

SPRING/SUMMER 2026

ART BEAT



A Publication of

ARTS CULTURE CATAWBA

A letter from our President



We can't kick off 2026 without taking a moment to gratefully reflect on an amazing end to 2025. We ended the year with a super successful Jingle Bell Bash, raising funds vital for arts and culture programs in Catawba County. Thank you to everyone who came out on that chilly, damp Monday in December to make it such a success. My favorite part of the evening had to be all of the beautiful artwork donated by local artists for the silent auction. Because of the talented artists and the charitable offering of our attendees, we will be able to generously support artists this year through our Innovative Artist Grant program.

Welcome to 2026! We are moving full steam ahead with the United Arts Fund. The United Arts Fund is our annual campaign that provides vital, unrestricted operating support for our Funded Affiliates and essential resources for all of our members and partners. Funded affiliates who received operating support in 2025 include:

Catawba Science Center

The Green Room Community Theatre

Hickory Choral Society

Hickory Community Theatre

Hickory Landmarks Society

Hickory Museum of Art

Historical Association of Catawba County

Western Piedmont Symphony

Unrestricted operating dollars are the most difficult to raise and the most important to creating a vibrant and thriving cultural community. Arts, science and history nonprofit organizations in Catawba County generate \$53.5 million dollars annually in economic activity (2022-2023 Economic Impact Study). This means that arts and culture are vital to creating communities with a good quality of life. Less than half of our county's arts and cultural organizations have the staff they need. Funding is the primary challenge in offering deserving wages, benefits and much needed training for new recruits. We appreciate your continued support of our United Arts Fund to ensure a healthy future for arts and culture in our area.

In other exciting news, we will officially launch Catawba 365 to the public in May! One of the main initiatives and priorities that came out of our cultural plan was the need to expand awareness about arts and culture events. The Arts Culture Catawba team and many other local organizations have been working hard to ensure that this online calendar will be filled with relevant, impactful events and information when we launch this spring. We hope you'll join us in May for our official launch party and make Catawba365.com your source for all things arts and culture around Catawba County!

Katherine Rogers
Arts Culture Catawba
Board President

WHO WE ARE | Staff

ARTS CULTURE CATAWBA

promotes, nurtures, and funds excellence in individuals and organizations who provide creative experiences that enrich the lives of residents and visitors.



Ingrid Keller
Executive Director

CONTACT US

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Angel Pittman
Finance & Office Operations Associate



Kelsey Graf
Data & Donor Services Administrator



Kendra Williford
Marketing Manager



Our administrative offices are located in the WEST WING of the SALT Block:

243 Third Avenue NE – Box 5
Hickory, NC 28601



Rand Brandes
Partnership Manager

Thank you to our Government Support!

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City of Hickory City of Newton Town of Maiden Town of Catawba

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Arts Culture Catawba

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Funded Affiliates

Catawba Science Center
The Green Room Community Theatre
Hickory Choral Society
Hickory Community Theatre
Hickory Landmarks Society
Hickory Museum of Art
Historical Association of Catawba County
Western Piedmont Symphony

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SALT Block Foundation
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Scan the QR Code to view
our membership link list.



Community Partners | Education

Catawba County Schools
Catawba Valley Community College
Hickory Day School
Hickory Public Schools
Hickory Schools Orchestra Boosters
Lenoir-Rhyne University (VWS)
Lenoir-Rhyne Youth Chorus
Montessori Children's House
Newton-Conover City Schools

Community Partners | Service

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Community Partners | Government

Catawba County Library
Catawba County Parks
Downtown Newton Development Association
Friends of Catawba County Library
Friends of Claremont Library
Friends of Hickory Public Library
Friends of Sherrills Ford Library
Hickory Downtown Development Association
Hickory Public Arts Commission
Hickory Public Library
Hickory Recreation Department
Keep Catawba County Beautiful
Newton Public Art Commission
North Carolina Cooperative Extension
North Carolina Extension Master Gardener
Volunteer Association
Town of Catawba Historical Association
Visit Hickory

2025 Sustainability Society Commitments

In Honor of our Leadership Donors

Thank you to all of our Sustainability Society Members! The Sustainability Society is made up of a dedicated group of donors who have pledged to make a gift of at least \$1000 a year for five years to support the new initiatives of the Creative Catawba Culture Plan.



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2025 United Arts Fund Campaign

In Honor of our Leadership Donors

Thank you to all who donated to the 2025 United Arts Fund Campaign which supports our arts, science and history organizations so they can continue to help make Catawba County a great place to live and work.

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ARTS CULTURE CATAWBA...

FUNDS

In addition to the UAF, Arts Culture Catawba provides grants to individual creatives and organizations.

- Artist Support Grant
- Innovative Artist Grant
- Projects Pool Grant
- Community Cultural Grant
- Edna Bost Barringer Young Artist Award
- Kathryn Greathouse Legacy Scholarship

NURTURES

Professional Development

New Initiative!

-Workshops specifically catered for artists and arts organizations.
 -Resources for both artists and arts organizations available through new website.

PROMOTES

Events Calendar

New Initiative!

-Our cultural event calendar is a great resource for residents and visitors, as well as arts & cultural organizations.

HICKORY COMMUNITY THEATRE



Wrestler Mace Guerra is paid to lose—until he teams up with charismatic V.P. To exploit them, executives cast the duo as ring "terrorists." This heavy-hitting comedy slams racism and politics in the scripted, high-stakes world of professional wrestling.

April 3-18, 2026

When a freshman lands the juicy role of Lady Macbeth, four jealous students host a "celebration" to assert dominance. As the vodka flows, the night spirals into violent betrayal in this all-female thriller. In high-stakes theatre, what's done cannot be undone.

May 1-26, 2026



Wishes collide in this Tony Award-winning reimaging of Brothers Grimm classics. As a Baker, Cinderella, and Jack chase their dreams, "happily ever after" turns into a deconstruction of consequences where every choice has a cost.

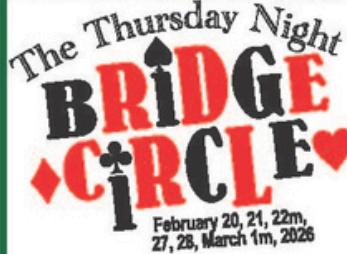
June 5-20, 2026



**AND DON'T MISS
THE BEST PARTY IN HICKORY!
THE VACATION EXTRAVAGANZA
TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 2026 • 6:30PM • TICKETS \$150**

HICKORYTHEATRE.ORG

THE GREEN ROOM COMMUNITY THEATRE



February 20, 21, 22m, 27, 28, March 1m, 2026



March 27, 28, 29m, April 3, 4, 10, 11, 12m, 2026



May 1, 2, 3m, 8, 9, 10m, 15, 16, 17m, 2026



June 12, 13, 14m, 19, 20, 21m, 2026

Box Office (828) 464-6128 thegreenroomtheatre.org
10 South Main Ave., Newton, NC - Old Post Office Playhouse



HICKORY CHORAL SOCIETY

SPRING CONCERT

featuring Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*

April 19, 2026 | 3:00 pm

First Baptist Church, Hickory

SINGING ON THE SQUARE

May 16, 2026 | 6:00 pm

Courthouse Square, Downtown Morganton

May 17, 2026 | 6:00 pm

Union Square, Downtown Hickory

6TH ANNUAL

HCS GOLF CLASSIC MAY 11, 2026

Details online at:
www.hickorychoralsociety.org/golf/



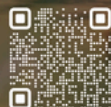
CHILDREN'S SUMMER CHORAL CAMP

A week-long, fun-filled camp for rising 4th - 6th graders to enjoy music and explore the SALT Block together!

June 15-19, 2026

For more information and to register visit:
<https://hickorychoralsociety.org/choral-camp/>

Hickory Choral Society
 @hickorychoralsociety
 hickorychoralsociety.org



EETHOVEN PÄRT BACH SAMMARTINI HAYDN MENDELSSOHN MYTH SIBELIUS 61 SEASONS OF SOUND. SAËNS VAUGHAN WILLIAMS GOLDMARK RIZET STEINER SAINT-SAËNS PINCK FLOYD ANDERSON LOYD ANDERSON WAXMAN COPLAND BEETHOVEN PÄRT BACH SAMMARTINI HAYDN MENDELSSOHN SMITH SIBELIUS

ONE UNFORGETTABLE YEAR.

Join us for the final concerts of the season!

FROM BROADWAY TO HOLLYWOOD!
April 18, 2026 | J.E. Broyhill Civic Center
A joyful journey through iconic American show tunes and standards, featuring soprano Haley Sicking.

MUSICAL WANDERLUST
May 16, 2026 | P.E. Monroe Auditorium
A journey across cultures and sound worlds, featuring Saint-Saëns' "Egyptian" Piano Concerto with acclaimed pianist Sheng Cai.

WESTERN PIEDMONT SYMPHONY
MATTHEW TROY, MUSIC DIRECTOR

CONCERT TICKETS

Our camps may look a little different this year but they're still HMA!



This summer, art camps for kids ages 4-13 will be held in our satellite location at Valley Hills Mall from May 26 to July 2 before teamHMA begins to prepare for the museum's reopening in September.

Did You Know?

The cost of 1 family membership + 2 summer camps is less than 2 non-member summer camps!

2 Camps: \$120	2 Camps/Workshops: \$200
+Family Membership: \$75	+Non-Member Benefits: \$0
Member Total = \$195	Non-Member Total = \$200



create **HMA**
SUMMER art camps

Visit hickoryart.org/summer26 for complete details!

DINOSAURS!

OPEN NOW - DECEMBER 6TH

"DINOSAUR EVOLUTION" VR EXPERIENCE
16 DINOSAURS • FOSSIL DIG PIT

On The SALT Block | 243 3rd Ave NE, Hickory, NC 28601

catawba
science center



HICKORY LANDMARKS SOCIETY

Collecting Hickory's History since 1968



MOTHER & DAUGHTER TEA PARTY
May 9, 2026

ROMANCE OF THE HOME & GARDEN TOUR
May 16, 2026

UPCOMING EVENTS:



Heritage Days 4th Grades
April 16 & 17, 2026



Bourbon Tasting Event at Maple Grove
June 13, 2026

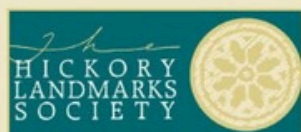
Welcome To The Catawba County Museum Of History

The History Museum of Catawba County offers testimony to the hardy settlers of the Catawba River Valley and their resourceful descendants who carved a world-renowned furniture and textile empire out of the backwoods.

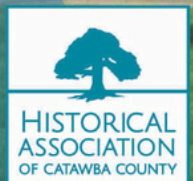
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Stay up to date and follow our Facebook & Instagram @hickorylandmarks



www.hickorylandmarks.org



ARTIST SPOTLIGHT | SCOTT OWENS

I can't say much in the clarity of paragraphs about my childhood without hurting the feelings of people I love. Suffice it to say my childhood was chaotic. Poverty, abuse, lots of moving. The rest of the story can be found in the somewhat less direct lines of my poetry.

Four things from those days that I can say with certainty though is that I always loved language; I always loved the woods; school was a refuge; and books saved me.



I can remember from my youngest days being interested in the rhythms of language. Nursery rhymes, Dr. Seuss, jump rope songs, even commercial jingles from television fascinated me, and I found myself constantly composing little rhymes and alliterative phrases in my head, sometimes even sharing them with the girls jumping rope which got me attention from them that I otherwise would likely never have received.

While we were forced to move frequently, one place that we came back to often, was my grandfather's farm, a small 7-acre farm with cows and chickens and corn, but most importantly with a couple square miles of undisturbed woods in the back. I always loved those woods, the infinite variety of leaves and trees and birds, the occasional sighting of deer, fox, raccoons, but mostly, the freedom there – no rules, no worries about being punished, or told I couldn't. That love of the outdoors never went away, and so throughout my life I've been a hiker, a gardener, a birdwatcher, and just someone who likes to see as much as I can.

My appreciation for school began in earnest in second grade at Blake Elementary School. I had a teacher who read to us, letters from a relative of hers who was a professional football coach and a genuinely good man, a rarity in my world at that time. From those letters I was able to glean that not everyone's world was like the one I was experiencing, and that gave me hope. Then she started reading Laura Ingalls Wilder's books to us, and again I was able to hear about a world that made more sense than the one around me. Pretty soon after that I started reading those books and others like them on my own and putting together ideas in my head about what I thought the world should be like and more importantly what I should be like.

Most of the time, a few bullies aside, I felt safe in school, and I started doing well enough that I was frequently asked to help others with their learning, and I truly enjoyed the feeling of helping others. Not every grade or class was as positive, but there were other experiences that kept me interested in teaching. Carolyn Thomas, my 10th grade English teacher, who convinced me that even though no one in my family had graduated high school, I should and would go to college.

HICKORY'S FIRST *Poet Laureate*



Catherine Rotter, who in 11th grade made me editor of the school's annual literary journal. And Ann Carver, my grad school Shakespeare instructor at UNCC, who demonstrated that certain inclinations I had had in my thinking for years were not so strange after all, that not only were reading, writing, and paying attention to the world hermeneutic acts but also that a pluralistic approach to those acts was as valid if not more valid than any monolithic insistence on singular truths.

So there you have it: books + language + nature + school = teacher and poet.

I've been a classroom teacher for more than 40 years, but I've also taught outside the classroom as a coach, father, workshop facilitator, and writer of 25 books, more than 2000 poems, and nearly 1000 essays.

One of the things I decided to do after being named Hickory's inaugural Poet Laureate was to write a regular column on poetry. It comes out in Hickory's "Focus Newspaper" every other week. Recently, a reader of that column said to me that it was like being in a creative writing class. I could think of nothing I would rather hear about the column. So far in the column I have given a history of salons, examined the meaning of the word "kakalak," talked about levels of meaning in poetry, and discussed participles and serendipity, but the lesson that I always want to get across about writing and in my writing is the importance of paying attention. I think all artistic endeavor forces us to pay attention, and I believe life is always better when we do.

Join Scott and fellow Poets!



Poetry Hickory meets on the second Tuesday of each month, and is free and open to the public.
Taste Full Beans 6:15pm



Hickory Poetry Salon

Sharing, Discussion, Prompts, Critiques, Workshops

Hickory Poetry Salon meets on the third Tuesday of each month, and is free and open to the public.

Patrick Beaver Memorial Library 6-8pm

For more information: Call Scott Owens (828) 234-4266 or email asowens1@yahoo.com

RANDOM ACTS OF ARTSINESS

The literary arts play a significant role in our lives. Many of us had a favorite childhood book with the pages worn from the enthusiastic turns or a story that we can easily recite from memory. The style of our language and the way that we express ourselves through written and spoken words are insightful ways to explain who we are as people.

I recently learned about a creative way that our county manager's office has used the poetry form of haiku to facilitate ideas and discussion.

In this case, a simple fishbowl held an ever-changing collection of prompts, and each week one was drawn to spark inspiration. Soon, the whiteboard at the county manager's office would be filled with haiku – inviting any passerby to contribute and take inspiration from their colleagues' words.

To choose a winner, an unsuspecting judge was recruited from the hallway: a county employee on an errand or a visitor stopping in to drop off paperwork.

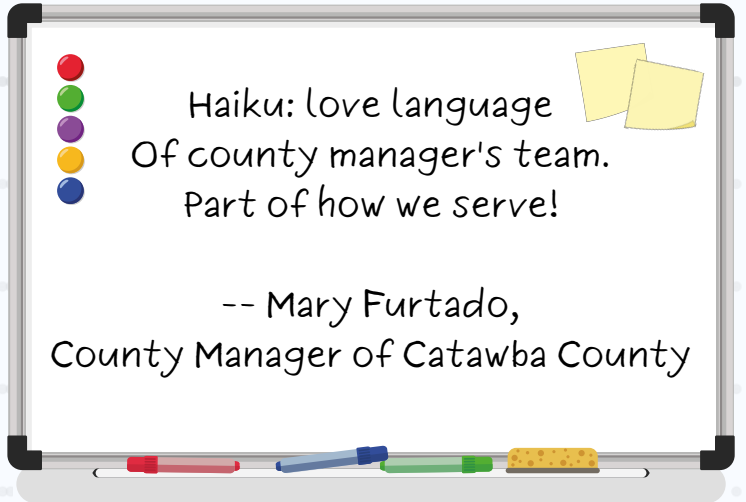
After reading the poems, the judge selected a favorite and the winning poet was rewarded with a silly dollar store prize. Then together, the poet and the judge would add a new prompt to the fishbowl, keeping the cycle of creativity going.

I asked our County Manager, Mary Furtado, to share why they did this.

"Doing things to spark creative thinking at work leads to better business outcomes. Our work at the County aims to address complex problems that require out-of-the-box thinking. So it would be a strategic mistake for us to ignore the importance of cultivating creativity within our County team. And as an added bonus, it brings an element of fun and self-expression to work that we've all come to appreciate."

What a great reminder of how random acts of artsiness could help our work days between the budget reviews and coffee refills.

~ Ingrid Keller



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5-7pm WEST WING OFFICES At THE SALT BLOCK

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Thank you to all of our artists who submitted to be featured on the cover of this issue of ART BEAT!

Learn more about these artists on the Catawba365 Artist Directory!

ON THE COVER:

Dana Pape
'Berry Bliss'– Oil on Canvas

ON THE BACK:

- 1.** Maria Register
- 2.** Cathy Cooper
- 3.** Alison Willard
- 4.** Michelle Short
- 5.** Stacey Pilkington-Smith
- 6.** Jennifer Cline

Thank you Artists!

