

JULY

County wrestles with short-term rental rules

The Buncombe County Board of Commissioners accepted applications throughout July for the Ad Hoc Short-Term Rental (STR) Committee as pressure built to balance various interests. In August, an 11-member board was named consisting of real estate agents, STR renters, affordable housing advocates, planning board members and county commissioners. Critics then noted the lack of a property management representative. Debate over rules flared months earlier when draft recommendations were tabled in April by the Planning Board, with board Chair **Nancy Waldrop** saying things were moving too fast. The ad hoc committee met in September and October, hoping to present recommendations by November, but all meetings and decisions are on hold until January. ❌

UNCA slashes programs just as enrollment decline slows

On July 24, the UNC Board of Governors approved July 24 cutting UNC Asheville's drama, philosophy, religion and ancient Mediterranean studies (classics) programs to shave \$6 million from its budget. The cuts recommended by Chancellor **Kimberly van Noort** also included reducing the number of languages and literature classes. Over the past five years, UNC Asheville's student body has dropped by 25%, but this fall had its largest incoming class in four years, bringing the student body to 2,900 students. In the wake of Tropical Storm Helene, the N.C. General Assembly approved funding so UNCA can offer free tuition, worth about \$2,000 for the spring semester that starts Jan. 13, and other financial support to state residents. ❌



Photo courtesy of UNC Asheville

Reparations commission asks for deadline extension

The Community Reparations Commission (CRC) asked the Asheville City Council for a six-month extension at the July 23 Council meeting to complete its work to assess and address racial disparities. The council agreed to do so at its Aug. 27 meeting. Recommendations thus far include a Black Chamber of Commerce; an accountability council to oversee implementation of CRC recommendations; and a reconciliation task force to develop ongoing reparation actions. Tropical Storm Helene has since halted all city-appointed boards and commissions. The CRC expects to resume meetings in the spring, according to city spokesperson **Kim Miller**. ❌

The inaugural Black Mountain Blues music festival was hosted July 12-14 at several venues in downtown Black Mountain in collaboration with LEAF Global Arts and White Horse Black Mountain. "Blues is the heartbeat of modern music, and this festival is our tribute to true blues," says **Zach Hinkle**, director of operations at White Horse Black Mountain.

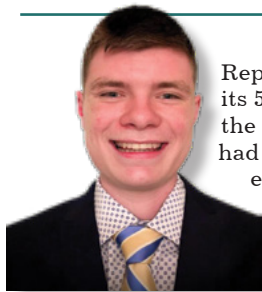


Pictured is Pat "Mother Blues" Cohen. Photo courtesy of White Horse Black Mountain

The Asheville City Council approved a 84-unit residential project, the Meadows at Haw Creek, on July 23. The 27-acre project drew fierce opposition but concessions from the developer led to an agreement.

A dozen people pleaded with the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners at its July 16 meeting to let French Broad Outfitters at Hominy Creek, an outdoor and event space, stay on county-owned land. However, the county had no choice but to order the 8-year-old business to close by Oct. 15 because the parcel's conservation easement prohibits commercial businesses. Buildings on the site were destroyed in Tropical Storm Helene on Sept. 27.

IN CONVERSATION WITH Jack Womack



"Southern Appalachian Repertory Theatre marked its 50th season with one of the biggest lineups it has had in its history, with eight shows taking place from May-July of 2024. When planning our 50th season, the SART team wanted to pay

tribute not only to our foundations within Mars Hill University, but also to SART's evolution into the exceptional professional theater that it is today."

— **Jack Womack**, PR Director for Southern Appalachian Repertory Theatre. For the full interview, visit avl.mx/ee1. ❌



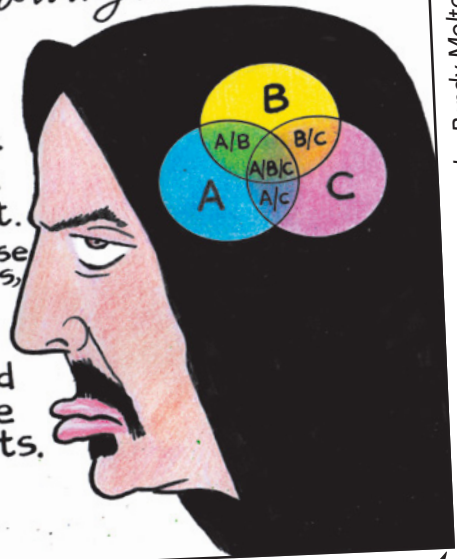
Photo courtesy of SART

"We've got to uphold this history and we've got to pass it on,"

— **Sarah Weston Hart**, 1957 graduate and president of Stephens-Lee High School alumni association, told Xpress in the July 3 issue.

A VENN DIAGRAM on Living in ASHEVILLE

- A—sell my art.
- B—Service Sector Job.
- C—No Affordable Housing.
- A/B—Artist with crappy job.
- B/C—Low-wage job, high rent.
- A/C—Full-time artist. I refuse to work for corporate overlords, so I gotta leave Asheville.
- A/B/C—Broke artist, with low-paying, crappy job, and high rent, so I gotta leave town, or live on the streets.



Cartoon by Randy Molton

SONG OF THE Month



Yarn, "Down at the Dancehall"

On this absolute stomper from the veteran rockers' new album, *Born Blessed Grateful & Alive*, one of Brevard-based frontman **Blake Christiana's** numerous narrative avatars vows to hit the local honky tonk, get loaded and "groove like it's 1979." If you can somehow avoid busting a move while giving this track a listen, pinch yourself because you might be dead. Bonus points to AVLfest attendees who caught local siren **Caitlin Krisko** lending her pipes to this number during The Grey Eagle's weekend-closing set.

Listen at avl.mx/edg.

— **Edwin Arnaudin** ❌

Photo by Bob Adamek

COVER OF THE Month



Photos by Caleb Johnson

FOOD NEWS

July saw a number of new restaurant arrivals. Highlights included: Big Tikka, Dizzy's Glizzies, Luminosa and MammaMia! Café.

The Whale :: A Craft Beer Collective opened its third Asheville location July 3 at 21 Buxton Ave.