highlands Recreation Center sits today) and established the Highlands Tuberculosis Sanatorium (“Bug Hill”). The sanatorium was unlike the hospitals we think of today. It featured a central administration building surrounded by approximately sixty small open-air cottages, one of which still stands today at the Highlands Historic Village. These structures allowed patients to remain exposed to fresh

mountain air while receiving medical supervision. Patients arrived from throughout the Southeast, many traveling great distances in hopes that treatment at Bug Hill would improve their chances of recovery.

Under Lapham's leadership, Bug Hill gained a reputation as one of the region's most progressive tuberculosis treatment centers.

The Highlands Sanatorium operated until 1918, when a devastating fire destroyed the main building. Although all patients were safely evacuated, the facility was never rebuilt. Dr. Lapham went on to volunteer with the Red Cross during World War I and did not reopen the sanatorium.

Dr. Mary Lapham is remembered as a trailblazing physician, entrepreneur, and advocate for public health. At a time when women faced significant barriers in medicine, she built and operated a nationally recognized tuberculosis sanatorium in the mountains of North Carolina, pioneering and popularizing the most effective TB treatment at that time.

Today, visitors who learn the story of Bug Hill gain more than a glimpse into early 20th-century medicine. They discover the vision and determination of Dr. Mary Lapham, whose belief in the healing power of the Highlands Plateau helped shape an important chapter in the town's history.

Come check out the surviving Bug Hill tent cottage and our exhibit on Dr. Mary Lapham at the Highlands Historical Society Museum and Historic Village! The Museum and Historic Village are open Thursday–Saturday from 10:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M. and Sundays from 1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M. for this summer. For those unable to visit, we invite you to visit our website at highlandshistory.com to learn more about Highlands history, the Historic Village, and check out our virtual exhibits.

*by Cora Bauman,
Highlands Historical Society*



Echoes Across **the Valley**

The Cashiers Historical Society has opened its new permanent exhibition, *At the Crossroads of Time: Cashiers in the American Story*, in the historic Zachary-Tolbert House on our campus.

You're invited to learn how the story of Cashiers became part of the story of America. Told through the lens of Cashiers Valley, this new exhibition explores more than 250 years of history through the people, events, and turning points that shaped both the local community and the nation. Through historic photographs, maps, artifacts, and stories drawn from the Cashiers Historical Society's collections, visitors will experience how national events and movements played out in one small mountain valley – and how the history of Cashiers reflects the larger American experience.

Beginning with Cherokee history and homeland, the exhibition traces the arrival of early settlers, the challenges of frontier life, the Civil War, the rise of tourism and resort culture, technological innovation, and the emergence of the modern Cashiers community.

More than a timeline of events, the exhibit examines how national debates, economic shifts, and cultural movements influenced the lives of local residents across generations.

This exhibition allows visitors to see Cashiers not as an isolated mountain community, but as a place deeply connected to the broader story of America. The people who lived here experienced many of the same challenges, opportunities, and transformations that shaped the nation.

One of the things I love most about local history is that it helps us see ourselves in larger stories. While this exhibition is rooted in Cashiers, it reveals connections to events and movements that shaped the entire nation. We hope visitors leave with a deeper appreciation for both the history of this community and its place within the American story.

We're located at 1942 Hwy. 107 South, just beyond the Crossroads.

*by Amelia Golcheski,
Cashiers Historical Society*

Thirty Years of **Summit Charter**

Summit Charter School's
30-year milestone
celebrates a
community-built K-12
school sustained by
shared commitment
across generations.

*Groundbreaking for Summit Charter School's
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This August marks a substantial milestone for Summit Charter School as the 30th year of education begins. The first classrooms opened in 1997 on the Village Green, bringing to life a visionary idea: that a community could come together to create a school reflecting its values, landscape, and shared commitment to children's education. That vision was made possible in North Carolina following the 1996 Charter Schools Act, and Summit was among the first class of charter schools approved in the state.

From the earliest days, Summit has been shaped not by a single founder or moment, but by many hands and voices – families, educators, students, and community members who believed that education could be both rigorous and deeply connected to place.

Looking at a school today, it's easy to see buildings, programs, traditions, and milestones. What is harder to see is the steady layer of commitment underneath it all. At Summit, that foundation has always been community. Families who trusted a new idea in public education. Educators who built curriculum while also building culture. Students who brought curiosity, leadership, and their own sense of belonging. Volunteers, business owners, and supporters who contributed in countless ways, both tangible and quiet.

As a tuition-free public charter school, Summit receives less public funding than traditional public schools, making community support all the more essential in sustaining the Summit experience.

Over time, Summit has grown and changed: expanding to a full K-12 school, creating beloved traditions, and adding spaces where learning occurs in many forms. Through all of this growth, what has remained constant is not a building or a program, but a shared responsibility: to care for a school that belongs to all of us. Summit is not the work of one group or one moment in time, but the ongoing result of thousands of decisions, contributions, and acts of intentional participation over three decades.

We mark this 30-year milestone with deep gratitude – for those who first imagined what Summit could be, for those who have nurtured it through the years, and for those who continue to shape it for both today and tomorrow.

As we look ahead at the next chapter of Summit, guided by a new strategic plan and strengthened by a growing endowment, we do so in continuity with Summit's past: a school built and sustained by community.

*by Laura Lamont,
Summit Charter School*



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Playing in the **Rhythm of the Horse**

Carpe Diem's summer equine sessions taught Boys and Girls Club participants how to safely handle, groom, and partner with horses — discovering patience, focus, and the quiet power of connection through the art of lunging.



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We blinked once again and the calendar now says August! The year seems to be passing like a horse running across the open field!

We have completed the summer sessions of the equine activities for the participants of the Boys and Girls Club. Children of all ages from Cashiers and Highlands have enjoyed spending time with the horses of Carpe Diem. They have learned how to interact with the horses safely as well as how to groom and care for them.

The “brave” participants (their choice) learn how to lunge and exercise them in the arena while others choose to watch. It’s an experience in learning how to partner with a 1,000-pound sentient being that operates on a fear-and-flight mentality.

Learning the art of lunging teaches the person doing the activity how to calmly ask the horse to walk, trot, or canter in a

circle. They learn to “direct” their energy by looking at the horse’s hindquarter, the lunge line in one hand and the other hand extended out, pointing at the tailhead, visualizing an imaginary line between fingertip and tail. Energetically, they “drive” the horse in a circle.

“...the art of lunging teaches the person doing the activity how to calmly ask the horse to walk, trot, or canter in a circle.

It’s a powerful learning, realizing that with focused intent and a calm demeanor, the horse will respond first by walking in a circle, and with the “push” of the lunger’s hand in the air, continuing to focus on the tailhead, the horse will increase its speed.

Once the horse has responded to their request to circle at a walk, trot, and even

canter, a partnership forms. The final step: the lunger turns their energy inward by dropping the extended arm; the inside shoulder turns away from the horse, resulting in the horse turning toward them and stopping. That’s the basis of “joining up,” being one with a horse.

Lunging is one of those activities that can teach each of us a variety of skills: patience, perseverance, and partnership. Asking a 1,000-pound-plus flight animal to follow your lead with nothing more than you visualizing pushing their energy with an extended arm can be purely magical.

*by Sue Blair,
Carpe Diem Farms*



Hood Craddock, CPA, EVP, Director of Family Office Services
James McArthur, EVP, Family Office Services



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Stone Cottage's Refined Retreat

This refined Highlands retreat pairs walkable convenience with timeless mountain elegance, offering updated craftsmanship, flexible guest spaces, and a serene setting just minutes from Main Street.

Tucked just two minutes from Main Street, 142 Lucerne Drive manages a rare balance – close to everything yet quietly apart. Known as Stone Cottage, this Highlands residence captures the essence of mountain living with a refined, timeless touch.

Originally built in 1976 and thoughtfully renovated in 2013, the home has been lovingly maintained and updated, blending craftsmanship with comfort. Its interiors pair Carrara marble and Waterworks fixtures with vaulted, beamed ceilings and multiple stone fireplaces, creating a space that feels both elegant and deeply rooted in its mountain setting.

The main living areas invite gathering and ease. A formal dining room, complete with its own fireplace, sets the stage for memorable meals and holiday celebrations. Nearby, the den offers a relaxed retreat – a place to watch the game, read by the fire, or simply enjoy an unhurried afternoon. Throughout, the home's layout encourages connection while allowing for quiet moments of solitude.

The primary suite on the main level enhances that sense of retreat. With direct access to the back porch and a stone-clad wood-burning fireplace nearby, it's a private haven designed for comfort. The kitchen and baths continue the home's thoughtful approach, featuring updated finishes and heated floors in select areas – details that elevate everyday living.

Upstairs, the home expands beautifully for guests. A private apartment with a full bath and kitchenette offers flexibility for extended stays, while a sleeping loft and built-in bunk room provide space for children, grandchildren, or visiting friends. A loft off the bunk room can serve as an office, reading nook, or additional sleeping area, adding versatility without sacrificing charm.

Outside, the setting is as appealing as the interiors. The 0.3-acre property is landscaped and framed by mountain views, with multiple porches and a courtyard-style exterior that enhances its sense of arrival. An oversized two-car garage adds practicality, while the overall design supports both everyday living and

seasonal entertaining.

Every detail of Stone Cottage reflects the kind of elevated Highlands lifestyle that continues to draw buyers to the area – a blend of privacy, beauty, and walkable convenience. It's a home that feels equally suited to elegant entertaining and quiet mornings by the fire, embodying the enduring appeal of Highlands living.

Currently offered at \$3,195,000, this residence stands as a polished mountain retreat where craftsmanship and comfort meet.

Offered by Andrea Gabbard with Highlands Sotheby's International Realty.

Andrea brings genuine warmth and deep local knowledge to every transaction. Originally from Saratoga, New York, she has fully embraced mountain life and the Southern hospitality

that defines Highlands. Her background as a professionally trained chef and experienced homebuilder gives her clients a unique advantage – she sees not only what a home is, but what it can become.

Known for her attention to detail, steady guidance, and enthusiasm for the community she calls home, Andrea has become one of the area's most trusted real estate professionals. When she isn't helping clients find their perfect mountain retreat, she enjoys hiking, exploring the local arts scene, and volunteering with area nonprofits.

To learn more about Stone Cottage or other Highlands properties, contact Andrea Gabbard at (828) 200-6742.

See additional photos of this property on pages 187-188.





Welcome to "Stone Cottage"

Featured in one of Atlanta's premier design magazines. Located just 2 minutes from Main Street in Highlands.
Completely renovated in 2013. 4 fireplaces, 3 bedrooms, 3.5 bathrooms, two-car garage, generator.
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66 Summit Trail, Highlands

*4 bedrooms, 4 baths 2 half baths, Incredible views, fully renovated,
near downtown, care-takers suite, generator, 2 car garage*

\$2,195,000



42 Hemlock Ridge, Highlands

*4 bedrooms, 4 baths, gated community,
Close to downtown*

\$1,999,000



806 N 4th Street, Highlands

*3 bedrooms, 2 baths
Downtown Highlands*

\$1,350,000



354 Flat Mountain Estates - Highlands

*4 Bedroom 4 Bath custom estate with floor-to-ceiling glass
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19A - Whiteside Mountain Road, Highlands
*2 bedrooms, 2 baths, Loft/extra sleeping area,
 Garage - Near the clubhouse. Almost 1 acre.*
\$695,000



19 B- Whiteside Mountain Rd, Highlands
*2 bedrooms, 2 baths, Loft/extra sleeping area,
 Garage - Near the clubhouse. Almost 1 acre.*
\$795,000



Lot 33 Summit Trail, Highlands
*Incredible views, community
 water and sewer.*
\$125,000



38 Rock Hill Road, Highlands
*3 Bedrooms 3 baths
 Incredible views.*
\$1,650,000



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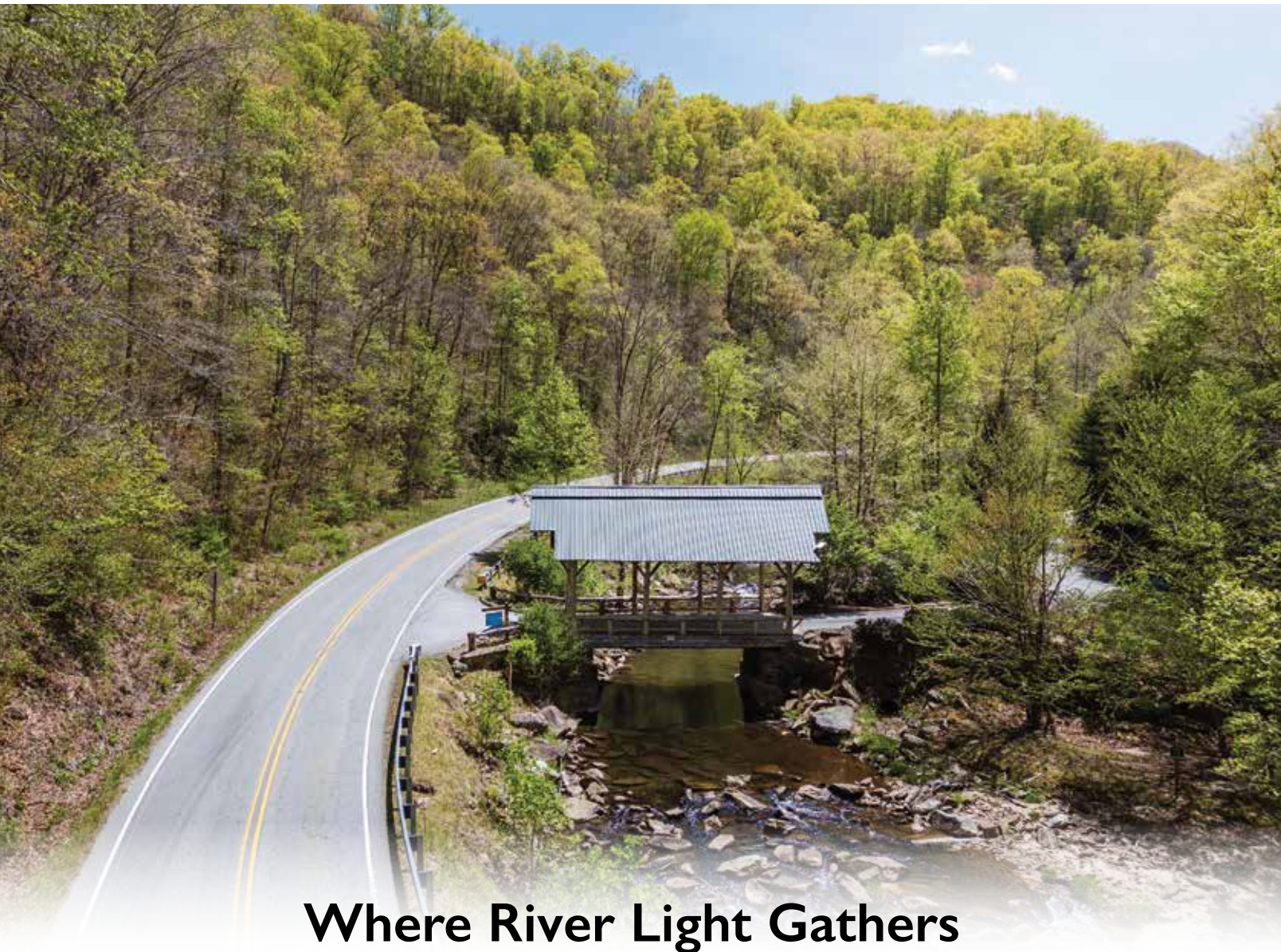
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Waterdance offers a rare mix of river access and ridge-top views, shaped by careful stewardship and the quiet character of the Tuckasegee landscape.

If you've been reading *The Laurel* for any length of time, you know we're passionate about the wild places that ring the Highlands–Cashiers Plateau.

That's why we're excited to spotlight a new community springing up in Jackson County's Tuckasegee, a bend in the landscape where water, stone, and sky seem to collaborate. Waterdance – a privately owned, gated community tucked along the secluded West Fork of the Tuckasegee River – lives within that bend. It's a place shaped by ancient geology and modern stewardship, a mountain enclave that feels

both timeless and carefully tended.

The landscape rises and folds around Waterdance in soft blue layers.

Here, elevations climb from 2,400 feet to a sweeping 3,600 at the ridge, offering long-range vistas, cool summer air, and the kind of seasonal rhythm that makes this little corner of the Southern Appalachians cherished. Spring brings Mountain Laurel and Rhododendron; fall arrives in a blaze of color; winter is gentler than in higher ranges; and summer offers a welcome escape for visitors from everywhere in the continental United States.

Waterdance's homes and homesites sit among woodlands, beside majestic boulders, and along Grassy Creek and Prickly Ash Creek. The community's infrastructure is intentionally unobtrusive – paved roads, underground electrical service, and an electronic access gate preserve the quiet beauty of the land. A community-wide water system, years in the making, reflects the dedication of Waterdance's long-serving board of directors.

But the defining feature is water. The wild and scenic Tuckasegee River – “The Tuck” – runs through the heart of Jackson

County, and its West Fork threads directly through Waterdance. Few communities offer both river frontage and mountaintop views, but Waterdance does, with more than a mile of catch-and-release fly-fishing water, a couple of irresistible swimming holes, and easy access to paddling, kayaking, and drift-boat fishing just downstream.

Five miles south, Lake Glenville – one of the largest high-elevation lakes east of the Rockies – expands the possibilities. With

26 miles of shoreline, three waterfalls, seven islands, and a nearby marina, it's a haven for bass fishing, watersports, and sunset cruising.

And of course, southern Jackson County itself is a wonderland, home to hundreds of waterfalls – perhaps more than any county in the nation – many just a short drive away. And when residents venture out, they find themselves close to Glenville, Cashiers and Highlands – towns filled with

dining, lodging, shopping, and the easy hospitality that defines this corner of the Blue Ridge.

Waterdance offers a simple invitation: step into a landscape shaped by river light, mountain air, and the enduring beauty of Jackson County – and let it feel like home.

To learn more about the promise and possibilities offered by this magnificent natural wonder, visit waterdancenc.com.

by Luke Osteen



What the Hats Hold

Two heirloom hats long carried by Lec Hobbs are restored with a care that reaches back to the men who originally wore them, letting their legacy feel quietly renewed as the hats come back to life.



Derek Pollard and Lec Hobbs



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Here at *The Laurel* are suckers for sentimental stories that end with a happy reunion.

For Highlander Lec Hobbs, the reunion came decades after he lost both of his grandfathers at 17.

What remained of them – what he carried forward – were two hats: his mom's father's Panama, worn faithfully to church, and his dad's father's straw cowboy hat, the one that saw long days in the yard and summers under the sun.

Lec kept them through moves, seasons, and the slow wear of time, even as they grew squished, softened, and misshapen.

"I've kept them all these years," he says. "They got smashed over time. They are both a lot of hat."

For a long while, he assumed they were beyond saving – too sentimental to throw away, too battered to wear again.

Then, at the Bear Shadow Music Festival, Lec wandered past a booth run by The Highlands Hatter and struck up a conversation with Derek Pollard. When he

mentioned the two heirlooms, Derek didn't hesitate: *Bring them in. We can help.*

It took a couple more years – life being life – before Lec remembered to pack the hats for a trip up the mountain. But when he finally carried them into the shop, Derek saw not old hats, but legacy.

They looked a little like roadkill – the kind you swerve around on the way to Franklin. Derek didn't flinch. He picked them up like heirlooms instead of survivors.

Hat restoration, Derek explains, is a craft built on patience and respect for what time has left behind.

"Over time, we've developed our own restoration techniques that allow us to revive hats while preserving their original character whenever possible," he says. "Every restoration is approached individually, as no two hats wear or age the same. Our goal is never to erase a hat's history, but to restore its structure, shape, and appearance so it can be enjoyed for years to come."

Restoration is a service The Highlands Hatter consistently offers, though many clients do not initially realize it is available. Custom hats are the shop's primary focus, but restoring a beloved piece of headwear carries its own reward.

"Restoring a cherished piece of headwear is especially rewarding because of the sentimental value these hats often carry," Derek says. "Giving a beloved hat a second life is one of the most gratifying aspects of what we do."

Derek cleaned Lec's hats, steamed them, and reshaped them, coaxing each brim and crease back into dignity.

"I figured I would never wear them," Lec says. "But now I can see getting them out on fun occasions."

On the Plateau, where memory is often the most cherished inheritance, two grandfathers' hats have found their second life – carried forward, brim first, into whatever Lec encounters.

by Luke Osteen

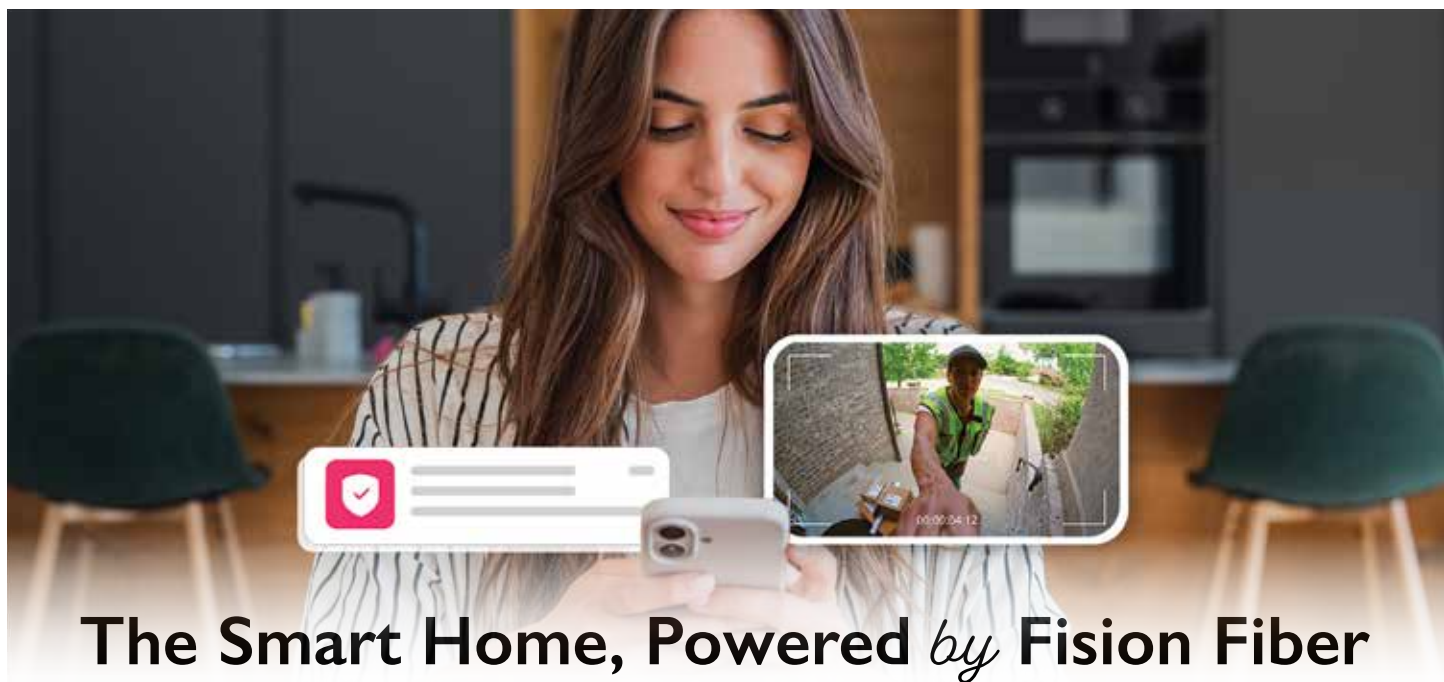
HOP Gallery-House of Pictures

by Tiho Trichkov

HOP Gallery is an artist-run space offering a unique collection of Fine Art Photography that blends gorgeous mountain landscapes from the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau and the Great Smoky Mountains with travel gems from all over the world, all created by the award-winning photographer Tiho Trichkov.

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by Kelly Frye, Hotwire Communications



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A Retreat Built *with* Intention

A carefully considered renovation transformed an inefficient primary bathroom into a refined retreat where beauty, function, and everyday living coexist effortlessly.

A thoughtfully designed home should do more than impress, it should quietly improve the way you live. For Anne Buresh, the most rewarding projects rarely begin with selecting finishes or choosing a color palette. They begin with a conversation.

“How do you want to live here?”



It's a question she asks every client, and one that shaped the renovation of this primary bathroom. After more than a decade in their home, the homeowners weren't simply ready for a cosmetic update, they were ready for a space that reflected the life they envisioned for the years ahead.

The existing bathroom was generous in size, but inefficient in function. A centrally placed soaking tub interrupted the room's natural flow, storage was limited, and the layout no longer served the homeowners' daily routines.

"We completely reimagined how the room could work," she says. "Once the layout supports the way someone lives, the design decisions become much more intentional."

One of the most transformative changes was converting the former primary closet into an expansive steam shower, opening the room both visually and functionally. The redesigned layout created distinct areas for relaxing, getting ready, and everyday routines while allowing natural light to move freely throughout the space.

The homeowners' wish list reflected a desire for comfort as much as luxury: heated floors, towel warmers, a steam shower, generous storage, a soaking tub, and a dedicated vanity designed with concealed electrical outlets for everyday essentials. Comfortable seating completed the room, encouraging moments of pause rather than hurried routines.

For Anne, those details represent a larger philosophy.

"Luxury isn't just about beautiful materials," she says. "It's about creating a home that makes everyday life feel easier, calmer, and



more enjoyable."

Warm walnut cabinetry anchors the room, while marble-inspired stone, polished nickel fixtures, and large-format tile create a timeless backdrop. Soft dusty blue upholstery introduces warmth and color without competing with the architecture, and an elegant hand-blown crystal chandelier adds a sense of quiet refinement overhead.

Every element was chosen not because it was trending, but because it would endure.

"I've always believed that timeless design comes from thoughtful decisions rather than trends," Anne explains. "When materials are authentic and every detail has purpose, the room continues to feel beautiful for years to come."

That philosophy extends well beyond aesthetics. Hidden storage solutions, custom cabinetry, layered lighting, and carefully considered proportions work together almost unnoticed, quietly supporting the homeowners' daily routines.

The finished space feels less like a bathroom and more like a private retreat; one that encourages slowing down, lingering a little longer, and appreciating the rituals of everyday life.

It's a reminder that great design isn't measured solely by what you see. anneburesh.com.



Dale Gordon, Serenity Richards, and Mattilynn Sneed



A New Chapter *at* The Village Green

The Village Green welcomes Serenity Richards as its new Operations & Development Coordinator, a role designed to strengthen both daily operations and long-term support for the park's mission.

The Village Green has appointed Serenity Richards as its new Operations and Development Coordinator.

In this newly created position, Serenity will provide administrative and operational support while also assisting with development initiatives, grant management, donor stewardship, and the pursuit of new funding opportunities that will help advance The Village Green's mission for years to come.

Serenity brings a wealth of organizational experience, community knowledge, and a deep appreciation for the Cashiers area. Her strong relationships throughout the community and passion for public service make her an excellent addition to The Village Green team.

"We are thrilled to welcome Serenity to The Village Green," says Dale Gordon, Executive Director. "As our organization continues to grow, it has become increasingly important to strengthen our operational capacity while expanding our development efforts. Serenity's unique skill set, professionalism, and commitment to our community make her an ideal fit for this role."

Many community members know

Serenity through her years of service at the Albert Carlton-Cashiers Community Library, where she earned a reputation for professionalism, community engagement, and a genuine commitment to serving others. Her dedication to the people of Cashiers and her passion for strengthening community connections have made her a familiar and respected presence throughout the Plateau.

"Serenity's commitment to our community and her ability to connect with people make her an outstanding addition to The Village Green team," said Brandy Letson, Chair of The Village Green Board of Directors. "As we look toward the future, we are excited to invest in the people and resources that will help The Village Green continue to thrive. Serenity brings both talent and heart to this role, and we are delighted to welcome her to the organization."

The creation of the Operations and Development Coordinator position reflects The Village Green's ongoing commitment to serving the community through exceptional programming, environmental stewardship, and responsible organizational growth. The role will help support the more than 200 days of free community events and

programs hosted annually at the park while increasing the organization's capacity to pursue grants, cultivate donor relationships, and secure additional resources for future projects and initiatives.

"I am honored to join The Village Green team and contribute to an organization that means so much to our community," says Richards. "The Village Green is truly the heart of Cashiers, and I look forward to helping advance its mission and ensuring it remains a vibrant gathering place for residents and visitors alike."

Known as the Heart of Cashiers, The Village Green is a privately conserved, nonprofit park that serves as a center for civic, cultural, recreational, educational, and community activities. Open 365 days a year, the park welcomes thousands of residents and visitors annually and hosts concerts, festivals, educational programs, art exhibitions, and community gatherings throughout the year.

For more information about The Village Green, visit villagegreencashiersnc.com.

by Luke Osteen



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Our team is deeply embedded in the local community and invites you to join us at some amazing events we're involved in.

2026 *Events* CALENDAR

➤ 07-09 FRIDAY-SUNDAY **CASHIERS ANNUAL ANTIQUE SHOW**
August at The Village Green Commons

➤ 28-05 DAILY **CASHIERS DESIGNER SHOWHOUSE**
August - September Cashiers Lake

➤ 03 THURSDAY **YOUNG PRESERVATIONIST EVENT**
September Benefitting the Cashiers Historical Society

➤ 09-11 FRIDAY-SUNDAY **CASHIERS VALLEY LEAF FESTIVAL**
October at The Village Green

➤ 26 SUNDAY
October

SOUTHERN CHEF'S POTLUCK
The Farm at Old Edwards

➤ 30 FRIDAY
October

GOBLINS ON THE GREEN
at The Village Green

➤ 13 FRIDAY
November

FARM HARVEST DINNER & BARN DANCE
16th Annual at Old Edwards

➤ 26 THURSDAY
November

GOBBLE ON THE GREEN
Benefitting The Village Green

➤ 27-28 FRIDAY - SATURDAY
November Benefitting Summit Charter School Foundation

CASHIERS FESTIVAL OF TREES

Fifty Years of Blue Ridge

Blue Ridge School & Early College celebrates its 50th graduating class, marking five decades of learning, leadership, and community connection – and looking ahead to the next chapter already taking shape.




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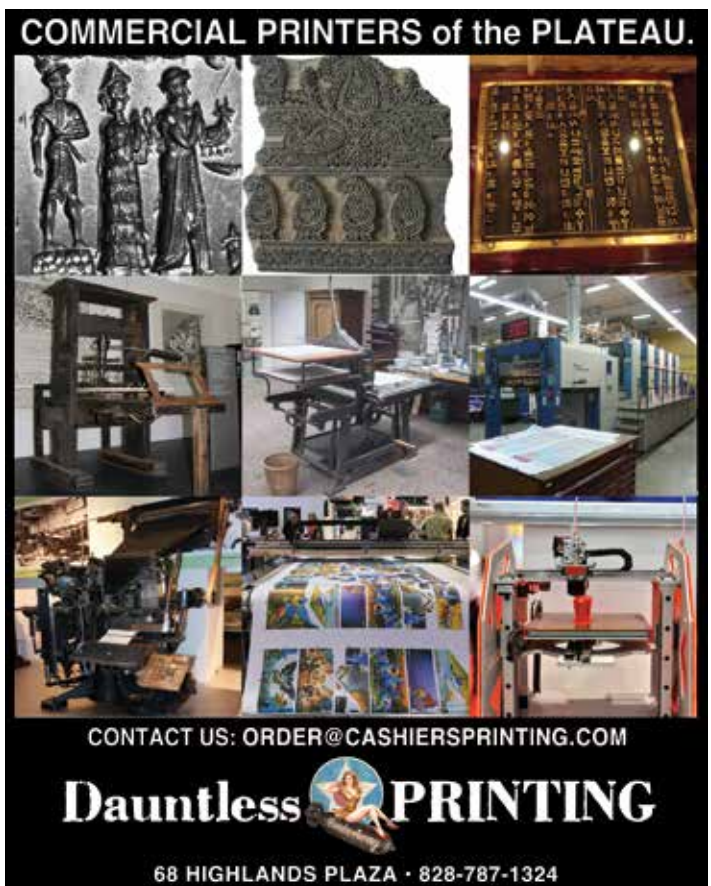


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When the Class of 2026 crossed the stage this spring, they did more than receive their diplomas – they became Blue Ridge School & Early College's 50th graduating class, marking a milestone half a century in the making.

For 50 years, Blue Ridge has been woven into the fabric of the Cashiers community. Its classrooms have shaped generations of students, its teachers have become lifelong mentors, and its hallways have welcomed families whose connections to the school span decades. This anniversary offers an opportunity to celebrate not only where Blue Ridge has been, but where it is headed.

Spend a few minutes on campus and one thing becomes immediately clear – this is more than a place where students attend classes. It is a place where potential is nurtured, confidence grows, and young learners blossom into tomorrow's leaders.

For many students, that journey begins in preschool and continues on the same cam-

pus through graduation – and even beyond. At Blue Ridge Early College, students have the opportunity to earn college credit while completing high school, making it possible to leave campus with both a diploma and a college degree within reach.

This year, two graduates earned associate degrees through Southwestern Community College as they received their high school diplomas, while several classmates will return for a 13th year to complete their degrees.

While Blue Ridge is deeply rooted in tradition, it's never stopped looking ahead. In recent years, students have embraced new opportunities like the Drone Technology Program, where hands-on learning opens doors to careers in aviation, engineering, public safety, and other emerging industries.

Made possible through the support of the Blue Ridge Education Foundation, the program is one example of how Blue Ridge continues to prepare students not only for

today's world, but for tomorrow's.

The next chapter of Blue Ridge is already beginning to take shape. Plans are moving forward for significant capital improvements, including a new competition gymnasium and a modern kitchen and cafeteria – projects that will serve students for decades to come and ensure the campus continues to meet the needs of future generations.

The true measure of Blue Ridge, however, has never been found in its buildings or programs. It is found in the people. Today, second- and even third-generation Bobcats proudly walk the same hallways their parents and grandparents once did, continuing a tradition that has connected families and strengthened the Cashiers community for 50 years.

The first 50 years built a remarkable legacy. The next 50 are already beginning – and somewhere on campus today, another young Bobcat is taking that very first step.

by Kendra Pressley, Blue Ridge School



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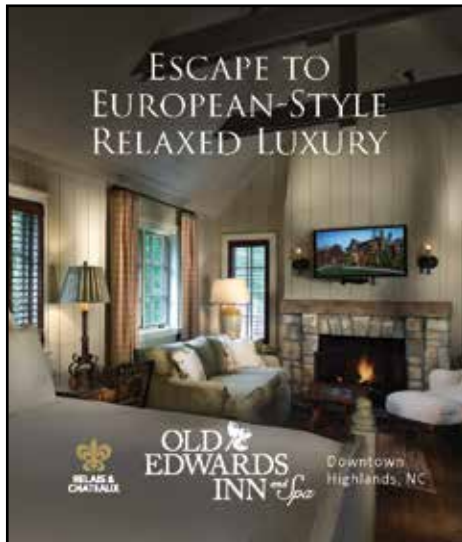
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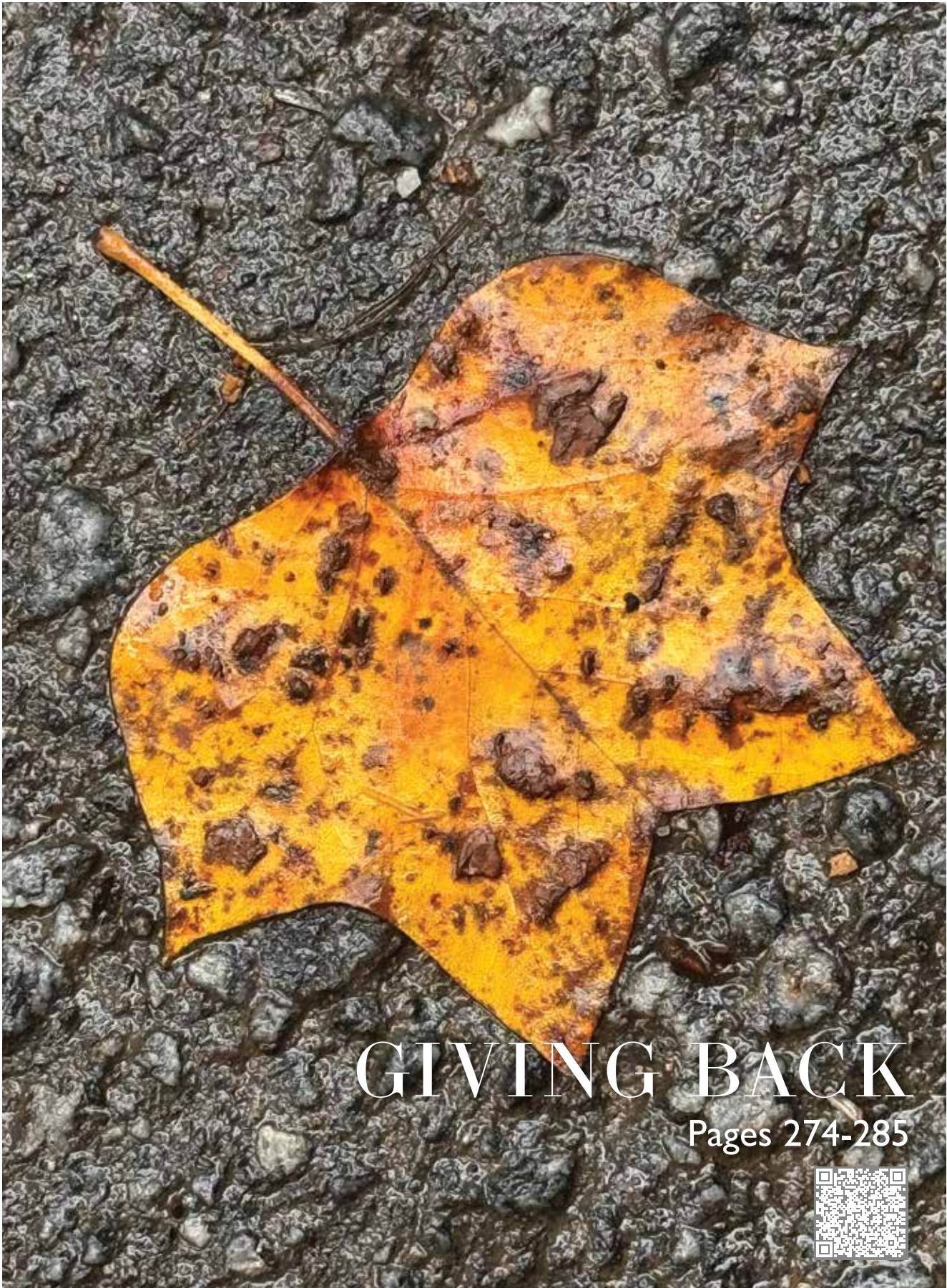
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GIVING BACK

Pages 274-285





A Shelter Filled With Joy

At Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society, dogs spend their days exploring acres of outdoor play yards, enjoying real enrichment and care while they wait for the families who will one day call them their own.

When most people picture an animal shelter, they imagine rows of kennels.

We don't blame them. That's the image many of us have carried around for years. The old "dog pound."

Now let us paint you a different picture.

Picture a beautiful mountain morning here on the Plateau. Dogs racing through acres of play yards. Friends chasing one another. Tails wagging. Noses exploring every new scent. Volunteers throwing tennis balls. Staff members laughing right alongside them.

At the Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society, our dogs don't spend their days waiting. They spend them being, well... dogs.

Our 14 outdoor play yards aren't narrow fenced runs or tiny exercise areas. They stretch across acres of our campus, giving the dogs in our care room to romp, run, play, explore, and simply enjoy life while they wait for the families who will one day

call them their own.

Sometimes they'll even pause whatever important canine business they're conducting to bark enthusiastically as the UPS truck makes its daily appearance. We suspect they're simply making sure the driver feels properly welcomed.

One of our favorite residents has developed her own end-of-day routine.

Keowee, a sweet Border Collie mix, has discovered that after a full day of outdoor adventures, there's really no reason to walk back to the Adoption Center.

Instead, she climbs into our side-by-side and enjoys a chauffeur-driven ride home for dinner.

And she loves every second of it.

Of course, we'd happily trade her daily chauffeur service for the one thing better. A forever family.

The kind that enjoys weekend road trips. The kind that doesn't mind a happy passenger riding shotgun. The kind with

reliable transportation, because Keowee is only two years old and she's in it for the long haul.

And while we're happy to provide transportation around campus, we'd love nothing more than to see her climb into a vehicle with a bumper sticker that says:

My Other Car is a Forever Home.

Established in 1987, Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit animal welfare organization located at 200 Gable Drive in Sapphire, one-and-a-half miles east of the Cashiers Ingles in between Cedar Creek Club and Lonesome Valley on Highway 64. Our no-kill shelter is open Tuesday–Saturday, 10 A.M.–4 P.M. For more information, visit us online at chhumanesociety.org or call (828) 743-5752. Tax-deductible donations to support our lifesaving work can be mailed to: CHHS, P.O. Box 638, Cashiers, NC 28717.

*by David Stroud,
Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society*

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The Literacy & Learning Center is thrilled to welcome both new faces and returning families for the 2026–27 school year, launching a comprehensive suite of free educational initiatives designed to empower community members of all ages.

A Bright Start in Pre-K

The educational journey kicks off with our dedicated Pre-K program, which provides a supportive, enriching environment Monday through Friday from 8:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. Focused on fostering social-emotional growth and critical thinking, the program blends meaningful play with essential early literacy skills. It is designed to be a warm space where children and their families can immediately feel right at home.

Engaging After-School Enrichment

As students progress into elementary and middle school, TL&LC remains a cornerstone of academic achievement through its popular After-School programs, which

operate Monday through Friday.

Grades K–3: Young learners receive targeted homework assistance alongside unique, hands-on activities. These enriching experiences are boosted by our strong community partnerships with local organizations, including The Bascom, the Highlands Biological Foundation, Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, Hudson Library, and the Highlands Fire Department.

Grades 4–8: Older students gather daily for structured academic support, receiving the guidance they need to tackle complex homework assignments, navigate research projects, and master core curriculum concepts.

Tailored One-on-One Support

Recognizing that some students thrive with a more personalized approach, the Center continues to offer individualized tutoring. This one-on-one mentorship is available to learners of any age and in any subject. Sessions are typically structured for one hour, twice a week, providing the tools and confidence a student needs to excel.

As the new academic year begins, TL&LC looks forward to championing the growth, curiosity, and success of every single student who walks through our doors.

Secure Your Student's Spot Today

Enrollment is officially open across all programs!

To register for the After-School program: Visit theliteracyandlearningcenter.org/youth.

To register for the Pre-K program: Visit theliteracyandlearningcenter.org/pre-k.

For Pre-K information, please get in touch with Carolyn Middlebrooks at cmiddlebrooks@theliteracyandlearningcenter.org. For other enrollment inquiries, programmatic details, or questions, please reach out to Kara Long at klong@theliteracyandlearningcenter.org or call (828) 526-0863. Please also feel free to visit TheLiteracyandLearningCenter.org.

by Anna Norton,

The Literacy & Learning Center



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A Gift for Growing Families

A CAPTRUST Community Foundation gift of \$2,500 will help the Highlands Community Child Development Center continue offering dependable care and early-learning support for local families.

Left to right: Diane Dickey, HCCDC board president; Demitra Passmore, director; Robin Cook, CAPTRUST financial advisor; and Tracy Wade, HCCDC board member.



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The CAPTRUST Community Foundation and CAPTRUST Financial Advisor Robin Cook have awarded a \$2,500 grant to the Highlands Community Child Development Center, furthering their shared commitment to enriching the lives of children and supporting the communities where CAPTRUST employees live and work.

Founded by CAPTRUST employees in 2007, the CAPTRUST Community Foundation was created as a way for employees to give back to the places they call home. Through its grant program, the Foundation supports local charitable organizations that serve children and families. Employee contributions are matched by CAPTRUST, helping extend the reach and impact of each gift.

The opportunity to support the center began when board member Tracy Wade shared information with Cook about the

needs of the Highlands Community Child Development Center.

“When Tracy made me aware of some of the needs at the Highlands Community Child Development Center, it seemed like the perfect fit for our employee grants program,” Cook said. “As a parent myself, I

We are proud to support the Highlands community that we serve and to help ensure local families have access to the resources they need.

understand how important access to quality childcare is. It was essential for me as I continued to build my career after becoming a parent.”

Cook said the need for quality, affordable childcare is especially meaningful in Highlands.

“Quality, affordable childcare is essential to the well-being of working families and

the strength of our local economy,” she said. “This is especially important in Highlands, where much of the workforce comes from outside the community. We are proud to support the Highlands community that we serve and to help ensure local families have access to the resources they need.”

“The CAPTRUST Community Foundation’s mission is focused on enriching the lives of children, and this organization plays a vital role in supporting families throughout our community,” Cook added.

Cook submitted the grant application on behalf of the center, and the Foundation approved the full \$2,500 request.

The grant will help the Highlands Community Child Development Center continue its mission of providing quality care and educational opportunities for children while supporting working families throughout the region.

by Luke Osteen



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Building a Home for Highlands

The Boys & Girls Club of the Plateau has launched an \$8 million Capital Campaign to build a permanent Club at the Highlands Recreation Center, creating expanded youth programming and a new community gathering space expected to open in Fall 2028.



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The Boys & Girls Club of the Plateau has officially launched its \$8 million Capital Campaign to build a permanent Boys & Girls Club on the grounds of the Highlands Recreation Center, creating a lasting investment in the future of Highlands children, families, and the community.

The project represents a unique public-private partnership between the Town of Highlands and Boys & Girls Club of the Plateau that will benefit generations of residents. Through the collaboration, the town is providing the land while BGCP will raise the funds to design and construct the facility. Upon completion, ownership of the building will be transferred to the town, creating a permanent public asset that will serve both local youth and the broader community for decades to come.

BGCP will operate the facility, providing free after-school and summer programming for youth in kindergarten through 12th grade who live in the Highlands area or whose parents or guardians work in the community. During evenings, weekends,

and other non-program hours, the building, outdoor pavilion, and surrounding grounds will be available for community meetings, educational programs, nonprofit events, concerts, festivals, and other civic gatherings, making it both a Boys & Girls Club and a welcoming community gathering place.

Located in the heart of Highlands on the Recreation Center campus, the new Club will provide members with convenient access to the Recreation Center amenities, swimming pool, athletic fields, walking trails, and the newly renovated Highlands Park playground. Its central location, just minutes from Highlands School and downtown, will also improve transportation for families and allow more children to participate in high-quality after-school and summer programming.

"This is much more than a building," said Carmen Waite, Chief Executive Officer of Boys & Girls Club of the Plateau. "It's an investment in the future of Highlands. Thanks to the vision of the Town of Highlands and the generosity of our community, we're creating a place where children can thrive,

families can succeed, and the community can gather."

The need for expanded space has become increasingly urgent. BGCP's current Highlands Club has reached capacity, limiting its ability to serve additional youth. The existing location also presents transportation challenges, requiring lengthy bus routes from Highlands School and making pick-up difficult for some working families. The new facility will significantly expand access to free out-of-school programming for youth in kindergarten through 12th grade, with dedicated space for middle and high school students that will enhance leadership development, career exploration, workforce readiness, academic support, and life skills programming.

The new Club is expected to open in Fall 2028. For more information, call (828) 743-2775 or email kayla@bgcplateau.org. Visit our website at bgcplateau.org.

*by Kayla Deaton,
The Boys & Girls Club of the Plateau*



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WestBridge *at* Fifty

WestBridge Vocational was founded in 1976 by parents who believed their adult children with disabilities deserved the same opportunities to work, grow, and be active members of their communities as anyone else. What began as the Jackson County Sheltered Workshop has evolved over five decades into an organization that now serves approximately 140 individuals each year across Jackson, Macon, and Swain Counties, as well as the Qualla Boundary.

Over the years, WestBridge has adapted to the changing needs of the people and communities it serves. In 2019, the organization changed its name from Webster Enterprises to WestBridge Vocational, reflecting a renewed vision and continued commitment to creating meaningful opportunities for individuals with barriers

to employment. Today, WestBridge helps people learn, earn, and thrive through community-based employment services, work-based learning experiences, training programs, and individualized support.

Unlike the sheltered workshop model of the past, individuals taking part in our facility-based employment programs earn at least minimum wage, with opportunities for wage growth based on productivity and performance. Most of the employment supports we provide happens directly within the community, helping individuals build skills, gain experience, and achieve success in integrated workplaces.

At its core, WestBridge's mission is simple: Connecting people to opportunity. Through partnerships with local businesses, schools, colleges, and community organizations, we help individuals

develop workplace skills, explore career paths, secure employment, and increase their independence. Programs such as Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), Bridge to Work, Work Adjustment Training, Supported Employment, and Long-Term Follow-Along services are designed to meet people where they are and help them take the next step toward their goals. While each program serves a different purpose, they all share the same aim—helping individuals find meaningful paths to employment and participation in their communities.

One thing that makes WestBridge special is that we are often seen as a place that provides hope. Every day, we work with people who have been told “no,” who have struggled to find opportunities, or who simply need someone to recognize their potential. We believe everyone deserves the



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opportunity to contribute, earn a paycheck, and experience the dignity that comes with meaningful work. Watching individuals secure their first job, gain confidence, increase their independence, or achieve goals they once thought were out of reach reminds us why this work matters. Success is measured not only by employment outcomes, but by the confidence, purpose, and sense of belonging individuals gain along the way.

As Community Engagement Specialist, I have the privilege of helping build the relationships that make those opportunities possible. My work centers on connecting WestBridge's mission to the broader community by developing partnerships with employers, schools, chambers of commerce, civic groups, colleges, and nonprofit organizations throughout Western North Carolina. Those relationships create opportunities for workplace experiences, employment placements, sponsorships, volunteers, and community support.

Equally important, they help raise

awareness about the talents, abilities, and contributions of the individuals we serve. One of the greatest lessons I have learned is that barriers are often created by a lack of understanding rather than a lack of ability. By sharing success stories, creating connections, and encouraging businesses and community members to engage with our programs, we help open doors that may not have existed before. Every business that offers an opportunity, every community partner who collaborates with us, and every sponsor who supports our work becomes part of our mission in action.

I also had the opportunity to take part in Leadership Cashiers as a member of the Class of 2020. Although much of the program took place virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it offered valuable insight into the organizations, leaders, and resources that make the Cashiers community unique. One of the most important lessons I learned was that resources only make a difference when people know they

exist and understand how to access them. That lesson continues to guide me to my work today. Whether I am introducing WestBridge to a new community partner, helping connect an individual to services, or creating opportunities for collaboration, I am constantly reminded of the importance of awareness, communication, and relationship building.

As we look toward the future, our mission stays the same as it was in 1976: helping people discover their strengths, connect with opportunities, and build meaningful lives in their communities. While much has changed over the last five decades, the belief that every person deserves the chance to succeed continues to guide everything we do. For 50 years, WestBridge has been creating opportunities, fostering independence, and building stronger communities. We look forward to continuing that work for generations to come.

by Chris Stuckey, WestBridge Vocational Inc.



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Double Your Impact for Justice

A generous supporter has issued a \$25,000 matching gift challenge to strengthen Pisgah Legal Services on the Plateau, giving donors the chance to double their impact and help neighbors facing eviction, domestic violence, disability denials, and other crises.

Representatives of Pisgah Legal Services and Cashiers Cares at a recent event.



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Every day, individuals and families face legal challenges with profound consequences for their safety, stability, and future.

From eviction and denied disability benefits to custody disputes involving domestic violence, many must navigate these crises without access to an attorney.

For them, the justice system can feel like a maze, one they have no idea how to navigate alone.

Free legal aid helps bridge that gap, ensuring that access to justice is not reserved only for those with means. Here on the Plateau, and throughout Western North Carolina, much of that need is met by Pisgah Legal Services, a nonprofit that plays a vital role in making the promise of equal justice a reality rather than an ideal by assisting more than 25,000 people with low incomes in the mountain region each year.

Locally, Cashiers resident Patricia Caddell is one of two dedicated attorneys who assist people in need who live in Jackson and Macon counties. "Our clients are often dealing with

multiple crises at once. A person facing eviction may also be struggling with a medical condition, job loss, or caring for children all at the same time.

"If we can intervene in time, we can stop a bad situation from spiraling out of control and becoming much worse. And we have Pisgah Legal's whole team of attorneys and advocates standing behind us, offering a broad array of holistic services that can improve the lives of our clients and their children in significant ways."

For almost 50 years, Pisgah Legal has provided critical legal support to individuals and families, including: veterans, the elderly, survivors of domestic violence and immigrants with a path to legally remaining in the country legally. Thanks to generous community support, legal aid plays a vital role in making the promise of equal justice a reality rather than an ideal.

When Pisgah Legal expanded to the Plateau in 2020, Regional Development Officer Leslie Manning said, "The response from the community has been

remarkable. Local philanthropists and supporters have rallied behind this mission because they see the impact and results of this organization and that helping neighbors through times of crisis strengthens the fabric of our entire community."

There are two offices on the Plateau where clients can meet with attorneys and caring advocates: at the Church of the Good Shepherd Bazaar Barn in Cashiers and at the Peggy Crosby Center in Highlands.

Generous supporters, Lisa and Glenn Ullman, recently issued a matching gift challenge of \$25,000 to raise funds locally for Pisgah Legal Services. This summer, donors can double the impact of their gifts when they join the challenge and give online at pisgahlegal.org/plateau or call Leslie Manning at (828) 575-1353 to learn more about all their giving options.

For more information, visit pisgahlegal.org/plateau.

by Erie White, Pisgah Legal Services




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A&A Produce +		P 52, 62	of Commerce	cashiersareachamber.com	P 248
A&A Property Cleanouts		P 271	Cashiers Farmers Market	cashiersfarmersmarket.com	P 161
ACP Home Interiors	acphomeinteriors.com	P 31	Cashiers Highlands Humane		
Allan Dearth			Society Paws & Boots	chhumanesociety.org/pawsandboots	P 236
and Sons Generators	adsemeregencypower.com	P 72	Cashiers Kitchen Co		P 124
Allison Diane Clothing		P 53	Cashiers Sotheby's		
America's Home Place	americashomeplace.com	P 278	International Realty	cashiers.com	P 78-87
Annawear	annawearnc.com	P 54	Cashiers Valley		
Anne Buresh Interior Design	anneburesh.com	P 263	Community Chorus		P 134
Annell Metsker	annell.com	P 129	Cashiers Valley Real Estate	cashiersvalley.com	P 267
Around Back			Center for Life Enrichment	clehighlands.com	P 173
at Rocky's Place	aroundbackatrockysplace.com	P 135	Charles Johnson		
Ashwood			Fine Art Photography	charlesjohnsonfineart.com	P 130
Construction Group	ashwoodconstructiongroup.com	P 277	Chattooga Gardens	chattoogagardens.com	P 228
B.H. Graning Landscapes, Inc.	bhglandscapes.com	P 70	Children's Edit	childrensedit.com	P 225
The Baked Bunny		P 171	Christie's International		
Balistreri Realty	laketoxawayliving.com	P 210	Real Estate	highlandscashierscire.com	P 148, 149
Barbara Jamison Paintings	barbarajamisonpaintings.com	P 5	Christine Hyde	artistchristinehyde.com	P 135
The Bascom	thebascom.org	P 67, 119	The Christmas Tree		P 140
Bazaar Barn		P 40, 284	Clark & Co.		
Bella Cotn	bellcotn.com	P 146, 285	Hardscape Supply	clarkhardscapes.com	P 268
Berkshire Hathaway	meadowsmountainrealty.com		Classic Lighting		
HomeServices		P 24, 25, 93, 191, 243	& Design, Inc.	classiclightinganddesign.com	P 102
Beth Poindexter Luxe		P 193	Clayton, Ga Events	visitclaytonga.net	P 281
Betsy Paul Properties	betsypaulproperties.com	P 291	Clean Cut Painters	cleancutpainters.com	P 225
Bijou		P 250	Counseling Center		
Bird Barn & Garden		P 124	of Highlands	counseling-center.org	P 244
Black Rock Design Build	blackrockdb.com	P 121, 270	Country Club Properties	ccphighlandsn.com	P 2
Blue Ridge Bedding			Craig Ragsdale	craigragdale.com	P 129
& Furniture	blueridgebedding.com	P 88	Crawford Construction		P 14
Blue Ridge Music		P 269	Creative Concepts		P 270
Blue Ridge Public Safety	blueridgepublicsafety.com	P 104	Creeside Construction		
Bodega by The Bull		P 178	Company		P 249
Bombshell Hair Boutique		P 232	DD Bullwinkel's Outdoors	ddbullwinkels.com	P 131
Bounds Cave Rug Gallery	boundscaverugs.com	P 27	Dana Kelly Oriental Rugs	danakellyrugs.com	P 63
The Brier Patch		P 62	Dauntless Printing		P 271, 268
Brookings Fly Shop	brookingsonline.com	P 49	David Harley MD	harleymd.com	P 45
Bryson's			Dead Artists Gallery	deadartistsgallery.com	P 139
Grading & Paving	brysongrading.com	P 245	The Dilly Deli		P 218
Bungalow Boutique	bungalow828.com	P 194	Dr. Anita Dormer	dranitamedicalesthetics.com	P 233
Burlingame	burlingame.com	P 101	The Dry Sink	thedrysink.com	P 51
Butler Galleries	butlergalleries.com	P 280	Duck Hawk Provisions	duckhawkprovisions.com	P 161
C Orrico	corrico.com	P 64	Dusty's		P 165
Calders Coffee Cafe	calderscoffeecafe.com	P 159	Dutchmans	dutchmansdesigns.com	P 58
Caliber Fine Properties	caliberfineproperties.com	P 56, 57	Earthshine Lodge	earthshinenc.com	P 218
CAPTRUST	captrust.com	P 228	Edgewood Antiques		P 142
Casa Amigos		P 150	Eight on Oak		P 275
Cashiers Celtic Table	cashiersceltictable.com	P 177	Elena's	elenagolf.com	P 96

Elevation		P 102	Highlands Smokehouse	highlandssmokehouse.com	P 155
Elevations Design Showroom	jenningswnc.com	P 203	Highlands Sotheby's		
Fisher Realty	fisherrealtync.com	P 111	International Realty	sothebysrealty.com	P 36, 37, 235
Fision Fiber Optics by Hotwire	gethotwired.com	P 257	Highlands Sotheby's International		
Florida Trust			Realty - Andrea Gabbard	sothebysrealty.com	P 254, 255, 256
Wealth Management	floridatrust.com	P 251	Highlands Sotheby's International		
Four Seasons Landscape	fsl-wnc.com	P 94	Realty - Jody Lovell	sothebysrealty.com	P 36, 37
Four65 Woodfire Bistro + Bar	four65.com	P 154	Highlands Supper Club	thehighlandssupperclub.com	P 5
Fusion Yoga & Wellness	fusionyogaandwellness.com	P 194	Highlands Transportation		
Gracewear Boutique	gracewearcollection.com	P 184	Company		P 69
Grand Olde Station	grandoldestation.com	P 219	Historic Toxaway	historictoxaway.org	P 216, 218
Green Mountain Builders	greenmountainbuilders.com	P 68	Historic Toxaway Market	historictoxawaymarket.com	P 219
The Greyfox Grocery	greyfoxgrocery.com	P 175	Hollymont Camp for Girls	hollymont.com	P 71
The Greystone Inn	thegreystoneinn.com	P 4, 217	HomeChoice		P 282
Happs Place	happsplace.com	P 158	HOP Gallery	houseofpicsnc.com	P 261
Head Innovations		P 270	Howard Hanna		
Headwaters Outfitters	headwatersoutfitters.com	P 217	Allen Tate Real Estate	allentate.com	P 9, 112, 113, 290
High Country			Hummingbird Lounge	oldedwardsinn.com	P 292
Furniture & Design	highcountry.com	P 44	Isabelle Ambrose		
High Country			by Marci Sherwood	isabelleambrose.com	P 138
Wine and Provisions	highcountrywineprovisions.com	P 166, 167	J. Banks Design	jbanksdesign.com	P 34
The High Dive		P 159	Jack's Upholstery		P 202, 271
Highland Hiker	highlandhiker.com	P 41	Jackson Hole Gem Mine	jacksonholegemmine.com	P 269
Highland Woods		P 47	Jannie Bean	janniebean.com	P 43
Highlands Bistro		P 33, 163	Jeanie Edwards Fine Art	jedwardsfineart.com	P 125
Highlands Burrito	highlandsburrito.com	P 176	Jennings Builders Supply	jenningswnc.com	P 203
Highlands Cashiers			Jim Stephenson, Author		P 74
Film Festival	highlandscashiersfilmfestival.com	P 42	Joan Anderson Interiors	joanandersoninteriors.com	P 195
Highlands Cashiers			John Cleaveland Realty	jcrealty.com	P 50
Health Foundation	highlandscashiershealthfoundation.org	P 227	Josephine's Emporium	alledgesgilt.com	P 109, 271
Highlands Cashiers Players	highlandscashiersplayers.com	P 143	The Kitchen	thekitchenofhighlands.com	P 165
Highlands Chamber			Lakeside Restaurant	lakesiderestaurant.info	P 171
of Commerce	highlandschamber.org	P 61	Lala White Interiors	lalawhiteinteriors.com	P 125
Highlands Chiropractic			Landmark Realty Group	landmarkrg.com	P 145
& Wellness	highlandschironc.com	P 231	Landmark Vacations	landmarkvacations.com	P 145
Highlands Decorating Center	highlandsdecorating.com	P 63	Las Margaritas		P 177
Highlands Dental Care	highlandsdentalcarenc.com	P 231	Laura Moser Art	lauramoserart.com	P 5
Highlands Dermatology	highlandsdermatology.com	P 4	Lehotsky & Sons	lehotskyandsons.com	P 108, 270
Highlands Fine Art &			Lenz Gifts & Luxury Linens		P 105
Estate Jewelry Wine Shop	highlandsfineart.com	P 22, 23	Leslie Jeffery	lesliejeffery.art	P 128
Highlands Ladies Jeep Club		P 130	The Look Boutique		P 21
Highlands Lawn & Garden	highlandslawnandgarden.com	P 230	Los Vaqueros		P 181
Highlands Mountatop Rotary			Lucy Clark Gallery & Studio	lucyclarkgallery.com	P 131
Pickleball Tournament	pickleballtournament.com	P 97	Lupoli Construction	lupolicconstruction.com	P 65
Highlands Performing			Mabon Edge	mabonedge.com	P 229
Arts Center	highlandsperformingarts.com	P 127	Main Street Gifts		P 103
Highlands Pizza		P 175	Main Street Nursery		P 95
Highlands Porchfest	highlandsporchfest.com	P 199	Maria's House Museum	mariahousemuseum.com	P 134
Highlands Recreation Park	highlandsnc.org/recreation	P 244	Martha Anne's		P 195

McCulley's	mcculleys.com	P 3	Rosewood Market	rosewood marketnc.com	P 179
The McKee Group -			Rusticks	rusticks.com	P 11, 136
Beth Townsend	bethtownsendbroker.com	P 12, 13	Sapphire Valley Real Estate	sapphirevalleyrealestate.com	P 10
Meraki Escape	merakiescape.com	P 217	Satolah Creek Farms	satolahcreekfarm.com	P 276
Meredith Sellars Photography	meredithsellars.com	P 271	Sashay Around	sashayaround.net	P 19
Micas Mountain Kitchen	micas.restaurant.com	P 178	Slabtown Pizza		P 163
Mirror Lake Antiques		P 26	Smoky Mountain Transportation		P 248
Monkee's of Highlands	monkeesofhighlands.com	P 69	The Southern Way		P 103
Moondance Wine Bar	moondancewinebar.com	P 216	Spoiled Rotten	spoiledrotten2.com	P 197
Moose Tracks Footwear	ddbullwinkels.com	P 131	Spraggins		
Morales Painting		P 70	Home Inspections	spragginshi.com	P 17
Mountaintop Rotary			Steve Holt Landscaping		P 271
Art & Craft Show	highlandsartshow.com	P 114, 289	Stubborn Buddha	thestubbornbuddha.com	P 178
Mountain Construction			Stubborn Bull	the-stubborn-bull.com	P 178
Engineering	mountain-ce.com	P 71	The Summer House by Reeves	summerhousehighlands.com	P 201
Mountain Home			Sweetwater		
Consignments		P 55	Perk & Creamery	sweetwaterperk.com	P 219
Mountain Life Properties	mountainlifere.com	P 183	Tarah's Beauty Bar		P 270
Mountain Theatre Company	mountaintheatre.com	P 133	Timpson Creek Gallery	timpsoncreek.com	P 283
Mountainworks Custom			TJ Bailey's for Men	tjbmens.com	P 237
Home Design, Ltd.	mtnworks.com	P 99	The Exchange		P 32
Nancy's Fancys		P 32	Toga Roofing	togaroofting.com	P 279
Nearly New	nearlynewnc.com	P 193	Trailborn Highlands	trailborn.com/highlands	P 5
Nora & Co		P 55	The Ugly Dog Pub - Highlands	theuglydogpub.com	P 158
Nth Degree	nthliving.com	P 222	Unfurl Wellness Spa	unfurlwellnessspa.com	P 141
Objet d' Art	objet-dart.com	P 125	Van Tassel		
Old Edwards Inn & Spa	oldedwardsinn.com	P 270, 292	Architecture & Design	vantasseldesign.com	P 59
On the Side Barbecue		P 161	Vic's for Men	victoriasclosetnc.com	P 197
On the Verandah	ontheverandah.com	P 179	Victoria's Closet	victoriasclosetnc.com	P 197
One Wicker Cheese	onewickercheesecompany.com	P 176	Victoria's Sportswear	victoriasclosetnc.com	P 197
The Orchard	theorchardcashiers.com	P 164	The Village Green	villagegreencashiersnc.com	P 238
Osteria del Monte	osteriadelmonte.com	P 218	Vivianne Metzger		P 137
Paoletti's	paolettis.com	P 177	Waterdance	waterdancenc.com	P 26
Park on Main	theparkonmain.com	P 229	The Watershed Shoppe		P 29
Pat Allen Realty		P 208, 209	Wayah Insurance Group	wayah.com	P 33, 270
Peak Experience	peakexpshop.com	P 260	Wenzel Facial		
Pisgah Legal Services	pisgahlegal.org/plateau	P 54	Plastic Surgery	wenzelfacialssurgery.com	P 73
Primary	primaryhnc.com	P 176	Western Carolina		
Property Stewards	property stewards.com/highlands	P 68	Brew & Wine	wcbrewandwine.com	P 176
Pro-Servicess		P 270	WHLC FM 104.5	whlc.com	P 17
Rebecka's Home			Whistle Stop Antiques	whistlestopantiquesnc.com	P 52
Cleaning Service		P 270	Whistlin' Dixie		P 219
Reclamations		P 35	Whiteside Art Gallery	whitesideartgallery.com	P 124
Rejuvenate Medical Spa		P 230	Willow Valley	willowvalleyrv.com	P 46
Rent In Highlands-CCP	rentinhighlands.com	P 32	Wish and Shoes	wishandshoes.com	P 272
Retro Whims Floristry	retrowhims.com	P 245	Wit's End		P 39
Robin's Nest	robins nest-cashiers.com	P 67	Zach Claxton Art	zachclaxtonart.com	P 128
Rock the Plateau	rocktheplateau.org	P 147	Zoller Hardware	zollerhardware.com	P 124, 271
Roman's Roofing	romansroofingnc.com	P 249, 271	The Zookeeper Bistro	thezookeeperbistro.com	P 164

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29 - 30 | AUGUST | 2026

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CEDAR RIDGE ESTATES

Stunning Cedar Creek Mountain home close to Cashiers NC (5 mins.) & Country Clubs featured in books by Lynn Monday & Southern Living Magazine. Many elevated design choices throughout. Custom eat-in kitchen 2019. Spacious greatroom has wood floors shiplap walls, antique beams high ceilings a stone fireplace all ideal for entertaining. New 2nd BR suite in 2019, 3 stone FPs, Laurel Creek waterfall view & soothing sounds. 2 car garage & encapsulated crawlspace. 7 +/- Gated acres.

MLS# 1002992 • \$ 2,000,000



CASHIERS IN-TOWN LIVING

One mile from the Crossroads. Private neighborhood w/ community water & paved roads. Home was enlarged & remodeled in 2017. 2 car garage. Double sided fireplace fronts both living & dining room. Recent tree trimming in April of 2026 for Incredible views of Whiteside Mtn. & other peaks from the large screened in back porch. Jetted tub/shower combo & heated floor in the Master Bath. 2 new hot water heaters & a water filtration system. 2 heat pumps. Circular driveway easily accessed. Connections for RV.

MLS# 1003052 • \$ 1,195,000



LAUREL FALLS

Subdividable large tract of 58.08+/- acres. Beautiful mountain land with gated access. In close proximity to Panthertown Valley and the Glenville area. Just minutes to Cashiers, North Carolina. Sits approximately at 4000' in elevation. Several nice building sites, some with stream frontage. There are well established roads and several wells and fabulous views that can be enlarged making for panoramic views. Secluded and quiet estate property, allows for horses - could make a grand equestrian center or pursue your own unique vision. Very few have this quality of established infrastructure

MLS# 1003366 • \$ 950,000



BEE TREE AREA VIEWS

Tucked away off Bee Tree Rd but convenient to Lake Glenville & Cashiers. NC. 3BR/2BA sits on one acre in a low stress neighborhood. Enjoy cool summer breezes & ridge views from the upper level deck or cozy up in front of one of the 2 stone fireplaces. 2 Living spaces with separate entry. 2 car carport.

MLS# 1003072 • \$ 474,900

PRICE IMPROVEMENT



SERENE SAPPHIRE VALLEY

There is a peace that comes from knowing exactly where you are in the world. This 2BR/2.5BA home in the coveted Holly Forest community offers just that: a secluded retreat perched on a shaded ridge where the noise of everyday life doesn't reach. Inside, an updated kitchen w/ granite countertops & grand living room w/ vaulted ceilings anchor the main space. Every room including a spacious primary bedroom has been thoughtfully updated creating a welcoming canvas for someone new to make their own. SVMA amenities.

MLS# 1003084 • \$ 395,000

PRICE IMPROVEMENT



GLENVILLE LAKE LIVING

Close to Cashiers, North Carolina and Lake Glenville! Lake Glenville is a 1,452 acres lake with a total of four waterfalls. Live just off the lake with close path to Lake Glenville common area with dock. Quaint two bedroom, two bath, two story home with three lots in total. Gentle slope behind the home leads to one of two ponds on the property.

MLS# 1001217 • \$ 750,000

Orchard Sessions

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