



THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP *of the Carolina Foothills*

Meeting 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month at the Whimsical World Gallery, 116 Jones St in Landrum, SC
Mailing Address: UUFCF, P. O. Box 653, Tryon, NC 28782

Sunday, August 3, 2025 – Ernie Mills (the cool guy)

Tassel Weejuns: *Dealing with Disappointments*

I remember seeing, for the first time, a pair of Tassel Weejuns in the window of Belks in downtown Hendersonville. It was love at first sight. But the price was \$30 and neither I nor my parents could afford that. So I took the lay-away plan and put \$5 down. It took several months and many lawns to cut before I raised enough money to own the shoes. ~~BOG~~ Then, after about a month of wearing them, the first tassels fell off, followed, a few days later, by the second. MAJOR DISAPPOINTMENT and shattered dreams of being the “cool guy” with the Tassel Weejuns. As life went on I got over the disappointment. But the Tassel Weejuns were not the end of disappointments in my life and they still continue till today. In this reflection (I prefer not to say “sermon”) we will explore life’s disappointments and how we cope and deal with them.



Sunday, August 17, 2025 – Ernie Mills (the philosopher)

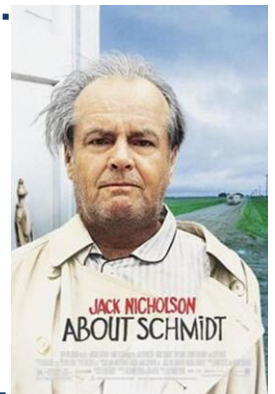
Why I Love Taoism

As far I know Taoists have never persecuted, tortured or executed those who disagree with their philosophy. There are no dogmas in Taoism nor do Taoist philosophers engage in theological debates and discussions. They leave God alone. Their philosophy is very simply, “follow the WAY and put your Self in harmony with the natural universe” (small and large). Taoist philosophy encourages us to embrace both the light and dark aspects of life (Yang and Yin, male and female.) And finally, Taoism has never attempted to establish itself on historical events, persons or places. As “local” as it may seem, its roots are universal and eternal.

Sunday, August 31, 2025 – Guest Speaker

Still Ticking

In the 2002 movie “About Schmidt,” Jack Nicholson’s character refers to his advancing age with a comment to Kathy Bates. “Not that many more shopping days ‘til Christmas,” he grumbles. The idea of embracing, or at least facing, our senior years and their challenges is a topic worthy of exploring, and we’re currently interviewing qualified speakers to address the subject. As the article on Page 2 of this issue suggests, roughly a third of the local population might benefit from a service focused on age-related concerns.

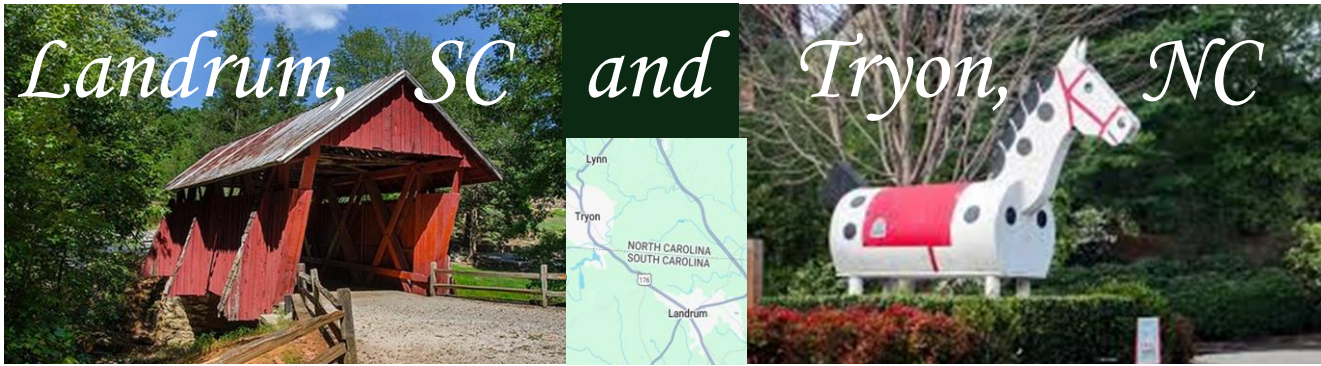


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A Tale of Two Towns:



Let's admit it: Tryon residents sometimes think of their town as a little superior to their neighbor Landrum, despite being separated from it by just four miles. Both towns owe their growth to the same railroad tracks that once connected them to distant destinations; each has its strengths and weaknesses. Such friendly rivalries are pretty common. Greensboro and High Point are only 14 miles apart, but both have a Guilford County Courthouse. In Kansas City, the southbound lane of State Line Road is in Kansas, the northbound in Missouri. But they share the potholes.

Statistically, Landrum has around 2600 people while Tryon has 1713. Since 2020, Landrum's population has only grown by around 100 people while Tryon's grew by 150 (10 more per year than Landrum!) Landrum's elevation: 1,047 ft, Tryon: 1,063 (Wow, 16 feet higher!)

The land area of Landrum occupies 2.36 square miles (1100 people per square mile) and Tryon occupies 1.85 square miles (926 people per square mile). Both towns have historic, restored railroad depots. Both towns have restaurants – the popular *Hare and Hound* in Landrum is open seven days a week, Tryon's *Throwbox* is also open every day and offers live music. Both towns offer pedestrian friendly downtowns and easy parking. One statistical difference is the median household income. Landrum's is \$41,161 while Tryon's is \$47,604.

Last year, the median sold home price in Tryon was \$558,310, compared to Landrum's median price of \$325,000. Interestingly, the property tax rate for Tryon is .64%; for the part of Landrum in Greenville County, it's .69%, and for the part of Landrum in Spartanburg County, it's .76%. But with home values higher in Tryon, its actual tax revenue from property is greater.

Landrum was founded in 1880, incorporated in 1912, and became a city in 1973. Much older as a settlement, the town of Tryon was an early stop on the railroad line and already had a hotel in 1881. Tryon was incorporated in 1885, 27 years before Landrum.

The average age of a Landrum resident is 47, while the average age in Tryon is 58. (Over 30% of Polk County's population is over 65.) Racially, both towns are overwhelmingly white, 83% in Landrum, 77% in Tryon. By comparison, Hendersonville is 78% white; Spartanburg is 46% white. Spartanburg is the 5th most populous county in SC; in NC, Polk ranks 80th.

Perhaps the biggest differences between the two towns are qualitative. Tryon is easily the more appealing to most artists, with a fine arts center, an art school and several galleries. Tryon is also famous for its association with equestrian interests. (But I have only seen restaurant patrons arriving on horseback in Landrum!) It's fair to say one may count more cars with license plates from Florida in Tryon, whether they're tourists or "snow birds," and because of the average age of residents, more retirees. Tryonians are proud of their town's history of hosting famous or marginally famous visitors, but the most famous, Nina Simone, was actually born there.

I could find no voter information specifically for Landrum or Tryon, but both Spartanburg and Polk counties voted 63% Republican in the last presidential election. One analysis concluded that Tryon is the most liberal community in Polk County and party results there were close to an even split. On March 15, a protest rally was held in Tryon opposing Trump administration policies, but no recently organized protest has taken place in Landrum.

At the slow rate of population growth for both communities, it will be a long time before they merge, if they ever do. But they do have much in common. They're both in the Carolina Foothills, both appeal to "horse people," both are just a few miles off the same interstate highway, and both enjoy a quality of life that includes small town charm and a choice of two airports, each just 40 minutes away. And both have easy access to the Whimsical World Gallery, which if nothing else, serves as a bridge between the values of these two peaceful, thermal belt towns.

—Don Greeson