

# OCTOBER



Most Western North Carolina residents had no words in the immediate aftermath of Tropical Storm Helene. The devastation was across the board — from loss of life to loss of homes, businesses and dreams. But throughout the recovery efforts, many in WNC have discovered there is one thing we have not lost: community. Across neighborhoods and towns, ad hoc chain-saw crews cleared roads, yards and paths. Businesses and nonprofits set up distribution sites. Church groups showed up en masse to help people pull waterlogged items out of homes and businesses. Government agencies and volunteers traveled from house to house checking on people whose families couldn't reach them because of spotty cellphone service. Help poured in from all points, ferrying in food, water, tools, labor and funds, leaving us, once again, without words. X

Several hotels, including the Restoration Hotel, Kimpton Hotel Arras, Aloft Asheville Downtown and Moxy Asheville Downtown began housing out-of-town first responders and utility workers arriving to help rebuild.

The Wedge at Foundy. Photo by Cindy Kunst



**HOT MEALS:** Calvary Baptist Church in West Asheville served hot meals in the immediate aftermath of Helene. Photo by Caleb Johnson



**FREE FOOD:** Members of Strada Italiano handed out free meals in downtown Asheville. Photo by Thomas Calder

*“Western North Carolina has lost none of its independent and hardworking ethos. Rather than moan and wait on the government, people used their own equipment, their own gasoline and their own sweat to address a serious situation.”*

— Guy Smith wrote in a letter to the editor published in the Oct. 16 issue of the Xpress.

Photo by Thomas Calder



Photo by Thomas Calder



Photo by Caleb Johnson

## COVER OF THE Month

Early voting began Oct. 17. In all, more than 116,000 people voted early in Buncombe County, representing 53.6% of registered voters, up from 51.1% in 2020. Statewide, more than 4.2 million North Carolinians voted early, topping the last early voting record of more than 3.6 million ballots cast in 2020.

Buncombe County Schools reopened on Oct. 25; Asheville City Schools did the same on Oct. 28.



Photo courtesy of Autumn Kirgan



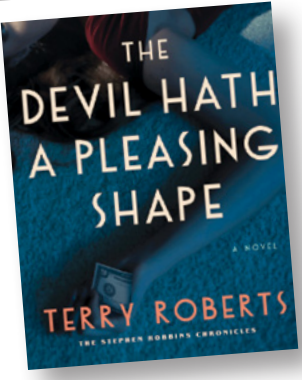
Nonpotable water service was restored Oct. 14, freeing residents from having to tote water to flush, bathe and do laundry. Photo by Susan Hutchinson



The month closed out with Halloween celebrations, including a block party in downtown Asheville, where many businesses handed out candy, as did members of the Asheville Police Department. Photo by Thomas Calder

## BOOK RELEASE

Terry Roberts' *The Devil Hath a Pleasing Shape* came out Oct. 1. Set in Asheville in 1924, the story revolves around the murder of a college girl, whose body is discovered in her room at the Grove Park Inn. X



## SONG OF THE Month

**Karly Hartzman, “Baby Me”**  
The Wednesday vocalist/guitarist was in West Asheville as Tropical Storm Helene whipped through and knocked out cell service. Lacking information about the severity of the situation, she sat down with her acoustic guitar and recorded this haunting demo on her phone. Just over a week later it was available for all to hear on the star-studded *Cardinals at the Window* compilation, 100% of whose proceeds are being donated to flood relief. Listen at [avl.mx/eda](http://avl.mx/eda). — Edwin Arnaudin X