

# Chatham News + Record

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'THIS WAS VERY DIFFERENT'

## First day of school: Teachers adjust to remote learning

Technology runs smoothly, teachers enjoy seeing students

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN  
News + Record Staff

On Monday, schools across the country started the school year — many doing so remotely. In North Carolina, only a few hours into the first day, the crashing of online student information system NCEdCloud temporarily left families and students across the state unable to access their school's online

learning programs. At Chatham County Schools — which will continue under the remote learning Plan C for at least nine weeks in response to COVID-19 — the first day went smoothly. That's partially because CCS is not using NCEdCloud, which manages PowerSchool and Canvas education tools, to distribute remote learning materials. "We're actually good to go,"

CCS Public Relations Coordinator John McCann said Monday. "Our learning management systems are routed internally." The only impact of the statewide outage of the tool for CCS, McCann said, was that attendance had to be tracked manually by counselors and social workers instead of through the system. The CCS Board of Education unanimously extended Plan C at the district's public schools from four to nine weeks at its Aug. 10 meeting. Prior to the board extending the remote-learning period, Superintendent Derrick Jordan said

the county was much better prepared to provide remote instruction this semester than they were in March. "Folks should expect it to be absolutely better than what it was," Jordan said at that meeting, adding that additional structure to remote learning this semester, such as attendance and grading policies, were a big part of that. "It won't be perfect. There will still be hiccups. But I see that folks will be better positioned to navigate given the lessons that we were able

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**FOOD:** What you need to know about Plan C meal services

**SEAFORTH HIGH SCHOOL:** Not everyone's pleased with Scenario 3 for new school's attendance zone

See **SCHOOL**, page A3

'IT'S NOT REALLY THE SAME'

## Twin Birch navigates new world without in-person events

BY VICTOR HENSLEY  
News + Record Correspondent

SILER CITY — The coronavirus pandemic has been anything but kind to the arts. From large-scale music festivals to small-town theater productions, events across the country have been canceled, leaving many artists with a void in their 2020 calendars. For Sue and Richard Szary, co-owners of Twin Birch & Teasel and Twin Birch Products, Siler City-based businesses specializing in the production of handcrafted fiber art tools, it isn't much different. Fiber art is created using textiles such as natural and synthetic fibers, yarn or fabric. In a typical year, the Szarys attend between 10 and 12 fiber art shows, where they bring and sell their products to different communities, traveling as far north as Michigan and as far south as Georgia. Each of the shows they had scheduled for this year have been canceled.



Twin Birch owners Sue and Rich Szary stand outside their downtown Siler City store, which also houses studios for customers.

"This year we decided to buy a lovely camper for when we do all of these shows, so we could have our camper and we could kind of have the whole ex-

perience instead of staying at hotels," Sue Szary said. "Well, now we've got this lovely camper sitting on our property in anticipation of when the show

season starts again." Sue has control over the company's marketing, shipping, packaging and

See **NAVIGATES**, page A12



## Elections Board split on Sunday early voting; state to consider on Aug. 31

BY CASEY MANN  
News + Record Staff

The N.C. Board of Elections will consider — and eventually rule — on early voting plans for Chatham and 18 other counties during a specially called meeting Aug. 31. The announcement comes after Chatham's Board of Elections split along party lines on the question of whether to include Sunday voting in its 2020 early voting plan. At a July 21 meeting, the five-member local body met to discuss early voting, polling sites and election day plans. Sunday voting was a topic because prior to the meeting, the board received emergency orders sent to each of the state's 100 counties from the N.C. Board of Elections Executive Director Karen Brinson Bell stating that any early voting plan should have at least 10 hours of voting during the weekends of early voting, as well as encouraging early voting on Sundays throughout the early voting period. The local elections board also heard about 40 comments from Chatham County residents during the meeting advocating for expanded early voting to include Sunday hours. According to the draft minutes, Chatham

See **VOTING**, page A7

CHATHAM CHAT | ALYSSA BYRD, CHATHAM EDC

## Departing EDC president reflects on last decade, Chatham's future

Alyssa Byrd, the president of the Chatham Economic Development Corporation, will be leaving the position Aug. 28 to lead the economic development efforts for the town of Fuquay-Varina in Wake County. This week, on the eve of her departure, we spoke with Byrd about her nearly 10 years working for the EDC, the state of Chatham County now, her new position and how she views Chatham's future.



Byrd

You've been with the EDC for about 10 years now, and it's been a real transition for you — coming in as a communications specialist and then being interim president and now president. How difficult is it for you to leave the EDC, given that you've dedicated the last 10 years of your life to it?

Diane Reid, and then Kyle Touchstone. They are excellent economic development professionals, and even within the greater region this is a very supportive industry. So, across municipal lines, I've worked with some exceptional professionals. I've been very fortunate in that sense. And leaving the organization is very difficult because of the many strong and meaningful relationships I've developed within Chatham County.

So not having that day to day interaction with some of the best people that I know is the hardest part of leaving, but I do feel fortunate that I'm staying in this region and I know that Chatham County's growth and the region's growth will impact what I do going forward.

How will the new job in Fuquay-Varina be different from what you're doing now?

See **BYRD**, page A11

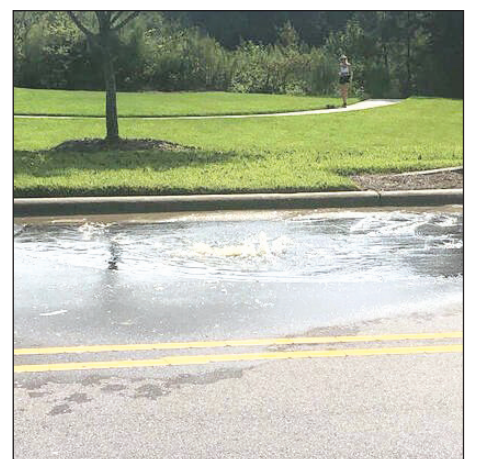
## Briar Chapel sewer company struggles continue

BY CASEY MANN  
News + Record Staff

The troubles for Old North State Water Company in Briar Chapel — and Envirolink, the company which manages its operations — continue. Old North and Envirolink have been plagued with problems of sewer spills in the Briar Chapel community. The town of Pittsboro severed its contract with the company for the operation of the Reclamation Plant under construction in Pittsboro on Aug. 10. At the same time, a the developer of Williams Corner, planned for the area, has temporarily put his project on hold. In addition, the companies' attempts to connect the Briar Chapel system to the aging system at Ferrington Village has again been delayed.

### Some history

Since 2016, Briar Chapel's sewer lines have spilled more than 47,000 gallons of raw sewage with nearly 39,000 gallons estimated to have reached surface water, according to the N.C. Dept. of Environmental Quality. This year alone, more than 15,000 gallons of sewage has made its way to surface water from the community's sewer lines.



File photo

This is a photo of an untreated sewage spill that occurred on Sept. 7 in Briar Chapel. An estimated 47,000 gallons of untreated sewage have spilled in the community since 2016.

The system is owned by Old North State Water Company and maintained by Envirolink. The relationship between the two

See **STURGGLES**, page A12

## IN THE KNOW

Olivia Rojas: What it's really like at UNC-Chapel Hill right now. **PAGE A9**

Town of Siler City to resume water/sewer shut-offs in September. **PAGE A10**

Carolina Waters: locally-born brand marries performance, design. **PAGE B1**

'We are still here.' Siler city's Hispanic businesses staying afloat. **PAGE B7**



## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Events are subject to change based on closures due to coronavirus. Verify with organizers prior to events.

### ON THE AGENDA

• **The Pittsboro Board of Commissioners** will hold its regular meeting at 7 p.m. on Monday, August 21 from the Pittsboro Town Hall. This is a virtual meeting. For more information, contact Pittsboro Interim Town Clerk Cassandra Bullock at cbullock@pittsboronc.gov.

### CANCELLATIONS

• **Chatham County Council on Aging:** both centers are closed at this time until further notice. If you need to pickup supplies, call the Siler City or Pittsboro location or check our website: [chathamcoa.org](http://chathamcoa.org).

• **Chatham County Historical Museum:** For the safety of visitors and volunteers, the Chatham County Historical Museum is closed until further notice. See our website: <https://chathamhistory.org>.

• **Chatham Community Library:** Closed to the public at this time.

### WEDNESDAY

• **Wake Up Wednesday** will host its virtual networking meeting at 8:30 a.m. on Aug. 19 with this month's speakers Kim

Bennett with WordJack Media and Heather Johnson, owner of Chatham Business Services. Zoom meeting ID: 826 0647 0013 Please start logging on at 8 a.m. to take care of any technical issues you may encounter.

### THURSDAY

• **The Pittsboro Farmers Market** is open with seasonal items year-round from 3 to 6 p.m. on Thursdays. They are located at 287 East St., Pittsboro.

• St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church provides a healthy, appetizing meal at no cost to those who come to us hungry at noon on Thursdays. We provide a place of hospitality and fellowship for everyone. All are welcome, regardless of race, sex, age, national origin, religious preference, handicap, or income.

### SATURDAY

• **ELECTION 2020 - VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES:** Bi-Partisan, Open to All! Will be hosted from 1 to 3 p.m. on Aug. 22, Sept. 5, and Sept. 19 by the First Missionary Baptist Church in Siler City located at 914 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. To verify your current registration status, visit: <https://vt.ncsbe.gov/RegLkup/>

### UPCOMING

• United Way is seeking volunteers for their **First Day of Service** event, that will take place on Thursday, Sept. 3. This is a free

community service event that pairs volunteers with projects for local non-profits to make an impact where it's needed most in Chatham County. There are multiple volunteer project sites around the county, and even remote and contactless donation drives for everyone to get involved. To view a list of community service projects and donation drives, please visit [www.UnitedWayof-ChathamCounty.org/Day-of-Service](http://www.UnitedWayof-ChathamCounty.org/Day-of-Service) and sign up before Tuesday, Sept. 1.

• **A community COVID-19 testing** will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 29 at Staunton Memorial CME Church, 230 Credle St., Pittsboro. This is free and open to the public. Sponsored by: StarMed Healthcare. To Sign-up visit: [StarMedHealthcare.com](http://StarMedHealthcare.com)

• Chatham Community Library is offering **free classes on genealogy basics, and job interview skills** in August. While the library is closed, all classes will be presented virtually via GoToMeeting. A description of each class and a registration link can be found at [www.chathamnc.org/ComputerClasses](http://www.chathamnc.org/ComputerClasses). Genealogy 101: 3 p.m. on Tuesday, August 25; Job Interview Skills: 3 p.m. on Wednesday, August 26; For more information, call 919-545-8086 or email [reference@chathamlibraries.org](mailto:reference@chathamlibraries.org). A full list of upcoming programs can be found on the library's

events calendar.

• **Central Carolina Community College** will offer the **Teacher Preparation degrees** this fall. To register for the programs, visit [www.cccc.edu/apply-register/](http://www.cccc.edu/apply-register/) or call **CCCC Student Services** at 919-718-7300. Students can earn an Associate in Science - Teacher Preparation degree or Associate in Arts - Teacher Preparation degree in only two years, and then transfer to a four-year institution and enter as a junior. These degrees allow students to pursue a teaching degree in the K-12 field of education.

### ALSO HAPPENING

• **Second Bloom of Chatham** is accepting Fall/Winter donations during regular store hours, Tues. - Sat., 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Due to space limitations, a two bag/boxes maximum. We accept clean, new and gently used men and women's clothing, shoes, accessories and jewelry. We accept credit cards. We are located on the Courthouse circle at 10 Sanford Rd., Pittsboro. All proceeds provide support for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and promote community education in collaboration with Chatham County.

• With COVID-19 sweep-

ing the country, artists' livelihoods are being challenged like never before. The Chatham Arts Council has put together a relief effort specifically for artists and arts-workers called **CAARE: Chatham Artist and Arts-Worker Relief Effort**. For more information on CAARE, or to donate, visit [ChathamArtsCouncil.org](http://ChathamArtsCouncil.org).

• **JMArts** hosted a **JMA-CoronaConcert** via Twitter featuring performances submitted by JM students and faculty. Concerts can be viewed on its Twitter account @JMArts and by using the hashtags #JMA-CoronaConcert performances and #JMACoronaConcert program.

• **Adult Volunteers Needed** at Chatham Hospital in Siler City, a 25-bed Critical Access Hospital located in Siler City and part of the UNC Health Care System. All prospective volunteers must complete an on-line application, a criminal background check, an orientation and have documentation of required immunizations. To learn more go to: [www.chathamhospital.org/ch/about-us/volunteer](http://www.chathamhospital.org/ch/about-us/volunteer).

• **Volunteers Needed** — Nonprofit agencies in Chatham seek teen volunteers to help with many projects. Teens can help at food pantries, in gardens, fundraising proj-

ects, office work, and care for animals. Chatham Connecting website lists many volunteer opportunities for youth. See where you are needed to help in the community: [www.chathamconnecting.org](http://www.chathamconnecting.org).

• **Foster and/or adoptive information** — Give children a safe place to grow. Interested in becoming a Foster and/or Adoptive parent. Call 642-6956 to learn more.

• **Alcoholics Anonymous** — North Carolina District 33, call the Help Line at 866-640-0180 for the meeting schedule for this area.

• **Motorcycle Association** — The Motorcycle Association for Chatham, Western Wake, Lee, Orange and Alamance counties meets in Pittsboro and is open to all riders. For information, call 919-392-3939 or visit [www.chathamCBA.com](http://www.chathamCBA.com).

• **Narcotics Anonymous** — For drug problems in the family, Narcotics Anonymous helps! Call 1-800-721-8225 for listing of local meetings!

• **Al-Anon Meeting** — Pittsboro Serenity Seekers Al-Anon Family Group meets at 7 p.m. Mondays, at Chatham Community Church, in the lower level of Chatham Mill, Pittsboro.

# Montesinos joins News + Record's 'La Voz' project team

CN+R Staff Report

Patsy Montesinos, a senior journalism student at UNC-Chapel Hill, will help produce multimedia stories for the News + Record's La Voz de Chatham project. Publisher Bill Horner III has announced.

She joins lead reporter Victoria Johnson for La Voz, funded by the Facebook Journalism Project's COVID-19 Relief Fund. The News + Record was awarded a \$30,300 grant from Facebook for the project, designed to cover the impact of COVID on Chatham's Latinx community.

"La Voz de Chatham was the perfect project for me," Montesinos said. "I've always wanted to be part of a project that was about making an impact on the community, especially mine. I wanted to study journalism to find stories that matter, and that wouldn't be told otherwise. In a time like this, with a pandemic, people have been more aware of the news, but that doesn't mean communities of color are being prioritized. People need to know that Latinx folks are being affected at a higher rate, especially in North Carolina, and it's essential to understand why. That's what La Voz de Chatham is here to do; we aim to tell these kinds of stories."

Montesinos has served as a producer for her

school's Spanish- and English-language newscast, produced a radio show and reported for her school's sportscast. Her coverage of Venezuelans, which she reported from Colombia, won a national award from the Society of Professional Journalists. In addition, her coverage of a series of campus crimes won a regional award from the Society of Professional Journalists.

Born in North Carolina to two Mexican immigrant parents, Montesinos moved to Mexico at age 10, and returned to North Carolina at age 15 and decided to pursue journalism.



"Patsy is a versatile and gifted storyteller, and we're fortunate to have her as a part of this project," Horner said. "She'll work part-time for us throughout the fall as we continue to tell important stories from our Latinx community."

Montesinos and Johnson — a 2020 graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill's Hussman School of Journalism and Media and a native of Greensboro — have published a number of stories on La



Submitted photo

**Patsy Montesinos, a senior at UNC-Chapel Hill, has joined the News + Record's 'La Voz' project.**

Voz de Chatham's Facebook page and on the News + Record's website. Some of the stories they have covered include a story about COVID-19 testing in Chatham County with an accompanying multimedia video, a narrative piece written by Lendy Cerna Carias, who immigrated to the U.S. from Guatemala, and more. Johnson and Montesinos have also translated a number of evergreen pieces that were previously published by the News + Record.

If you are interested in submitting a story to La Voz de Chatham or would like to discuss what type of stories you'd like to see La Voz de Chatham cover, you can contact Victoria Johnson at [victoria@chathamnr.com](mailto:victoria@chathamnr.com). You can also stay up to date with the project by following our Facebook Page, La Voz de Chatham.

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BILL HORNER III, *Editor/Publisher*  
[bhorner3@chathamnr.com](mailto:bhorner3@chathamnr.com) 919-663-3250

### NEWSROOM

CASEY MANN, *Reporter*  
[caseymann@chathamnr.com](mailto:caseymann@chathamnr.com)  
HANNAH MCCLELLAN, *Reporter*  
[hannah@chathamnr.com](mailto:hannah@chathamnr.com)  
VICTORIA JOHNSON, *Reporter*  
[victoria@chathamnr.com](mailto:victoria@chathamnr.com)  
PATSY MONTESINOS, *Reporter*  
[pmontes2@chathamnr.com](mailto:pmontes2@chathamnr.com)  
CHAPEL FOWLER, *Sports Reporter*  
[cfowler@chathamnr.com](mailto:cfowler@chathamnr.com)  
OLIVIA ROJAS, *News Intern*  
[olivia@chathamnr.com](mailto:olivia@chathamnr.com)  
CAROLINE WATKINS,  
*Digital Media Intern*  
[cwatkins@chathamnr.com](mailto:cwatkins@chathamnr.com)  
KIM HAWKS, *Staff Photographer*  
[khawksnest53@gmail.com](mailto:khawksnest53@gmail.com)  
PEYTON SICKLES, *Staff Photographer*  
[peyton@sickles.org](mailto:peyton@sickles.org)

NEWSROOM INQUIRIES, PRESS  
RELEASES AND WEBSITE QUESTIONS  
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### ADVERTISING

JASON JUSTICE  
[jjustice@chathamnr.com](mailto:jjustice@chathamnr.com)  
DAWN PARKER,  
*Advertising Specialist*  
[advertising@chathamnr.com](mailto:advertising@chathamnr.com)  
919-930-9668

### OFFICE

KAREN PYRTLE  
[karen@chathamnr.com](mailto:karen@chathamnr.com)  
DORIS BECK  
[doris@chathamnr.com](mailto:doris@chathamnr.com)  
FLORENCE TURNER  
[billing@chathamnr.com](mailto:billing@chathamnr.com)

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# VIEWPOINTS

## On unflattering photographs, age and neuroses

I was startled — a better descriptor might be “shaken” — one morning this past week after opening an email newsletter which included a picture of a sports figure I know.

**BILL HORNER III**  
 Publisher + Editor  
 “Mercy,” I exclaimed aloud. “How’d he get so old?”

It wasn’t a totally unattractive picture. The photo showed Ted Leonsis, a former AOL executive and the wealthy owner of several professional sports teams, including hockey’s Washington Capitals, the NBA’s Washington Wizards and the WNBA’s Washington Mystics. Ted was shown smiling and wearing his Mystics 2019 championship ring — which probably paired well with his Stanley Cup ring, earned with the Capitals’ National Hockey League title in 2018.

The ring looked great. Leon-

sis? Well, not so hot. Smiling, distinctive, and a champion — but much more frail and much grayer that I remembered him. Older. *Definitely* older.

As a hockey fan and an admirer of great sports team owners — Leonsis is among the best — his is a trajectory I’ve followed for years. I’ve read dozens of stories about him and seen his likeness many, many times, but until this one, every single picture I’ve seen of Leonsis shows a more robust, beefier man who seemed more sturdy and less...well, *old*.

I realize it’s just a picture, and Leonsis is “just” 63. But all of a sudden he’s looking ancient.

“Old” may be a state of mind; still, we all know it’s also a number that only gets higher, never lower. My own number — my age — will be flipping one higher next week as I celebrate another birthday. Being another year older doesn’t bother me. Being “old” does. Looking “old” does. *Feeling* “old” is the worst.

When I was a child, the oldest I could ever imagine myself

was 37 — probably because, having been born in 1963, that’s how old I’d turn in the year 2000. For an 8-year-old in 1971, anything past the year 2000 was extraordinarily difficult to fathom. Then, being 37 years old seemed ancient.

In the blink of an eye, though, I’ll be as old as Leonsis. Time doesn’t just fly, it steamrolls. Life’s a beach, sunny and warm, with flip flops and fruity drinks containing miniature umbrellas, and then a tsunami comes and all of a sudden you’re over the hill and under water, gasping for air and going down stairs sideways. And then you begin to not recognize yourself in photographs taken of you.

We had a “time flies” moment this weekend. Our older son Zach — he’ll be 28 soon (pause while I come to grips with that) — and his wife Sarah popped over. When they walked in the door, my wife of 30 years, Lee Ann, and I happened to have been watching the comedy film “What About Bob” — a truly funny movie which makes light of our tendencies toward

self-indulgent neuroses. I’d not seen it in years.

In the movie, Siggy — the young son of the antagonist, the high-strung psychiatrist Dr. Leo Marvin — is an anxious, angst-ridden child who, among other things, pushes back against his dad’s attempts to teach him how to dive into a lake off the family pier. Siggy likes to wear black and obsesses a bit about death. So when one of Dr. Marvin’s new patients, the uber-neurotic Bob Wiley — portrayed to perfection by actor Bill Murray — follows the family up to New Hampshire on a vacation and ends up being responsible for Siggy’s first dive, chaos ensues.

Bob eventually ends up spending the night with the Marvin family, sleeping in a spare bed in Siggy’s room. In one poignant scene, the phobic boy and the obsessive-compulsive man-child talk about their fears.

“Are you afraid of death?” Siggy asks Bob.  
 “Yeah,” Bob admits.  
 “Me too,” says Siggy.

“There’s no way out of it. *You’re* going to die. *I’m* going to die. It’s going to happen. What difference does it make if it’s tomorrow or 80 years from now?”

A pause, and then Siggy comes to a realization.  
 “Do you know how fast time goes? I was 6, like, *yesterday*.” He pauses, and you can sense the light bulb going off in his head. “I’m going to die. You are doing to die. *What else is there to be afraid of?*”

The lesson: nothing. Any other fears — age being one of them — are unfounded.

Our own son and his wife enjoyed watching part of the film — they weren’t familiar with it — while we sat together.

One of them asked: “How old is this movie?”

Lee Ann said she thought it was released about 15 years ago.

I had news for them all. She was half-right: “What About Bob” came out in 1991.

It’s a year older than Zach. Time...it flies for Ted Leonsis and the rest of us.

What else is there to be afraid of?

## The signs of our times

I’m grateful to The Chatham News + Record for its coverage of the Black Lives Matter billboard in Pittsboro. The owner of the land along the highway wished to fly a Confederate flag but not lease his property for this particular sign affirming Black lives.



**ANDREW TAYLOR-TROUTMAN**  
 Hope Matters

I think about this controversy in light of a brouhaha in Briar Chapel, a residential community where I live in north Chatham. The Briar Chapel board of directors wishes to adopt a rule that limits permanent signs in residential yards to realtors and security systems.

I do not think it is a coincidence that this rule was advanced after a neighbor made Black Lives Matter signs available for widespread purchase. To give the Briar Chapel board members the benefit of the doubt, they defended their actions “to promote and protect the character of the community.” By their own words, then, the signs that display our “character” read For Sale and Alarm.

I believe that a community’s value concerns other values. To be transparent, I do say “Black lives matter” as part of my stand for anti-racism. But I am vehemently against the proposed signage restrictions in my neighborhood because I believe that the free expression of speech is a value that helps to create meaningful conversations.

The willingness to engage in dialogue is increasingly rare in our culture. Defending his decision to remove the Black Lives Matter billboard, the gentleman in Pittsboro claimed that BLM stood for “burn, loot and murder.”

The pushback against Black Lives Matter signs in my neighborhood is couched in more diplomatic terms. Some have argued that such a political statement focuses on our differences at the expense of what we hold in common. To again quote the Briar Chapel Board of Directors, the goal of the signage restrictions reflects “the overall intention for the community to be cohesive.”

“Cohesive” means “to join together,” and the Latin root was originally a medical term in reference to a procedure to heal the body, such as binding a wound. We can safely say that our body politic is hurting, even bleeding. For people of color dying in the streets, this is not a metaphor. A body is not joined together by denying the differences of individual parts. Cohesion is the incorporation of those differences into a system of harmony and wholeness. Instead of silence and denial, a sign that makes known a moral position can be the first step toward a proactive conversation with respect and care.

Southern Baptist leader Russell Moore (not exactly a bleeding-heart liberal) characterized the sign of our times: “One of the great problems that we have in American life across the board is that we don’t ultimately believe that we’re going to be able to persuade one another of anything. And so, we assume all we can do is push one another into their categories and to speak about them rather than to them.”

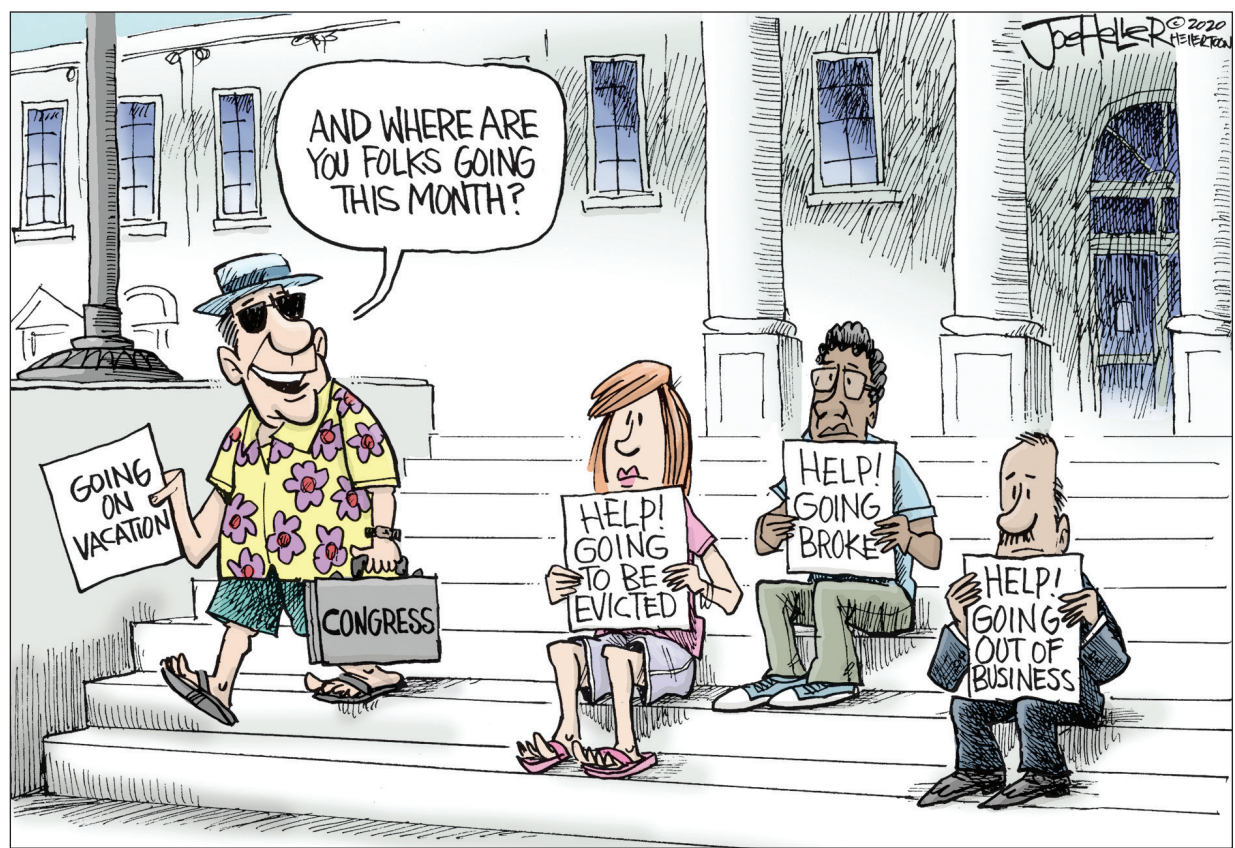
Or we quietly retreat into our homes and pretend that everything is fine.

*Andrew Taylor-Troutman is the pastor of Chapel in the Pines Presbyterian Church and author of Gently Between the Words: Essays and Poems. He is currently working from home with his wife and three children.*

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## Answering the call

I still remember it like it was yesterday.



**BOB WACHS**  
 Movin’ Around

It was between semesters at UNC after having flunked out for about the 18th time. That was entirely my fault. Too much cutting class and shooting pool at the student center along with an overall lack of care and concern had put me in a place where the university administration thought someone else could better use my spot in the student body, so the dean invited me not to come back.

I don’t even remember where I was working or much of what I was doing or even the exact date for sure. I do know I was living at home and my folks were becoming interested in what I was going to do with my life, if much of anything. It was sometime, I think, in the autumn of ’69, about the time I was easing out of my teen years. Life was generally pretty good — not many demands and not much in the way of responsibility.

I vaguely remembered during those days that my student deferment from local draft board number 19 would be a casualty of not being in college. Since I wasn’t thinking much beyond the next 10 minutes of my life, that didn’t really seem like much of a big deal.

Then one day I went to the post office for the family mail and I had a letter from my uncle.

My Uncle Sam. And not my father’s brother Sam who was living in Alabama.

It was a nice pleasant letter. He wanted to know how I was doing. He even started out by saying “Greetings,” and it wasn’t even Christmas.

Then he invited me to go on a bus ride.

To Raleigh. To the Armed Forces examining station and induction center.

I didn’t want to go.

I had heard about Southeast Asia and other places. I had high school friends who had gone there and some had not returned. It was a hard time in our country’s life. But I wasn’t about to run away to Canada or break my leg so I’d be in the hospital or anything like that. So on a Tuesday (I think) morn-

ing at 4:30 I gathered at the draft board office with about 40 others of Chatham County’s finest and we piled into the Greyhound and off we went.

They made me the group leader. I’m not sure why. Maybe they were impressed with my ability to stick to a task, like flunking out of school on a consistent basis. I asked the lady at the draft board what that meant. “Give them this envelope when you get there,” she said.

“Give it to who?” I asked, forgetting that Mrs. Rigsbee and Mrs. May had told us in English class that I should have said “Give it to whom?”

She said something about “the people who will meet you at the door.” She was right. They did. I don’t think they were impressed with my potential as an officer, however, since when I got off the bus I headed the wrong way. I think I was still asleep. The bus driver blew the horn, stuck his head out the window, hollered at me and pointed me in the right direction to the correct building.

The next hours were a rush of going from one examining point to another. The highlight was when we all got to stand around naked in a big group and see if we could touch our toes. The fellow in charge said something about not wanting to hear a sound, which sounded like pretty good advice to me.

Anyway, I was one of the folks who made the ride back to Pittsboro on the bus at the end of the day. While my hearing and height and weight and general overall sweet disposition were beyond just merely acceptable, the fact I couldn’t see an elephant in front of me without my glasses or contacts pretty much meant Uncle Sam would call me later if he wanted me or got really desperate.

Some of the guys who rode to Raleigh with me didn’t come back that day. I remember the recruiters telling us that if we wanted to sign up that day, we could and could pick the branch of service and assignment and all that stuff. They said if we didn’t volunteer then, we were going to be drafted within 30 days and we wouldn’t have much of any choice. Some guys did that. I remember walking by one of my bus mates as he was crying to his mama in the phone telling her he was leaving for Texas in a few hours

and wouldn’t be back in Goldston for supper.

In time I got my act together, finished college and so on and so forth. But I’ve never forgotten that day. And I’ve never forgotten the folks who went that day and on other days. Sometimes I do a mental checklist of just how many guys my age out of my school buddies went to Vietnam and out of just some 40 or so guys, I come up with about 10 — including a couple of them who paid the ultimate price and made the ultimate sacrifice.

And that’s when I start to wonder. I wonder why them and not me. I wonder what genetic event happened in my life that kept me at home and gave other guys an eagle’s vision. I wonder what I would have been like if I had gone. Would I have had the internal fortitude to do what millions of other folks have done through war after war?

Seeing a B-17 World War II bomber at the Sanford airport a few years ago just added to that mental exercise. Old veterans in their 80s — including my father-in-law, who spent three years away from his Bennett home without benefit of cell phones or instant messaging working as a mechanic on those planes in India — went through the plane, touching and feeling and moving slowly. They told stories ... and no doubt kept some to themselves.

And I wondered ... about them and about me.

A veteran of the fighting in Korea and Vietnam once told me not to feel that way, not to beat myself up mentally because I wasn’t there. But still I wonder.

I like to think I could have.

And I appreciate those who did ... Today as so many in our country seem bent on destroying it from within (as Russia’s Nikita Khrushchev years ago said at the United Nations would happen as he beat the desk in front of him with his shoe), I’m thankful for the men and women who did answer the call.

Winston Churchill is remembered for his comment about the Battle of Britain against the German Air Force that “never in the history of mankind has so much been owed by so many to so few.” In the U.S., we could rewrite that to say “Never have all owed so much to so many.” May we not forget.



# VIEWPOINTS

## We regret to inform you that this is a rejection story

I'm part of the generation of prizes, gold stars and words of affirmation. Once I graduated from grade school, I realized how ill-prepared that made me for life's unavoidable rejections.

**RACHEL HOROWITZ**  
Millennial Musings

— theatre — during quarantine and getting too confident. I lost multiple roles to other actors in the Triangle because I was so sure the writers and directors would pick me. So, as I sit in the thick of it, I want to share

some tips on how to move past rejection. When you get rejected, it can feel like the end of the world. In a way, it is the end of a future path you fantasized about since the moment you auditioned or applied. You may try to pinpoint the blame on something other than yourself (e.g., I could definitely rant about nepotism's unwelcome role in many theatre companies). Although, ultimately blaming someone else for your rejection won't allow you to move past it.

So what do you do? One tip that works for me is to separate what you can control from what you cannot. When we first searched for a dog to adopt, we were rejected many times because we didn't have a fenced

yard. It was frustrating, but it also wasn't feasible to move to a new, expensive location for the sake of a backyard. By waiting, we were able to work with a wonderful adoption coordinator who found the best fit for us. Looking back on it now, we would have missed out on the most amazing dog.

That brings me to my second tip: reflect on past rejections and the positives that came afterwards. I was rejected from working at a gung-ho wilderness program the summer after graduation. However, if that program had accepted me, I would have missed the opportunity to apply and interview for my current position at Chatham Habitat for Humanity.

My last tip is one of the hardest, and that is to try to

separate your personal feelings from the rejection itself. I try to picture the possibility of rejection instead of blindly focusing on what will happen after I am accepted. Then if the rejection comes, you can greet it with a logical numbness. The hiring committee didn't hate you; you just weren't the best fit. The rejection could have saved you from a horrible experience or set you up for an even better one.

If you have faced large-scale rejection — whether from a job, grant proposal, elected office or even a lover — you are not alone. You will also not be in this situation forever (although if a rejection is truly unjust or discriminatory, let's fight it).

If — like me — you have also

been on the other side, make sure to notify those you reject so they can move on to the next opportunity. Maybe add a few kind words to your template rejection email so applicants don't avoid your organization forever.

You truly may need them one day.

P.S. My go-to podcast for this topic is "We Regret to Inform You" by Apostrophe Podcast Company. Because guess also faced rejection? Stephen King, Lisa Kudrow, Ed Sheeran, RuPaul, Jay-Z and Lady Gaga.

*Rachel Horowitz resides in Chatham County and works in Pittsboro. She is a graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill's Hussman School of Journalism and Media.*

## Summer polls are flawed predictors

In this year that sometimes feels like a decade, North Carolinians have yet to cast a single general-election ballot for president or other offices. But I'm seeing lots of politicos and pundits making confident predictions about the state's key electoral contests based on data from recent voter surveys.

**JOHN HOOD**  
John Locke Foundation

You can count me out of that game. I've seen too many North Carolina races narrow in the homestretch. Using summertime polls to predict November outcomes is fraught with peril.

This is certainly true with regard to the presidential race. North Carolina has proved to be a key battleground in recent cycles. The Tar Heel State voted for Barack Obama in 2008 by less than a percentage point. In 2012, North Carolina flipped to the Republican candidate, Mitt Romney, who won it by two points.

Across the eight publicly released polls of North Carolina voters taken during August of 2016, Hillary Clinton led Donald Trump by an average of two points. As we now know, Trump would go on to beat her in North Carolina by nearly four points (although Trump actually got a smaller share of the vote than Romney had four years earlier, due to a higher share of 2016 votes going to Libertarian and other alternatives).

Let's also remember what happened the first time Thom Tillis ran for U.S. Senate, in 2014. Across four midsummer polls, incumbent Democrat Kay Hagan led Tillis by an average of 1.5 points. In November, Tillis defeated Hagan by 1.7 points.

Even in the North Carolina gubernatorial race, where the conventional wisdom has Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper fated to defeat Republican Lt. Gov. Dan Forest in 2020, recent history makes a case for caution. At this time in 2016, Cooper was leading then-Republican Gov. Pat McCrory by an average of six points in the August polling. As we now know, Cooper would go on to victory — but by one of the closest margins in the history of gubernatorial elections, just two-tenths of one percent.

In other words, swings of six percentage points or so between August and Election Day are something akin to normal behavior for our state's electorate.

As I write, the August 2020 polls have Trump and Joe Biden tied in North Carolina, Cal Cunningham up five, and Roy Cooper up eight. Naturally, it is better to be up than down. Democrats understandably feel good about their current position. But veteran Tar Heel Dems are likely warning their younger colleagues not to get overconfident, not to take anything for granted. That would be wise.

For example, even if Cunningham and Cooper win in November, it is quite possible their margins will have narrowed considerably by then. Again, based on recent electoral history, it is entirely conceivable that Republicans would still win some other statewide contests, for Council of State and judicial offices, and keep at least partial control of the state legislature under such a scenario.

While it is true that ticket-splitting is rarer than it was a generation or two ago, when as many as a quarter of North Carolinians might vote Republican for federal offices and Democratic for state and local ones, there are still enough true swing voters to tip the balance to one major party or the other on any given Election Day.

That's because those major-party coalitions are so closely balanced in North Carolina. Disregard party registration, which doesn't necessarily reflect voter behavior. When pollsters for Emerson College asked North Carolinians which party's candidates they will support for Congress — without mentioning any candidates by name — 44.6% said Republicans and 44.2% said Democrats. The latest Civitas Institute survey had it at 43% Democrats and 42% Republicans.

Will some unforeseen event tip undecided voters decisively to one side or the other? Will some voters vote "strategically," consciously splitting their tickets so neither party exercises unchecked power? Will one party's coalition turn out to be more enthusiastic and energized to cast their ballots when it counts?

I don't know. Neither does anyone else.

*John Hood (@JohnHoodNC) is chairman of the John Locke Foundation and appears on "N.C. SPIN," broadcast statewide at 7:30 p.m. Fridays and at 12:30 p.m. Sundays on UNC-TV.*

## Saltbox Seafood Joint, surviving the coronavirus

Can any of North Carolina's great roadside eateries and local joints survive the coronavirus?

**D.G. MARTIN**  
One on One

I have my doubts. So does UNC Press. It has put

the release of an updated and revised edition of my book, "North Carolina Roadside Eateries," originally published in 2016, on hold indefinitely. We just do not know which of the more than 100 restaurants in the book will be in business when and if normal times returns. Nor do we know what the roadside restaurant business will be like in North Carolina after the worst of the coronavirus is over.

Will we be able to explore places where locals gather for good food along North Carolina's highways?

In general, the forecast is not good. But there are bright spots. For instance, Wilber's, the legendary barbecue restaurant in Goldsboro, closed in March 2019 and was therefore not included in the

revised "Roadside Eateries." Last month Wilber's reopened, at first only for curbside pickup. Thus, if the revised "Roadside Eateries" is ever published, Wilber's will be in it.

There is more good news. Saltbox Seafood Joint in Durham, one of the places covered in the original "Roadside Eateries," got an expanded description in the now-postponed revised edition.

It is the sort of joint that can make it through the pandemic. Because it is thriving, it might give a clue about what kinds of locally owned eateries and joints will be available to give us the experiences that "Roadside Eateries" celebrated.

Here is some of what my editors and I wrote for the revised "Roadside Eateries."

\*\*\*\*  
Since the last edition of "Roadside Eateries," Saltbox chef Ricky Moore has been just a little busy. Though he's a busy man, don't worry — he's still at it, cooking incredible food for lucky locals.

Now, Ricky's success isn't the least surprising. He's been in the food business all his life. He grew up catching and cooking fish in eastern North Car-

olina. He cooked during his seven years in the Army, studied at the Culinary Institute of America, and worked at the fine Glasshal restaurant in Carrboro and as the opening executive chef at Giorgio's in Cary.

Moore explained to me that it's not easy or cheap to get the best fish. He has to take into account that "the value is in the quality of fresh product we provide. Good, fresh seafood is not cheap, and the North Carolina fishermen deserve to get top dollar for their catch."

Hush-Honeys are Ricky's version of the hushpuppy. They're a little salty, a little spicy and a little sweet. They're the perfect complement to the best seafood you're liable to find anywhere, let alone in the middle of the Tar Heel State.

\*\*\*  
Even if you are not able to visit Saltbox Seafood Joint for its mostly take out service, you can learn some of its secrets in a new cookbook published by UNC Press, "Saltbox Seafood Joint Cookbook." Chef Ricky Moore tells his life story. He shares 60 favorite recipes and his wisdom about selecting, preparing, cooking and serving North Carolina

seafood. That includes how to pan fry and deep fry, grill and smoke, and prepare soups, chowders, stews and Moore's special way of preparing grits and his popular Hush-Honeys.

North Carolina's cultural icon David Cecelski is the author of "A Historian's Coast: Adventures into the Tidewater Past" and numerous other books and essays about our state's coastal region. He gushes in his praise: "Chef Ricky Moore's new cookbook is out and I think he's written the finest seafood cookbook you've ever seen and probably ever will see if you're like me and love the flavors of the North Carolina coast."

To learn how one restaurant owner is surviving the pandemic, visit Chef Ricky at the Saltbox as soon as you can. Until then, join Cecelski and me to celebrate Chef Ricky Moore's success and enjoy trying the recipes in "Saltbox Seafood Joint Cookbook."

*D.G. Martin hosts "North Carolina Bookwatch," at 11 a.m. Sundays and 5 p.m. Tuesdays on UNC-TV. The program also airs on the North Carolina Channel at 8 p.m. Tuesdays and other times.*

## We need a full-court press on the census

Four million North Carolinians have not filled out the 2020 census.

**TOM CAMPBELL**  
N.C. Spin

That's not good news for a number of reasons. Let's start with the dollars and cents. In fiscal year 2017, our state received \$44 billion dollars from any number of federal programs. Undercounting our population could cost us \$7.4 billion per year. These are not "free dollars," from our benevolent Uncle, as many are quick to point out. The feds are returning dollars we already paid into federal coffers. All true. But the reality is that unless the tax collection and distribution systems are drastically altered (and it's not likely to happen anytime soon), the dollars we sent aren't going to be returned to our state and might go to another state.

About 63 percent of the population has responded nationally. North Carolina's rate is about 59 percent, according to Rebecca Tippet and Carolina Demography. Sadly, the ones who have the most to lose are also the ones most likely uncounted, including those who

live in rural sections at both ends of our state and people of color. They depend on the food stamps, Medicaid, Head Start, school feeding programs and Pell Grant assistance in higher education.

This data is also important because it will be used to redistrict legislative and judicial districts. For many years, political power resided from those living east of I-95, but rural population declines have shifted power to more urban areas. If current undercounting isn't improved, rural areas could lose even more influence.

Because of population increases over the past decade, it has been widely speculated our state would gain an additional seat in the U.S. House, giving us 14 and a little bit more political clout. Even with our poor showing it is still likely we'll get that additional seat, but where the new district is located will be determined by census numbers.

It didn't help that the 2020 kickoff to the census came the first of April, as the pandemic was rearing its ugly head and changing our lives. That could be one of many reasons why people haven't responded. Feeding families, making rent and schooling children was a higher priority. Some might not understand how important the census is or don't have access to the

Internet. Census officials asked for more time to complete the count but were given only until the end of September. Some posit there are political reasons why no more time was given.

Those who haven't "self-responded," who didn't take the five minutes or less necessary to complete an online form, are supposed to be included in the NRFU, or nonresponse follow up operation. Census takers are now visiting addresses and taking the count. As you can imagine this is both expensive and time consuming; there are questions about whether there is enough money or enough time to finish the count.

Make it a point to ask everyone you contact if they have responded to the census. If they haven't, ask them to take five minutes and go online to my2020census.gov to do it. It will help them and our state.

We all benefit when everybody is counted. We need an accurate measure of our population. Let's put on a full-court press to complete the count.

*Tom Campbell, a former assistant N.C. State Treasurer, is creator/host of N.C. SPIN, a weekly statewide television discussion of N.C. issues that airs on UNC-TV's main channel.*

### What's on your mind?

The Chatham News + Record welcomes letters from its readers on topics of local and public interest, as well as thoughtful and informative guest columns.

At our discretion, we may edit letters for clarity. We reserve the right to refuse letters and other submissions that promote a commercial product, contain either libelous material, personal attacks on individuals or vulgar language. Consumer complaints and letters containing unverifiable factual claims are ineligible for publication.

Each letter must contain the writer's full name, address and daytime telephone number for verification. Letters should be no more than 400 words in length. Letters selected for publication may be edited and all letters become property of the Chatham News + Record.

To submit a letter: Mail it to the News + Record at P.O. Box 290, Siler City, N.C. 27344; or email to bhorner3@chathamnr.com; or drop by our office at 303 West Raleigh Street in Siler City.

# BOC hosts first public hearings since pandemic

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN  
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — The Chatham County Board of Commissioners hosted its first public hearings since March at its regular session meeting Monday, following months of delayed hearings due to the coronavirus as county staff worked to find the most accessible way to hold public hearings under the board's hybrid-meeting model.

The board, meeting at the Chatham County Agriculture and Conference Center, hosted two public hearings regarding requests by Chatham County Emergency Management on a conditional use permit for a new proposed 350-foot communications tower at the Moncreur Volunteer Fire Department and a new proposed 300-foot communications tower at the new Emergency Operations Center. Both requests were approved and referred to the Chatham County Planning Board without much discussion from the board or any public speakers.

The hearing of these items came

after months of controversy related to the two public hearings for Williams Corner, a 118-acre mixed use walkable community. These hearings had been scheduled for Monday's meeting, but the developer of the project requested the hearings be indefinitely postponed just a week before, following a sewage spill in Briar Chapel.

At the board's May 18 meeting — when it was decided to continue to delay public hearings until an accessible solution was found to host them — Commissioner Mike Dasher expressed concern about the potential "ripple effect" from delaying projects on the public hearing docket. At the time, board Chairperson Karen Howard said the COVID-19 situation warranted taking things step-by-step. While scheduling these hearing at their July meeting, Howard said she thought limiting the number of hearings at the August meeting would be wise for the board, staff and public and help ensure fairness throughout the discussions.

"It is disappointing if we're getting backed up, but disappointing

is a pill we can swallow," Howard said regarding the public hearings on May 18. "We are not arbitrarily choosing. We are in a critical crisis and making a decision that we hope is for the benefit of all of us."

At the board's next Aug. 27 meeting, it will host public hearings on requests from Vickers Bennett Group to amend language in the county zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations and watershed protection ordinance. At the Sept. 3 meeting, there will be a public hearing for a request by JNNJ, LLC, for a conditional district rezoning request.

There were about ten attendees present at the Agriculture center for Monday's meeting, and Board Clerk Lindsay Ray said 73 people registered over GoTo Webinar, including remote staff and presenters. The meeting was much shorter than in previous months, with a COVID-19 update as the only board priority of the meeting and only one speaker signed up for the public input session. During her public input remarks, Chatham resident Valerie Broadway called on the board to act

regarding homelessness, referencing Chatham's Salvation Army recent suspension of its emergency financial assistance line due to COVID-19 and potential rises in eviction rates due to the pandemic's impact on the economy.

"In recent weeks did any of you lie awake at night worrying about where the homeless people were as a hurricane passed by in the wee hours of the morning, or perhaps how they were coping on the days when the heat index was 105 degrees?" she asked the board. "I did."

Following her remarks, Howard clarified that she, too, along with the other board members, was greatly troubled about the problem of homelessness and looking for ways to provide additional resources in the county.

The meeting concluded with a county COVID-19 update. Interim Health Director Mike Zelek said at county currently has 1,363 cases and 55 deaths — with the majority of deaths taking place at assisted living facilities. Zelek also announced the county's new online COVID-19 community survey

dashboard, which features results from a survey assessing community prevention and impacts related to the pandemic. During her commissioner report, Howard referenced the return to school amid pandemic precautions, and encouraged parents and citizens alike that Chatham would make it through such challenges.

"I just join in with all the parents that are in the position of having to work and help homeschool and deal with all the myriad tasks that come along with trying to parent and navigate a system of education that we're not particularly well-versed in," she said. "My hat's off to our teachers and staff, superintendent, school board and all the parents and kids who are muddling our way through this — we will get out on the other end in Chatham County, and we will be ready and willing and waiting to engage all of these kids, who are going to be just fine."

Reporter Hannah McClellan can be reached at [hannah@chathamnr.com](mailto:hannah@chathamnr.com).

## VOTE 2020

# North Carolina will be the first state to send out absentee ballots on Sept. 4

BY BUCK RYAN

Special to the News + Record

Forget the national media countdown to Election Day, Nov. 3. North Carolina will be the first state to send out absentee ballots, on Sept. 4.

"The kickoff to our election is in just a few days, not 84 days from now," said Karen Brinson Bell, executive director of the State Board of Elections.

She spoke last Tuesday during a Zoom workshop with nearly 60 participants organized by the USC Election Cybersecurity Initiative, whose state media partner was the Chatham News + Record.

With support from Google, the University of Southern California team will bring perspective, tips and resources to all 50 states for election officials, campaign workers, journalists and academics. North Carolina was its 39th workshop.

"North Carolina is especially important because, as one of a handful of competitive states, campaign and election officials will be priority targets for bad actors trying to spread disinformation and trying to discredit the 2020 election," said Adam Clayton Powell III, executive director of the USC Election Cybersecurity Initiative.

Powell noted that the federal government is now offering rewards of up to \$10 million for information about hackers trying to meddle in U.S. elections.

Brinson Bell noted that most counties in the state prefer early voting and that no excuse is needed to apply for an absentee ballot, which has been redesigned and which now requires just one witness.

The state rejected the idea of all-mail voting, she said, because of supply chain, logistical and voter behavior issues and instead moved forward with a three-pronged

approach: absentee ballots by mail, one-stop early voting sites and in-person voting on Election Day, which she hoped will go smoothly with fewer people because many voted by other means.

"Back in the fall we launched a campaign in North Carolina to increase voter confidence because we know there are a lot of questions around cybersecurity and what goes on in elections," said Brinson Bell, the state's chief election officer working with boards of election in all 100 counties.

"We moved to a completely paper ballot system in North Carolina back in the latter part of last year," she said. "We have a state law in place that says our voting systems are not connected to the internet."

March 3 marked not only the first time North Carolina participated in a Super Tuesday primary election, but it also marked the first reported coronavirus case in the state in Wake County.

"Now, almost a year later after we launched that campaign, not only are we trying to address cybersecurity, but we're trying to address public safety and physical security," she said.

Brinson Bell emphasized the importance of the voter in ensuring election security.

"They are our poll workers," she said. "The neighbors, the people they go to church with, or go to the gym with, those are the people serving as our precinct officials and carrying out the election on the front lines. And now they are doing so with PPE."

The "ripple effect" from the upcoming election makes the stakes higher because 2020 coincides with the U.S. Census, said Ferrel Guillory, director of the Program on Public Life at the University of North Carolina's Hussman School of Journalism and Media.

"The legislature that is elected this No-

vember will be in charge of redistricting (for the 2022 elections)," he said. "North Carolina has been ground zero in many respects for almost 40 years in issues having to do with ballot access, gerrymandering, redistricting, and voter suppression or voting rules and regulations."

Like much of America, he said, the largest growth in voter identification in North Carolina has been unaffiliated, which represents about a third of the voters in the state with the other two-thirds being split with slightly more registered Democrats than Republicans.

Since 1972 in state elections, he said, Republicans have won 10 of the 12 presidential elections with Democratic victories only for Jimmy Carter (1976) and Barack Obama (2008). But in those same elections Democrats won eight of the 12 races for governor.

Asked about the importance of the workshop, Guillory said, "USC Election Cybersecurity Initiative produced a valuable workshop for North Carolina, a competitive swing state with statewide elections decided by narrow margins."

"In this stressful election year," he said, "it's crucial that citizens feel they have robust opportunities to vote, have their vote counted reliably and have confidence in the outcome."

One reporter, who covers election integrity, open government and civil liberties for Carolina Public Press in Asheville, struck a positive note.

"I want to praise election directors in the counties and the state of North Carolina," said reporter Jordan Wilkie, a Report for America corps member. "I think North Carolina has done a better job than a lot of states in responding to COVID especially as well as making significant changes since 2012 and 2016 in their election administration."

Wilkie also issued a warning.

"Voters need to know that the post office is delivering things pretty slow right now," he said. "If they are mailing in their ballot, as a record number of voters are doing, they should do that by October 25."

Politics reporter Steve Harrison, of public radio station WFAE in Charlotte, added perspective from the state's largest city.

"The elections director here says he expects a huge increase in mail voting," said Harrison, who writes a weekly newsletter, "Inside Politics." "Back in 2016 I think there were 29,000 mail ballots in the presidential race. This year they're expecting up to a hundred thousand."

Complicating the challenge, he said, is a new rule that citizens will be allowed a "do-over," a second chance to have their votes counted, if technicalities cause their ballots to be discarded.

As the pandemic has upended the "person-to-person effect" of traditional campaigning, longtime campaign manager Russell Peck sees another way Election 2020 will be different.

"You can't buy the value of the voter talking to another voter," said Peck, who was campaign manager for former Republican Gov. Pat McCrory in 2012 and 2016.

"It is the most valuable piece of being able to get out the vote."

USC's Powell summarized his national view this way: "2020 will be the most challenging election in our lifetimes."

Buck Ryan, director of the Citizen Kentucky Project on civic engagement, is an associate professor in the School of Journalism and Media at the University of Kentucky. He is conducting a case study of the Chatham News + Record, which he views as a model of success for community newspapers here and abroad.

## VOTING

Continued from page A1

elections board member Charles Ramos, a Republican, opposed having

early voting sites open on Sundays "for religious reasons." Frank Dunphy, another Republican member of the board, agreed with Ramos, advocating instead for longer Saturday hours in lieu of

Sunday voting.

The board's three Democrat members — Laura Heise, Amy Meek and Mark Barroso — each advocated in favor of Sunday voting. Heise noted data from 2016 which demon-

strated that the number of voters "drops off" later in the afternoon on Saturdays during early voting.

In the end, the board could not find a plan that would garner a unanimous vote, something re-

quired by state law for all county election boards' early voting plans. This means the plans under consideration by the county board will now be sent to the State Board of Elections to weigh in at its August 31 meeting.

Chatham County Board of Elections Executive Director Pandora Paschal said it's not very common for the local board to split along partisan lines for its early voting plan. Paschal said that in the past, while the subject of Sunday voting was discussed, the board would often reach consensus on not having early voting on Sundays because "our voters show up" — Chatham County consistently ranks among the top five in the state for election turnout even without Sunday voting.

"Because of the pandemic, this is not a normal time," Paschal said.

The board has been working on plans to "help keep people safe and give people options" in the face of what is expected to be a heavy turnout. "This is why, Paschal said, the board unanimously voted to approve two additional early voting sites for the 2020 election at the same meeting. Both of those sites — the Bold Building on Moring Drive and Chapel Hill and the New Hope Baptist Church on New Hope Church Road in Apex — are located in the northeastern portion of the county where there is the highest concentration of voters and where the population is growing the fastest. Those two sites join the county's four early voting sites at the Goldston Town Hall, the Paul Braxton Gymnasium in Siler City, the Chatham County Agricultural and Conference Center in Pittsboro and

the CCC Health Science Center off U.S. Hwy. 15-501 in Pittsboro.

"People shouldn't have to wait in lines for hours," Paschal said. "The board made the move to add two sites because in order to do proper social distancing you need more places to vote."

The board also approved changes to 14 of the 18 polling locations in the precincts to accommodate social distancing and protecting the safety of voters. Voting for residents in five precincts — Albright, Bynum, Hadley, Harpers Crossroads and Oakland — will be moved to buildings actually outside of their precincts since no structure that can maintain "proper social distancing" is available inside the precincts.

Nine other precincts will be in different buildings, but will remain inside the precinct proper. Four precincts — New Hope, West Siler City, East Williams and West Williams — will remain unchanged. The exact locations were not listed the minutes since the plan is still awaiting the final approvals from the state.

Other than the debate over weekend hours, the local elections board has nearly all of its plans in place for early voting and election day. Following the state's ruling on weekend hours on Aug. 31, the Chatham County Board of Elections will begin the process of "educating the voters" of the changes to ensure "voters know all their options."

Early voting runs from Thursday, Oct. 15 to Saturday, Oct. 31. Election day is Tuesday, Nov. 3.

Casey Mann can be reached at [CaseyMann@Chathamnr.com](mailto:CaseyMann@Chathamnr.com).

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A UNC STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

# What it's really like at UNC-Chapel Hill right now

**BY OLIVIA ROJAS**  
News + Record Staff

CHAPEL HILL — Less than a week. All it took was less than a week for four COVID-19 clusters to rise and spread around UNC.



**OLIVIA ROJAS**  
CN+R Intern

As a sophomore student who decided to come back to campus, I'm not surprised by the recent events from the university, but I'm definitely disappointed.

Students, staff, faculty and residents surrounding the campus all called on the university to go remote for months now. The university ignored recommendations from the Orange County Public Health Department to hold classes remotely for at least five weeks

and have at-risk students in on-campus housing only. They moved forward with housing plans that were deemed the highest-risk by the Center for Disease Control. Worries about Greek Life and large off-campus gatherings were voiced again and again. Yet, it was maintained that everything was going to be fine.

Yes, I know I had the choice to go back. However, I made the decision to head back to campus because I wanted that sense of independence and I wanted to focus on school in my school's own environment. Even though I knew it was not going to be 100% back to normal, the university continued to assert that this concept was feasible with their roadmap.

When I was on campus during these past two weeks, I saw that the community standards were broken plenty of times. Carolina Housing had guidelines for the fall

which said: "Non-residents and campus residents assigned to another building are not permitted in your residence hall." How was that going to get enforced? Let me tell you — it wasn't. I saw students on south campus, an area where the majority of first-years live, at night in party clothes with rumors swirling that fraternities were hosting parties. For the most part, everyone wore facial coverings, but from time to time there were those who didn't.

I understand that students need to be held accountable for their actions and take personal responsibility, but, as The Daily Tar Heel said in a now-viral editorial, we all saw this coming.

A lot of people feel hurt and betrayed right now. Some are confused on what the next step is, or they're canceling their housing and going home. Personally, I'm pretty sure that I'm heading home sometime soon.

My heart breaks for the first-years — including my own sister — and those who did uphold the standards. A college experience should not have been dangled in front of students and then ripped away like that. Not to mention, the anxiety of the fast spreading COVID-19 clusters appearing in your living space. There is too much time, effort and money that goes into this experience for it just to be a trial run — a one-week trial run. Better to be safe than sorry.

On Aug. 17, the University of North Carolina System President Peter Hans issued a statement about UNC's announcement where he wrote that students need to take "personal responsibility" and enforce those community standards for a successful semester and public health.

"Each campus is different, and I expect situations to evolve differently," he wrote. "In any circumstance, we will

be grounded by reliable public health data and prevailing local health conditions. I will continue to stay in close contact with our chancellors and fully support their efforts to fulfill our core educational mission in safe learning environments."

Here's the thing: I don't think every campus is different. A cluster has now surfaced at East Carolina University, and there are concerns about COVID-19 information at North Carolina State University. If anything, UNC's experience with reopening needs to be a warning and a wakeup call for the UNC system. We're in the middle of a pandemic, a global public health crisis. There's nothing different about that.

As for us Tar Heels, we're going to get through this and we're going to go back when it is completely safe to do so.

*Olivia Rojas, a News + Record intern and UNC sophomore, is from Sanford.*

ROOT CELLAR'S SERA CUNI

## Pittsboro resident to appear on Food Network's 'Guy's Grocery Games'

**BY CASEY MANN**  
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — Root Cellar co-owner and chef Sera Cuni will make her national television debut on the Food Network's Guy's Grocery Games at 9 p.m. Wednesday.

The show, hosted by celebrity restaurateur Guy Fieri, pits chefs from around the country in a single episode who are given a theme — and then a limited time to grab ingredients from the "warehouse market place" Fieri helped create and cultivate. The chefs then create items that are evaluated by a three judge panel.

In each of the three rounds in each episode, one chef is eliminated until a single chef participates in a shopping spree where they are given clues to different foods that they must find in the market place and place in their cart. If the contestant gets all the ingredients in time, they win \$20,000.

Cuni, a Pittsboro resident, didn't apply for the show. She said she received a Facebook message over the winter from what she described as a "random lady" asking to be friends. The woman then messaged Cuni asking whether she had interest in being on a television show.

"I thought, 'This is a scam,'" Cuni told the News + Record. "So I gave her very specific times and hours, like between 2 and 2:30 on a Tuesday. And they called."

The caller told Cuni representatives from the show "scour social media" for possible contestants. Cuni said she was "very skeptical" as it felt like a "rush-rush thing." She did another interview, with the caller never saying what show they were calling from. By the evening, the producers for the show called to say she was a

contestant. "It was kinda like a whirlwind thing," Cuni said.

The biggest struggle for Cuni as a business owner was that show producers didn't give her an exact date for filming — and with two businesses, Root Cellar locations in Chapel Hill and Pittsboro, she had a lot to juggle. The next thing she knew, she was on a plane for San Francisco, waiting for a car to take her to the studios.

The contestants were picked up early and taken to a trailer where producers reviewed rules and decided which of the seven different outfits they would wear on the show. Cuni said she spent a lot of time with the other contestants, fellow chefs from other areas of the country.

"I know it's a competition, but we were all cheering for each other too," Cuni said. "I feel like we really all lifted each other up."

**And then there's Guy**

Cuni said Fieri gave the chef contestants a pep talk before the day began. Cuni said Fieri knew little pieces about each of the contestants.

"I'm going to remember that forever," Cuni said. "He said to us, 'You've already won if you're here, because we think you're somebody.' He really cares."

Cuni also raved about the market place the show created in a warehouse saying it contained "everything you could want" and the "most interesting things" that don't appear in a typical grocery store. "The produce section," she said, "was beyond amazing."

**The Root Cellar during COVID**

Back at home, Cuni returned to The Root Cellar

before the COVID-19 pandemic hit the region, causing shutdowns. She said she started seeing things slow in Pittsboro, so she and her wife and co-owner, Susan White, decided to close that store first, then the Chapel Hill store. But they continued doing "family meals," where customers can order five nights of meals for two, including salads. And they continued doing Friday night take-out where Cuni makes up a menu for the evening. Her staff distributes the meals at the Chapel Hill store, the Pittsboro store and in Briar Chapel.

"We knew it was helping people, too, because they were having a hard time finding things at the grocery store and they were afraid," Cuni said. "But the hardest part was telling our staff, many of whom were with me when I started 15 years ago. These are my family. We're working on hopefully being able to bring them back, but with take out and only having 50% capacity, it's hard to bring back 30 employees."

Throughout COVID, Cuni has stayed in touch with her fellow contestants.

"We've all had our ups and downs through the coronavirus," she said. "It's good to get their view. We were all chefs. They all have restaurants all over the place and they are all really great people."

Looking forward, Cuni said she doesn't really know what is going to happen with both Root Cellar locations. She said "we make decisions every morning." She wants to reopen the Pittsboro location, but doesn't feel like it's safe. And she's not sure they can afford to reopen Pittsboro under the current restrictions considering the economics adding that "everybody is



Submitted photo

**Pittsboro resident Sera Cuni will be appearing on the Food Network's Guy's Grocery Games on Wednesday. Cuni is also the co-owner and chef at The Root Cellar.**

struggling."

Cuni had hoped that the show would be a "big break" for them, but COVID hit. They had wanted to do a watch party, but for now she and friends will simply watch it from home in their living room.

"I was representing North Carolina and Chatham County," Cuni said. "I hope I made Chatham County proud and represented it well."

*Casey Mann can be reached at CaseyMann@Chathamnr.com.*

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NEWS BRIEFS

Brookwood Farms to expand operations

Brookwood Farms, a Siler City-based barbecue production facility located on Alston Bridge Road, will be expanding its operations to an area located on what was previously called the Phase 3 section of the Chatham Siler City Advanced Manufacturing Site on U.S. Hwy. 64, now called the Midstate Development Center. The company is planning to open a distribution center at the site, a \$3.7 million investment. Production would still continue at the company's Alston Bridge Road location. The expansion will require a \$1 million road extension for access to the site. The town of Siler City is working with multiple entities including Triangle J Council of Governments and Golden LEAF to seek out grant opportunities for the road expansion. The site currently does not have public water or sewer access, but as no production is planned to occur there, Brookwood Farms believes it can use well and septic while the town explores grant options to pay the nearly \$1 million to extend those services to the site. "The town and EDC are proud to have a family-owned and operated business such as Brookwood have the confidence to expand in Siler City," Siler City Town Manager Roy Lynch said. "We look forward to continuing to work together to source funds to move forward on site preparations for both Brookwood Farms and other tenants."

Chatham County COVID-19 Community Survey Dashboard now available

PITTSBORO —The Chatham County Public Health Department has released an online data dashboard with results from a survey conducted in May and June 2020 to assess community prevention and impacts related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey utilized Chatham County's innovative Community Assessment Cohort, which is representative of Chatham's population. This survey was a collaborative effort between the CCPHD, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, and the North Carolina Institute for Public Health and the Department of Epidemiology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Gillings School of Global Public Health. Key results are now available online at [www.chathamnc.org/coronavirusdata](http://www.chathamnc.org/coronavirusdata). "While much has changed in the COVID-19 pandemic between June and today, the responses provide us with useful information that can inform our ongoing efforts," said Interim Public Health Director Mike Zelek. "The numbers show that the Chatham community has taken the virus seriously and has been practicing the 3 Ws. We are also able to learn about broader

impacts of the pandemic, from economic indicators to exercise." The survey was designed to better understand the prevalence of COVID-19 and its impacts on the community. Respondents answered questions about following the 3 Ws, a potential COVID-19 vaccine and how the pandemic has affected residents' lives. Among the highlights were:
 

- More than 90% of respondents said they were following each of the 3 Ws – wait six feet apart, wear a face covering and wash your hands regularly.
- 7 out of 10 respondents planned to get the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available.
- 27% said they have exercised less than usual since March.
- 47% stated the outbreak has posed a "substantial" or "moderate threat" to their household's finances.

 The survey was also used to recruit participants to a separate and ongoing study led by UNC-Chapel Hill faculty to monitor the prevalence of COVID-19 in Chatham County over time.

CCL Launches Kids' Club for Social Justice

The Youth Services Department of the Chatham Community Library has announced a new monthly event for elementary-school aged children to openly discuss social justice topics. Social justice topics are frequently in the news, and children may have questions or concerns. The monthly forum also provides a space to brainstorm ideas about how to make the world a better place. "Kids' Club for Social Justice" is a safe space for children in grades K-5 to talk about social justice topics. The first GoToMeeting event will be held from 3:30-4:30 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 17. Then, and every third Thursday from there on, a Youth Services staff member will read a book with a social justice theme and invite children to connect with the topic and with each other. The topic for September's meeting is racism, and the book the group will read together is "Chocolate Me," written by Taye Diggs and illustrated by Shane W. Evans. At the end of the meeting, one child will win a copy of the book. Future meeting topics include bullying, colonialism, sexism, homophobia and anti-Semitism. Parents, older siblings and caregivers are welcome at these meetings, which will be virtual until the library reopens, and will not be recorded or archived. For additional information on this program or to receive virtual meeting instructions, please contact the Youth Services department at 919-545-8085 or via email at [youth.services@chathamlibraries.org](mailto:youth.services@chathamlibraries.org). This program is free and open to the public.

— CN + R staff reports

CHURCH NEWS

COMMUNITY COVID-19 TESTING

A community COVID-19 testing site will be available from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 29 at Staunton Memorial CME Church

located at 230 Credle St., Pittsboro. The testing center is free and open to the public. This event is sponsored by StarMed Healthcare. To sign-up visit: [StarMed Healthcare](http://StarMedHealthcare.com) at [www.StarMed.care](http://www.StarMed.care).

HANOOD RECEIVES NATIONAL HONOR

The National Society of High School Scholars (NSHSS) has announced that student Austin K. Honood from Goldston has been selected to become a member of their organization, recognizing scholars demonstrating outstanding leadership, scholarship and community commitment.

Siler City to resume water/sewer shut-offs in September

BY CASEY MANN  
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — The Siler City Board of Commissioners decided to resume water and sewer shut-offs for non-payment following the end of the moratorium on utility shut-offs issued by N.C. Gov. Roy Cooper in March. Last week, the town had 360 accounts that were delinquent with residents in the arrears more than \$73,000. Siler City Finance Director Tina Stroupe did note on Monday that the number of delinquent accounts

had dropped in the past week to 284, but was not sure of the remaining amount due. A majority of the delinquent accounts are residential, but Stroupe did say that some were commercial. "We don't want to shut people's water off," Stroupe said. "Especially since this is something none of us expected." Stroupe suggested the town institute a six-month payment plan for the outstanding accounts. Utility users who are behind on payments would need to make their current payments as well

as sign up for the six-month plan. The amount that each account owes would be split equally among the six months with a monthly payment date agreed to by the customer. The Siler City Board of Commissioners agreed to the plan on Monday. Stroupe did note that if customers do not make a payment or sign up for the payment plan, the town would begin conducting shut-offs to customers on Sept. 8. Casey Mann can be reached at [CaseyMann@Chathamnc.com](mailto:CaseyMann@Chathamnc.com).

**PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo**


**NEIGHBORS' NAMESAKES**

**ACROSS**

|   |  |   |                           |  |                                |
|---|--|---|---------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 1 Singer Reddy                                  | 49 Funeral pile                            | 92 "I want that now!"                       | 3 Volcano stuff           | 40 Screw up                            | 79 Work unit                   |
| 6 "Preach it!"                                  | 50 Tangent, e.g.                           | 93 Leaf veins                               | 4 Full of pep             | 41 Forest cats                         | 81 Sudden temperature increase |
| 10 Italian Riviera city                         | 52 Actor Omar of "House"                   | 95 Pro                                      | 5 Dummy                   | 42 Ones making an effort               | 82 Apiece                      |
| 15 At the home of, French-style                 | 54 Singer Cole or Abdul                    | 96 Animator's sheet                         | 6 Ornament hanger, e.g.   | 43 Aches (for)                         | 83 Fencing sword               |
| 19 Muscat citizen                               | 56 Actress Long                            | 97 Tolkien fiend                            | 7 Barcelona soccer great  | 46 Aqua — (highly corrosive liquid)    | 84 After-bath application      |
| 20 Display model                                | 57 Ranch food provider [animator]          | 100 They may bedevil dogs                   | 8 Overplayed the part     | 51 Approves of                         | 85 .6214 mile                  |
| 21 In the midst of                              | 60 Teen girl, in old lingo                 | 101 Lace a party drink [bandleader]         | 9 Have a snack            | 53 Show that you can download          | 86 Kuwaiti chief               |
| 22 Plastic brick brand                          | 62 Flavorful                               | 105 Fourth-place finisher, say              | 10 Fuel holders           | 54 Gives out in abundance, as flattery | 87 Community rec center        |
| 23 Certain bolt                                 | 63 Sch. in Manhattan                       | 107 Envoy's bldg.                           | 11 Estevez of film        | 55 Stubborn equine                     | 88 Not veiled                  |
| 24 Spanish for "bears"                          | 64 Harsh                                   | 108 Oval portion                            | 12 "Just say — drugs"     | 58 Witty sort                          | 91 Piano seat                  |
| 25 Ravi Shankar played it                       | 65 Magic spell                             | 109 Very dense element                      | 13 — even keel            | 59 Car financing abbr.                 | 94 Pesky insect, informally    |
| 26 As a result                                  | 69 Creditor's time of forgiveness [singer] | 111 What you do when you solve this puzzle? | 14 In a pleasant way      | 60 "So long!"                          | 96 Bow of respect              |
| 27 2008 Lucasfilm sci-fi flick [TV personality] | 74 Bacon sizzle sound                      | 119 Tiny fly                                | 15 Get resolved           | 61 NBA nail-biters, in brief           | 98 Some aircraft engines       |
| 31 — Mae (government lender)                    | 75 Cost — and a leg                        | 120 Tiger sounds                            | 16 Mr. in Munich          | 63 It aired "Car Talk"                 | 99 Ad award                    |
| 32 Mai — (French "Egad!")                       | 77 Part of ETA                             | 121 Went by bike, e.g.                      | 17 Custard components     | 65 College focuses                     | 102 Realm: Abbr.               |
| 33 Part of ENT carrying bag                     | 78 "— bleu!"                               | 122 Unmoving                                | 18 Noted Bronx attraction | 66 How police may get info             | 103 In groups of two           |
| 34 Hiker's carrying bag                         | 80 "Monterey" food [singer]                | 123 Part of ENT                             | 28 Stud money             | 67 Actor Derek Connelly                | 104 Santa's laugh              |
| 37 College academics overseer [actor]           | 84 Male gobblers [singer]                  | 124 Binge                                   | 29 States, to Macron      | 68 Mork's planet                       | 110 Roomy car                  |
| 44 Very busy                                    | 89 Western Amerind                         | 125 At the drop of —                        | 30 Female WWII enlistee   | 69 How police may get info             | 111 Radio dial                 |
| 45 Screw up                                     | 90 Jumped                                  | 126 Strange                                 | 34 Playwright             | 70 Lead-in to "now" (Gillette brand)   | 112 Relieve                    |
| 47 Bldvs., e.g.                                 | 91 Illegalizes                             | 127 Lyft competitor                         | 35 Bryce Canyon locale    | 71 "You are not!" reply                | 113 Vatican head               |
| 48 Legal deg.                                   |  | 128 Baby's bear                             | 36 In — (as found)        | 72 Lead-in to Nov.                     | 114 Fed (off)                  |
|   |  | 129 Downsides                               | 38 X Games ailer          | 73 Joanne of "My Pal Gus"              | 115 — II                       |
|   |  | 130 Tire pattern                            | 39 "Spare tire" fat       | 76 Roman 1,150 antelope                | 116 Coll's father              |
|   |  |   |                           |  | 117 Director Kazan             |
|   |  |   |                           |  | 118 Arctic vehicle             |
|   |  |   |                           |  | 119 African                    |

Solution for the puzzle in last week's edition.

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
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**Town of Siler City**  
Public Works and Utilities

August 12, 2020

Dear Customer,

The town is experiencing an increase of brush and junk placed on the side of the road with so many people staying and working from home. Due to the volume, we are experiencing extended pick up times.

We also now have to deliver our waste to Sanford, NC, since the closing of the Siler City Waste Management transfer station in 2019.

**Please remember these rules for brush and junk pick up:**

1. Do not combine brush and junk together. It will not be picked up.
2. No oils, paints, gas, weed killers, or hazardous containers should ever be placed out at the side of the road for pick up.
3. No construction debris: wood pallets, brick, cinder block, drywall, concrete. These should be removed by the contractor or homeowner.
4. Grass clippings should be bagged separately. Do not place loose grass clippings in the same pile as your brush. It will not be picked up as it cannot be mulched.
5. Anything that can be recycled, should be. This not only reduces the cost of pick up but goes a long way to help our environment.
6. The town offers a roll-off waste cart rental if you are removing high volume junk or limb debris. Call Town Hall for more info on rental: (919) 742-4731.

Agosto 12, 2020

Estimado Cliente,

La ciudad está experimentando un aumento de desperdicio de yarda y chatarra colocada al lado de la carretera. Debido a que tanta gente se queda y trabaja desde casa. Con el alto volumen, estamos experimentando retrasos para cuando los artículos serán recogidos.

También ahora tenemos que entregar nuestros residuos a Sanford NC, desde el cierre de la estación de Siler City Waste Management en 2019.

Por favor, recuerde estas reglas para la recogida de desperdicio de yarda y chatarra:

1. No combinar el desperdicio de yarda y chatarra. No será recogido.
2. No se deben colocar aceites, pinturas, gas, productos químicos para matar hierba o recipientes peligrosos a lado de la carretera para ser recogidos.
3. No escombros de construcción: palets de madera, ladrillo, bloque de cemento, pared seca y concreto. Estos deben ser retirados por el contratista o propietario de la casa.
4. Los recortes de hierba deben embolsarse por separado. No coloque recortes de hierba sueltos en la misma pila que su desperdicio de yarda. No se recogerá ya que no se puede hacer en mantillo. Cualquier cosa que pueda ser reciclada, debe ser. Esto no sólo reduce el costo de la recogida, sino que ayuda mucho a nuestro medio ambiente.
5. La ciudad ofrece el programa Roll Off Waste Cart si está retirando chatarra de alto volumen o escombros de extremidades. Llame al City Hall para obtener más información sobre este programa: (919) 742-4731.

# Chatham EDC announces Byrd's resignation

PITTSBORO — Alyssa Byrd, the president of Chatham Economic Development Corporation (EDC), will be resigning from her post effective Aug. 28 to join the Town of Fuquay-Varina in Wake County as its economic development director.

Byrd joined the EDC in 2011 as a communication specialist. In her nine and a half years with the organization, she took on increasing leadership roles, serving as the director of communication and strategic projects, interim

president, and as of February 2019, president.

"It has been a privilege to serve the EDC and residents of Chatham County, and I'm really proud of the work that's been done," Byrd said. "Chatham County has incredible assets that will be transformative for the region."

Chatham EDC chairman Jeff Wilson of Wilson Bros. Trucking said, "Alyssa has been a strong leader for the organization and in the community, and while we will miss her, we wish her the best

with her new endeavor."

In her tenure as president, among many other notable accomplishments, Byrd recruited new industries to Chatham County — including Gilero in downtown Pittsboro and A.D. Tubi in Siler City — oversaw the continued development of Chatham's industrial sites, increased the EDC's capacity by expanding the staff, and led the organization through a strategic planning process.

The EDC's board of directors has engaged the firm Creative Economic

Development Consulting to conduct an executive search. Byrd will remain available to support the staff and board through the transition period of selecting a new president.

The Chatham EDC is the lead economic development agency for Chatham County. The EDC is a 501(c)3 economic development non-profit that provides support to businesses throughout the county and markets Chatham County as the preferred location for emerging growth companies.

## BYRD

Continued from page A1

The ultimate goal of economic development is to create increase and create wealth within a community. So I think from that standpoint, it won't be much different — just how that work is deployed, and what those strategies look like...they'll be tailored specifically to that geographical area and their assets and what they want to achieve.

Fuquay-Varina has seen a lot of residential growth over the past 10, 15, 20 years. That's much like Chatham County, but very specific to their economic goals is to increase their retail and services to support that residential growth. So the ultimate goal is still to increase wealth and community support and diversify your tax base support employment, but to tailor it to that community.

### What are you most excited about with the new position?

It's a new adventure, right? I like learning things. I like challenges and I think this will check both of those boxes. There's a learning curve and meeting a lot of new people. So it's hard to just pick one thing, but the position has all the things that get me excited about Chatham County. In that sense I think the positions are very similar.

### As you look back, what

### are going to be the accomplishments you're most proud of? What will you remember most fondly?

I think that I was so lucky to recruit Sam Rauf and Ann Fitts to our team. They are two exceptional young professionals that Chatham County and the organization are lucky to have. One of the most difficult things with any business or any organization is getting the right fit on your team. They're such critical pieces of the success of the organization. So I'm so confident in them and their ability to adapt and rise to the challenge of being down a staff person. They'll see the road bumps much like I did when I was in that position, but you know, they have built strong relationships in their short tenure within the community and they'll do really well.

In the meantime we have contracted with a consulting and economic development consulting firm out of North Carolina. It's actually the same firm that helps Lee County and Sanford when they were transitioning their organization, and they are going to support us with executive recruitment as well as providing some back office internal support as needed.

### Give us your assessment of where the county is right now...and what would you say to your successor about what's happening in Chatham County?

Chatham County is in such a great position. We have done a lot of groundwork, you know,

starting back with Diane Reid, developing industrial sites. At this point, the two megasites are well-oiled machines. We've gotten a lot done with their development; any missing pieces, we know what they are and we know what it takes to do them. Chatham Park is developing; it's really taking off. I think the state of things is that we're going to see a lot of residential growth as Chatham Park builds homes. And from that there's going to be a natural demand of services within the community.

Especially now, with people staying at home or staying closer to home, I think that's a big opportunity for people to appreciate the services and the businesses within their community, as opposed to commuting out and maybe not embracing that.

So the state of things is that really great groundwork has been laid. There still some hurdles in the way — some refining and polishing of things we know we want and need to do. But the sky's really the limit here.

### You mentioned hurdles...

I think that's one of the hard parts of me leaving. These projects aren't like two-week projects. They take months and months and they're long-term investments. I know some of the things in progress and in the works, and stepping away when they're 80% there and not being able to see them completed is really tough.

### If you had a wish list of things you could bestow on

### your successor, or Chatham County, what would be on that list?

Just three? (laughs). Let's see...I think funding for infrastructure is one of the biggest challenges. Siler City needs support. There's no county-wide, county-maintained sewer and sewer is so critical for good development practices. We don't want a lot of separate septic systems or shopping centers developed with septic or individual package plan. So I think sewer that will continue to be a need across the county. That's always going to be at the top of the wish list.

I think something tying into that infrastructure piece is broadband. The county does what it can do, but there are limitations to what they are legally permitted to do. And I know they want to do more. That's really in the hands of higher powers when it comes to legislation of what a municipality is permitted to do and provide. But I think that if given the opportunity, we would very much be compelled to invest in widespread broadband solutions.

Third on the wish list to continue to get through COVID. Let's protect our existing businesses and make sure they have the resources they need to be resilient through this, and that's going to be really challenging. Every community is facing that challenge right now, but that's my wish — for Chatham County businesses can hang on and get through this.

### When you think about Fuquay-Varina, there's the old downtown area with breweries and coffee shops and lots more. Plus there's a huge retail base there...

There is. And I think we have that demand from folks who live here in Chatham County. But ultimately, when it comes to recruiting... Over the course of my time in Chatham County, I wish I had counted the number of times people asked me when we were going to get a Chick-fil-A. Part of economic development and understanding opportunities like that is knowing that a lot of those franchise or corporate location decisions are really based on metrics. A lot of what businesses like that require is based on headcount. A big piece of it is just having the population base to support the business.

### What do you say to people who may not be as energized about growth, who would like to see Chatham stay the way it is?

I think I totally understand that. I'd say there are two things. One is that change is hard, and the other is the unknowns that come with change.

Seeing a proposal on a piece of paper is not the same as being able to enjoy the amenities that it might bring. So that's the first thing, because just being the funny little creatures we are, humans find it difficult to change and embrace the unknown.

I think across the

board, we can always do a better job at communicating the benefits of overall development and the very specifics about a project — because these things can really take off and spiral in a way that is not necessary. We need to do a better job communicating on the front end, and I think that comes with building community relationships...

We're lucky in Chatham County that we have some really exceptional developers tied to our projects, and the fact that they're local... You know, these are our neighbors and they're invested in our community. And I think you've got to embrace that.

### Anything we didn't cover, or any final thoughts?

I have said this before, but I am so confident in Chatham County and this region and I have no doubt that this organization and will be able to recruit either from within or externally to bring top talent here. It's an incredibly compelling region. I might be leaving, but I'm not going far because this is a great place to live and to raise a family and to have a business. It's going to continue to grow. And we're going to continue to have extremely skilled and educated people coming out of the community college and university system. So I think people should be very proud of what's going on in Chatham County and embrace that growth because we're a big player in a good region.

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## NAVIGATES

Continued from page A1

invoicing, while Rich is in charge of production and product development. Together, they make a team that's established a major presence in the North Carolina fiber arts community.

Twin Birch Products also offers wholesale buying, selling its products to more than 100 businesses nationwide, along with many schools that are still teaching traditional fiber art skills.

In addition to their appearance at in-person shows, the Szarys also have a 4,000 square-foot brick-and-mortar "fiber space" called Twin Birch & Teasel, located in the downtown arts district in Siler City, which remains open with modified hours.

This location serves as a retail, studio and education space, where they place a heavy emphasis on local artists, selling products like fair-trade African baskets, yarn, spinning wheels and accessories, fiber-related jewelry and other locally sourced goods, alongside their own birchwood fiber art tools.

"What we do is try to encourage local sales, local artists," Sue said. "Everything in our store needs to have a story. It has to have kind of a hands-on component to it. There's a human piece, the hands-on, the actual imagination that goes into the things that we carry here."

Twin Birch Products also works with the Siler City Merchants Association to raise awareness about the fiber arts community in Chatham County, while simultaneously using its space to give artists a place to create.

There are three resident artists at Twin Birch & Teasel's studio, including Sue, which she refers to as their "playground" because they tend to experiment with different types of art. Rentable studio space is also available, both short- and long-term, for artists.

Education is also a major component of Twin Birch's mission, with a few guest artists teaching in-house classes such as Saori — a Japanese weaving technique — and Tunisian crochet. However, no classes have been held in the space since late February due to the pandemic and there is no plan to teach them in the foreseeable future.

While Twin Birch & Teasel may not be hosting any physical classes — and very few virtual classes — that doesn't mean the Szarys have stopped working to get new people involved in the community.

"We always take joy in introducing products to new knitters, to student knitters, to children that are learning at home," Sue said. "We're enablers here. We're going to help people down the path, get them information, get them the materials that they need and answer as many questions as we can."

Over the past five months, which saw the announcement of the stay-at-home order by Gov. Roy Cooper in March, many people have attempted to pick up new hobbies or relearn old skills while they have more time on their hands. Sue has gotten to see this first hand.

"Last weekend a woman bought a pair of knitting needles for her mother in Texas and her 7-year-old daughter was with her," Sue said. "The daughter said 'I want to learn to knit too!' So now that she's home with her, she bought a pair and she'll teach her to knit."

There have been some knitters who have come into Twin Birch & Teasel to buy more needles because they're working on five or six projects at once since they now have the time and flexibility to choose which project they want to spend time with.

The lack of in-person fiber art shows, however, is limiting to how Twin Birch Products can branch out, grow their brand and introduce new folks to the art.

That's where virtual

shows come in.

Some of the larger fiber art shows, such as the Southeastern Animal Fiber Festival in Asheville, aren't hosting virtual shows, but they have a spot on their website where people can view all of their would-be vendors and visit their websites to buy directly from them online.

Other shows will begin hosting virtual events where someone can set up a time slot to "visit" a specific vendor online — such as Twin Birch Products — who will have their camera on so the customer can browse the products being offered and then purchase them from the vendor's website.

It may not be the most ideal way to spend the show season, but according to Sue, it's better than nothing.

"You speak with your customers across hundreds and hundreds of miles and try to make that work," Sue said. "It's really not the same as the touchy-feely and being able to tell stories with each other. The fiber arts community shares so many stories of their experiences with the traditional craft and so it's not quite the same, but at least we'll still have a presence."

Twin Birch Products aims to attend some virtual shows throughout 2020. With an already well-established website that includes an online marketplace where people can buy their products, the Szarys are ahead of the curve.

Despite all of the challenges that have emerged over the last five months, Sue remains optimistic for the future and continues to reinforce why she loves her job.

"We make tools that other people can walk around and say, 'I made this, I made it with your needles, look at what I made because of your tools,'" Sue said. "I think my favorite part [of owning Twin Birch Products] is just the endless possibilities for ourselves, for others and the opportunity to make connections."

## STRUGGLES

Continued from page A1

companies is greatly intertwined. Recent correspondence from DEQ lists Michael Myers, the president of Envirolink, as the president of Old North State Water. But the president of Old North State Water, which is based in Alabama, is John McDonald, according to documents filed with the N.C. Utilities Commission. The companies have seemed to merge together for the purposes of the work in Chatham County into Old North State Water North Chatham with Myers at the helm.

Last year, DEQ assessed nine violations and ultimately penalized the company \$1,500. Letters of violation have also been sent to the company for this year's incidents including one for having an invalid operator designated, but penalty assessments are still "pending," according to DEQ documents.

During that same period, the companies were working through the process with the NCUC to connect the Briar Chapel system with Fearington Village. The residents of both communities soon began speaking out against the merger. At a January public hearing on the subject, 230 people were in attendance with more than 30 speaking in opposition to the transfer.

Following the public hearing, the public staff at the NCUC filed a motion to postpone public hearings scheduled for later in January and instead schedule a June evidentiary hearing.

"The Public Staff is extremely concerned about the extensive and compelling customer testimony on the reclaimed water issues," the motion stated, "including odor, excessive watering, spraying outside the permitted areas, windblown reclaimed water, and the lack of responsiveness by Old North State and Envirolink's to the customer complaints."

In the meantime, the NCUC allowed three additional groups to participate in the process as intervenors — the Briar Chapel Community Association, StopChathamNorth and the Fearington Homeowners Association — and more than 600 residents signed a petition against the project. The petition later become part of the public record for the NCUC investigation.

In May, the hearing was postponed to September "to allow the Public Staff and intervenors time to further investigate and prepare testimony on issues in this case." The actual date is likely to be later than that, according to Bill Grantmyre, a member of the public staff of the N.C. Utilities Commission leading the investigation. Grantmyre said that the team is still working to gather information from the N.C. Dept. of Environmental Quality and other outside sources. He believed the hearing could be anywhere from November to January.

Briar Chapel's most recent spill of 8,400 gallons of untreated wastewater on July 26 may have further complicated matters. Grantmyre said the commission was aware of the spill and is working with the other regulatory agencies

responsible for monitoring the system.

But the last spill was enough for at least one developer.

Chris Ehrenfeld — a partner in Chatham Media Group, which owns the News + Record — and the owner of Bold Development, the developer of Williams Corner, put public hearings on the project on hold citing concerns about the ability of the company to manage wastewater. In the letter to the county requesting the delay, Ehrenfeld said his company relies "on utility partnerships and have faith in local providers to hold up their end of the bargain and adequately perform the services for which we engage them. Bold is not willing to gamble with the health of our surrounding community."

At the same time, the town of Pittsboro voted unanimously to sever its agreement with Old North State Water Company for the operation of its wastewater reclamation plant still under construction on U.S. Hwy. 64 East at its regular meeting on Monday, August 10. The town originally entered into an operators agreement with Old North State Water Company in May 2018. The resolution dissolving that relationship stated that "irreconcilable issues" between Chatham Park and Old North State Water Company "have arisen in 2020" making it such that Chatham Park has not entered into an agreement with them to own and operate the facility. That agreement was a pre-requisite for the original operator agreement with the town.

Tim Smith, one of the developers with Chatham Park, said that while the two companies are in negotiations, without an agreement, Chatham Park asked the town to make the change for the NPDES permit, the one issued from N.C. Dept. of Environmental Quality that allows the plant to operate.

"The town's NPDES permit needed to be in the same name as the town agreement on the Chatham Park plant as directed by the state," Smith said. "It was decided that putting both the permit and the agreement in Chatham Park's name was best. That way if there ever was a change in operators of the plant, the name, Chatham Park, would not need to change."

What Old North State Water Company, Envirolink and the combines Old North State Water Chatham North do moving forward is likely a question for regulators. The companies own and operate dozens of facilities across the state, most of which are smaller subdivision size water systems and seven wastewater systems.

The Briar Chapel system is "substantially larger" than any of the other systems that it operates, according to Grantmyre. According to records from the N.C. Utilities Commission, the average user number for its water systems is 40. Its six other wastewater treatment plants range between 10,000 to 150,000 gallons per day. The system in Briar Chapel processes about 250,000 gallons per day and has over 1,700 customers. Grantmyre said that he was not aware of any current action against any of those systems.

Casey Mann can be reached at Casey-Mann@Chathamnr.com.

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# Chatham News + Record

## SPORTS NEWS & CLASSIFIEDS

AUGUST 20-26, 2020 | chathamnewsrecord.com/sports | SECTION B

### NEW CHATHAM BUSINESS

## Carolina Waters takes off: Locally born brand built on the water marries performance and design

BY ADRIANNE CLEVEN  
News + Record Correspondent

BEAR CREEK — Two long-time friends, countless fishing expeditions and a love of small-town life have added up to a young business for Chatham native Chris Callicutt and his friend Brad Terry.

The two men have regular day jobs — Callicutt is a physical education teacher at Chatham Charter School, and Terry is a store manager — but each manage to spend a decent amount of time on fishing expeditions across the state. This year, their hobby crossed over from an intense pastime to a business venture: a performance and lifestyle clothing brand called “Carolina Waters.”

“The more I researched it,” Callicutt said, “there’s not a ton of North Carolina-based outdoor companies ... And I thought that was a little market that we might be able to take advantage of and really succeed in. You have your ‘Lake Life’ and your ‘Salt Life’ (brands) ... but there’s not a whole lot of North Carolina-based stuff.”

Starting with a company name and a logo, the two set

out to change that in between their daytime work and duties as fathers to young kids. It took around four months for the brand to move from ideation to its debut online last month.

“We’re trying to get our dad time in, to do a little fishing on the side,” Callicutt said. “But we wanted to do something extra with it this year. And the more that that evolved, we wanted to get a branding for our little adventures. And that’s where we came up with the name Carolina Waters ... we like to fish throughout the whole state, so we wanted to find something to encapsulate that.”

Each member of the pair brings a certain specialty to the project. Terry has worked in retail management for around 15 years, while Bear Creek native Callicutt did some sports marketing work before his current positions as a P.E. teacher and basketball coach at Chatham Charter in Siler City.

But the engine behind the Carolina Waters project stems from a longtime love of fishing and being outdoors. Though Callicutt is the only Chatham native of the duo, they both spent plenty of time fishing in



Submitted photo

**Brad Terry (left) and Chris Callicutt, the co-founders of the fishing and lifestyle clothing brand Carolina Waters, pose near a family pond in Tramway.**

the county’s waters. According to Terry, the Cape Fear, Haw and Deep River are all “home waters for us.” They’ve both made sizable catches in Harris Lake and Jordan Lake, too.

“I love seeing the sunrise on any body of water,” Terry said. “It feels like the closest I am in nature — when you see the sun come up. So that’s one of my favorite traditions, being on any body of water and watching the sun rise and getting the first snippet of light over the water ... It’s gorgeous.”

When Callicutt and Terry dip their lines into a pond owned by Terry’s family, it’s evident they’re not too worried about scaring fish off with competitive banter and dad jokes.

When one of them hooks a tree with a line, it’s jokingly called a “tree-pounder” instead of what they’re really after: a three-pound fish or an even bigger catch.

Neither of them make a practice of eating their catches — Terry said he doesn’t like the taste of bass — but by the end



Submitted photo

**Brad Terry, co-founder of the fishing and lifestyle brand Carolina Waters, holds a largemouth bass he caught in a family-owned pond in Tramway. His business partner Chris Callicutt walks behind him.**

of an evening of fishing they’ve caught a few nice-sized largemouth bass. One tips the scale

See **BUSINESS**, page B2

## Phil Senter, longtime Jordan-Matthews football coach and teacher, dies

BY CHAPEL FOWLER  
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — Phil Senter, the vaunted Jordan-Matthews football coach who led the Jets to 14 consecutive playoff appearances in 19 years at the helm, died Tuesday morning.

His daughter, Wendy Copelan, confirmed the news in a Facebook post early Tuesday. She said Senter had been

suffering from neuropathy, a result of chemotherapy to treat lymphoma, and was “a little unsteady” when he fell and broke his neck Monday night pulling a recycling bin



Senter

in from the road. Neurosurgeons arrived to

treat him, but Copelan said the injuries from his fall were “too severe.”

“My daddy and my hero left us peacefully this morning,” Copelan wrote. “I am so angry that he fought lymphoma and won and this fall took him.”

“I am everything I am today because of this amazing man!” she continued. “Please pray for strength for us. We are rocked to the core. God, I need you!”

Senter, who retired from the school in 1996 after going 146-65-2, remained a beloved fixture in the community long after he stopped coaching.

P.J. Lowman, the former Jordan-Matthews men’s basketball coach who played four years of football for Senter at J-M, said the coach changed his life for the better — “and there’s hundreds of people just like me” who feel the same, he added. “Honestly, I don’t even know

where to start,” said Lowman, now coaching at Apex Friendship. “He’s a guy who held the coach title long after he coached. He was so active on Facebook. If I ever posted something about my teams, he was always there with a word of encouragement. He stayed our coach 25 years after he was gone.”

Funeral and memorial service details are still developing. Visit [chathamnewsrecord.com/sports](http://chathamnewsrecord.com/sports) for further information.

### ‘ALL YOU REALLY NEED IS A PAIR OF SHOES’



CN+R file photo

More than 100 athletes from 20 schools competed at the NCHSAA 3A Midwest Regional on Northwood’s campus last fall.

## Cross country during a pandemic? Local runners, coaches say not much has changed

BY CHAPEL FOWLER  
News + Record Staff

Every morning, Sarah Barbour wakes up at 7:30 a.m. By 8 a.m., she’s running, with the open country and trails of Moncre as her course and contemporary Christian as her music of choice.

The Northwood sophomore puts in three to six miles a day. She’s up to 184.8 miles for the summer. In June, she shattered her previous personal best in a two-mile run by 53 seconds. An optimist, Barbour said she realized the coronavirus pandemic has helped her in that regard.

“I’m making the best out of the worst situation,” Barbour said. “Without all of this being at home, the growth that I’ve had probably wouldn’t have happened.”

With life slowed down a bit, she’s found it easier to eat healthy, stay hydrated and most of all keep up with her stretching — “usually,” she said, “I’m horrible at that.” So far, the results of Barbour’s hard work have shown, and she’s excited to carry them over to the Chargers’ 2020 season.

Her progress is a nod to cross country’s place in a sports world still largely dictated by COVID-19. An individual

sport at its roots, it remained relatively unscathed in comparison to team competition. And, more so than golf and tennis, two lower-risk sports that have also seen a surge, running is equitable.

“All you really need is a pair of shoes, somewhere to run and some motivation,” Barbour said.

As such, coaches in Chatham County said they had an easier time making progress this summer. Whether in-person, under the NCHSAA’s socially distanced guidelines, or remotely, their athletes can still go the extra mile.

At Woods Charter, co-head coaches Bernard Penney and Karen Hawkins just wrapped up six weeks of workouts, focusing mostly on “regular runs” of 30 to 45 minutes to help runners establish base times for running a mile, two miles and so on. They also utilized “tempo runs,” shorter-interval runs meant to build up speed for competitions, jump roping, agility ladders and core and strength training.

It was a “safe environment,” Hawkins said, as the Wolves adhered to the NCHSAA’s Phase One and Two guidelines for in-person workouts. When they weren’t running on the shady one-mile trail behind Woods Charter’s Chapel Hill campus, athletes wore masks, and everyone got

See **RUNNERS**, page B2

### ‘WE’VE GOT TO ROLL WITH IT’

## How county ADs are tackling the NCHSAA’s new 2020-21 athletics calendar

BY CHAPEL FOWLER  
News + Record Staff

After a spring and summer’s worth of coronavirus-induced cancellations and delays, Chatham County’s five high schools got a comprehensive roadmap for fall sports last Wednesday.

That afternoon, the NCHSAA announced its much anticipated 2020-21 athletics calendar. No teams will hold official practices until November, football games won’t start until February and all but three sports (cross country, volleyball and swimming and diving) won’t compete until 2021.

It was an understandably dramatic overhaul, one that brought with it plenty of questions and made for an atmosphere of “hesitant excitement,” as Jordan-Matthews’ Josh Harris put it. Still, though, he and the rest of the county’s athletic directors had something definitive. And that was a relief.

“On social media, a lot of people are starting to get really bitter and negative about things,” Northwood co-AD Jason Amy said. “I’m just tickled to death they told us we were even going to do something. It was better than guessing.”

Added Chatham Charter’s Clint Fields: “We’ve gone so long with, ‘There’s something coming, there’s something coming,’ and now we finally have it. We’ve got to roll with it.”

NCHSAA commissioner Que Tucker said she hopes the schedule, which runs from November to June, is a “one-year blip on our radar.” The changes to football are the most eye-catching — a slew of top in-state recruits have already announced they’ll pass on a spring season and enroll early at their respective colleges — but there are substantive changes to other sports, too.

Men’s soccer, a traditional fall sport, and men’s/women’s lacrosse, traditional spring sports, will all begin games Jan. 25. Outdoor cross country, which usually ends its season in November, will now start meets Nov. 16. Wrestling, a winter sport, will compete from April to June.

“When you have a schedule, you can move forward, make plans,” Woods Charter athletic director Dena Floyd said. “Let’s be positive. People need to realize it’s not going to be like it was last year.”

Tucker, in a news conference last Wednesday, provided more specifics on the calendar, which is still in the works. The NCHSAA hopes to hold playoff competition for all sports, she said, and acknowledges that weather may play a role in traditionally outdoor sports budgeted for the winter — as such, the current limit of two competitions a week is “not set in stone.”

Tucker also confirmed the NCHSAA has no rules preventing athletes from participating in multiple sports, even if those sports’ seasons run simultaneously. Floyd said Woods Charter, a 1A school that relies heavily on multi-sport athletes to field enough players for its varsity rosters, will have to “get creative” there; it’ll also be a point of concern at fellow 1As Chatham Charter and Chatham Central.

Scheduling is also on athletic directors’ minds — usually a year-long process and collaboration between them and their individual coaches, it’s back to Square One in terms of finding opponents.

As HighSchoolOT reported Friday, the NCHSAA placed a temporary moratorium on official scheduling, but schools can still make plans unofficially. In the Central Tar Heel 1A Conference, home to Chatham Charter, Woods Charter and six other charter schools, that can be tricky.

Since charter schools act as their own local education agency, or LEA, under NCHSAA rules, each may take its own stance on how and when it will return to competition, including in stricter ways.

Amy said the same goes for the Big 8 3A Conference that Northwood competes in. In that conference alone, five systems are represented: Durham County, Orange County, Durham Coun-

See **CALENDAR**, page B2

# Spring football, no sports practicing until November and other changes in new NCHSAA calendar

BY CHAPEL FOWLER  
News + Record Staff

High school sports in North Carolina won't begin official practices until Nov. 4 and competitions until Nov. 16, according to the NCHSAA's new 2020-21 athletics calendar announced last Wednesday by commissioner Que Tucker.

The new calendar, approved by the NCHSAA Board of Directors last Tuesday, also moved the first football practices to Feb. 8, 2021, and first football games to Feb. 26. Football teams can play seven total regular-season games, and one game a week, through April 9.

Men's and women's basketball teams will first practice Dec. 7 and play games from Jan. 4 to Feb. 19, with a 14-game cap; cross country and volleyball will be the first two sports to resume practices and games in November. Swimming and diving, which practices Nov. 23 and start meets Dec. 7, is the only other sanctioned sport with competition scheduled in

2020. "We recognize that this is a lot of information to digest and drastically different from the way the sport calendar has been aligned for years in North Carolina," Tucker said. "However, as we mentioned many weeks ago: we will play again. In that mantra we believe, and it is in that spirit that we present this calendar."

She added that "all proposed dates are dependent on COVID-19 conditions improving" across the state, but the board still saw the calendar as "a framework we believe maximizes the opportunities for students in our membership to participate in athletics at some point during this school year."

The calendar overhaul came a week after the NCHSAA initially delayed the start of the fall sports season until at least mid-September, in reaction to Gov. Roy Cooper's extension of Phase Two in the state through at least Friday, Sept. 11. In normal years, official fall sport tryouts

| 2020-2021 NCHSAA SPORTS CALENDAR |                   |                      |                    |                      |                      |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Sport                            | 1st Practice Date | 1st Competition Date | Final Contest Date | Season Contest Limit | Weekly Contest Limit |
| Cross-Country                    | November 4        | November 16          | January 8          | 10                   | 2                    |
| Volleyball                       | November 4        | November 16          | January 8          | 14                   | 2                    |
| Swimming & Diving                | November 23       | December 7           | January 30         | 10                   | 2                    |
| Basketball                       | December 7        | January 4            | February 19        | 14                   | 2                    |
| Lacrosse (M&W)                   | January 11        | January 25           | March 12           | 14                   | 2                    |
| Soccer (M)                       | January 11        | January 25           | March 12           | 14                   | 2                    |
| Football                         | February 8        | February 26          | April 9            | 7                    | 1                    |
| Golf (M&W)                       | March 1           | March 15             | April 30           | 14                   | 2                    |
| Soccer (W)                       | March 1           | March 15             | April 30           | 14                   | 2                    |
| Softball                         | March 1           | March 15             | April 30           | 14                   | 2                    |
| Tennis (M)                       | March 1           | March 15             | April 30           | 14                   | 2                    |
| Baseball                         | April 12          | April 26             | June 11            | 14                   | 2                    |
| Tennis (W)                       | April 12          | April 26             | June 11            | 14                   | 2                    |
| Track & Field                    | April 12          | April 26             | June 11            | 10                   | 2                    |
| Wrestling                        | April 12          | April 26             | June 11            | 14                   | 2                    |

Submitted photo

The NCHSAA has also scheduled a cheerleading invitational for May 1.

and practices begin on Aug. 1.

The NCHSAA has allowed its member schools to work out under comprehensive Phase One safety guidelines since June 15 at the discretion of their local education agencies, or LEAs. On Aug.

3, the NCHSAA allowed schools to move into somewhat less restrictive Phase Two workouts.

Tucker said Wednesday the NCHSAA will continue to allow schools to work out under Phase Two guidelines with one tweak — access to locker

rooms and weight rooms will be governed by each LEA.

Both of those decisions were approved by the NCHSAA Board of Directors on Tuesday night along with the new calendar. The board also kept in place a dead period for the first five

"student days" of the school year so athletes can focus on academics. For most schools, that dead period will run Aug. 17 to 21.

Reporter Chapel Fowler can be reached at [cfowler@chathamnr.com](mailto:cfowler@chathamnr.com) or on Twitter at [@chapelfowler](https://twitter.com/chapelfowler).

## CALENDAR

Continued from page B1

ty, Vance County and Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools. They, too, may govern their own reopening and athletics.

"I want to personally just see if we can get through cross country and volleyball," Amy said.

The feasibility of any plan as comprehensive as the NCHSAA's during the coronavirus pandemic remains a lingering fear. Tucker said last week Gov. Roy Cooper's reopening plan — namely, moving into Phase 3 — will play "a huge role" in the NCHSAA's target start dates in

November.

In Chatham County, all public and charter schools started the 2020-21 academic year with virtual learning Monday. But in terms of athletics, they've haven't been as uniform.

While Chatham Charter and Woods Charter held summer workouts — and are making plans for fall workouts — under NCHSAA guidelines, public schools Northwood, Jordan-Matthews and Chatham Central remain on pause as Chatham County Schools begin the year with nine weeks of remote learning.

"There's so many different scenarios we can paint," said Amy, who also teaches physical education at Northwood. "I'm

**'People need to realize it's not going to be like it was last year.'**

DENA FLOYD, Woods Charter athletic director

just trying to pull back and focus on starting school."

"That's the big thing: there's probably going to be some hiccups," Fields of Chatham Charter said. "It's just being patient and working with your coaches and administration, because this is new to everyone."

Reporter Chapel Fowler can be reached at [cfowler@chathamnr.com](mailto:cfowler@chathamnr.com) or on Twitter at [@chapel-fowler](https://twitter.com/chapel-fowler).



Under the NCHSAA's new athletics calendar, volleyball will be one of two sports starting practices Nov. 4 and competition Nov. 16.

CN+R file photo

## RUNNERS

Continued from page B1

temperature checks.

"Despite all of those added things, I've seen a joy that they're improving and getting a few moments to hang out with their peers," said Hawkins, a former scholarship runner at N.C. State.

Chatham Charter started holding workouts June 15, the earliest date allowed the NCHSAA, and will resume them next week after a dead period for the first five days

of school. Cross country coach Gary Oakley didn't hold summer workouts, but he said he's working on a fall schedule where he can train athletes in specific techniques, such as heel or speed exercises, to supplement their solo distance runs.

"When kids are together and they see each other," he said, "they're more likely to push each other."

Area runners and coaches got a nice surprise last Wednesday, too, when NCHSAA commissioner Que Tucker revealed the association's new 2020-21 athletics

calendar. It places cross country front and center along with volleyball, as both are scheduled to start official practices Nov. 4 and competitions Nov. 16 — the earliest of any sports in the state.

Jackson Adams, a Northwood sophomore, said the idea of cross country being front and center under the new schedule was "awesome," even if it brings some necessary adjustments to cooler weather.

Outside of a two-week stint in July, the high schools in the Chatham County Schools system (Northwood,

Jordan-Matthews and Chatham Central) have not held summer workouts. So Northwood coach Cameron Isenhour and his athletes have done most of their work individually, logging times and keeping up with each other's runs through the app Strava, which Adams described as "an Instagram for running."

This summer, Adams has started his hour-long runs around 7 a.m., running the backroads of his Pittsboro home. He logs between 50 and 60 miles a week (seven to nine a day) and, like

Barbour, has improved dramatically — he's dropped 42 seconds from his previous best two-mile time.

"The only reason I'm willing to do that is because next season in the fall, we have a very good chance at a state championship," Adams said. "I'll do anything to help that."

The Northwood men's cross country team finished 8th in last year's NCHSAA 3A state championship meet, capping off a successful 2019 season in which all five high schools in Chatham County placed at least one men's and women's runner each on

their respective all-conference teams.

This season, coaches and players want their season — one of the first in the NCHSAA's attempt to resume high school sports, which haven't been played since March, amid coronavirus — to mean even more.

"We hope we can not only be a sport that people tune into," Hawkins said, "but a sport that gives them hope."

Reporter Chapel Fowler can be reached at [cfowler@chathamnr.com](mailto:cfowler@chathamnr.com) or on Twitter at [@chapelfowler](https://twitter.com/chapelfowler).

## BUSINESS

Continued from page B1

at five pounds.

Their expertise and real-life hours out on the water have translated to a line of clothing that's conscious of the needs of fishermen. The clothing line, hosted on the website of an outdoor clothing company called Nuthreads, offers performance fishing shirts and cotton T-shirts. Callicutt and Terry also sell Carolina Waters-branded hats and decals.

"Our performance gear is sort of that dri-fit, moisture-wicking style gear," Callicutt said. "It has SPF 50 sun protection, so it minimizes the use of sunscreen and it also keeps you covered from pretty much head-to-toe with the long sleeves. And you still remain cool, because it's lightweight."

According to Terry and Callicutt, the design of the Carolina Waters logo was created just as intentionally. After Callicutt created a base design, local designer and Chatham resident Elgin Marsh took the original mock-up and, in Callicutt's words, "brought it to life." The final design includes an outline of the N.C. border, a fishing hook and waves that represent the ocean along the state's coast.

"I was excited to get on board and help bring (Callicutt's) vision to life," Marsh said in an email. "I wanted to create something eye-catching but symbolic of the name 'Carolina Waters.'"

Though the business is still in its infancy, Terry and Callicutt are using

social media to spread the word. They recently reached an agreement with Gulf's J.R. Moore & Son to sell their product in-store.

Julie King-McDaniel, the co-owner of J.R. Moore & Son, said partnering with another business to sell a successful product "is a win for both us and the vendor."

"When we have an opportunity to support a local business by offering and showcasing their goods at our store, we try to make that happen," she said. "We

think that local businesses should be supportive of one another."

Callicutt and Terry said they've felt supported by the community, especially during a pandemic that has disrupted supply chains across the nation.

"During this time, if you can support your neighbor, whether that be the small shops downtown or people with creative ideas like ourselves ... if there's mutual support between neighbors and families, then that's going to keep our area posi-

tive and our community on an uptick no matter what situation comes our way," Callicutt said.

"As far as where I see us going in the future," Terry said, "I think as long as the interest is there we'll keep broadening the horizons as far as designs and new additions to the logo and different color palettes ... I think if we can tell a story with our colors and our designs on our shirts, I think they're going to continue to be popular."

Still, both seem to care more about showing pride for their state and perfecting their fishing technique than maximizing sales.

"I don't want it to be this huge fad because I'm not a big numbers guy,"

Callicutt said, "So I really don't care if we get a huge amount of sales. I just want the customer to appreciate the product that's in their hands and the design that they have, and they take pride in wearing it."



# TIRE ALLEY

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# Siler City seeking more info on proposed Third Street closure

BY CASEY MANN  
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — The Siler City Board of Commissioners decided on Monday to wait for additional information before moving forward with public hearings on the proposed closure of E. Third Street in front of the Mountaire Farms chicken processing plant.

Mountaire, a Delaware-based company, has been seeking the closure of the road for more than a year. In previous meetings, the board requested several pieces of information — a new traffic impact analysis to include not only impacts around the plant, but impacts on Raleigh Street; an economic impact study by the Chatham Economic Development Corporation; and public informational sessions on the plan to be held



CN+R file photo

**Mountaire continues to pursue its request to have a portion of Third Street in Siler City be permanently closed. Siler City officials have opted to wait and get additional information and public input before moving forward.**

and for staff to prep the necessary resolution documents to schedule formal hearings.

As of Monday, the only item that was complete was the resolutions. Board members indicated they felt uncomfortable

moving forward with the formal process without the other items.

Mark Reif, Mountaire's community relations manager for North Carolina, raised concerns about having in-person informational sessions

due to COVID-19 and noted they were planning instead to host a video conference for the public using the Zoom online platform. The board was not receptive to holding only virtual meetings.

"Not everybody has access to Zoom, but (they want) to voice their opinion," Commissioner Tony Siler said. "They're going to be left out."

"Not everyone has the phones or computers to do that," Mayor Pro-Tem Cindy Bray added. "We do, but we can't take it for granted because not everyone does. We're talking about older people who don't have access to this stuff."

"Can you see my mama on a Zoom?" Commissioner Chip Price quipped.

"Me neither, that's why I've been here every meeting," Bray responded.

"I don't personally feel like I can consider anything until I have public

input," Price said. "Until I get some input from the citizenry."

Several commissioners suggested that written questions needed to be collected by the staff prior to any virtual meeting. At the same time the board wanted to ensure that answers and responses were distributed in a variety of ways, perhaps at Town Hall or through media outlets.

Reif remarked that "it sounds like we need to do this a few different ways."

Another significant concern for the board was the completion of an economic impact study. Reif noted that such a study could take five or six months to complete, which was "a problem" for the company. Sam Rauf, the project manager for the Chatham Economic Development Corporation, acknowledged that a "full economic formal study from

a third party" might take at least six months, but that it may be possible for him and town staff to do a door-to-door survey of businesses that may be affected by the road closure rather than contract with a third party to do the study.

"It may not be as formal, but we're happy to try to find a way to expedite," Rauf said.

The board seemed satisfied with that option as long as businesses surveyed went beyond just those on E. Third Street.

The timeframe for the completion of the items requested by the board was not certain, but the board agreed that it was not comfortable moving forward to the formal public hearing process without having the information prior.

Casey Mann can be reached at CaseyMann@Chathamnr.com.

## Pet of the Week: DIESEL



Photo courtesy of the Chatham Sheriff's Office

The Chatham County Sheriff's Office would like you to meet Diesel, a 1-year-old, neutered lab mix! Diesel would be a total lap dog if he could — although his size doesn't exactly mesh with that job description. He is known around the Animal Resource Center as a goofy, lovable pooch who enjoys long walks and snuggles with his humans. Diesel is very playful, but also conscientious and mindful when playing with children and small dogs; he is extremely gentle and careful not to harm those smaller than himself. Diesel would make a wonderful companion for an individual or family home, especially if members of the household are moderately active or if there are other dogs or children to entertain him. He is the giant, endearing sidekick of your dreams! Through the month of August, Diesel's adoption fee is 50% off — meaning he can go home with his new owner(s) for only \$50! This fee covers microchip implantation, Rabies vaccination, and Bordetella/Distemper vaccinations. For more information on how to meet or adopt Diesel, call ahead to 919-542-7203 to schedule a visitation appointment or speak with an Animal Resource Officer. The ARC is located at 725 Renaissance Dr., Pittsboro, and is currently participating in Clear the Shelter month! For details on how you can get involved in helping local animals, visit [www.facebook.com/chathamsoar](http://www.facebook.com/chathamsoar).

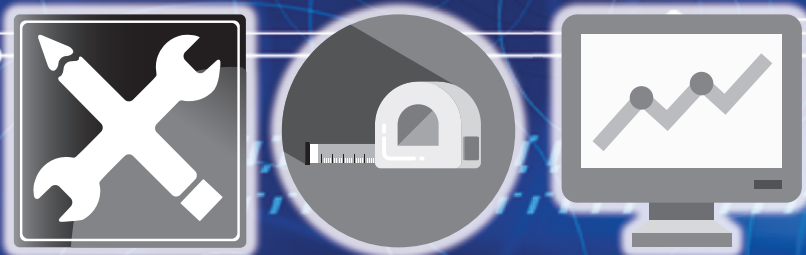
## Pet of the Week: DUCHESS



Photo courtesy of the Chatham Sheriff's Office

The Chatham County Sheriff's Office would like you to meet Duchess, a 10-month-old, female, calico domestic shorthair. She is an adorable, engaging feline looking for a cozy home to call her own! Duchess earned her name by establishing herself as the resident Animal Resource Center diva — occasionally demanding attention, chin scratches, and snuggles from her caretakers. Duchess loves to spend her days lounging about and watching visitors come and go from the ARC. She would do well in an individual or family home as she is a very quiet, peaceful companion who craves nothing more than human interaction and a soft bed for casual afternoon naps. Her low-cost, \$20 adoption fee covers her spay, microchip implantation, and vaccinations! For more information on how to meet or adopt Duchess, call 919-542-7203 to speak with an Animal Resource Officer. If you would like to visit the ARC at 725 Renaissance Dr., please call ahead to schedule an appointment. August is national Clear the Shelter month, so be sure to check out [www.facebook.com/chathamsoar](http://www.facebook.com/chathamsoar) for details on how you can get involved in helping local animals find their fur-ever homes!

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# Salvation and redemption



**DEBBIE MATTHEWS**  
The Curious Cook

More than waiting in line, outside, in the summer, more than blisters from new shoes, more than adding up my American Express bill each month, I hate wasting food. More than a frosted lemonade, more than a new Mad magazine, more than no line at the bank, I love rustic, artisanal, bakery breads. This puts me on the horns of a dilemma. I'd love to fill my kitchen with sourdough miche, ciabatta rolls, multi-grain loaves and big, fat, yeast rolls. But the drawback to these kinds of breads is that they go furry quickly,

and go stale even quicker. So, what's a girl, to whom throwing away food is anathema, to do? This girl uses the bread as fresh as possible for things like tomato sandwiches, made with garden fresh tomatoes. Once the bread goes stale, it's still great for grilled or toasted sandwiches. After that, but before it goes furry, bag it and place it in the freezer. It's perfect for bread crumbs and coating for oven-baked pork chops and chicken. I haven't bought Shake & Bake or any breader for literally decades. But even from the chill chest, this bread can make a delicious, unusual starchy sandwich siding. Thaw two slices of the bread. Spread a little softened butter on one side of each. Place, buttered side down onto heated skillet and cook until browned and crispy. While grilling, the other side will become

as soft as fresh. Then spread the grilled sides with sandwich fixings. Tuna is terrific on this reclaimed bread. This procedure makes the best peanut butter and jelly sandwich you will ever put in your mouth. The buttery crunch of a grilled PB&J is wonderful. But peanut butter and jelly will both warm, soften, and drizzle right out once you pick it up. This way, though, you can wait a minute until it cools, and you get the buttery crusty, along with the soft pillowy experience of fresh bread on the outside. Below, I've got a couple of recipes for our favorite grilled cheese sandwiches. The mayonnaise may seem odd, but the egg in it makes the crust almost take on a savory French toast texture. Thanks for your time. Contact me at [debbie@bullcity.mom](mailto:debbie@bullcity.mom).

**Petey's Perfect Grilled Cheese**

2 slices hearty rustic bread  
4 slices bacon, cooked 'til very crispy  
Heat a cast-iron or other heavy skillet on medium-low. Make sandwich: 1 slice Velveeta, shredded cheddar, bacon, then the final slice of Velveeta. Spread mayo on the outside of both slices of bread. Place sandwich onto heated skillet. Cover pan and cook until cheese has begun to melt. Uncover and cook until the first side is browned and crispy. Flip sandwich and cook the other side until done. Remove from pan and let sit three minutes or so before cutting.

**Debbie's Deluxe Grilled Cheese**

2 slices hearty rustic bread  
4 thin slices of the sharpest cheddar you can find  
1-2 teaspoons brown deli or Dijon mustard  
1/2 teaspoons horseradish  
Heat skillet to medium-low. Mix mustard and horseradish until smooth. Construct sandwich: spread mustard on one slice of bread, then layer two slices cheddar, onion jam, topping with last two slices. Spread one teaspoon mayo on the outside of each slice of bread. Place sandwich onto heated skillet. Cover pan and cook until cheese has begun to melt. Uncover and cook until the first side is browned and crispy. Flip sandwich and cook the other side until done. Remove from pan and let sit three minutes or so before cutting.



Photo courtesy of Debbie Matthews

A delicious grilled cheese sandwich is enhanced by — of all things — mayonnaise.

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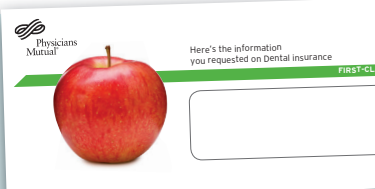
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CN+R Q&A | VACCINE APPRECIATION WEEK

# The word on vaccines and immunization from Chatham's Health Department

August marks National Immunization Awareness Month. The Chatham County Public Health Department is marking the month by celebrating "Vaccine Appreciation Week" on its Facebook page, facebook.com/chathamhealth, from August 17-23. A team that included Public Health Nurse Laura Parks, Childcare Health Consultant Dorothy Rawleigh, Communications Specialist Zachary Horner and Interim Public Health Director Michael Zelek from the CCPHD answered some questions about immunizations, including what is offered at the department's Siler City clinic, potential COVID-19 vaccines and the upcoming flu season.



**What vaccines does the Health Department offer? And why those vaccines?**

The Chatham County Public Health Department currently offers vaccines for children to cover state requirements for entering school. Those vaccines include Tdap, Td, Hepatitis A and B, HPV, Polio, DTaP, MMR, Menactra (Meningococcal), Hib, Prevnar (Pneumococcal), Rotateq, and Varicella. CCPHD recommends children receive all of these vaccines and follow the vaccine schedule recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The clinic also offers adult immunizations for the seasonal flu, Hepatitis A and B, HPV, MMR, Prevnar and pneumovax 23 (Pneumococcal), Rabies, Shingrix (Shingles), Td and Vaicella. Coverage for adults is dependent on insurance. Some adults may meet coverage criteria for state supplied vaccine, which means no out of pocket cost to client.

Beyond us, there are many options in the Chatham community to get vaccinated. Talk to your doctor or medical provider to ensure you and your family are up-to-date on vaccines and protected from vaccine-preventable diseases.

**The World Health Organization called "vaccine hesitancy" — "the reluctance or refusal to vaccinate despite the availability of vaccines" — one of the top 10 threats to global health last year. Is that a concern in Chatham County?**

Vaccines are among the most important public health interventions that

exist, and we always encourage Chatham residents to protect themselves and their families by getting vaccinated. Here in Chatham, our community has responded. Vaccination rates among young children in the county consistently rank among the highest in the state. In 2019, 99 percent of children in licensed child care in Chatham were up-to-date on age-based vaccine requirements. Additionally, all 43 of Chatham's child care facilities are fully in compliance with immunization laws. Only around 4% of parents of children under two years old have refused to get their children vaccinated. The Chatham County Public Health Department and residents have worked together to make this happen.

**The CDC published a report in May saying that immunizations in Michigan declined by around 50 percent among children two years and younger during the COVID-19 pandemic. Should parents be bringing in their children for immunizations right now?**

Yes. Vaccines are as important now as ever. For example, getting COVID-19 and the flu at the same time could make you very ill, and vaccines are as good of a tool as we have to protect ourselves. Medical providers across Chatham County and the country have implemented measures focusing on patient safety during the pandemic. If you have questions about these measures, give your doctor a call.

If more people do not vaccinate their children on time, the likelihood of a vaccine-preventable disease outbreak increases. No one wants to deal with an outbreak on top of a pandemic. A person who has influenza, measles or pertussis, for example, is going to be at a greater risk for a severe COVID-19 infection because their immune system will already be compromised. The situation

we're in really highlights the critical importance of vaccinating children on time for every childhood immunization.

**With flu season coming up, what is the status of the flu vaccine in Chatham County? What should people know about the flu vaccine this year as compared to previous years?**

This flu season, it is more critical than ever that Chatham residents get the flu vaccine. With one virus being rapidly transmitted around the county, it's important that Chatham respond and get vaccinated.

The flu vaccine will soon become widely available, and we will be updating the Chatham community through our website, chathamnc.org/publichealth, and our Facebook page, facebook.com/chathamhealth. Your doctor and pharmacy are beginning to get the flu vaccine. Given them a call to schedule your visit.

Another interesting fact is that social distancing was not created specifically for the coronavirus — it has been practiced for many years. During the 1918 flu pandemic, cities across America closed movie theaters and schools and prohibited public gatherings to help curb the spread of the virus. To help prevent the flu from infecting people, we need to be conscious of how we interact with others in public. And while the COVID-19 pandemic is still going on, it's vital that we continue to follow the 3 Ws — wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer, wear a face covering when in public and wait six feet apart from others.

**What is the most common misconception you've heard about vaccines, and why is it a misconception?**

We hear many people express concern about children receiving "too many" vaccines and that these vaccines will overwhelm an infant's immune system. It's understandable for parents to question the number of shots and the components in them, but it is important to know that the benefits of being up-to-date on vaccines are clear.

We encourage parents to learn more about how the different kinds of vaccines are made and how our immune systems work. It's really quite fascinating. Vaccines contain parts of viruses or bacteria that induce protective immune responses. These active ingredients are called im-

munological components. The challenges from the immunological components in vaccines is minuscule compared to the immune system challenges that infants experience every day from viruses, bacteria, parasites and fungi in our environment, on our skins, in our food, in the water we drink and the air we breathe. Babies are constantly making antibodies to respond to the trillions of bacteria they are colonized with. Each bacterium contains 2,000 and 6,000 immunological components. The challenge from the 150 immunological components in vaccines is dwarfed when compared to what their immune systems manage every day.

**While we don't know what the COVID-19 vaccine will look like, what role do immunizations play in viruses that spread like the strand of the coronavirus does?**

The history of vaccines tells us a lot about how effective they have been in the past, and we hope that the COVID-19 vaccine will do something similar. Like COVID-19, measles is a disease caused by a virus that is spread by respiratory droplets from person to person. Thanks to effective use of vaccines, measles was virtually eliminated in the U.S. by 2000. Unfortunately, it has returned due to some children not being immunized, and there have been some notable outbreaks in recent years. Polio was a disease spread through person-to-person contact and caused issues ranging from a sore throat to death. The polio vaccine eliminated the disease in the U.S. in 1979. Varicella, more commonly known as "chicken pox," is spread in part by coughing and sneezing. Prior to the first vaccine in 1995, around 4 million people in the U.S. contracted it every year. The total number of cases per year is down to around 12,000. (All data is courtesy of the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's Vaccine Information Center.)

We know many are eager for a COVID-19 vaccine. In a recent survey we conducted among Chatham adults, more than 7 in 10 said they would get a vaccine for COVID-19 when it became available.

The history tells us that vaccines and immunizations play a vital role in protecting public health, which is our No. 1 job at the public health department. While we do offer some vaccines at our clinic, we encourage everyone to talk to their primary care physician or visit immunize.nc.gov to learn more about the various vaccines required for children in North Carolina.

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# POLICE REPORTS

## United Way's 'Day of Service' set for Sept. 3

The United Way of Chatham County's annual Day of Service event — which pairs volunteers with projects for local non-profits to make an impact where it's needed most — has been scheduled for Sept. 3.

There are multiple volunteer project sites around the county, and even remote and contactless donation drives for everyone to get involved. The Day of Service will allow community members to make a tangible impact in Chatham County by sharing their time, talent and resources. Volunteer opportunities include event photography, indoor and outdoor revitalization projects at non-profit agencies, assembly of

athletic equipment for children, home construction, a food drive, a school supply drive, and a drive for comfort items to benefit Chatham County's home-bound seniors. You can even submit cards of appreciation to Chatham County School Teachers and Chatham's Health-care workers without leaving your home.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Way has reimagined the annual kick-off event to their fall fundraising campaign, according to Interim Executive Director Katie Childs.

"The coronavirus has affected Chatham County in many ways," she said. "Knowing there are so many opportunities to make a di-

rect impact on those who have been most affected by this virus was the reason we shifted the focus of our annual campaign kick-off event. Connecting United Way supporters with hands on volunteer projects and supply drives to support people all over our community is our way of showing that social distance does not equal social disengagement."

To view a list of community service projects and donation drives, please visit [www.UnitedWayOfChathamCounty.org/Day-of-Service](http://www.UnitedWayOfChathamCounty.org/Day-of-Service) and sign up before Sept. 1.

This event is generously sponsored by Realty World Carolina Properties and The Chatham News + Record.

### CHATHAM COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Jhadius Person, 21, of Siler City, was charged Aug. 7 for breaking or entering a motor vehicle and misdemeanor larceny. Person was jailed under a \$25,000 secured bond with a Aug. 17 court date in Pittsboro.

Ieesha Alston, 29, of Siler City, was charged Aug. 7 for failure to appear on charges of driving while impaired cancelled/revoked/suspended certificate/tag, fictitious/alterd title/registration/card/tag, permitting the operation of a vehicle with no insurance, failure to wear a seat belt, operating a vehicle with no insurance, driving while license revoked, giving/lending/borrowing a license plate and driving a motor vehicle with no insurance. Alston was jailed under a \$2,000 secured bond with a Sept. 15 court date in Pittsboro.

Dimitri Rone, 27, of Pittsboro, was charged Aug. 8 for domestic violence protection order violation. Rone was jailed under a domestic violence 48-hour hold with a Sept. 9 court date in Graham.

Frank Williams, Jr., 47, of Siler City, was charged Aug. 8 for driving while impaired. Williams was issued a written promise with a Sept. 2 court date in Pittsboro.

Jodie Marshall, 33, of Moncure, was charged

Aug. 8 for violation of court order, injury to personal property and injury to real property. Marshall was jailed under a \$3,000 secured bond with a Aug. 19 court date in Pittsboro.

Anton Moffitt, 25, of Siler City, was charged Aug. 8 for failure to appear on charges of speeding. Moffitt was issued a written promise with a Aug. 24 court date in Asheboro.

Larry White, Jr, 32, of Siler City, was charged Aug. 10 for burglary/breaking and entering. White was issued a written promise with a Sept. 1 court date in Pittsboro.

Phillip Dennis II, 31, of Pittsboro, was charged Aug. 10 for failure to appear on charges of driving while impaired and reckless driving with wanton disregard. Dennis was jailed under a \$500 secured bond with a Aug. 18 court date in Pittsboro.

### STATE HIGHWAY PATROL

George McLamb of Lillington III was cited Aug. 12 for failure to reduce speed on SR 1008 near Pittsboro.

Samuel Robinson of Raleigh was cited Aug. 12 for driving while intoxicated and lane control violation on U.S. Hwy 64 in Pittsboro.

Ollie Sanders of Chapel Hill was cited Aug. 12 for lane control violation on SR 1534 in Pittsboro.

## Farm Service Agency still taking committee nominations

CN + R Staff Reports

Nominations for the Chatham County Farm Service Agency County Committee continue through Aug. 3, with elections taking place this November. The 2020 election for Chatham County will be held in Local Administrative Area (LAA) 1 and is comprised of Albright, Bear Creek and Matthews townships, which is roughly the western end of the county.

To be eligible to serve on a Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committee, a person must participate or cooperate in a program admin-

istered by FSA, be eligible to vote in a county committee election and reside in the local administrative area in which the person is a candidate and that area must be the one holding the election.

Producers may nominate themselves or others, and organizations representing minorities and women may also nominate candidates. To be a candidate, an eligible individual must sign the nomination form, FSA-669A, agreeing to serve if elected. The form and other valuable information about FSA county committee elections are available online at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections>. Nomination forms for the 2020 election must be postmarked or received in the Chatham County FSA Office by the close of business on Aug. 3.

FSA strongly encourages beginning farmers, women and underserved farmers to actively seek a position on the county committee.

FSA will mail ballots to eligible voters beginning Nov. 2. The voted ballots are due back to the local county office either via mail or in person by Dec. 7. Newly elected committee members and alternates take office Jan. 1, 2021.



## SUBSCRIBE

[www.chathamnewsrecord.com](http://www.chathamnewsrecord.com)

### Siler City Parks & Rec to host drive-in movie

SILER CITY — Siler City Parks and Recreation's Friday Night Flicks events — a popular movie in the park series — is traditionally organized by the Town of Siler City Parks and Recreation Department in the park each year. Out of an abundance of caution, and to ensure compliance with both state and federal COVID-19 guidelines, the 2020 series of events will be modified to offer a family-friendly event for the community to enjoy.

Events will take place on the fourth Friday night of August, September and October at the Bray Park Sports Com-

plex in Siler City. The first event will premier "The Lion King," a 2019 photorealistic animated film. "The Lion King" will premier on the big screen on Friday, Aug. 28. The movie will begin at dusk and gates will open at 7 p.m. for ticket-holders to enter. Tickets for the event are free; however, pre-registration is required as space is limited. Tickets will be available two weeks prior to the event, at 9 a.m. on Aug. 17. Tickets can be reserved online at [www.silercity.org](http://www.silercity.org) or at the Water and Billing Department on the 1st floor of City Hall. (Tickets are 1 per vehicle, not per person). No tickets will be available on the day of the event. Tickets must be presented when entering the park to attend.

The 2020 Friday Night Flicks sponsors include Chatham News + Record, Countryside Collectibles & Antique Mall, Central Piedmont Urgent Care, Mountaire Farms, Chatham — Siler City Advanced Manufacturing Site, Rotary Club of Siler City, Crossroads Grill of Siler City, Freedom Family Church of Siler City, Martial Arts A.F.E. Taekwondo Fitness Academy, Sir Pizza of Siler City and Wilson Brothers Trucking. For more information, please contact the Siler City Parks and Recreation Department at 919-742-2699, email [recreation@silercity.org](mailto:recreation@silercity.org), or visit us online at [www.silercity.org](http://www.silercity.org).

— CN + R staff reports

### NEWS BRIEFS

**SILER CITY DRIVE-IN MOVIE**

**THE LION KING (2019 FILM)**  
**FRIDAY, AUGUST 28, 2020**  
 \*The movie will premier at dusk (gates open at 7pm)  
**BRAY PARK - SILER CITY (upper parking lot)**

CONCESSIONS WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME  
 GUESTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO BRING OWN REFRESHMENTS  
 ALCOHOL IS NOT PERMITTED

SCAN FOR ONLINE TICKETS  
 Tickets go on sale **Aug 17 at 9am** online at [silercity.org](http://silercity.org) & in **City Hall (311 N 2nd Ave, Siler City)**

TICKETS ARE FREE!  
 PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED ONLINE OR IN CITY HALL

Stay tuned for the future **Friday Night Flicks:**  
 "Onward" (September 25) | "The Addams Family" (October 23)

SOCIAL DISTANCING & COVID-19 GUIDELINES WILL BE PRACTICED AND ENCOURAGED AT THE 2020 FRIDAY NIGHT FLICKS

(919) 742-2699 SILER CITY PARKS & RECREATION SILERCITY.ORG

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**Chatham News + Record**

‘WE ARE STILL HERE’

# Siler City’s Hispanic businesses stay afloat despite little aid

BY VICTORIA JOHNSON  
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — To Siler City beauty salon owner Yazmín Hernández, Gov. Roy Cooper’s decision to reopen businesses came as a great relief.

“I had been thinking about looking for a temporary job to be able to support myself and my business,” she said. “Economically, wow. (Being able to reopen) was one of the best things that happened to me after the pandemic began.”

Like Hernández, many Hispanic business owners in Siler City struggled to stay afloat and secure federal coronavirus aid during and after North Carolina’s stay-at-home order. Yet despite receiving little aid, several Hispanic business owners in Siler City found ways to innovate and survive.

Hernández owns Estética Yaz, a beauty salon on North Fir Avenue. She’d originally worked in Archdale but moved to Siler City and opened up her salon in early February.

“Hardly after being open a month, I had to close,” she said. “It was like, ‘Oh my God.’”

But she was able to stay open: She also handles money transfers and other financial services considered essential at her salon. People can go to her salon to pay telephone bills and send remittances back home.

“It’s not like I made a lot of money in that aspect because my main business is my beauty salon,” she said. “This (financial services) is something extra.”

To move to Siler City, she took out several loans that she’s still paying, and the commissions she earned from her financial services haven’t provided much.

“So, yes, (the pandemic) affected me a lot in everything since I’d hardly just opened,” she said, adding, “But we’re moving for-

ward little by little.”

After reopening in late May, Hernández said she’s begun to see more and more clients come in. Everything’s done by appointment, and she estimated that the maximum number of people she sees in a day is around 12.

“I try not to have many people because I don’t want the salon to turn into a center of infection,” she said, adding, “I try to follow everything they say about checking temperatures, cleaning after every client and not having many people concentrated in one place.”

Leo Davalos-Nuño and his wife Aídee own a Mexican restaurant called Rojo Canela on East Third Street in Siler City. There they serve family recipes in a restaurant that Davalos-Nuño said “looks like a house.” If you’re not careful, he added, you could drive right by it.

For Davalos-Nuño, the pandemic came as an unwelcome sequel to a previous misfortune: Last year, Third Street closed for seven months and hurt Rojo Canela’s bottom line.

“At the beginning, we were selling like anywhere from \$800 to \$1,400 a day,” Davalos-Nuño said. “Then when they closed the street, it went down to \$600. And then it kept going down and down and down because they sent the traffic to the next street.”

And then COVID-19 struck.

Following Gov. Cooper’s stay-at-home order in March, Rojo Canela closed its in-door dining and switched to fulfilling take-out orders.

“Sometimes we would only sell like \$80 or \$50 (in a day),” Davalos-Nuño said. They also had to let go of their remaining employees, and Davalos-Nuño said he doesn’t think he’ll earn even half of the revenue Rojo Canela earned during their first year in Siler City.

But since North Carolina reopened restaurants at half capacity, he said



Staff photo by Victoria Johnson

**Yazmín Hernández owns Estética Yaz, a beauty salon on North Fir Avenue in Siler City. After opening her salon in early February, she had to close it down in March due to COVID-19.**

business has picked back up. They’re now selling between \$250 to \$400 a day in take-out orders, and some customers even leave generous tips. In fact, Davalos-Nuño said one customer bought a meal for around \$13 but left a check for \$200.

On South Chatham Avenue, Luis Armando Lucas owns a small shop called Tres Estrellas. A friend, who had owned and operated the shop for 12 years, signed it over to him last October, and he’s been managing it ever since.

Tres Estrellas offers a little bit of everything: People can wire money to different countries, pay their bills and reload their phones. They also sell sporting goods, athletic clothing, Bibles and “things from different places.”

“We fulfill orders,” he said. “More than anything, people come, and if what they’re looking for isn’t here, we order it.”

Since they provide essential financial services and sell food, Lucas said they never had to close the shop under the stay-at-home order. But, he added, it’s been difficult.

“There are highs and lows,” he said. “Sometimes there’s business and other times there’s definitely not any.”

The most difficult months were March and April, he said.

“There were no people,” he said. “People were scared and panicking. In March and April, we were

open, but there wasn’t much movement.”

It began to improve in May, he said, after the governor partially lifted the stay-at-home order.

“Purchases have begun to normalize again,” he said, “but there’s still not as much movement as we were hoping for.”

**‘Nothing, nothing, nothing’**

In mid-July, Camino Financial, an online financial institution, released its quarterly U.S. Latinx Small Business Survey. The survey, which compiled data from all across the country, concluded that many Hispanic businesses are “in a credit crunch caused by a disproportionate lack of access to government relief funds and other lines of credit.”

According to the survey, 70% of Hispanic businesses had to close at some point during the first half of 2020, and sales declined by 80%.

“Latinx-owned businesses get the short end of government business relief,” the survey further explained. “Lack of technical and financial support withheld Latinx-owned businesses from relief funds,” such as the COVID-19 Small Business Administration loan programs funded by Congress in late March.

All three Hispanic entrepreneurs in Siler City applied or tried to apply



Staff photo by Victoria Johnson

**Leo Davalos-Nuño owns Rojo Canela, a Siler City Mexican restaurant, with his wife, Aídee. Though business is picking up, he said it’s not as much as it used to be.**

for such loans, but only one managed to get any funds.

Hernández tried to apply for a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan, a forgivable loan of up to \$10 million intended to help employers retain their employees. Since she’s self-employed, she wasn’t eligible to apply for the program until about a week after it had opened.

And then funds ran out. After Congress infused more money into the PPP, she tried to put in an application online and over the phone without success.

“They told me they were going to call me, but they never did,” she said. “And well I tried three times to call, but sometimes I was waiting for up to two hours online and nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing.”

Likewise, Lucas wanted to apply for a PPP loan, but he was told he didn’t qualify because of the “time” he had.

“I think the majority of Hispanic businesses didn’t qualify for being very small,” he said. “It wasn’t so much what they are or what they report or those kinds of things.”

“Those that qualified,” Lucas added, “it could be that the government only helped them a little bit.”

That was Rojo Canela’s experience.

Davalos-Nuño applied for and received a PPP loan of just over \$3,200. They couldn’t get more, he added, because they didn’t have all the necessary documentation and they paid employees by check.

“We only had the proof of the checks,” he said, “but they wouldn’t take the checks as proof of having people working for us.”

He said he’d seen many large companies collecting what they needed to survive and even some returning the money.

“People like us, we need

it,” he added, “but we only get \$3,000.”

**‘We’re still walking’**

To stay afloat, Hernández and Davalos-Nuño found ways to cut costs or generate more income.

Davalos-Nuño began doing what he could to cut restaurant costs, including turning to more efficient cleaning measures to cut his water bill down to a fifth of what it was pre-pandemic.

Likewise, Hernández collected cleaning and household supplies – like toilet paper, snacks and hand sanitizer – and sold them to customers “without exaggerating the prices.” She also began to sell phone cases and masks, which she still sells now even after reopening.

“If you simply can’t earn income one way, you’ve got to find another way,” she said. “It was like we mobilized ourselves in all that we could.”

Davalos-Nuño said he’s optimistic despite lower income and fears over contracting COVID-19.

“I will be here and serve the people with quality and friendliness,” he said. “And I’ll be here as long as I need to be.”

Hernández said she’s working nearly seven days a week to pay off her loans as quickly as possible.

“You never know what’s going to happen in December or January with flu season coming up,” she said. “Sometimes it looks positive. Other times it looks a bit negative.”

Lucas said his shop will finish the year with a negative balance, but he said they’re surviving.

“But well, thanks to God, we are still here,” he said. “We’re still walking. We don’t give up so easily.”

Reporter Victoria Johnson can be reached at [victoria@chathamnr.com](mailto:victoria@chathamnr.com).

## You're Invited to Register Today! United Way of Chatham County Day of Service Thursday, September 3, 2020

To view a list of community service projects that can be completed at home or in person, visit:

[UnitedWayofChathamCounty.org/Day-Of-Service](http://UnitedWayofChathamCounty.org/Day-Of-Service)

United Way is partnering with agencies to host a variety of safe and socially distant volunteer opportunities & donation drives to support our community.

For questions call the United Way Office at (919) 542-1110.

Follow us on Facebook to join virtually: [fb.me/UnitedWayofChatham](https://fb.me/UnitedWayofChatham)



United Way of Chatham County



Due to COVID-19, United Way is reimagining the Annual Campaign Kick-Off Event. Join us by signing up for a service project.

**Event Sponsor:**  
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### USDA - Farm Service Agency Notice of Availability Poultry Facility Construction Final Environmental Assessment

U. S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency (FSA) announces they will be completing an Environmental Assessment for the poultry facility construction located at Chatham county Tax Parcel number 0089771 and Pin Number 869700553969. The primary objective of this activity is to construct 4 poultry houses on the 64-acre property.

FSA is accepting comments on the potential effects of the proposed project on protected resources and the human environment through September 21, 2020. Information regarding this project can be reviewed in person at the FSA office located at 3230A Presson Road, Monroe, NC 28112. Comments should be submitted to Suzanne Simpson at 3230 Presson Road, Monroe, NC 28112 or by email at [suzanne.simpson@nc.usda.gov](mailto:suzanne.simpson@nc.usda.gov).



THE AWARD-WINNING PRINT & ONLINE FAMILY FEATURE  
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Read this article aloud to a family member. Then discuss your answers to the questions it asks.

GREAT MOMENTS IN WOMEN'S HISTORY

# How Women Won the Right to Vote

Replace the missing words on this page:

- GOALS
- APPROVED
- DECADES
- PROTECTING
- PROBLEMS
- VOTE
- MARCHED
- LAST
- RIGHT
- SCHOOL
- STEP

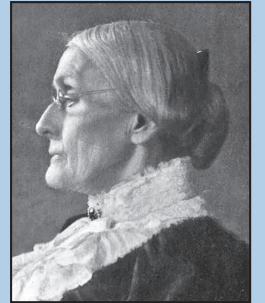
## Can you imagine a world in which women do not have the right to vote?

How long do you think women in the United States have had the right to vote? 300 years? 200 years? 150 years?

In the United States, women have had that \_\_\_\_\_ for only 100 years of the 244 years we have been a country. And getting the right to vote took \_\_\_\_\_ of protesting and writing to lawmakers—who were all men at the time.



## ARRESTED FOR VOTING?



On Election Day, Nov. 5, 1872, Susan B. Anthony walked into her polling place and voted.

Two weeks later, a U.S. marshal knocked on her door.

"I have a warrant for your arrest," he told Susan. "You are charged with voting without the lawful right to vote."

In 1872, by U.S. law, a person had to be 21 years or older to vote. Susan was born in 1820. Was she old enough to vote?

Susan met two other requirements for the right to vote. She was a U.S. citizen and she had never been convicted of a felony crime.

Why was she arrested for voting? Would she have been arrested in November of 1920?

## Meeting for Women's Rights

In 1848, a group of people met in Seneca Falls, NY to talk about the \_\_\_\_\_ women faced because they didn't have the same rights as men.

The word **suffrage** means the right to vote in elections. A **suffragist** is a person who fights for suffrage.

At that time, women could not own property, they could not vote and very few could go to \_\_\_\_\_.

This meeting was the first women's rights convention in the United States. At that meeting, men and women signed a document called, "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions." By signing, these people agreed to the \_\_\_\_\_ of what was becoming the woman's movement.

For more than 70 years, women and men \_\_\_\_\_, wrote letters and articles, protested and picketed to get an Amendment to the Constitution which would give women the right to \_\_\_\_\_. These people were known as **suffragists**.

## Victory!

On May 21, 1919, the U.S. House of Representatives finally \_\_\_\_\_ the **19th Amendment**, also known as the Susan B. Anthony Amendment, guaranteeing women the right to vote. But that was just the first \_\_\_\_\_. The U.S. Senate and at least three quarters of the states had to approve it before it would become the law of the land.

The United States Senate approved the amendment a week after the House.

On August 18, 1920, Tennessee became the \_\_\_\_\_ state needed to ratify the 19th Amendment.

One week later, on August 26, the 19th Amendment officially became part of the U.S. Constitution, forever \_\_\_\_\_ American women's right to vote.

Today, more than 68 million women vote in elections because of the courageous suffragists who never gave up the fight for equality.



Photo: Everett Historical / Shutterstock

Extra! Extra!

## Should kids be able to vote?

Write a letter to the editor of this newspaper sharing your opinion about whether or not kids should be able to vote. Be sure to support your argument with some facts.

Standards Link: Writing applications.

1. Which Amendment to the U.S. Constitution gives women the right to vote?  
 16th  19th  21st

2. How many years have American women had the right to vote?  
 100  250  500

3. Where did the first women's rights convention take place?  
 TENNESSEE  IOWA  NEW YORK

## Kid Scoop Puzzler

In 1920, exactly 100 years after Susan was born, the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was passed, giving women the right to vote.

While Susan did not live to see women get the right to vote, in 1979 she became the first woman to appear on U.S. money.



Look closely to see which Susan B. Anthony dollar is different.

Standards Link: Investigation: Find similarities and differences in common objects.

## Double Double Word Search

- AMENDMENT
- PICKETED
- SUFFRAGE
- APPROVED
- WARRANT
- ANTHONY
- VICTORY
- DECADES
- RATIFY
- RIGHT
- WOMEN
- LAST
- VOTE
- MEN

Find the words in the puzzle. How many of them can you find on this page?

R V S Y N O H T N A  
 D I E U I G H T M A  
 E C D T F G O E E P  
 T T A R I F N T T P  
 E O C R A D R S O R  
 K R E V M T N A V O  
 C Y D E O E I L G V  
 I E N E M O W F E E  
 P T N A R R A W Y D

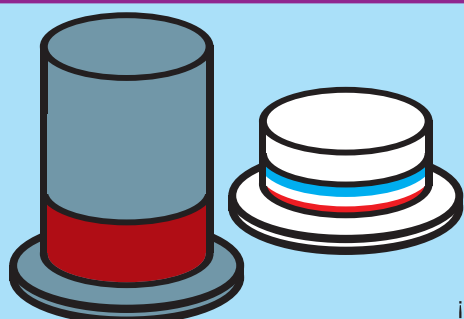
Standards Link: Letter sequencing. Recognized identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

## FROM THE Kid Scoop LESSON LIBRARY

### Women in Leadership

Not only can women vote, but they also hold elected offices. Look through the newspaper for examples of women that are in leadership positions. Research to find out if they were voted into this job or hired.

Standards Link: Use the newspaper to locate information.



## Which president wore the biggest hat?

ANSWER: The one with the biggest head!

## Write On!

### Ode to the Sun

Write a poem about the sun. Read it to your family this evening.

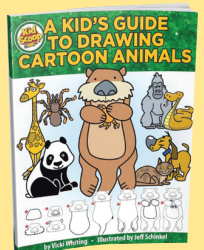
Standards Link: Writing applications.

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## Drawing fun!

Step-by-step instructions show you how to draw more than two dozen animals in Kid Scoop's **A Kid's Guide to Drawing Cartoon Animals**. Available now on amazon.com, target.com or at foxchapelublishing.com



## Kid Scoop VOCABULARY BUILDERS

This week's word: **RATIFY**

The verb **ratify** means to approve something.

Women's right to vote was **ratified** in 1919.

Try to use the word **ratify** in a sentence today when talking with friends and family members.

# Cooper and Stein account for, reaffirm commitments to N.C. Latino Congress

BY VICTORIA JOHNSON  
News + Record Staff

In 2016, candidates Roy Cooper and Josh Stein made a series of promises to 1,400 Latinos at a North Carolina Congress of Latino Organizations (NCCLLO) assembly in Durham. Last Thursday, Gov. Cooper and Attorney General Stein met with the NCCLLO once again to account for and to renew these promises.

"This is a historic event in North Carolina in terms of an accountability report from two of the most influential elected leaders of the state," NCCLLO executive director Ivan Parra told other members during the meeting.

Among other things, Cooper promised to issue an executive order to help protect essential workers, particularly meat-processing plant workers and farmworkers, from COVID-19, and to continue fighting against disparities in public education. Stein committed to continue supporting DACA, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, and to support legal challenges against policies intended to harm immigrants and their families.

More than 850 delegates attended the meeting, including nearly 700 Latino leaders representing some 150 organizations from all over North Carolina. Thirty-six Latino community leaders from Chatham County attended the meeting, including Chatham County Schools' Johnny Alvarado.

During the meeting, Alvarado asked Gov. Cooper to commit to ensuring all children equal access to a "sound basic education," a right guaranteed under the North Carolina Constitution and reaffirmed by the 1997 court case *Leandro v. State*.

"(Leandro) requires North Carolina to identify specific resources necessary to guarantee that all children and young adults, including those who are learning English, have access to that education," Alvarado said. "We hope that whoever

becomes the next governor will be a strong leader in ensuring that promise comes true."

In response, Cooper promised to do everything he could to fulfill the Leandro requirements.

"High quality public education is critical to me," he said, "and I want to make sure that every child has one."

## Power accounts

In 2016, then-gubernatorial candidate Roy Cooper made the NCCLLO four promises:

- to meet with NCCLLO leaders within 90 days of taking office
- to reinstate the Hispano/Latino Advisory Council to the Governor
- to strengthen relations between Latinos and law enforcement, including vetoing legislation seeking to require that North Carolina's sheriffs cooperate with ICE, and
- to work toward improving the state's ability to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate health and human services to North Carolina's growing Spanish-speaking community.

Per his report, Cooper said he had met or was working toward fulfilling his promises. Besides meeting with the NCCLLO in 2017, he said he reinstated the Hispanic/Latino advisory council, upon whose recommendations he appointed the "first ever Hispanic district attorney in the history of North Carolina."

He vetoed House Bill 370, the bill that sought to have sheriffs work with ICE to deport undocumented immigrants — legislation he said "came from a bad place."

"It came from political leaders who were using our national origin to try and divide us," he said during his report. "I believe strongly that we are a state and a country that is more successful when it is diverse."

His final promise contained several parts, which Cooper said his administration is still "working on meeting."

Parra said the NCCLLO's health and human services

requests "amount to a total reshape of the way health and human services agencies serve (the Latinx) community throughout the state." Among others, the NCCLLO asked for the Cooper administration to provide information on health and human services in Spanish and consider collecting federal reimbursement funds designed to incentivize health care providers and insurance companies to hire bilingual staff.

Cooper's administration has met or is working to meet most of the health and human services requests he promised to realize, Parra said during the meeting.

The only request the NCCLLO is unsure about, Parra said, is whether the N.C. Dept. of Health and Human Services has assessed the capacity of all 100 counties to serve their Spanish-speaking communities — something he said is particularly important during COVID-19.

"A simple letter from you or the Secretary of Health assessing the capacity of the state to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services to our community is in need if it hasn't been provided," he said to Cooper. "It would give you a baseline about the kind of capacity that the state has to support our community."

Then-candidate Josh Stein committed in 2016 to defending DACA in federal court, to issuing guidelines about where ICE may go, and to defending the rights of Latino mobile home park residents.

Per his report, Stein said North Carolina under his legal authority successfully challenged federal attempts to abolish DACA. He also reported his department has routinely put out information on ICE impersonation scams targeting the Latinx community and that he's investigating a Cary mobile home park with a large Latinx population.

"Unfortunately, COVID has slowed it down a bit," he said, "but we are committed to ensuring that all tenants — all consumers, no matter who you are, what your race is, where you were born, what language you speak — are equally pro-



Staff photo by Victoria Johnson

A screenshot from the NC Latino Congress Zoom meeting.

tected under the laws of North Carolina."

## Renewing promises

Cooper and Stein also reaffirmed their commitments to the Latinx community. Both promised to meet regularly with NCCLLO leaders and to continue supporting the rights of Latino mobile home park residents.

Stein promised to continue fighting federal attempts to intimidate and harm the Latinx population. He also committed to keep defending DACA, the program that protects over 24,000 people in North Carolina.

"But DACA has only ever been a Band-Aid," he added. "It's only been a partial solution. And it only addresses a small percentage of people who live in fear of deportation, people who have lived in this country for many, many years."

What the country needs, Stein said, is a comprehensive DREAM Act that grants DACA recipients a pathway to citizenship — an act he said he's urged Congress to pass.

Likewise, Cooper promised to issue executive orders mandating social distancing, regular sanitation and other measures to protect essential workers, particularly farmworkers and meat processing plant workers who often come from the Latinx community.

Moris Aldana, the meeting's co-chairman, called the pandem-

ic "a matter of life and death" for North Carolina's Latinos.

"Our people are getting sick and dying," he said. "We have been called essential workers and made to work during this pandemic so that others can be nourished and comfortable."

COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted North Carolina's Latinx community. Right now, North Carolina has over 146,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19, and about 39% originated from the Latinx community, even though they only represent about 10% of the state population. More than half of Chatham County's confirmed cases also come from the county's Latinx community.

"I care about the people who are performing these jobs," Cooper said, adding, "Since we can't get the general assembly to do anything, we think an executive order would be the best way to provide these protections. We're working very hard to put it together."

The pandemic is "shining a bright light" on disparities that existed prior to it, Cooper told the NCCLLO.

"So we want to continue to emphasize our communities of color and particularly the Latinx community that has been hit so hard by this virus," he said. "I pledge to you my work."

Reporter Victoria Johnson can be reached at [victoria@chathamnewsrecord.com](mailto:victoria@chathamnewsrecord.com).

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