

Chatham News + Record

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Board adjusts previous Plan A timeline to comply with school reopening bill at Monday's special meeting

Pre-K through 5th graders to return April 12 under Plan A

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

The Chatham County Board of Education approved the district's suggested motion to comply with school reopening bill, Senate Bill 220, on Monday, voting 3-0 to send 4th-5th graders back

under Plan A on April 12 instead of April 19.

The approved motion also provides EC and 504 students in 6th-12th grades the option to return to in-person learning under Plan A on April 12, and revised the system's academic calendar to make April 1 — the compliance deadline outlined in the new state legislation — an optional work day instead of a half day. This revision was made to ensure the district wouldn't need to bring K-5 students back for just one half day before the April 2 holiday and

spring break the following week.

"We didn't think it was a real good idea to bring all of our K-5 kids in for an early release day and then send them on spring break the following week," Interim Supt. Randy Bridges told the board. "So we're asking that you change that April 1 early release day to a work day and that way we will cover everything I've just described in terms of complying with Senate Bill 220."

Board members Melissa Hlavac and Jane Allen Wilson were not present for the vote.

The reopening bill passed March 11 requires N.C. public schools to offer Plan A to K-5 students and Plan A or B to 6-12th graders. The state's districts must comply with the legislation by April 1, which is 21 days after Senate Bill 220 was signed into law. While districts could immediately implement the change, the bill says systems can comply no later than the first instructional day after the 21-day period. CCS is on its spring break the first week of

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IN DOWNTOWN PITTSBORO

SoCo project barrels toward completion

BY D. LARS DOLDER
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — Pittsboro is undergoing dramatic change, especially north of U.S. Hwy. 64 where the Chatham Park behemoth is developing at full bore.

But some residents, such as "SoCo" developer Greg Stafford, fear the new northern communities — replete with extensive shopping centers, entertainment venues and dining options — will antiquate Pittsboro's historic downtown and rob longtime businesses of their clientele.

"They're not the enemy," Stafford said of Chatham Park. "The rooftops they bring and the people they bring, we want to have as customers downtown. But if we don't step up, or we don't match what they do, then I think we'll suffer."

Stafford owns several properties downtown on West Street and Sanford Road where he is developing the SoCo project — which stands for

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'A GREAT OPPORTUNITY'

Under new management, Carolina Cravings combines the best of both worlds

BY VICTORIA JOHNSON
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — Less than a block away from Pittsboro's historic courthouse, two young Mexican immigrants have baked something new out of an old recipe.

For nearly two years, Carolina Cravings served up southern delicacies from 84 Hillsboro Street to Pittsboro's community and beyond. Now, Carolina Cravings is under new management — and co-owners Yeraldyn Martinez and Iliana Jesús Escalante-Palacios have a different vision for their new business.

"We're trying to involve both communities — the Hispanic community and other (wider) community," Escalante-Palacios told the News + Record. "... We're trying to do both recipes, like pecan pie or pie bars, and then involving Hispanic bread. We just want our community and this community coming together."

From outside the bakery, it looks as if nothing's changed. The same awning roof juts out from the brick storefront. The same two storefront windows showcase miscellaneous decorations, and of course, the bakery still boasts the same name.

Inside's a different story. Instead of a rich red, the walls are now a light



Staff photo by Kim Hawks

New co-owners Yeraldyn Martinez (left) and Iliana Escalante-Palacios (right) opened Carolina Cravings on Feb. 13. Martinez's mother, Maria (second on the left), and Escalante-Palacios' sister, Angeles, help them bake.

pink. The furniture's all been rearranged, and the goodies on sale offer customers a bicultural blend.

In the back, Escalante-Palacios bakes with her sister Angeles, who she calls her "second mom," and Martinez's mother, Maria, or "Mama Coco." Up front, Martinez greets new customers and gives those willing a little tour of the shop.

"I love talking to everybody — like

brightening up their day," Martinez said. "I love sharing those social media posts, taking the pictures. Everybody that comes in, you know, like, 'Hey,' I give them like a little tour of the store, and make them feel like they're at home."

On display up front, there's the "perfect brownie," apple strudel muffins

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SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE

Testing the waters: finding private solutions

BY D. LARS DOLDER
News + Record Staff

Editor's note: In this fourth installment of our water and sewer infrastructure series, the News + Record explores calls for government intervention in Chatham's private wastewater treatment operations.

BRIAR CHAPEL — Government-operated water and sewer systems across Chatham County are complex — but they're navigable. Intricate partnerships and long-term expansion plans are thoroughly documented and easily accessible.

But sewer infrastructure in unincorporated Chatham is a different story.

As discussed in the first installment of this series, Chatham County operates water systems to supply most Chatham residents outside Siler City and Pittsboro. But the county has no wastewater treatment plants under its purview.

Neither do the county's munic-

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'IT'S SUCH AN OVERLOOKED ISSUE'

Chatham students start donation drive for products to fight 'period poverty'

BY VICTORIA JOHNSON
News + Record Staff

For Annika Lowe, the idea to fight local "period poverty" all began with TikTok.

While scrolling through the social media platform in November, Lowe, a junior at the Chatham School of Science & Engineering, an initiative based out of Chicago caught her eye. The nonprofit "Her Drive" was organizing donation drives across the country to collect and distribute menstruation and general hygiene products to those who can't afford them.

"It brought out the idea that I had not even considered — that period poverty was such a big struggle," Lowe told the News + Record. "I sent (the post) to everyone. They're like, 'Oh my gosh, yes, we have to do that.'"

Together with three other Chatham high

See **DRIVE**, page A8



Submitted photo

Annika Lowe (bottom right) began a donation drive in Chatham to collect menstrual care products with her friends, Angelina Parker-Lewis (top left), Emma Dickerson (top right) and Geneva Yarger-Woolford.

CHATHAM COUNTY SCHOOLS

Search for new superintendent narrowing down

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

After voting to update its previous Plan A timeline at a special meeting Monday, the Chatham County Board of Education met in closed session to discuss superintendent applications.

The board scheduled the special session at its March 8 meeting — the same day as the district's deadline for applications for

the position. At the time of the meeting, the district said it received more 30 applications. By the time the application window closed a few hours later, a total of 45 applications from 18 states and U.S. territories were submitted, the district said.

"The school board will consider the applicants based, in part, on the qualities and characteristics community members indi-

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IN THE KNOW

El Futuro hires first Chatham-focused clinical project manager. **PAGE A8**

Want to build a rain garden? Loves Creek's stewards can help. **PAGE A9**

Chat: 2020 Census leader reflects on count, and what's next. **PAGE B9**

Movie reviews: 'Zack Snyder's Justice League,' 'Nobody.' **PAGE B11**

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Events are subject to change based on closures related to the coronavirus pandemic. Verify with organizers prior to events.

• **The 2021 Spring Chicken Festival**, scheduled for May, has been cancelled due to COVID-19.
• **The Friends of the Chatham Community Library** has cancelled its Spring Book Sale due to the continued lockdown of government offices and businesses, ordered by federal, state, and local government. More information can be found on the website: friendsccl.org.
• **Chatham County Council on Aging**: Both centers are closed at this time until further notice. If you need to pick up supplies, call the Siler City or Pittsboro location or check our website at chathamcoa.org.

ON THE AGENDA
• The **Siler City Board of Commissioners** will meet at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, March 29, at the Siler City courtroom.

THURSDAY
• The **United Way of Chatham County** will hold its annual meeting Thursday, March 25, at 11 a.m. The public is invited to attend. The meeting will be virtual via Zoom. Please contact United Way for access to the Zoom call. 919-542-1110
• The **Pittsboro Farmers Market** is open with seasonable items year-round from 3 to 6 p.m. on Thursdays. It is located at 287 East St., Pittsboro.
• **St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church** provides a healthy, 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.

OTHER UPCOMING:
• **Easter Egg "Roll-Thru"** Extravaganza event, hosted by **Siler City Parks & Recreation** at Bray Park on Saturday, March 27 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., all wearing masks and adhering to COVID-19 guidelines for social distancing. Drive thru with windows rolled down, Easter baskets ready, and follow the specified route - to collect free treat-filled Easter eggs. In addition, various organizations and the "Easter Bunny" will be in that line. The park is located at 200 Bray Park Complex Drive in Siler City.
• The **Loves Creek Watershed Stewards** will be hosting a free rain garden workshop for up to 30 Siler City residents from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Saturday, March 27 (rain date: April 10). The workshop location will be provided after registration. Rain gardens are bowl-like depressions in the ground that capture rainfall runoff from your rooftop and driveway and allow water to filter into the ground. The plants, mulch and soil in a rain garden combine natural processes to filter pollutants from runoff and break down in the soil over time. Visit <https://cvent.me/qMrzOL> by March 24 to reserve your spot.
• **BYNUM Front Porch and the Blood Connection** will hold a Blood Drive at the Bynum General Store on Saturday, March 27 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Appointments not necessary but are recommended - just go to The Blood Connec-

tion website to make an appointment
• The Chatham County community is invited to spring into the season with the **Chatham County Parks and Recreation Department's Hunt at Home: The Easter Egg Drive-Thru** will be held on Saturday, March 27, from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Chatham County Agriculture and Conference Center in Pittsboro. Modified due to COVID-19, this year's event will take place as a drive-thru, where participants will be asked to stay in their cars while in attendance. During the event, families will be able to collect 10 free Easter eggs per child, a spring-themed craft, bubbles, and additional items from other County departments and community partners that will be joining Chatham County Parks and Recreation in this event.
• The first **Chatham Rabbit Festival** will honor the history of the Chatham County Rabbits and will be hosted by The Plant in Pittsboro on Sunday, March 28 from 1 to 5 p.m. The event is public and family-friendly, featuring a vendor/farmer's market, live music, outside activities for the whole family. COVID restrictions apply including masks and safety distancing.

The **Chatham Historical Museum** is open Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. Masks required and groups will be distanced. Adult and kid friendly; no admission fee. Our current special exhibit is vintage toys. Don't miss it! Our permanent exhibits cover all aspects of Chatham's unique history. The Museum is located in the historic Chatham County Courthouse in the circle. More info: <https://chathamhistory.org>

• **Second Bloom Thrift Store is now open** in our new location at the Food Lion Shopping Center. Our new store hours will be from Tuesday until Saturday 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. Masks are required and hand sanitizer is also available. All proceeds provide support for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and promote community education in collaboration with Chatham County.
• With COVID-19 sweeping 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.
• JMArts hosted a **JMACoronaConcert** via Twitter featuring performances submitted by JM students and faculty. Concerts can be viewed on its Twitter account @JMArts and by using the hashtags #JMACoronaConcert performances and #JMACoronaConcert program.
• **Foster and/or adoptive**

information: Give children a safe place to grow. Interested in becoming a Foster and/or Adoptive parent? Call 919-642-6956 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.
• **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.
• **Scout News**
• Boy Scout Troop 93 in Pittsboro meets 7 p.m. Wednesdays at the Harold Boone Scout Park on Hwy 64W, just past CCCC. Open to boys, ages 11-17. Visit www.bstroop93.org for more information.
• Pack 924 of Siler City First U.M.C. meets on from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesdays for boys, grades 1 through 5. Come join the Cub Scouts.
• Pack 900 in Bear Creek meets at 7 p.m. Tuesdays at Meroney's U.M.C., following the school calendar. See <http://pack900.com> for more information.

Chatham County Council on Aging

WEEKLY TRIVIA HUNT!

Q: What Chatham town was once considered a resort destination?

Find the answer in this issue for your chance to win a \$25 Visa Gift Card!

HONOR ROLL

WIDENER UNIVERSITY

Emma Wilcock of Pittsboro has been named to the President's List at Widener University for the Fall 2020 semester. This honor recognizes full-time students earning a 4.0 and above. The school is located in Chester, Pennsylvania.



Photo courtesy of the Chatham Sheriff's Office

Pet of the Week: JAZZY
The Chatham County Sheriff's Office would like you to meet Jazzy, a 1-year-old, spayed, pit bull mix. Jazzy is a true social butterfly who is ecstatic whenever to meet new people or animals. She never meets a stranger and is quick to welcome visitors with wet doggy kisses. Jazzy still has a puppy mindset and adores playtime, especially if squeaky toys are involved! Jazzy is the type who never seems to get enough head rubs or back scratches and has a penchant for staring lovingly into her human's eyes. She would make a wonderful, loyal companion for someone seeking their new best friend! Jazzy would thrive in a moderately active household with or without another friendly dog for a playmate. For more information about how to meet or adopt Jazzy or another pet, please contact the Sheriff's Office Animal Resource Center (ARC) at 919-542-7203 to schedule an appointment for a visit at 725 Renaissance Dr., Pittsboro.

Chatham News + Record

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Easter

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CRAVINGS

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and lemon bars — but there’s also pan dulce, or sweet bread. Between muffins and lemon bars lie vanilla and chocolate conchas, Mexican sweets that look like seashells.

Next to a batch of M&M cookies, you might find yoyos, two domes of sweet bread stuck together with pastry filling. Sometimes, they’ll also have bolillos, Mexican savory bread. In another part of the store, customers can find birthday cakes and an assortment of truffles and macaroons.

And that’s not all they plan to offer, either.

“We’re trying to put food in here as well, but we just haven’t got to that

step yet,” Escalante-Palacios said, adding, “But right now, it’s mostly cakes, and Mexican bread, or Hispanic bread.”

She also said they’re looking to bake chocolates, expand their coffee options and sell fresh fruit creations. They’d like to add churros to the menu, too.

“The yoyos are a great hit — and the conchas,” she added. “So we’re trying to involve more of that. We’re trying to put orejas (palmiers), chocolate, regular flan. We’re trying to do mantecadas (Mexican muffins).”

Beyond bicultural, Carolina Cravings has also become bilingual. Inside the store, people speak both English and Spanish; many signs, too, are in both languages and most if not all of their social media posts pass along messages in English and Spanish. On several recent Facebook posts, half of the comments are in English; the other half’s in Spanish.

Below a recent post about bolillos, one person commented in Spanish, “Delicious those. They taste like the Mexican ones.”

So far, Escalante-Palacios said she and Martinez have seen a blend of customers come in from both communities — Hispanic and otherwise. That, she said, has perhaps been the biggest change from the old Carolina Cravings, where she used to work.

“It’s really good seeing a lot of these families coming because they wouldn’t do that whenever it was just Carolina

Cravings,” Escalante-Palacios said. “And then I think us advertising in both languages and our family advertising brought more of the community here, like from Sanford, from Siler City. ... Hispanics (are) coming here for their coffee, for their cafecito en la mañana con el pan.”

Slipping into Spanish, she added, “I love to see that.”

‘We can try it’

The new Carolina Cravings first opened on Feb. 13 — but both owners can trace their partnership back to a snap decision to chat in their church nearly a year and a half ago.

Escalante-Palacios and Martinez, both 23, were born in Mexico. From a little town in Guerrero, Escalante-Palacios immigrated

to the U.S. with her family when she was 10. She grew up in Sanford. Likewise, Martinez was born in Zacatecas, but came to the U.S. when she was 11. She grew up in Pittsboro.

They both attend Pittsboro’s only Hispanic church, Iglesia Bautista Misionera Roca Fuerte, and first began talking to each other in late 2019.

“I used to see her all the time at church, but I never spoke to her,” Escalante-Palacios said. “And then (2019), that’s when we started speaking to each other.”

Both also had baking connections: Martinez’s mother worked at the Phoenix Bakery in Pittsboro, Carolina Cravings’ cousin company, and taught Escalante-Palacios a few recipe tips after she started working at Carolina Cravings in late 2019.

The pandemic set it all in motion.

“From what I knew, at that moment, is that the business wasn’t doing so great because of the pandemic, and the owner at the same time decided to look for another opportunity outside of that business,” she said, adding, “And that’s whenever they told me, ‘Hey, it’s not working so well, so we’re trying to close it down.’”

Soon after, Carolina Cravings’ previous owners decided to sell the business or rent it out — and that’s when they offered it to Escalante-Palacios and Martinez’s mother.

“And then that’s whenever we decided, ‘Hey, it’s a great opportunity. We can maybe



Staff photo by Kim Hawks

Iliana Escalante-Palacios is Carolina Cravings’ new co-owner and baker. She said the vanilla conchas have been popular among customers.



Staff photo by Kim Hawks

Carolina Cravings, located on Hillsboro Street in downtown Pittsboro, sells cakes like this one, a strawberry cream cake with a dusting of cocoa.

work it out, you know,” said Escalante-Palacios.

“My mom told me about it,” Martinez added. “... She doesn’t want the responsibility of owning a business. She said that she was going to help us do it, but she doesn’t want that on her shoulders. She thought of us.”

Both had always dreamt of owning their own business, too, so once the opportunity arose — they seized it.

“It’s a great opportunity,” Es-

calante-Palacios said, adding, “I was actually scared because I saw the business during the pandemic. And I was scared, like, what if it doesn’t work out, you know? What if this? What if that? But (Martinez is) like, ‘We can try it.’”

They sealed the deal on Feb. 8, and opened just five days later at 7 a.m., a day before Valentine’s Day.

“It took us less than a week for us to open, which is incredible,” Martinez said, laughing.

SOCO

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South of the Courthouse — a collection of dining and retail locations. He talks like an established downtown business owner, passionate about the district’s health and survival, but until recently, Stafford worked as a lawyer before tiring of the profession and turning his attention to real estate.

“I didn’t like being a lawyer, honestly,” he said. “I didn’t like arguing.”

But he did like helping people as “a reasonably priced alternative legal representation.” That same motivation to help Pittsboro residents and keep the town relevant fueled his SoCo vision, a revitalization effort to keep pace with Chatham Park and Mosaic.

Now, with about \$7 million invested and countless hours spent working with contractors, petitioning the board of commissioners and fielding resident concerns, Stafford jokes that “if we had known what was involved in doing this project when we started the project, it would have never happened.”

“And it’s not really going to recover the money anytime in my lifetime,” he said. “But that’s fine because we are excited about what this means for Pittsboro.”

Stafford grew up in Cary and watched the town’s evolution as the Preston community introduced new residents and business infrastructure to support them. It has taken 30 years, he says, for Cary’s downtown to establish some relevance again. He would be devastated if the same happened in



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Stafford hopes SoCo will be ready for business by the start of 2022, after road construction has completed.

Pittsboro.

“I really do not want to see that happen in Pittsboro,” Stafford said, “and I do not believe it will.”

At least, not if he has anything to say about it.

After finalizing his permits and permissions with the town, Stafford broke ground on SoCo at the beginning of this year. So far, most of the work has been laying infrastructure. He’s racing to finish construction and welcome new tenants as pandemic restrictions begin to lift and people return to public spaces. Current businesses include The Modern Life Deli & Drinks (The Mod), Chatham Business Services and Chateaux Realty, all on Sanford Road.

He’s also working against the clock to keep pace with

NCDOT’s construction projection at the traffic circle downtown.

“We have to have our work done before they get theirs done,” he said. “If we don’t get done with all of our utilities and stuff out to the street, then the DOT builds a new sidewalk, new paving, new everything, and then four weeks later we end up digging that up. And that’s not a good look.”

NCDOT is projected to compete its work in October. Stafford estimates SoCo will be ready for tenants not long after.

“We’re a little bit behind our completion projections,” he said. “We thought it was going to be in November. Now it looks like it’ll be January.”

But Stafford isn’t worried by the minor delay. His primary

concern through the project’s early stages was whether businesses would pursue the space.

“When we started in August, I was very, very worried that we were going to put ourselves out there on this project, and then we were going to be unable to rent the place out for a while,” he said.

A little more than half a year later, though, and his concerns have abated.

“It’s been very much a pleasant surprise,” he said, “the number of outfits that want to go in.”

Stafford expects to announce in about two months what businesses will occupy the SoCo complex. Until then, he can’t divulge all the details, but offered that one new tenant — almost certainly — will be a brewery.

More about Carolina Cravings:

- Open Monday through Saturday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- They offer online curbside deliveries.
- Contact them at (919) 444-2023 or carolinacravings84@gmail.com.

“I’m like, ‘I’ve never worked so hard in my life. I’ve never cleaned so hard in my life.’”

“It was crazy,” Escalante-Palacios added.

They’ve received a lot of support to get to this point, they said, both from their families, the previous owners and the wider Pittsboro community.

“Even though we’re still in a pandemic and the construction is going on, the Pittsboro community has been very supportive of everybody, like the Virlie’s (Grill) and all the local people,” Martinez said.

“They have been sharing our posts, coming and checking on us, making sure that we’re OK, and just like checking the place out. They enjoy all the changes that we have done.”

There’s one particular store that eased their worries about opening, too, Martinez added, and that’s Tienda Hispana El Rayo on 119 Hillsboro Street, a shop Martinez and Escalante-Palacios said they also hope to support.

“I know that they were brave enough to jump in business like during the pandemic,” Martinez said. “... That made me a little bit more comfortable that the Hispanic store was already here, and that opened a door for us to come in and offer our Hispanic treats as well.”

So far, both have enjoyed working together, baking treats and meeting new people. Despite worries over the pandemic and Pittsboro traffic circle construction, they’re glad they took the risk. And even if it didn’t — or doesn’t — work out, both said they’d just find something else and keep on trying.

“We were not going to stop here and just, you know, leave it. We were going to look for something together as well,” Escalante-Palacios, adding, “We’ll start it and see how it goes. If it doesn’t work out, we can try something else. I think that’s the main thing — just having faith.”

Reporter Victoria Johnson can be reached at victoria@chathamnr.com.

“Almost universally, what wants to go in there is breweries,” he said. “... Currently, there’s really six breweries who want to be in there, but there are three of them who are serious contenders.”

Even before the pandemic, microbreweries were in hot demand. In the last year, though — during which pandemic restrictions closed traditional bars — the concept has especially thrived, and microbrewery owners are poised for expansion.

“The way the governor shut down restaurants and bars but didn’t shut down breweries,” Stafford said, “the breweries are flush with cash and everyone else isn’t. So now we’re looking at a situation where breweries are the guys going, ‘Oh yeah, I got the money for that.’”

Whatever the final roster of businesses, Stafford’s primary concern is that they complement downtown’s current offerings and entice Pittsboro residents. As Chatham Park continues its development and new residents move into the town’s northern communities, Stafford hopes SoCo and similar downtown revitalization projects will ensure that all of Pittsboro moves forward together.

“I just hope that the rest of downtown can benefit from this,” he said. “... We’ve got to push it to get done as much as possible so that we can survive the next 20 years with a vibrant downtown and not everything fall apart. That’s really the goal.”

Reporter D. Lars Dolder can be reached at dldolder@chathamnr.com and on Twitter @dldolder.

VIEWPOINTS

Fighting achievement gaps beyond the school reopening debate

Last week, my colleague Victoria Johnson introduced the first article in a new series we’ve been thinking a lot about over the last few months: equity in schools.

In recent months, many have heralded learning gaps as a reason to urgently return to in-person learning. Our reporting found that the gaps — one metric of many in measuring school equity — have worsened and widened over the course of the pandemic. But they weren’t created by it, or remote learning. Without addressing the root of said disparities, education advocates warn a return to school could just return learning gaps to their previous rates — leaving marginalized groups of students behind, again.

We must continue to fight for equity, and against achievement gaps, then, even after doing so no longer serves a reopening-schools agenda.

To be clear, plenty of parents, teachers and education experts have expressed legitimate concern for the apparent learning loss that’s taken place during remote learning. I’m not suggesting those people are incorrect in their assessments or deceitful in their intentions.

Unfortunately and despicably, though, some people have never cared about achievement gaps — and often oppose any systemic change to address underlying inequities and barriers. They cite such data to demand schools reopen without expressing any commitment to addressing such gaps once they get what they want.

But equity in education ensures that every student has an equal chance for success, and that, advocates say, requires proactive and systemic policies before students enter school. In other words, real equity work requires planning and a commitment over time. And while it most often takes glaring evidence of inequity to move society to action, reactive education policies can only put a Band-Aid on the fractures we see at the surface, when we need policies that will uncover and destroy the injustice that pervades the very roots of the educational system.

Think about the most recent reports we’ve seen on the impact of COVID-19 and remote learning. Most — from Chatham to the national level — paint a grim picture of learning this year, indicating many students are falling behind based on previous year’s grades and testing score. At Durham Public Schools, a February report by The News & Observer in Raleigh showed that the percentage of middle

school students with at least one failure in the first quarter went up for every group of students included in the data analysis, with more than 55% of students receiving at least one failing grade, up from about 31% the previous year. The same data showed that gaps between students groups also went up — with the gap between white and Hispanic students increasing by nearly 20 percentage points and the gap between white and Black students increasing by about 9.

Are those citing achievement gap data caused by the pandemic talking about those gaps? And if they are, are they doing so to bring attention to the students who always suffer most in times of crisis, or to exploit their struggles to prove their point? These gaps must be addressed in a meaningful and sustained way. But it’s also true these numbers don’t reflect the whole story.

More than 500 educators signed a March 22 letter to U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona stressing this point, raising concerns with a Feb. 22 letter from the U.S. Dept. of Education declining states’ requests for waivers of standardized testing in 2021. This move will “exacerbate inequality and will produce flawed data in the midst of the pandemic,” the letter says.

“The damage inflicted by racialized poverty on children,

and schools is devastating and daunting,” the letter says. “To that end, we understand why some civil rights groups have advocated for systems that use standardized tests to highlight inequalities. Whatever their flaws, test-based accountability systems are intended to spotlight those inequalities and demand they be addressed.

“But standardized tests also have a long history of causing harm and denying opportunity to low-income students and students of color, and without immediate action they threaten to cause more harm now than ever,” the letter continues.

Our ongoing equity series, with another installment to come next month, has and will cite such data from standardized tests. But in our reporting, we also hope to bring context to the underlying inequities that lead to such gaps in testing performance, and to the work being done to address them.

Standardized tests have long been cited as an inadequate measurement of student learning, and studies show testing methods often reflect and maintain racial inequity. Not to mention that tests, and studying for them, might not be the biggest priority for students as they continue to process and cope with living in a pandemic.

Under the stress of a global crisis, it is inevitable that an education system built to best serve affluent, English speak-

ing and white families would continue to fail the marginalized students it is constitutionally bound to serve. While teachers and administrators certainly play an important role in working toward school equity, they alone cannot bear the brunt of righting such failures — especially not when these workers have been particularly devastated by the emotional and physical stress of working during COVID-19.

We cannot continue to point to achievement gap data as a reason why one school or district is bad and another is not. We cannot continue to use such data to support our isolated agendas while ignoring the decades of work by experts and advocates, often people of color. And we cannot, as journalists or as a society, be drawn to stories about such gaps when they receive lots of attention or clicks while failing to comprehensively report and discuss them the rest of the year.

If we truly care about ensuring an equal chance of success for every student, we must care about such disparities — and the conditions and policies that create them — all the time. And then, we must invest in the work that will extend long past the resumption of in-person learning.

Reporter Hannah McClellan can be reached at hannah@chathamnr.com or on Twitter at @HannerMcClellan.

Loss of interest gumming up life

There was a story in a Sunday paper not so long ago that hurt my heart.

Seems, according to that piece, a bit of America is on the way out. It also went on to say that the movement had been going on for quite awhile. So what hurt my feelings was not only that it was happening but that I had missed out on realizing it. The fact it was national in scope and not relegated to my small corner of the world explained my ignorance in part, but still it was painful.

All this news came from a large manufacturing firm — Mars Inc. They’re not an outer space exploration company but rather the folks who make Milky Way candy bars and other similar basic food groups. Unbeknownst to yours truly, they also own Wrigley, the folks who not only gave us where the Cubs play baseball (Wrigley Field, now under the lights like every other team) but also the folks who make chewing gum, as in Doublemint and Spearmint.

It seems, the story says, that since peaking in 2009 U.S. gum sales have dropped 11% — down to a paltry \$3.7 billion recently. Math and economics were never my strong point (lunch and break were) but that seems like more than just pocket change to me. Maybe it’s not enough for the company and it’s an indicator of dark days and bad times ahead for them.

The story also mentioned that such a poor record was achieved over the same period of time that overall candy sales — which included gum, chocolate, mints and licorice — were up 10% to \$31.5 billion. Furthermore, it pointed out that an additional drop of gum sales is expected.

At this point, I’m in over my head. So I’m going to leave the dollars and cents to sharper individuals and instead dwell on something else about gum, namely the question of whether all this a reflection of a change in our culture.

If it is, I don’t like it. Where would this great country of ours be without gum? What would baseball be like without it? When speakers stand to speak or preach or teach, what would the audience or congregation look like without some open mouth gum-chompers? I’ve officiated at funerals and weddings to the beat of four-part gum harmony, even by the bride and groom. While it’s not especially attractive and violates all sorts of rules of etiquette, it’s a big part of life ... or was, according to the story in question.

Gum-buying was one of my early rites of passage into adulthood. Mama would give me a nickel and let me walk the 100 yards to Sam White’s

store, even though it was across busy U.S. Hwy. 64. By the time she let me make that trek, she had drilled into my acorn that I needed to stop at the edge of the road and look and listen both ways ... and on both trips.

Chewing gum, especially in school, occupies a large part of my childhood memory. You weren’t supposed to do it in class; doing so could get you sent to the principal’s office. That’s why when I was in the 4th grade and Mrs. Sears would ask, “Bob, are you chewing gum?” that I would swallow it and thereby not lie to her. If I were caught doing the unpardonable sin, usually the teacher would say, “I hope you brought enough for everybody.” One time I did; she was not impressed.

As a smooth young teen, a pack of chewing gum always occupied a place in my pocket. That way you could whip out a piece to give your sweet patooty when you wanted to impress her. Even when it got up to a dime a pack, Spearmint was still worth it; ditto for when it went to a quarter.

Gum made its way into larger parts of society. In the 1975 movie “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest,” the heretofore silent Chief Bromden doesn’t speak until given a stick of gum. Given a piece, he says, “Mmm ... Juicy Fruit.” That’s the same brand my Uncle Frank gave me every time I left his house (that, and a shiny new dime).

Maybe economics is the reason for the decline — prices keeps going up. I must admit that at our house we still have packs of gum, the traditional five-stick pack lying here and there as well as the larger ones for the little folks who come by. Same as in the car and trucks. But it’s getting harder and harder to find those small packs because the 15-20 stick size now occupies most of the space near the checkout counter and it gets harder and harder to shell out two bucks for a nickel pack of gum.

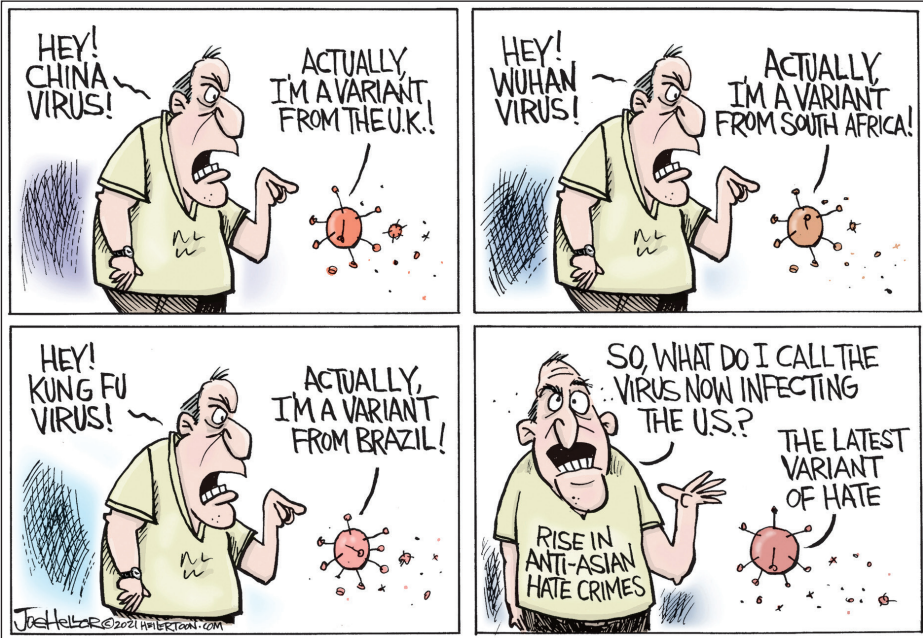
The folks who study such tell us that part of the decline is not only price but the habits of the 20-somethings segment of society which drives so much of our larger ways and habits. Those folks are more into Altoids and fruit snacks as their thing. For the life of me, however, I can’t see my favorite pitcher chewing away on a thin mint or fruity chew.

Do your part, America. Go out and buy some gum. And then buy some more. Don’t let this go down without a fight — or a chomp.

Bob Wachs is a native of Chatham County and retired long-time managing editor of the Chatham News/Chatham Record, having written a weekly column for more than 30 years. During most of his time with the newspapers, he was also a bi-vocational pastor and today serves Bear Creek Baptist Church for the second time as pastor.



BOB WACHS
Movin’ Around



Justice for Bubba

Before 2 a.m. on the morning of November 19, 2020, Lewis Thomas Riggsbee



ANDREW TAYLOR-TROUTMAN
Hope Matters

terrible head injury and was near death. N.C. Highway Patrol was dispatched to the scene to investigate a possible hit-and-run. Riggsbee eventually died in a medical facility on January 26, 2021.

On March 20, I attended his funeral. His friends, family and loved ones all called him “Bubba.” They all spoke highly of him.

Bubba worked for more than 20 years in the public works department of Chapel Hill, then another 30 years in restaurants, including The Rathskeller where he earned the nickname “Chef Rigg.”

His younger cousins remembered how he would watch over the kids playing in the neighborhood, intervening if someone got hurt. He also kept an eye on older relatives in case someone needed a helping hand.

Bubba may have been a man of few words, but he made good on his promises. He was as honest as the day is long.

Like many people in our

community, I knew Bubba as the elderly man walking along U.S. Hwy. 15-501. He did not hitchhike. He would accept a ride from a friend, including many police officers who were kind to him.

But Bubba wanted to walk. As his niece put it, he walked with “pep in his step.” He walked with purpose: Bubba knew who he was and where he wanted to go. That will preach!

His pastor noted the metaphor of walking by faith not sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). We often find ourselves at loss for words after a tragedy. We have to keep moving ahead.

Philippians 4:5 came to my mind: “Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.” Bubba lived into this verse as a gentle man — patient, kind and caring.

The second part of this verse may be interpreted in two meaningful ways. “The Lord is near” is a promise of comfort and care for those who are grieving. God is close by, like Bubba watching over those neighborhood children or elderly relatives.

“The Lord is near” may also contain a message of judgment. Since the Letter to the Philippians was written in the first century, believers have looked for the establishment of God’s kingdom of justice and peace. Many Christians profess a belief that Jesus will return to earth as the judge of all the nations and every human

heart. At that time, what has been hidden in secret will come to the light of truth.

Since the tragic incident was first reported in November, investigators of the Chatham County Sheriff’s Office have searched for clues as well as interviewed Bubba’s family and friends in the effort to discern whether he was the victim of a targeted attack or struck by a motorist. The investigation is ongoing.

“Mr. Riggsbee was described as a kind, quiet man, who was familiar to our deputies due to his frequent walks and sightings in the area,” said Lt. Sara Pack. “Whether his death turns out to be the result of an unfortunate accident, fall or criminal act, our agency is committed to finding facts and hopefully providing his loved ones with a sense of closure following this tragic loss.”

If you or someone you know has any information regarding the tragic incident on November 19, please contact the Sheriff’s Office at 919-542-2911.

Gentle reader, this is a time for walking in the truth. Let there be justice for Bubba. And peace for us all.

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.

VIEWPOINTS

LETTERS

Water quality, habitat concerns dismissed by Chatham Park

TO THE EDITOR:

In Mr. Horner’s recent article promoting Chatham Park and Mosaic (“As pandemic wanes, Chatham Park going, growing in a ‘great direction,’” March 11-17), the phrase “the loud objections of environmentalists” dismissed concerns about water quality in the Haw River and Jordan Lake, and the destruction of forests and habitat for wildlife, as “loud” instead of important.

Our serious environmental concerns include:

- Chatham Park Investors (CPI) dismissing the 2,000 buffer along the Haw River in Pittsboro’s Land Use Plan map. The buffer was intended to mitigate storm water runoff and flooding, provide a corridor for remaining wildlife and conservation of valued natural areas, and protect water quality downstream in Jordan Lake — a major source of drinking water.

- More recently, N.C Dept. of Water Resources’ denial of the 401 permit that would allow destruction of streams and wetlands by CPI and NC DOT to construct North Village and North Chatham Park Way.

- Objections to the plan to move the Park Way on to neighbors’ property and destroy their quality of life, instead of keeping the road, which will primarily benefit the new Chatham Park businesses and residents, on undeveloped CPI land.

- Dismay CPI ignored the 2008 Southwest Shore Conservation Assessment recommendations for lands purchased by Preston Development to conserve critical lands and provide additional buffers for streams, trails, and game lands.

Among concerned environmentalists called loud were water quality experts, scientists on biodiversity, and wildlife experts. Speakers at town board meetings included advocates for climate crisis reduction regarding the impacts of rooftops and parking lots replacing carbon-sequestering forests; naturalists alarmed about the loss of plant species with bulldozing; bee keepers concerned about loss of tulip poplars, a primary food source for bees in early spring; and historians

wanting to preserve valuable conservation resources.

1,449 community members signed a petition for protection of the 2,000 foot buffer for the Haw, and for greater retention of existing forests and trees. Instead, CPI obscured minimum tree coverage with a shell game of tree planning areas — many on stream buffers already requiring trees to be protected.

The risks of disturbing eagles nesting along the river, endangered and threatened species of mussels and fish were ignored.

Saying parks and green-spaces overcame those objections is inaccurate. While these are good for the community, they do not overcome environmental damage to the watershed of the Haw River. A community newspaper should provide balanced, fair, and accurate coverage of all these issues as it promotes development around Pittsboro.

Joy Hewett
Pittsboro

Chatham Park stories contained ‘inaccurate’ statements

TO THE EDITOR:

Two recent promotional articles about Chatham Park contained some significant misleading or inaccurate statements.

There’s no evidence that “administrative roadblocks” by the town has slowed visible progress.

Preston/Chatham Park Investors (CPI) were authorized in August 2015 to build up to 1,100 homes. It was CPI’s choice to wait until 2020 to start on a handful. They were also permitted to develop a huge amount of non-residential square footage. However, much of that might require additional “rooftops”, and both retail and office space were shrinking even before Chatham Park’s preliminary plan was first proposed in 2013.

CPI has for several years been confusing the public about how much usable open space and parks there would be, and in regulatory terms these are different. It certainly is not correct that Chatham Park would contain 2,000 acres of “open park spaces.”

In the “North Village” plan, the only preserved forest would be narrow stream buffers,

just over 200 acres. Other “open space” would consist of thin strips such as highway or other screening buffers, floodplain or wetland, and other small fragments.

The total “open space” for such a large project seems large but that does not mean that it will include large preserved tracts, rather than a very large number of tiny fragments.

More importantly, the amount of open space and park acreage required for gross-square feet of commercial development or housing units is exactly the same for Chatham Park as it would be for any developer. They weren’t required to provide more acreage, and haven’t added any.

CPI has no role in expanding Pittsboro’s water supply, nor in treating the PFAS contamination. As for sewer, not all of the 2,200 acre North Village will utilize their new private treatment plant. CPI has agreed to pay part of the Sanford line loan, in return for that much treatment capacity.

Rather than provide solutions for the Town, CPI has sometimes stymied them. By fighting with state environmental regulators for an entire year over the size of preserved buffers on streams draining to the Haw, CPI delayed the permitting and financing of the line to Sanford by a year or more. The result of that is now a temporary lack of sewer capacity for planned more affordable development.

Real estate developers are in the business of promoting their “product.” Newspapers should be in the business of checking facts.

Liz Cullington
Pittsboro

‘One-sided’ article on Chatham Park disappointing

TO THE EDITOR:

I was very disappointed in your two-part article on Chatham Park. It is a public relations piece masquerading as a news article

Mr. Rawl and Mr. Smith are at some pains to dismiss the Chatham County residents who questioned the gigantic scope of this project, the impact on the Haw River watershed, the lack of affordable housing, and the long-term issues of adequate sewer and water. Their comments in

this interview have the same arrogant tone they adopted during many of the public hearings, where they basically said, “We have built all these developments in other places, we do a good job, all you locals stop asking all these questions about stream buffers, setbacks from the Haw, and open space. Just trust us. Don’t regulate us.” That was their approach in a nutshell and it seemed to work well for them in their negotiations with the Town of Pittsboro.

From past experience I expect this dismissive attitude toward their critics from Mr. Rawl and Mr. Smith, but I am surprised that the author of the article would quote these statements so approvingly. Did the author consider reaching out to the staff at the Haw River Assembly to hear their thoughts on the impact of Chatham Park? Or to former Pittsboro mayor Bill Terry, who was heavily involved in the contentious approval process? Or to other members of the Pittsboro Town Board? Surely there are important questions about a development of this size that should be discussed with someone other than the developers themselves! In the interest of balanced journalism perhaps you would consider a third installment where other voices could be heard?

As a long-time subscriber, it is clear to me that the new ownership of the News + Record has made many positive changes to the newspaper. You seem to be reaching out to a wide range of groups in the county and covering local issues in greater depth. That makes this one-sided article even more disappointing. Whether Chatham Park is ultimately a good thing for Chatham County will take decades to determine. But your story of hard-working developers overcoming unrealistic environmentalists and annoying government regulators seems fundamentally distorted to me. I think a more accurate narrative would be: millionaire Wake County developers backed by Cary billionaire James Goodnight create a development on a scale unprecedented in North Carolina while only paying lip service to environmental issues and the concerns of many local residents.

David Scott
Pittsboro

Editor’s note: The conflicts and disagreements between Chatham Park investors, the town of Pittsboro and local environmentalists have been well documented in previous news coverage by the News + Record, including details from discussion and debate in Pittsboro Board of Commissioners meetings and votes made by the town board to approve elements of Chatham Park’s development plan. The News + Record stands by the details provided in the two-part series, which was not a “promotional” article but a story providing an overview of the most recent work completed at the development and a look at plans for 2021.

Chatham Park officials provided various documentation from the N.C. Dept. of Environmental Quality and from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to refute the claims made in these letters, but opted not to respond directly to the claims — other than to say that Chatham Park maintains that it will provide a higher tree protection standard than any other development in the Haw River watershed, and to address the statement about “destruction of streams and wetlands.”

In regards to that statement — that the N.C Dept. of Water Resources denied the 401 permit that would allow destruction of streams and wetlands by CPI and NC DOT to construct North Village and North Chatham Park Way — Bob Zarzecki, the principal and wetlands development manager for Soil & Environmental Consultants, PA, in Raleigh, wrote to the News + Record: “The applicants submitted a revised application on September 8, 2020, which was determined by (the Dept. of Water Resources) to include the additional items necessary for a complete application as listed in the June 1, 2020, denial letter, with the exception of the eight (8) additional items requested by DWR in their October 21, 2020, request for more information letter. One of these items was simply a notice to the applicants that DWR intended to hold a Public Hearing. The applicants provided the requested information on November 12, 2020, and DWR deemed it adequate to be considered a complete application suitable to hold the Public Hearing and complete their review.”

Making roads safer for biking

TO THE EDITOR:

In Chapel Hill, North Carolina, between 2007 and 2019, there were a total of about 155 reported bicycle accidents. As North Carolinians, we should value safety and the environment.

Biking is an environmentally-friendly mode of transportation, and a good form of physical activity. Due to the global pandemic, a significant amount of people do not leave their house often, or get healthy outdoor physical activity, thus adding bike lanes on local roads would encourage more people to get outside and bike. One should want to uphold these values of safety, getting outside, and environmentally friendly transportation, so one should support adding bike lanes to local roads. If bike lanes were added to local roads it would relieve drivers of frustration from bikers not having a place on the road, and better ensure the safety of those who choose transit by bicycle.

Together we can achieve this goal for a safer and healthier community by

contacting our local decision makers of Chapel Hill, North Carolina to add bike lanes onto roads, such as Farrington Road, Lystra Road, and Mount Carmel Church Road.

Jenna Apolito
10th grader, Woods Charter School

Hispanic vaccination disparities in Chatham

TO THE EDITOR:

Greetings. I saw the News + Record’s article about the lack of Hispanics in Chatham County who are getting vaccinated (‘Chatham vaccine providers work to ensure vaccine equity for Hispanic residents,’ March 3-10), and was shocked by the number of people who were afraid of getting the vaccine due to misinformation and fear. As someone who is of Hispanic descent, I felt compelled to urge others in our community to help.

I believe that the best way to do so is by donating to and supporting organizations that have plans to help spread facts about the COVID vaccine to Hispanic communities.

This includes organizations such as El Vinculo Hispano (The Hispanic Liaison), which is in the process of recruiting a COVID-19 Project Manager to address the misconceptions that the Hispanic community has in regards to the vaccine. The project manager will be responsible for their response and outreach efforts for COVID. I also encourage other young Hispanic people to volunteer as this program gets underway.

I feel that these actions would help educate many more Hispanic people in Chatham County about vaccinations, and help with generally getting things back to normal.

Thank you for reading,
Alejandro Navarro
Chatham County

Lowering speed limit on Andrews Store Road

TO THE EDITOR:

When driving down Andrews Store Road on a beautiful Sunday morning, you can see multiple cyclists riding and doing their best to make it up the very

steep hill.

Cycling is a very popular activity, and is often done on secondary roads on which the speed limit is very high. These roads are also lacking in shoulder space, making it difficult to pass bicycles in a car. Andrews Store Road, the road that so many cyclists choose to ride on for connections from Manns Chapel to U.S. Hwy. 15-501, is regulated by a speed limit of 55 mph for many stretches. When cars traveling at high speeds unexpectedly encounter a cyclist as they crest a hill or round a curve, both the drivers and cyclists are placed in a dangerous and potentially fatal situation.

The new developments on Andrews Store Road increase the concentration of cars, which correlates to a higher risk for cyclists. In order to protect the cyclists who choose to ride on the lovely forested road of Andrews Store and the many drivers coming out of the neighborhoods and schools on said road, the speed limit must be lowered from 55 mph to 45 mph.

Maddie Sparrow
10th grader, Woods Charter School

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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. Letter-writers are limited to two published letters per month. 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.

VIEWPOINTS

Deciding who leads a university

Who runs the university? What university are you asking about?



D.G. MARTIN
One on One

as the UNC System.

Clearly, the recently appointed chancellor of FSU, Darrell Allison is the leader of that institution. But others share his authority. Allison reports to FSU’s board of trustees, a group of 13 that includes the student body president and other members appointed by the legislature and the UNC System’s board of governors.

But Allison reports directly and primarily to the president of the UNC System who has the power, subject to concurrence from the board of governors, to fire the chancellor.

If Allison has a single boss, it

is the university president.

But if you ask any chancellor he or she will tell you multiple people and groups must be pleased or the chancellor’s job is in jeopardy. He or she must also work with the institution’s trustees. While that board does not have the authority to discipline or dismiss its chancellor, an unhappy board would have the ear of the president who could take action.

It is complicated enough already, but other constituents must be pleased. Near the top of the list, some would argue, is the institution’s faculty, both its organizations and individual professors.

Unhappy students can also bring a chancellor down. So can passionate fans of the university’s athletic teams. Donors and alumni groups can feel that the chancellor is their employee and should listen to their directions.

All these interests and groups present potential problems for every new chancellor. Wise ones will understand that while you cannot always please

everyone, you must always take care to minimize friction and consider different opinions and aspirations that relate to the university.

What is really tragic is for the situation to be poisoned from the beginning, but that’s what has happened to Chancellor Allison. From the time his appointment was announced, opposition and concerns about his lack of experience in higher education and the process of his appointment arose from the faculty senate, the school’s alumni association and the student government association’s president.

Previously, Allison served as a trustee at his alma mater, North Carolina Central University, and as a member of the system’s Board of Governors, where he chaired its committee on Historically Minority-Serving Institutions. In 2018, Allison became the national director of State Teams and Political Strategy for the American Federation for Children, an organization that promotes school choice and was once

led by Betsy DeVos, former President Trump’s secretary of education.

From the beginning of the UNC System in the early 1970s, chancellors’ selection followed this procedure, taken from a UNC-Chapel Hill document describing the process:

“The chairperson of the university’s Board of Trustees will oversee the search committee to find the new chancellor. Committee members represent the University’s Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, students and alumni. Community members will be able to provide input throughout the process. The committee will make recommendations to the full Board of Trustees, which will vote on candidates to recommend to the UNC System president who will then recommend a candidate to the UNC Board of Governors, which will elect the new chancellor.”

This traditional process assured that every constituency would have some voice in the selection process even though it would be the president who

made the final recommendation to the system’s board.

This process was changed last year essentially to provide the president with the power to ignore the campus search process unilaterally and select any person to recommend to the Board of Governors.

The university president has every reason to seek a chancellor who will be a good partner. But it is a mistake not to bring into the selection process representatives of other groups the chancellor must serve.

As almost 50 years of university history has shown, a collaborative search process can find a person who will be the president’s strong partner without inflaming the kind of opposition that now faces Chancellor Allison.

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.

Suburban voters form largest bloc

If you think about regional differences in North Carolina politics, economics or culture in terms of urban blue and rural red, you are missing a thick slice of the story: the suburbs. And, no, you can’t just paint the suburbs purple. That’s an oversimplification.

Precisely distinguishing between the three categories — urban, suburban and rural — isn’t easy. Classifications by county can be valuable, of course, but they suffer from severe analytical limitations. For example, lumping all residents of Mecklenburg County together as “urban” is problematic. While it’s true that living in a suburban neighborhood or isolated farmhouse in Mecklenburg is rather different from living in downtown Ahoskie or Burnsville, it’s also rather different from living in uptown Charlotte! Just ask the people involved.

Actually, that’s often the right approach. When it comes to analyzing political trends, in particular, I think the best work starts by asking voters to classify themselves, rather than jamming them into a spatial category based on other criteria.

The John Locke Foundation’s Civitas Poll just did that with a mid-March sample of 600 likely North Carolina voters. Here’s the question: “Do you consider the area where you live to be more rural, suburban, or urban?” About 45% of respondents identified as suburban voters, 34% as rural and 21% as urban.

During last year’s general election, one of the nationwide exit polls did something similar. Some 40% of actual North Carolina voters said they lived in the suburbs, while 27% identified as rural and 33% urban. Other pollsters have used self-identification in their own surveys of North Carolinians. Again, while the percentages vary a bit, the suburban vote is always the largest single bloc of voters by area type.

Now, as to partisanship, it is certainly correct to observe that urban-identifying voters as a whole lean strongly Democratic and rural-identifying voters lean strongly Republican. In 2020, 69% of urban North Carolinians picked Joe Biden and 59% of rural North Carolinians preferred Donald Trump.

But it’s important not to paint with too broad a partisan brush. Trump’s 29% share of urban voters represents many hundreds of thousands of North Carolinians. And Biden’s rural share of 40% is hardly insignificant. Indeed, based on the results in these two categories alone, Biden would have won North Carolina’s electoral votes handily.

Why didn’t he? Because Trump didn’t just win the suburban vote by a little. He won it with a margin of 60%-39%. Thom Tillis won a slightly bigger margin there, 60%-37%. In the governor’s race, Roy Cooper held his suburban loss to 42%-56% while doing a bit better than Biden in urban and rural areas. That’s why Cooper bucked a generally Republican tide.

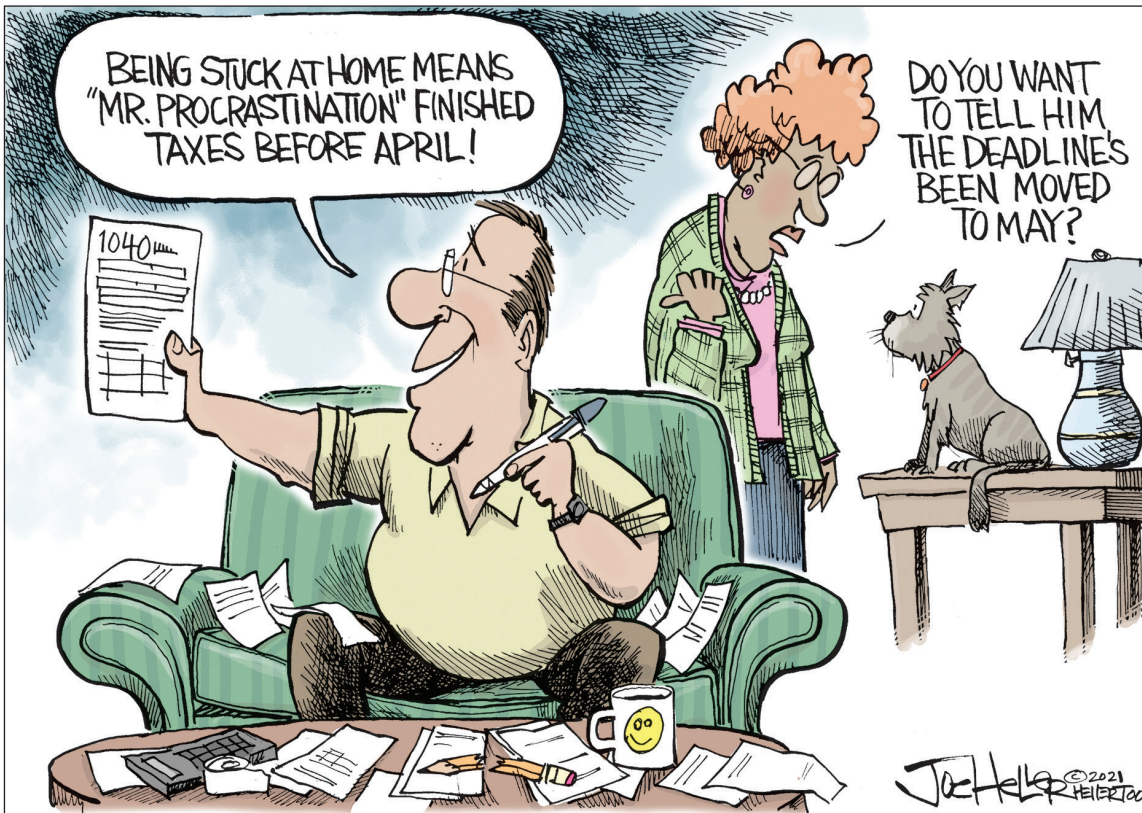
Over the past five years, there’s been a lot of political chatter about Trump’s disruptive effects on the two parties’ electoral coalitions. I’ve contributed to it myself. The Republican coalition has become somewhat more rural and less populated by upper-income and highly educated voters, some of whom have shifted Democratic.

But in North Carolina, at least, these shifts have been modest, not gigantic. Most suburban voters continue to favor the GOP. If they didn’t, the party would not be able to compete with Democrats, in either statewide contests or for key legislative seats that determine the control of the General Assembly.

One explanation may simply be that our suburban voters are more right-leaning than their counterparts in other states. About 47% of likely North Carolina voters told the Civitas Poll they were conservative, as did a similar number of North Carolina suburbanites. This is several points higher than the national average.

Of course, we don’t weight votes by geography. Every ballot counts exactly the same. Both coalitions ought to fight for every vote they can get in North Carolina’s urban cores and rural communities. But you can expect the major parties to keep spending lots of time and money in the suburbs. It’s where a plurality of the state’s voters, and a disproportionate share of state’s true swing voters, continue to reside.

John Hood (@JohnHoodNC) is chairman of the John Locke Foundation.



This could be the start of something of great

Something exciting has happened in North Carolina,



TOM CAMPBELL
N.C. Spin

reopening our schools.

Most agreed that virtual learning was not working well and that we needed to get students back in class, but until early this month we didn’t know how badly they had fallen behind. According to data presented to our State Board of Education, the majority of our high school students did not pass the end-of-course exams that were administered at the start of this school year. The majority failed the Math 1, Math 3 and Biology exams. More troubling was that 58.2% of 3rd-grade students who took the beginning-of-grade reading exam scored at Level 1, the lowest rating on the exam, and 75.4% were not reading at a level considered “proficient.” Educators caution us not to read too much into these data because not all students have been tested, but the raw numbers are shocking.

The alarm bells were ringing. Action was needed. Political pundits and partisans prepared for the too frequent dance we’ve experienced the past four years. The governor proposes action to get children back in class. The legislature barely gives his proposals daylight before passing their own legislation, which

they send to him for signing into law. After a few days, Gov. Cooper vetoes the bill. That returns it to both houses of the legislature to see if they have the votes to override the veto. In most instances since 2019, one chamber can’t scare up the requisite number needed to override and the matter dies.

But this time something different occurred. Some sources report that Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger (or his staff) approached the governor (or his staff) about initiating school reopening discussions. No matter who started it, there were willing ears and attitudes because of the urgency of the matter. Legislators and the executive branch resolved their differences. It’s called compromise, and wonders of wonders — it worked.

The speaker, pro tem and governor all appeared at a press conference to announce the outcome. Everyone, with the exception of some teachers, cheered, both for the resolution but also for the signal that we might be seeing a new day in relations between the executive and legislative branches.

It gets better. Within days, Sen. Berger announced that he and Gov. Cooper are going to appear together on a public service announcement urging North Carolinians to get their coronavirus vaccinations. With the devilish smile those who know Berger have seen, he then quipped, “People will think it’s the end times or something.”

We can only hope it signals a new era in North Carolina politics, a time when partisans can come together to take action

Most agreed that virtual learning was not working well and that we needed to get students back in class, but until early this month we didn’t know how badly they had fallen behind.

best for our citizens, not just their respective parties. Is it too much to imagine a jointly negotiated state budget that both houses and the executive branch could embrace, one enacted before the start of the new fiscal year, July 1?

We are going to see a big test of the new détente as lawmakers are attempting to redefine laws regarding the length of emergency declarations and the decision-making process. We can understand a governor not wanting to consult with a committee over every executive action, especially if that committee is politically partisan. But we can also understand wanting more than one voice in decisions. What we citizens hope for is a process that won’t be the same-old, same-old fighting between parties.

We’ve seen that our leaders can do it. We encourage them to continue this cooperative process. It could be the start of something great for North Carolina.

Tom Campbell is a former assistant N.C. State Treasurer and was the creator/host of N.C. SPIN, a weekly statewide television discussion of N.C. issues that aired on UNC-TV until 2020. Contact him at tomcamp@carolinabroadcasting.com.

Chatham’s focus on aging population continues

State report shows significant rise in those 60 and older

CN+R Staff Report

PITTSBORO — The latest statistics from the North Carolina Division of Aging and Adult Services (NCDAAS) show Chatham County is still among the state’s leading counties in terms of the aging of its population.

“There are many variables that tell this story,” said Dennis Streets, executive director of the Chatham County Council on Aging.

Among the more telling statistics revealed in the NCDAAS report:

- as of 2019, more than one-third (34%) of Chatham County’s population is aged 60 and older. By 2039, more than four in 10 (41%) of Chatham’s residents will be in this age category.
- as of 2019, the number of persons aged 60 and older in Chatham County

was estimated at 25,471. Comparatively, the number of persons aged 17 and younger was 13,927.

- looking ahead to 2039, the number of individuals aged 60 and older is projected as 43,181, compared to 16,796 for those aged 17 and younger.
- by 2039, Chatham is projected to be one of eight counties in North Carolina with more than 31% of its population aged 65 and older. (Chatham’s is projected at 34%.)
- the fastest growing age group remains those aged 85 and older. The projected increase is nearly 200% between 2019 and 2039, compared to an increase of 21% among those aged 17 and younger. This has important implications for long-term supports and services.
- one-quarter of Chatham residents

aged 65 and older live alone.

- nearly a quarter (24%) of those aged 65 and older have incomes less than 200% of the poverty level (\$25,752 annually for an individual). Social Security remains the primary source of income for adults aged 65 and older.
- nearly one in five (19.5%) of those aged 65 and older are still in the labor force.
- Alzheimer’s disease is now the third leading cause of death among those aged 65 and older.

While Chatham County is experiencing significant population aging, the state’s trend is also noteworthy. In 2019, 82 counties had more people 60 and older than those under 18 years. By 2025, this number is expected to increase to 89 counties and then, by 2039, to 95. The five counties with more youth than se-

niors are projected to be Cumberland, Harnett, Onslow, Craven and Hoke — all connected to military installations.

“These statistics should compel all sectors of our community to continue planning for ways to further as well as serve our older population,” Streets said.

Chatham County continues its long-term efforts to address these trends through the 2018-2023 Chatham County Aging Plan which focuses on five key areas: transportation; housing; healthcare coverage and services; care services and caregiving; and social connectedness, community engagement and opportunities for self-fulfillment.

For information about the Chatham County Aging Plan, see <https://chathamcouncilonaging.org/chatham-aging-plan>. For information about the work of the Chatham County Council on Aging, visit www.chatham-coa.org or call 919-542-4512 or 919-742-3975.

PLAN A

Continued from page A1

April, so April 12 is now the first instructional day after the bill’s April 1 compliance deadline.

After the BOE’s March 8 vote, CCS was on track for Pre-K through 3rd grade to return April 12 and 4th-5th on April 19. Last week, Amanda Hartness, the assistant superintendent of academic services & instructional support division, said CCS’s board would have to adjust its previous decision and begin Plan A for all Pre-K through 5th grade students on April 12 to comply with the bill. At the time, April 1 was still scheduled as a half day; April 2 is a holiday that marks the beginning of spring break. EC and 504 students in grades K-5 returned Tuesday, March 16.

“The half day on April 1st is something that we are looking into and the board will have to address next week,” Hartness told the News + Record in an email last week. “I am not sure what will happen with that piece.”

Following Monday’s motion, April 1 will now be a work day.

More on Senate Bill 220

Senate Bill 220 was signed into law by Gov. Roy Cooper March 11, after a deal between Cooper and the GOP was announced the previous Wednesday morning. The bill requires all public elementary schools to offer in-person learning under Plan A, and middle and high schools to offer in-person learning under Plan A or B. The legislation applies to N.C. public schools, with the exception of charter schools. It also doesn’t apply to private schools.

“Getting students back into the classroom safely is a shared priority, and this agreement will move more students to in-person instruction while retaining the ability to respond to local emergencies,” Cooper said March 11.

Under that legislation, Hartness told the News + Record last week that CCS would also need to bring back EC and 504 students in 6-12th grades for four days per week under Plan A. All students will still have a completely virtual learning option. At its Monday special meeting, the board called another special meeting for Thursday, March 25, to discuss how Senate Bill 220 pertains

to 6th-12th grade students, who can now attend in-person learning under Plan A — an option not available at the time of the board’s March 8 vote.

In Chatham County Schools, elementary students began returning for in-person hybrid learning under Plan B on Oct. 19, with middle school students returning Dec. 7 and high schoolers on Feb. 1. Under that plan, students who opt for in-person learning, rather than the district’s virtual academy option, attend school twice a week.

CCS administration proposed a plan to the board at its Feb. 23 meeting that would move Pre-K to 3rd grade students back to Plan A on March 22, and 4th-5th on March 29. At its March 8 meeting, administration expressed concerns over having enough time to buy furniture “conductive to distancing pieces” under Plan A. Previously, the administration said it could only guarantee four feet of physical distancing at its schools under Plan A, though many classrooms would allow for six. The new furniture — which would help schools to maximize physical distancing — wouldn’t arrive for three weeks after

ordering, the district said.

New physical distancing guidance

The new legislation requires schools operating under Plan A to partner with the ABC Science Collaborative to share anonymous data, the draft of the bill says. CCS has already been in partnership with that group, which previously told the board that reopening under Plan A and providing three feet of distancing would be safe. The CDC updated its guidance for schools on Friday, reducing its social distance recommendations from six feet to three for elementary schools and for middle and high schools in communities where transmission of COVID-19 is not high.

“CDC is committed to leading with science and updating our guidance as new evidence emerges,” said CDC Director Rochelle P. Walensky in that updated guidance. “These updated recommendations provide the evidence-based roadmap to help schools reopen safely, and remain open, for in-person instruction.”

While the new bill requires in-person instruction under

Plan A, a mid-week cleaning day is still allowed, meaning offering only four days a week of in-person classes would be permitted. That means CCS can maintain its mid-week planning day, offering in-person instruction four times a week for Pre-K through 5th grade students.

Hartness advised the board at its Feb. 23 meeting to continue to keep the mid-week planning day in place for teachers under Plan A, citing staff survey results which showed 92% of respondents said they’d prefer a 4-day in-person week with an at-home planning day under Plan A. Just 8% said they’d prefer a 5-day in-person week.

“I think right now the biggest way we can support our teachers is to continue to have that day for planning,” Hartness said at the time.

“What we’re asking teachers to do right now is more under either plan,” she emphasized again at the board’s March 8 meeting.

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WATER

Continued from page A1

ipalities offer sewer management for communities beyond their borders.

Instead, wastewater treatment in rural Chatham falls under private development and operations (ultimately accountable to state authorities), but developers and residents alike would like to see a change.

“It is very difficult to regulate and oversee all of these independently operated treatment facilities,” said Chris Ehrenfeld, owner of Chapel Hill-based development company, Bold Construction, which has frequently operated in Chatham. (Ehrenfeld is also a partner in Chatham Media Group LLC, the owner of

the News + Record.)

“A single, larger sewer solution, instead of all of these smaller systems, is going to be easier to regulate and better for the environment,” he said.

Developers and environmentalists are not often on the same side of arguments. But, Ehrenfeld says, sewer shortcomings in Chatham’s unincorporated areas — notably the Briar Chapel community — have fostered a rare instance of unanimity.

“It’s interesting as you have two sides that are typically on opposite sides of the spectrum, pro-development and pro-environment,” he said, “and both are saying the best solution is for the government to help get involved and come up with a larger solution that everybody can use.”

Liz Rolison, a Briar

Chapel resident and member of Stop Chatham North — a community non-profit resisting expansion of Briar Chapel’s private wastewater treatment plant — agrees with the thrust of Ehrenfeld’s message.

“The county has to be involved,” she said in a recent meeting of the county’s Environmental Review Advisory Committee.

Rolison advocates for a regional wastewater treatment plant to assume responsibility for new communities in northeast Chatham and to unburden the Briar Chapel facility, which has had multiple sewage leaks in recent years.

“I think the county is in a good position to try to identify a location for it ... We think that with the leadership of the county

helping to go after some of the money, and bringing together the right parties, that Chatham County doesn’t have to manage wastewater — they just need to bring together the right people.”

It’s a compelling idea, and well supported by some Chatham residents — but it’s almost certain not to happen.

“They have invested millions in that,” said County Manager Dan LaMontagne of the private sewer systems in northeast Chatham. “Would they love to wash their hands of that and have the county buy it? Maybe. Is the county going to use its dollars to buy the infrastructure they put in there? Probably not.”

To divest areas such as Briar Chapel of their private sewer struggles would cost the county an exorbitant sum, a cost which the county would have to mitigate with increased utility rates across Chatham — not only to residents benefiting from the modified infrastructure.

“Would the public see that as us trying to rescue that private system that got itself in trouble?” LaMontagne said. “I’m not implying that they are in trouble. I’m not implying that they need rescue. But would that be the impression the public has?”

But Rolison and others have not strictly proposed that Chatham buy out the private sewage companies. Rather, the county could buttress wastewater needs with a new regional plant, they say.

“Still unlikely,” LaMontagne responds.

“Municipal-type wastewater in the unincorporated parts of the county would need high density development to make it function properly and to be affordable,”

he said.

Wastewater systems require minimum flow rates which require minimum population sizes.

“As you can imagine, you do not want (waste) sitting around idle, so you need flow,” LaMontagne said. “Also, just to get in the more technical side of that, the treatment systems themselves are biological. So, that requires food to feed those microorganisms. So, you need more flow — it all means that you need more flow.”

That may not sound like a problem. After all, isn’t Chatham interested in aggressive real estate development?

Not exactly, at least, not everywhere.

“The county’s comprehensive land use plan, Plan Chatham, has already indicated many areas that we want to remain low density,” LaMontagne said. “So, these two things are opposing each other.”

For a county-operated sewer system to work in areas such as Briar Chapel, Chatham would need to authorize further development to establish the minimum community density standards necessary for a functional plant. Briar Chapel is a “compact residential” area, according to the county’s land use plan. It’s not approved for major expansion.

“And the public has been very clear in Chatham that they want to avoid that,” LaMontagne said. “... Plan Chatham has clearly stressed that we would like development to occur in the towns, that was a major goal of the plan — to focus development on the towns. That’s where you can have higher density; that’s where the infrastructure supports it; that’s why the towns are better equipped to handle

development like that.”

For developers in Chatham’s unincorporated areas, then, it’s safe to assume the county will not arrive to shore up wastewater systems any time soon.

“You’d have to have a way to have more density, that’s the long and short of it,” LaMontagne said. “And that would take making sure the roadways can handle it, and making sure that our ordinances allowed higher density, all of those things.”

In other words, more pieces would have to fall in place than it’s realistic to expect.

As for environmentalists frustrated with private wastewater plant operations, LaMontagne suspects they would recant pleas for county-run sewage after studying the ramifications for unincorporated lands.

“Just to be clear, any environmentalist you may be hearing from who would say they would love to see the county take over that wastewater because it’s better than dealing with these private entities,” LaMontagne said, “they would also be the ones that would be opposed to us having a high density in that area.”

Still, LaMontagne emphasizes that he understands where Chathamites are coming from.

“It’s not a knock on anyone, but this is a complex issue,” he said. “People think utilities are very simple, because they happen just automatically. And I love that utilities are that way ... It’s much simpler to say, ‘Oh, just let the county take it over.’ But it can’t really work that way. Overall, providing wastewater has a lot of implications.”

Reporter D. Lars Dolder can be reached at lldolder@chathamnr.com and on Twitter @lldolder.

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MEET SABRINA AGUILAR-SIMON

El Futuro hires first Chatham-focused clinical project manager

BY VICTORIA JOHNSON
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — El Futuro's Sabrina Aguilar-Simon almost decided against majoring in Spanish, her passion, while attending the College of Wooster in Ohio.

She thought it wouldn't be "practical."

"I thought that all you could really do with it was either teach or do research," she said, "and I wasn't really interested in either of those things."

Yet, as it turned out, it couldn't have been *more* practical: majoring in Spanish ultimately led her to an entire career dedicated to what she called "social work-y work" with the Triangle area's Latino communities "without really being a social worker."

For over a decade, Aguilar-Simon has worked to connect Spanish-speaking families with the resources they need primarily in Orange county. Now, she's just expanded her reach: she's El Futuro's newest clinical project manager — and the first to head the bilingual mental health clinic's outreach in Chatham.

"We've been there at Chatham for many years providing services, but this is sort of a new effort to try to expand the reach of our services in Chatham and Orange," she said, adding that she will be "doing some collaborative planning with others

at El Futuro to plan how to spread the word that we can serve folks in Orange County and Chatham County even during the pandemic through our telehealth services."

According to Kerry Brock, El Futuro's director of advancement and strategy, Aguilar-Simon will also be working to monitor trends in requests for services from Chatham Latino families, "improve screening processes" to help families access services better and engage with partner organizations who also serve county Latino families. She's still learning, but Aguilar-Simon said she plans to reach out to organizations like the Hispanic Liaison, Communities In Schools and Chatham-based health centers.

"Sabrina is perfect for this job because she is a Spanish-speaker, has lived in Latin America and can identify with the families we serve," Brock told the News + Record. "She also has significant experience providing effective outreach and engagement with Latino families through other nonprofit programs, and ensuring service trends and goals are met so that more Spanish-speaking families connect with helpful resources in the community."

'I could not wait to learn Spanish'

Aguilar-Simon first discovered her passion for the Spanish language while attending elementary school in southwest Ohio. A woman from Spain came to her school to teach a short Spanish course, and Aguilar-Simon said she quickly became "enthralled" with the language.

Her mother, a clinical psychologist, had also both studied and taught Spanish; after seeing Aguilar-Simon's interest, she decided to help foster her daughter's interest.

"Because it was just this two-week thing and then it was over, I didn't have a way to keep learning Spanish," Aguilar-Simon said. "So she (her mother) made like a little Spanish workbook, where she drew pictures and made little sentences where I'd fill in the blank, and match things up. ... And so ever since I had that little course in elementary school, I could not wait to learn Spanish."

She kept up her study from elementary school on to college. Besides majoring in Spanish, she studied abroad in Spain and worked as a teaching assistant for several undergraduate Spanish courses. After graduating, she ended up living for a few years in Mexico while teaching English.

"After becoming fluent in Spanish through those experiences, I just had this idea that I wanted to be using my Spanish to help people in some way," Aguilar-Simon said. "That was my vision and my drive and has really mostly been what I've done in my professional life, for almost my entire adult life."

At that point, though, she wasn't quite sure yet just how to best put her Spanish skills to work. While trying to figure it all out, she moved to North Carolina around 1995 to teach high school Spanish at Carolina Friends School in Durham.

In the early '90s, she'd considered moving to Chapel Hill before, since

her sister lived there, but initially rejected the idea. Aguilar-Simon planned to make use of her Spanish to serve local Latino communities, and as far as she could tell, North Carolina at the time didn't really host a significant Hispanic population.

A few years later, when she moved to North Carolina anyway, she still thought that was the case.

"Little did I know, that was right around the time that there was this beginning of this influx of immigration from mostly Mexico," she said, adding with a laugh, "It turned out I couldn't have come to a better place. I really love it, and so I've been here ever since."

Aguilar-Simon taught Spanish for about three years at Carolina Friends; in a way, that experience allowed her to forge the connections she needed to kickstart her dream. At Carolina Friends, students often became involved in community service projects throughout the year. While searching for service work for her students, she began to learn about the area's growing Latino population; she herself ended up volunteering at El Centro Hispano in Durham.

Through her volunteer work, she ended up finding work with various nonprofits and community health centers that served the fledgling Spanish-speaking community. Eventually, she joined Piedmont Health Services' Carrboro Community Health Center around 2000.

"I was drawn to that

because that program was serving families with all of the needs that they had," she said. "Basically, it was a family support program, so it had a broad scope of helping get them connected to all different kinds of services in the community that they needed for their kids and for their family.

And I really liked that sort of reach."

Aguilar-Simon stayed with Piedmont for more than a decade, managing a children's resource

coordination program for Spanish-speaking families with children, birth to 5 years old. She left in 2011 to study speech-language pathology at UNC-Chapel Hill, from which she graduated in 2013.

Thereafter, she practiced clinical speech therapy with Spanish-speaking children for about four years before moving onto to provide training and coordination for a childhood development research project at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute. But her time with Piedmont, where she'd stayed the longest, perhaps provided the most direct link to her decision to join El Futuro.

"In doing that work, I was able to see the breadth of services that were needed by these families and children and was able to see how critical mental health services were," she said. "... It was more or less the 2000s. At the beginning of that time, there were virtually no Spanish-language mental health services available in the area."

While working at the Carrboro Community Health

Center, she met Luke Smith, El Futuro's founder and executive director. He had been doing his residency at the time, treating patients at Piedmont's Carrboro center. When Smith started up El Futuro, Aguilar-Smith said she finally had a place where she could refer Spanish-speaking patients for mental health services.

"Since its beginning, I've always known El Futuro and very much admired and appreciated its mission and its services," she said. "So when I saw the position for the clinical project manager, I was really excited about the opportunity, the possibility of being involved with that effort."

In her new role, Aguilar-Simon said she hopes to help El Futuro expand its impact in Chatham County and other service areas. She also seeks to help destigmatize mental health services.

"I really hope to be able to just help El Futuro's services reach more people and help broaden their impact in the Latino community," she said. "(I want to) help folks who maybe wouldn't have otherwise been able to get support for their mental health needs."

And her colleagues have little doubt that she will.

"Our hope," Brock said, "is that, through warm engagement and outreach from Sabrina, Spanish-speaking families in Chatham County will understand what services we provide, what challenges we might be able to help with ... (and) feel more at ease and comfortable with reaching out to El Futuro for care."

Reporter Victoria Johnson can be reached at victoria@chathamnr.com.

DRIVE

Continued from page A1

school juniors — two from CSSE and one from Jordan-Matthews — Lowe applied that same month to start one such donation drive in Chatham County. Her Drive's leadership team interviewed them in December and gave them the green light soon after. Finally, after weeks of planning, Lowe and her friends began the drive on March 14.

"So most Her Drive drives will be just for one city, but we wanted to do the whole county so that we could help as many people as possible, get as many donations," Lowe said. "We're also a pretty small county."

The term "period poverty" refers to inadequate access to menstrual hygiene supplies. According to the Alliance for Period Supplies, one in four women across the country has struggled to afford period supplies in the last year.

Like 30 other states, North Carolina taxes period supplies, and not many governmental welfare programs help people purchase

menstrual care items. According to the Alliance for Period Supplies' 2020 North Carolina fact sheet, one in five girls and women between 12 and 44 lives below the federal poverty line.

"We're all very privileged, but we tried to put ourselves into other people's shoes, seeing that they're already struggling to pay taxes, to pay for food, for water, for shelter, and then on top of that they have to pay for period products every month," Lowe said. "... It's such an overlooked issue that we wanted to help combat in any way possible, so we thought that by doing a Her Drive in Chatham County, we can at least help a few people out."

The drive lasts until April 10 and will collect donations via contactless home pickups, local businesses and county schools. Among other things, people can donate pads, tampons, deodorant, pregnancy tests, socks and gently used bras. They can't accept any monetary donations, Lowe said. At the end of the drive, half of the donated items will go to the Women's Center in Raleigh; the other half will

go to the West Chatham Food Pantry in Siler City.

To donate via home pickup, people can fill out a Google Form at <https://forms.gle/Bo3Br2WvXFmSqPp57>. The form also has a complete list of accepted donations.

"They can set out their donations on their porch the night or the day before, or like in the morning, and we go and pick it up on Sundays and Wednesdays," Lowe said, "and so that's how we've gotten all of our donations so far."

Lowe and her team have also stationed drop-off boxes at schools and businesses around Chatham County — though, she added, most are in Siler City for now. They've placed a box at Jordan-Matthews and at CSSE's high school campus; they're also working to place one at Northwood.

They've stationed several collection boxes at Chatham Wellness & Counseling, Stillpoint Acupuncture and Carolina Dancing Gymnastics, and they're looking to contact several Pittsboro businesses about stationing several boxes in their stores, as well.

So far, Lowe told the News + Record that they've received about eight boxes' worth of donations loaded with pads, tampons, pregnancy tests and other miscellaneous hygiene products. Most donations came from Siler City via family friends, Nextdoor and other scheduled contactless home pickups.

To collect as many products as they can, Lowe said she and her team have been focusing on spreading the word about the drive — but it's been a bit harder than they'd anticipated. The national organization, Her Drive, doesn't allow local organizers to create their own websites or social media accounts to prevent confusion, so Lowe and her team have resorted to using their personal social media accounts.

"I think this program is definitely geared towards people that live in bigger cities," she said. "I've got quite a few posters that I'm going to hang up fairly soon, or fliers. I think like that kind of stuff would work a lot better in bigger cities, but we're trying our best. We're gonna make it work."

Their goal, Lowe said, is to help



This QR code will take you to the donation drive form to schedule contactless home pickups by holding your smartphone camera over the code.

at least 50 people in the area, and the donations they've received so far will at least help quite a few.

"We hope that we will be able to make somebody's month," she said, adding, "We understand that this won't be a huge thing, but as long as we can help one or two people, that's enough for us."

Reporter Victoria Johnson can be reached at victoria@chathamnr.com.



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ANOTHER VICTIM OF COVID-19

Once again, Spring Chicken Festival canceled

CN+R Staff Report

SILER CITY — The town’s 2021 version of the Spring Chicken Festival will — like the 2020 version before it — not take roost. Because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and out of concern for the safety of all festival participants and community members, and in response to directives from the state, the town of Siler City has decided to cancel the 2021 festival — originally scheduled for Saturday, May 1. “The decision to cancel the 2021 festival is out of an abundance of caution as the safety of all participants remains a top priority for the town of

Siler City,” said Jack Clelland, director of Siler City Parks and Recreation. While festival organizers explored alternative options for offering the event, the decision to cancel in 2021 was made due to the size of the event, the vast number of stakeholders involved, and the length of planning required to successfully implement this event. While future guidelines and restrictions are unknown, the town wants to ensure the festival remains a memorable, organized, and safe event for all involved for years to come. Vendors previously registered for the 2021 event will receive a full refund of their

registration fees and will be contacted in the upcoming weeks by staff. The 2022 event has been scheduled for Saturday, May 7, 2022, in downtown Siler City. The festival is anticipated to feature mechanical attractions, vendors, food, and live musical performances by The Embers featuring Craig Woolard and more. Mountaire Farms is the event’s sponsor. Officials from the Siler City Parks and Recreation Department are still encouraging residents to visit one of the town parks or attend special events or programs throughout the year. For more information, visit www.silercity.org or call 919-742-2699.



Want to build a rain garden? LCWS can help.

BY D. LARS DOLDER
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — Loves Creek Watershed Stewards, in partnership with environmentalists from N.C. State University, will host the first in a series of workshops on Saturday to help Siler City residents mitigate stormwater drainage issues and beautify their properties. Sarah Waickowski — a member of LCWS and a professional engineer and extension associate at N.C. State’s dept. of biological and agricultural engineering — along with N.C. State Area Specialized Agent Mitch Woodward, an expert on watersheds and water quality, will teach up to 30 attendees how to construct and maintain rain gardens.

“Basically, a rain garden is an infiltration area with native plants in it that works better than a patch of turf grass or a lawn,” Woodward said. The point is to introduce a section of land more capable of stormwater absorption than regular ground, thereby minimizing flood propensity. “We talk about the ‘Three S’s,’” Woodward said. “The key to stormwater is slow it down, spread it out and soak it in.” Whenever buildings are constructed, accompanying drainage systems are necessary to accommodate rain waters that can no longer soak into the ground beneath the structure’s footprint. In neighborhoods, Waickowski and Woodward said, that often means grading the land to direct excess water toward a retention pond. But rain gardens



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Mitch Woodward, a watershed and water quality expert at N.C. State, excavates a plot of land in Siler City for a rain garden.

offer a more effective solution by slowing the water’s spread, affording it time to disperse organically. The value of rain garden installation is hard to quantify, Waickowski says. On a single piece of land, it’s unlikely a rain garden will make an obvious and measurable difference in stormwater runoff, although it may prevent sediment displacement on properties especially prone to flooding. Taken cumulatively, though — if many Siler City residents were to install rain gardens — the town could see flooding decrease. “There’s a lot of flooding issues in Siler City,” Waickowski said. “These residential rain gardens will not stop the flooding into, say, Piggly Wiggly, but they will help. They’re a step in the right direction helping that flooding that’s occurring.” Siler City is especially susceptible to flooding

compared to most Chatham locations. Most of the town, including all of downtown, lies within Loves Creek Watershed, an 8-square-mile, 400-acre water system that drains into the Rocky River. Under heavy rains, it often induces floods across town. The problem is exacerbated by the watershed’s impairment. Much of the water’s natural flow is obstructed and widespread pollution worsens the issue. But Woodward admits most people will not go through the effort of rain garden construction and maintenance just to imperceptibly assist with the town’s flooding issues. For most, the incentive is beauty. “People care less about stormwater and more about plants,” he said. “So if you have a plant lover, like I think we’ll have on Saturday for the workshop, they’re very excited about this because instead of having this monoculture of

grasses, right now we can have some plants there that like wet feet, and flower and look like a native landscape.” If that sounds like you, what can you expect at the rain garden workshop? “Because of COVID, we’re going to abbreviate this,” Woodward said. Normally, workshops last four to six hours, but the program will be compressed into two hours with supplementary instruction offered online. “But what we’re going to focus on is the part that people really enjoy, which is plant installation,” Woodward said. “And also mulching.” The “hard part,” Waickowski said — excavating a plot to create a necessary “depression” in the land — was completed in advance on Monday. But she and Woodward will still teach how to identify the best rain garden site on a property, and how large it should be for an effective stormwater



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

On Saturday, Waickowski and Woodward will host a workshop, teaching attendees how to build a rain garden on this excavated site in Siler City.

‘People care less about stormwater and more about plants. So if you have a plant lover, like I think we’ll have on Saturday for the workshop, they’re very excited about this because instead of having this monoculture of grasses, right now we can have some plants there that like wet feet, and flower and look like a native landscape.’

MITCH WOODWARD, N.C. State Area Specialized Agent

cushion. “We’ll also talk about maintenance,” she said. “So, what you should expect in terms of how much time you’ll need to spend, and associated costs.” On average, rain gardens will be about 10 feet by 10 feet in size and cost between \$1 and \$2 per square foot to install, Woodward says, if one doesn’t hire out the labor. Later expenses include new plant life, fresh mulch and the time it takes to keep a rain garden healthy and functional. “So, it’s not for everyone,” Waickowski said. “But it can make a real difference, and they make for real neighborhood amenities.” If you’re interested in attending LCWS’ rain garden workshop, visit <https://cvent.me/qMr-zOL> to reserve your spot. The event will run from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Saturday. Event location will be shared after registration.

Reporter D. Lars Dolder can be reached at dldolder@chathamnr.com and on Twitter @dldolder.

SEARCH

Continued from page A1

cated they desire in the school system’s next superintendent,” a March 15 district statement said, adding that a survey captured that insight. “The school board meets March 22 to begin narrowing down candidates for interviews.” The board formally began its search Jan. 12, one day after Dr. Randy Bridges was sworn in as the district’s interim superintendent at the board’s mid-year retreat. Bridges, who has filled several interim roles as superintendent across N.C. since retiring from running school systems, will act as interim superintendent until the permanent superintendent begins — tentatively through the end of June. The search for a new superintendent began after former superintendent Dr. Derrick Jordan announced he’d accepted a position with the N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction. Jordan spent more than 12 years in Chatham as an educator and nearly eight as the district’s superintendent.

“I don’t think we can honor him enough for the things he’s done for our system,” BOE Chairperson Gary Leonard said of Jordan at the board’s Jan. 11 mid-year retreat. During that retreat, the board also heard a superintendent search overview, presented by Jim O’Rourke, an attorney with the North Carolina School Board Association. O’Rourke presented a draft timeline, which listed the March 8 application deadline, along with approving several other minorly edited search forms. The board also reviewed advertising options for the superintendent position, ultimately opting to pay for all the options O’Rourke presented, along with all the free options. Of those options, the board approved advertising through several organizations meant to advance and support educators of color, noting the “current climate” and its commitment to hiring diversity. After deciding to double all 30-day advertising periods to match the 60-day periods selected, the total advertising cost amounted to approximately \$3,500. During the board’s March 8

meeting, O’Rourke presented results from the superintendent search community and staff surveys and leadership profile materials for the board to consider. The district’s survey yielded 464 completed community surveys (11 in Spanish) and 133 staff surveys completed. The top five community priorities in a superintendent, based on the survey, asked for a superintendent who:

- Understands how to provide safe environments for students and staff
- Communicates well with people of all races and socioeconomic status
- Understands how to effectively advocate for resources needed to operate the schools
- Knows how to get staff, students, parents, and community to work together to help children learn
- Has strong human relations or “people skills”

The top five staff priorities for a new superintendent:

- Communicates well with people of all races and socioeconomic status
- Understands how to provide safe environments for students and staff

- Has strong human relations or “people skills”
- Knows how to get staff, students, parents, and community to work together to help children learn
- Communicates well with all community groups

After his presentation, O’Rourke asked the board to share any initial priorities it was thinking through in selecting a new superintendent. Board members echoed the priorities listed in the survey results, and Leonard emphasized looking for a good communicator, team builder and educational leader. “We’ve been fortunate,” Leonard said. “We had a wonderful superintendent in Dr. Jordan so that’s a good role model, and of course we followed with Dr. Bridges and he’s been awfully good too.” Leonard said a new superintendent should follow the desire of predecessors to help improve all schools throughout the county. “We’ve mentioned before — and you have to be careful with this one — but (we also want) a risk taker,” he said. “Someone who’s willing to make changes as they’re needed and they’re

not afraid to do that.” “Someone who is willing to take risks certainly, and understands education and innovation is critical in order to take us to the next level as a district,” Melissa Hlavac added. Board member Jane Allen Wilson emphasized the desire to see a “visionary” leader, as well as one with “genuine passion and excitement for kids learning.” David Hamm added that he’d like to see a superintendent with a vested interest in the community, adding that the priorities already mentioned should be given. “We want a superintendent that’s going to be out there. Beyond what the survey says, a real people person that lives and connects with the community,” Hamm said. “It’s going to take a very special person to do that and so that’s one angle I’m looking at we review applications... I’m looking for a person that’s going to live and breathe and be part of us for a long time.”

Reporter Hannah McClellan can be reached at hannah@chathamnr.com or on Twitter at @HannerMcClellan.

OBITUARIES

MARY ROCHELLE ATWATER



Mary “Rochelle” Atwater, daughter of the late Ben and Bertha Atwater of Chapel Hill, passed away on March 16, 2021, at Brookdale Chapel Hill Assisted Living.

Rochelle was born September 16, 1926, in Chatham County, graduated from Pittsboro High School and, afterwards, the secretarial school at Pittsboro High School. Following graduation, she worked at the BC Plant and Baldwins Department Store in Durham before following

her dream of moving to Washington, D.C. She spent most of her career there, employed by Watergate Developers of Washington, D.C., and International Developers Incorporated. Upon her retirement in 1995, she moved back to Chapel Hill. She was a member of Foundry Methodist Church of Washington, D.C., before transferring her membership back to Cedar Grove United Methodist Church. She was an avid Tar Heel fan, a member of The National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution and The National Society of Colonial Dames XVII Century.

Rochelle is survived by her nieces and nephews, Terry Hall (Richard) of Rougemont, N.C.; Eddie Kirk (Melva) of Durham, N.C.; David Atwater Jr. (Karen) of Durham, N.C.; and Sheila Bishop (Brian) of Newport News, Virginia; eight great nieces and nephews, their spouses, and children.

In addition to her parents, Rochelle was preceded in death by two siblings, Bynum Atwater Kirk and David Elbridge Atwater Sr.

A graveside service was held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 20, 2021, at Cedar Grove United Methodist Church, with Rev. Danny Berrier officiating.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to Cedar Grove United Methodist Church, 2791 Jones Ferry Road, Pittsboro, N.C. 27312.

The Atwater family is under the care of Walker’s Funeral Home of Chapel Hill.

the second daughter of Martin Luther and Elna McMillan



Efird. She was a charter member of Fellowship Baptist Church where she taught the Ladies and Children’s Sunday School for several years. She also volunteered at Grace Haven School. Moree was employed by Sprint Telephone Company (formerly Carolina & United), her first job out of high school until her retirement in 2000. After retirement, she volunteered at the ReachOut Crisis Pregnancy Center for Chatham and Lee counties, eventually becoming the

Client Services Director. She later volunteered with the Crisis Pregnancy Center of Alamance County. For many years she was involved with the N.C. Baptist Men and made many mission trips to volunteer in disaster relief. She enjoyed reading, and spending time with her grandchildren. In addition to her parents, she is preceded in death by her brother, Linuel Efird, and sister, Anna E. Wray.

She is survived by her children, Michael Poe of Carthage, Tonya Baker (Jerry) of Broadway, Kristy Harris (Chad) of Graham and Kevin Poe (Marsha) of Siler City; sisters, Donna E. Elmore (Harold) of Greensboro, Sandra E. Allen of Longview, Texas, Betty E. Johnson (Charlie) of Cary; sister-in-law, Dorothy Efird of Siler City; two “adopted” daughters, Renee Haugh and Rachel Cridland; grandchildren, Jerry Lee, Leighanna, Jessica, Tayler, Chloe and one great granddaughter, Niahley.

Moree Laid in Repose on Saturday, March 20, 2021, from 1-5 p.m. at Smith & Buckner Funeral Home, 230 North Second Ave., Siler City. A graveside service was held at 2 p.m. on Sunday, March 21, 2021, at Fellowship Baptist Church Cemetery, 120 Fellowship Church Rd., Siler City with Rev. Jason Golden and Rev. Brian Biggers officiating. The family requested that masks be worn during the service.

Memorials may be made to ReachOut Crisis Pregnancy Center of Lee County, 403 Carthage Street, Sanford, N.C. 27330 or Samaritan’s Purse, www.samaritanspurse.org or Gideons International, www.gideons.org.

Smith & Buckner is assisting the family.
Online condolences may be made at www.pughfuneral-home.com.

THELMA BINKLEY RIVES ESTES



Thelma Binkley Rives Estes, 88, of Goldston, passed away on Thursday, March 18, 2021, at UNC Hospice, Pittsboro.

Mrs. Estes was born in Chatham County on March 19, 1932, the daughter of Robert Binkley Sr. and Loney McDaniel Binkley. Thelma was a member of the Goldston Baptist Church, where she served on the flower committee. She enjoyed spending time outdoors, especially when she could be in her garden tending to

her flowers. She spent her working years at Fisher Hardware in Virginia, Quality Molding in Siler City and retired from the Courier Company in Sanford. In addition to her parents, Thelma is preceded in death by her first husband, David Ransom “Rank” Rives; second husband, Bill Estes; brothers, Robert Binkley Jr., Odell Binkley, Arvey Binkley, Earl Binkley; and sisters, Agnes Gilliland and Elsie Brigham.

She is survived by her sisters, Betty Jean Lindley of Knightdale, Camilla Gilliland of Goldston; brothers, Ashley “Possom” Binkley of Siler City, Wesley Binkley of Bear Creek, Steve Binkley of Graham, Joe Binkley of Asheboro, and Larry Binkley of Siler City; numerous nieces and nephews, and great-nieces and nephews.

Memorials may be made to the Alzheimer’s Association, Western Carolina Chapter, 4600 Park Rd., Suite 250, Charlotte, N.C. 28209, www.alz.org/northcarolina

Thelma Laid in repose on Friday, March 19, 2021, from 1 to 5 p.m. at Smith & Buckner Funeral Home, 230 North Second Ave., Siler City. The funeral was Saturday, March 20, 2021, at 2 p.m. at Goldston Baptist Church, 190 North Church Street, Goldston, with Rev. Bruce MacInnes officiating. Burial followed in Goldston Cemetery.

Smith & Buckner is assisting the Estes family.
Online condolences may be made at www.pughfuneral-home.com.

JOHNNY DARK



Johnny Van Dark was born on August 7, 1962, the only child of the late Sylbia Jean Dark and Percy “Sonny” Dark. Johnny was an intelligent kid with a voracious appetite for knowledge. He loved learning how things worked by tearing them apart and putting them back together again.

He could accomplish anything he set out to do, and if he couldn’t, he would keep trying until he found a way.

He served in the US Navy from 1982 to 1986, traveling the world and meeting all kinds of new people. Though he was proud of his service, like many veterans he always celebrated the day he left, vowing that he would never have another bad day. And he didn’t — not even when various companies he worked for left him in the dust, or when people tried to hoodwink him, or even when he was diagnosed with cancer on his only daughter’s birthday. He always fought to see the silver lining with a smile on his face and a mission to help others smile.

In 1992 he married the true love of his life, Carol Pearce Dark, with whom he hand-built a beautiful home and a successful trucking business with a single truck alongside raising their only daughter, Caitlyn Grace Dark. Through his own brand of strength, patience, and humility, Johnny provided for his family and worked to build professional relationships not just with business partners but with friends. But his true dedication was to his family and those he loved, working grueling 14-hour days but still always having a smile, a hug or a handshake, and a funny story about something that happened to him on the road.

Leaving behind a legacy of 30 years of being a loving husband, 23 years of being a wonderful father, and 58 years of being a beautiful, curious, and dedicated human being, Johnny passed away in his home surrounded by family on March 19, 2021. He is survived by his wife and daughter, Carol and Caitlyn Dark, and his father, Percy Dark.

A memorial visitation will be held Saturday, March 27, 2021 from 3-5 p.m. with a memorial service following at Smith & Buckner Funeral Home, 230 North Second Ave., Siler City.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the American Cancer Society Chatham Unit, 8300 Health Park - Suite 10, Raleigh, N.C. 27615.

Smith & Buckner is assisting the Dark family.
Online condolences may be made at www.pughfuneral-home.com

MARGARET LINDLEY ROGERS

Margaret Lindley Rogers, 75, of Siler City passed away on Saturday, March 20, 2021, at UNC Hospice, Pittsboro.

Mrs. Rogers was born in Chatham County on July 2, 1945, the daughter of Wade Coble and Treva Terry Lindley. Margaret was a member of Edward Hill Friends Meeting Church.

She was a loving and dedicated wife, who lived for her family.



She enjoyed cooking for her family and friends whenever she could. Margaret was a big fan of the Carolina Tar Heels. She liked to spend her free time doing yard work. Margaret was preceded in death by her parents.

She is survived by her husband of 59 years, John Harvey Rogers; son, Timothy N. Rogers of Siler City; sister, Donna McPherson and husband Bobby of Liberty; brother, George Lindley of Shallotte; half-sister, Jean Thomas of Silk Hope; and several

nieces and nephews.

A graveside service was held at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, March 23, 2021, at Edward Hill Friends Meeting Cemetery, 92 Ed Leonard Road, Bonlee with Josh Conrad officiating.

Memorials may be made to Edward Hill Friends Meeting Cemetery Fund, 92 Ed Leonard Road, Siler City, N.C. 27344.

Smith & Buckner is assisting the Rogers family.
Online condolences may be made at www.pughfuneral-home.com.

MOREE ELNITA EFIRD POE

Moree Elnita Efird Poe, 78, of Siler City, passed away on Thursday, March 18, 2021, at First Health Hospice in Pinehurst.

Moree was born in Guilford County on September 13, 1942,

RONALD PAUL FARRELL

Ronald Paul Farrell, age 70, of Apex, went home on Tuesday, March 16, 2021. He was a man of many talents and a friend to all who met him.

Ronald was born in Chatham County, N.C., on June 21, 1950, to the late George Frances Farrell and Ruby Byrd Farrell. He was also preceded in death by his brother, GR Farrell.

Surviving relatives include his wife, Teresa Roberson Farrell; son, Kevin Farrell and wife Beth of Cary; three sisters; Owanna Goodwin of Durham, Betty Baldwin of Apex, Sylvia McGhee and husband Pete of Chapel Hill; and sister-in-law, Barbara Farrell.

The family received friends Saturday, March 20, 2021, from 11 to 11:45 a.m. at Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church, 1288 Mt. Pisgah Church Road, Apex, N.C. The funeral service followed at 12 p.m. with Pastor Randy Umberger presiding. Burial followed in the church cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks for memorial contributions to be made in Ronald’s memory to Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church Cemetery Fund, 1288 Mount Pisgah Church Road, Apex, N.C. 27523.

Condolences may be made at www.donaldsonfunerals.com.
Donaldson Funeral Home & Crematory is honored to serve the Farrell family.

CHARLES EDWARD ‘BUCKY’ PHILLIPS

Charles Edward “Bucky” Phillips, 86, of Sanford, passed away Tuesday, March 16, 2021.

Funeral services were held at 11 a.m. Friday, March 19, 2021, at Cool Springs Baptist Church. Burial followed in the Church Cemetery.

He was born in Chatham County, a son of the late Robert Anderson Phillips and Eutha Hilliard Phillips. Bucky was a graduate of Goldston High School and a Veteran of the U.S. Army. He was owner and operator of Crowson & Phillips Exxon service station for 31 years. He was a member of Cool Springs Baptist Church where he served as a deacon, Sunday School director, usher; and served on numerous committees. Mr. Phillips volunteered with Highway to Healing and was a member of the Sanford Lions Club for more than 50 years. He was preceded in death by sisters, Edna Kate Durham, Frances Crowson, Bobbie Jean Atkins, Naomi Perry, and Ann Womack.

Surviving is his wife, Frances Rae Wilkie Phillips; children, Joy Phillips Thompson, David Anderson Phillips; and two grandchildren.

Memorial contributions can be made to Gulf Presbyterian Church, 1325 Gulf Road, Gulf, N.C. 27256; FirstHealth Hospice Foundation, 120 Applecross Road, Pinehurst, N.C. 28374; or to Clara McLean House, 120 Applecross Road, Pinehurst, N.C. 28374.

Online condolences may be made at www.rogerspickard.com.

HALFORD ‘PERRY’ THOMAS JR.

Halford “Perry” Thomas Jr., 53, of Lillington, passed away on Wednesday, March 17, 2021, at his home.

A graveside funeral service was conducted on Friday, March 19, 2021, at 2 p.m. at Leaflet Presbyterian Church Cemetery with Rev. David Priddy officiating.

He was born on April 5, 1967 in Lee County, son of Halford Thomas and Patsy Carson. He was preceded in death by his step-father, Bill Carson. Perry was a graduate of Western Harnett High School.

Surviving are his wife, Kirby Whitley Thomas of the home; his father, Halford Thomas of Broadway; his mother, Patsy Carson of Erwin; daughter, Tailor Strickland of Holly Springs; son, Halford Perry Thomas III of the home; step-son, Jesse Elgin of Newton Grove; sisters, Dottie Womack of Lillington, Millie Thomas of Broadway, Ginger Harrington of Sanford, Mary Jo Toler of Erwin; brother, Jason Carson of Greensboro; step-siblings, Dwight Carson of Lillington, Courtney May of Mt. Airy, Maryland, Brian Gillis of Broadway; and two grandchildren.

Online condolences can be made at www.smithfuneral-homebroadway.com.

JOSEPHINE (GILLIAM) TURNER

Ms. Josephine Turner, 96, of Sanford, passed away Thursday, March 18, 2021, at Sanford Health and Rehabilitation Center, Sanford, N.C.

Funeral service was held at 1 p.m. Tuesday, March 23, 2021, at Fair Promise AME Zion Church with burial following at St. Paul AME Zion Church.

CLEVELAND PALMER

Cleveland Palmer, 69, of Sanford, passed away on Thursday, March 18, 2021, at his residence.

The graveside service was held at 11 a.m. Wednesday, March 24, 2021, at Tempting Congregational Church Cemetery.

See **OBITUARIES**, page A12

SHOP
Local

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Greg Campbell

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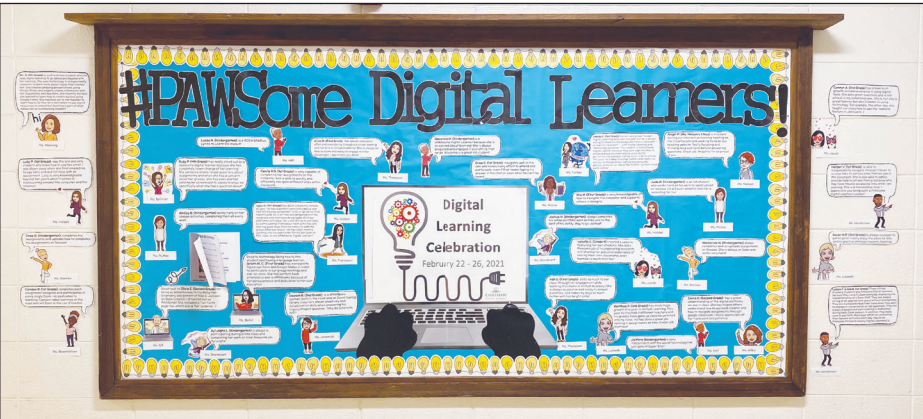
Over 50 years experience designing, lettering and erecting monuments in Siler City and surrounding area.
Opposite Smith & Buckner Funeral Home

CHURCH NEWS

HICKORY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

There will be an Easter Fest on from 3-6 p.m. on Saturday, April 3, at Hickory Mountain Baptist Church for children and adults. There will be

Easter festivities plus a cake walk, games, food, face painting, story time and music. Please join this event. The church is located at 1094 Mt. Vernon-Hickory Mountain Rd., Siler City.



Submitted photo

Teachers at Pittsboro Elementary School celebrated exemplary digital learners by creating a bulletin board praising students for things like making creative Google Slides presentations, or helping other students navigate digital platforms.

CCS digital learning celebration highlights new tools, technology

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN

News + Record Staff

Sharing science videos with students in the classroom and at home. Multi-step word problem activities in Zoom break-out rooms. A hands-free camera with a microphone to allow teachers to read aloud and easily display a book's pages for virtual reading clubs. Those are just a few of the activities teachers at Chatham County Schools have explored over the last year, thanks to tools discovered and invested in due to COVID-19 and remote learning. As in-person learning increases in Chatham and across the state, Emma Braaten, CCS' Executive Director for Technology and Digital Learning, said the district is excited to continue using such resources to continue engaging students. "What we're really hopeful of is that as students come back into the classroom, that we'll see a lot of those changes still being implemented with technology and digital learning for students," Braaten said.

CCS recently celebrated Digital Learning Day, an annual and national online celebration of digital education resources created by Alliance for Excellent Education (All4Ed) ten years ago. "Although current circumstances created by a global pandemic are undesirable, they offer district, school, and classroom leaders an opportunity to transform the policies and daily practices that guide teaching and learning," the website for Digital Learning Day says. "Through collaborative leadership, educators can redesign the school experience and deliver on the potential digital learning holds for creating a workforce that truly is future ready."

While the celebration was set for Feb. 25, at CCS, schools celebrated all week long — all part of an effort to recognize more district efforts and voices, Braaten said. Taking place as all students had the option of hybrid learning, the week especially highlighted efforts by teachers to engage students during the learning challenges presented by the pandemic. Events took place at both the district level and among individual schools — with recognition of teachers doing cool things digitally, professional development technology trainings and daily challenges on Twitter to highlight new activities and technologies in classrooms. "Our focus was to celebrate where our teach-

ers and our principals and students have come when it relates to digital learning and how much they've learned and grown over the last year, as we've been forced to be innovative and creative with these tools in our classrooms," Braaten said. "Our goal for the week was to recognize the growth that teachers have made in their digital learning digital teaching and learning skills." At CCS, elementary students began returning for in-person hybrid learning under Plan B on Oct. 19, with middle school students returning Dec. 7 and high schoolers on Feb. 1. Under that plan though, students who opt for in-person learning attend school twice a week, meaning the other three days are still virtual. Even as the county begins to phase in in-person learning under Plan A on April 12, digital learning skills will remain critical for teachers and students alike. Students will continue remote learning at least once a week for the mid-week planning day, and teachers will continue teaching students on completely virtual learning tracks. And with all the new digital tools gained, the potential to continue learning through digital platforms on snow days, sick days and vacations is more conceivable.

"Celebrating student and teacher success with digital learning after such a challenging year was a highlight from this experience for me," said Ashley Long, curriculum coach and digital-learning lead at Pittsboro Elementary School. At her school, they distributed things like power adapters, Bluetooth speakers, cord clips and organizers purchased by the district — "every teacher got something" — and administrators left thank you notes recognizing teachers for their digital teaching efforts. Teachers celebrated exemplary digital learners by creating a bulletin board praising those students for using platforms Jamboard and Google slides in creative ways, outstanding Zoom attendance and helping classmates navigate digital spaces. "The incredible amount of growth that teaching and learning remotely has required from all involved has not been easy," Long said, "so to take a week to look at the positive outcomes from the last year was important."

At Chatham Middle School, School Media Coordinator Theresa Joyner created a video to showcase engaging digital lessons, and prizes were given to teachers "caught" using digital re-

sources in a particularly interesting manner. "This year's Digital Celebration was received extremely well and almost every teacher was caught engaging students in digital lessons," Joyner said, adding that many students wanted to show off their newly acquired digital skills as well. "A highlight for me was walking into classrooms to see the amazing lessons that were taking place, and seeing the students fully engaged in their learning," she said. "This week revealed how focused CMS teachers are on facilitating learning for the students in a more remote way than ever before!"

While the past year has been difficult for everyone, Braaten said it's been exciting to see the potential technology has to enhance what students can do. Both the district and the state have also worked to increase access to technology for students and their families, emphasizing efforts to distribute laptops and hotspots to students without reliable internet access. Though CCS had pushed similar initiatives before this year, the dependence on the internet for remote learning further revealed the broadband divide many Chatham families faced. Last fall, the district said it had distributed nearly 1,000 hotspots since the spring, and was in the final stages of securing 42 bus hotspot locations. While broadband remains an issue in Chatham, parents and teachers previously told the News + Record access to hotspots and laptops was a crucial part of helping their students succeed.

Braaten hopes to see those efforts, along with innovation from teachers, continue past remote learning. "Teachers shared things last week that I had never thought of before," she said following the week-long celebration. "And so it was great to see their innovation and creativity — really pushing their limits with what they're able to do." She added: "A lot of times, we end up giving attention to the people who are those pioneers or doing groundbreaking things, or they're the first person to try this. "Our focus was on celebrating everybody, and where they started and where they are now," she said. "Everybody has grown in the past year with what they're able to do with digital teaching and learning."

Reporter Hannah McClellan can be reached at hannah@chathamnr.com or on Twitter at @HannerMcClellan.

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo

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13 Tavern seats	68 Brain product	118 Footways	9 Feel great excitement from	54 Ana who won the 2008 French Open	92 French for "nothing"
19 Nuptial promise	69 Eden woman	119 First-year athlete	10 Basking box	55 Cat with no tail	97 Arch used in croquet
20 Popular typeface	70 It's south of San Diego, California	120 Use a wand reader on	11 Baseballer's turn to hit	56 "Tell — was dreaming!"	98 Tightened up
21 Possesses, in the Bible	74 "Nunnery" has three	121 Jim Croce hit that's apt for eight answers in this puzzle	12 Poetry devices	57 Glacier or floe	100 QB's error: Abbr.
22 Is unable to	75 Tee off	122 Mago's title	13 Wound mark	62 Maximum or minimum: Abbr.	101 Area for mobile campers
23 "Cocoon" co-star	77 Political activist — X	123 Concluded	14 Soft powder	63 Steely Dan album with the hits "Peg" and "Deacon Blues"	102 Johnson who directed "Star Wars: The Last Jedi"
25 Red gem	78 "No, No, —" (old musical)	124 Current flow measure	15 Big Mac components	65 NFL's Cowboys, on scoreboards	103 Pets' jinglers
26 Singer Keys	80 "Find — and fill it"	125 Comic	16 As if scripted	66 German "a"	104 Golfer Tom who won the 1996 British Open
27 Talk formally	82 Of a maritime mil. branch	126 Arctic	17 Longest French river	67 Hitachi rival	105 Be beaten by
28 "Never on Sunday" star	83 Lofy poem	127 Gun, in slang	18 Step	71 Arm bone	106 James — Garfield
31 Suckerfishes	86 These, to Gabriela	128 Mago's title	19 Spike of film	72 Living in — (oblivious to current events)	107 Actress Watts
34 Tickle pink	87 Swede transplanted to the U.S., say	129 Concluded	20 Lauder of perfumery	73 "Dedicated to the — Love"	108 Rain units
35 — -do-well (idle sort)	93 In position	130 "It was — and stormy night ..."	21 Prefix with -dextrous	76 Swampy area	110 PC shortcut
36 She voiced Elsa in "Frozen"	94 Tycoon	131 — -cone (cold treat)	22 Certain Slav	77 PC key	111 With full force
39 Pigpens	95 Olympic code for Quito's country	DOWN	23 Pop singer	78 6/6/44	115 Satyric look
42 "Desperate Housewives" character	96 Roman 2,051	1 Figure skater	24 Greek Z	84 Accure	116 TV host Kelly
43 Dickens' "Tiny" lad	97 Earp of Tombstone	It's —	40 Small hotel	85 Austen novel	117 Psalm starter
46 Conclude	99 "Desk Set" actress	2 Having a smell	41 Small vortex		122 Suffix with pay or boff
47 By means of		3 French for "my friend"	44 Shared, as interests		123 Road goo
50 18th Constitution addition		4 Shutterbug's shooter	45 Phil of skiing		
57 Tehran dweller		5 Metal deposit	47 Bitter feud		
58 Restroom, informally			48 Determined to do		
			49 Map books		

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93																				

Solution for the puzzle in last week's edition.

A	B	B	R		D	E	A	R	M	E		T	A	R	O		C	O	B	B
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I	N	S	T	A	L		F	A	R		E	E	R	I	E		S	O	N	S
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			A	S	S	A	Y			P	O	L	A	R	C	A	P	L	E	T
A	C	O	R	N				C	E	E			I	V	E			A	A	H
T	R	I	P	L	E	T	P	L	A	N	N	E	R	S		S	U	N	A	L
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Arthritis Foundation



Arthritis Exercise Classes (Virtual)



ZOOM thru Chatham Council on Aging
10 am
Mondays & Thursdays
April 5—June 3 (no class on 5/31)

For best results, attend at least 13 of the 16 sessions

Register at: ChathamCOA.Org/COA-Virtual-Activities/
OR
(<https://tinyurl.com/COA-Arthritis>)

For more information:
Jackie.Green@ChathamCOA.Org or 919-542-4512, ext. 227

OBITUARIES

Continued from page A10

HELEN TICKLE WESTER

Helen Tickle Wester, 72, of Sanford, passed away on Monday, March 22, 2021, at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center. The funeral service was held at Olivia Presbyterian Church on Wednesday, March 24, 2021, at 11 a.m. with Rev. George Walton and Rev. Bob Johnson officiating. Burial followed in the church cemetery. The family received friends following the service in the fellowship hall. She was born in Asheboro, on May 3, 1948, to the late James Rogers Tickle and Mary Magdalene Nichols. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her brothers, Carl Tickle, Calvin Tickle and Earl Tickle. Helen was a member of Olivia Presbyterian Church. She worked with Coty. Helen is survived by her husband, James Wester; son, Scott Wester of Sanford; daughter, Ann Godwin of Moncure; four grandchildren; two step-grandchildren and two step-great-grandchildren. Condolences may be made at www.bridgescameronfuneral-home.com.

WILLIAM FREDERICK BRYANT

William Frederick Bryant, 72, of Asheboro, passed away Monday, March 15, 2021, at Ashton Health and Rehabilitation in McLeansville. Services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home, Sanford.

JOSEPH TURNER

Mr. Joseph Turner, 96, of Sanford, passed away Thursday, March 18, 2021, at Sanford Health and Rehabilitation Center. Services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home.

SHIRLEY ANN PARKER

Ms. Shirley Ann Parker, 66, of Sanford, passed away on Wednesday, March 17, 2021, at UN.C. Hospice Home, Pittsboro.

Services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home, Sanford.

MRS. DELOISE LOUVENIA (MARSH) BARBER

Mrs. Deloise Louvenia Barber, 92, of Siler City, passed away on Saturday, March 20, 2021, at The Laurels of Chatham in Pittsboro. Services being provided by Knotts and Son.

HILDA HART BERRY

Hilda Hart Berry, 65, of Broadway, passed away on Thursday, March 18, 2021, at her home. A graveside service was held at 2 p.m. on Monday, March 22, 2021, at Chatham Memorial Park with Rev. Troy Brown officiating. Mrs. Berry was born in Chatham County on April 8, 1955, the daughter of Herbert and Willie Bivens Hart. In addition to her parents, Hilda was preceded in death by her husband, Franklin Wayne Berry. She is survived by her sons, Sherman Lynn Berry, George Tracey Berry, and Bryan Keith Berry, all of Broadway; sister, Joanna Woods of AL; and brothers, George Hart and Herman Hart, both of Goldston, Raymond Hart of Bonlee; and two grandchildren. Online condolences may be made at www.pughfuneral-home.com.

BEULAH MAE OAKLEY DICKENS

Beulah Mae Oakley Dickens, 85, of Sanford, passed away on Tuesday, March 16, 2021, at her home. No services are planned. She was born in Harnett County to the late Robert Madison Oakley and Mary Elizabeth Angel Oakley. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Maurice “Bud” Dickens. She graduated from Boone Trail School in 1955. Beulah worked at Carnes for many years. She is survived by her sons, Tommy Dickens and Allen Dickens, both of Sanford; a daughter, Fran Dickens of South Carolina; sisters, Ruth Oakley Cox, Jeanette Oakley and Martha Shepherd, all of Sanford; and two grandchildren. Arrangements are by Bridges-Cameron Funeral Home. Condolences may be made at www.bridgescameronfuneral-home.com.

YOLANDA DENISE HENRY

Yolanda Denise Henry, 63, passed away on Sunday, March 14, 2021, at Central Carolina Hospital.

Private services will be held.

DAVID LEE OLDHAM

David Lee Oldham, 73, of Sanford, passed away on Friday, March 19, 2021, at his home. No services are planned at this time. He was born in Lee County to the late L.P. “Jimmy” and Mildred Johnson Oldham. David served his country in the U.S. Army. He retired from Sanford Finishing. David is survived by his wife, Patricia Yow Oldham; son, Dusty Lee Oldham of Sanford; daughter, Lisa Jackson of Kentucky; brother, Larry Oldham of Sanford; sisters, Jackie Hall, Brenda Garner, and Linda Thomas, all of Sanford, Judy Wine of Maryland; and three grandchildren. Arrangements are by Bridges-Cameron Funeral Home. Condolences may be made at www.bridgescameronfuneral-home.com.

JERRY LEE PARRISH

Jerry Lee Parrish, 73, of Broadway, passed away on Saturday, March 20, 2021, at his home. Private family services will be held at a later date. He was born on March 27, 1947, son of Richard Parrish Sr. and Helen Spain Parrish. He was preceded in death by his parents and his brother, Donald Parrish. Surviving is his wife of 40 years, Rita Whitton Parrish of the home; daughters, Denise Parrish of Browns Mills, N.J., Michele Bogdanowicz of Shamong, N.J. and Patricia Parrish of Burlington, N.J.; son, Michael Parrish of Pennsylvania; brothers, Richard Parrish Jr. of Nebraska and John Parrish of Sanford; 10 grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. Online condolences can be made at www.smithfuneral-homebroadway.com Arrangements are by the Smith Funeral Home of Broadway.

WILLIAM JUNIOR CLEGG

William J. Clegg, 83, passed away on Sunday, March 14, 2021. Funeral service was held at 2 p.m. Thursday, March 18, 2021, at Knotts Funeral Home in Sanford.

MARTHA ‘LOIS’ SMITH PHILLIPS

Martha “Lois” Smith Phillips, 89, passed away on Sunday, March 21, 2021, at her home. The funeral service was held on Wednesday, March 24, 2021, at 2 p.m. at Fall Creek Baptist Church with Rev. George Townsend and Pastor Edwin Moore presiding. Attendees were asked to wear a mask and practice social distancing. Lois was born in Chatham County on June 5, 1931, to Cora Lou Powers Smith and Isaac Talmadge Smith. She was a member of Fall Creek Baptist Church, where she played the piano and organ for 70 years. She worked at A.J. Schneierson and Sons. In addition to her parents, Lois was preceded in death by her husband of 70 years, Wade Hernan Phillips; son, Gerry Phillips; three grandchildren, and sisters, Dorothy Smith Beal and Mary Lou Smith Hayes. She is survived by her daughter, Cheryl Phillips Baldwin of Goldston; two granddaughters; six great-grandchildren; and a sister, Carol Purvis of Bennett. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the The Crystal L. Phillips Scholarship Fund, c/o Chatham Central High School, 14950 Hwy 902, Bear Creek, N.C. 27207 Condolences may be offered online at www.joycebrady-chapel.com.

PHYLLIS MARCHELL LUCAS

Phyllis Marchell Lucas, 57, of Fayetteville passed away on March 14, 2021, at Autumn Care of Fayetteville. Wake and service were held from 2 to 5 p.m. Friday, March 19, 2021, at Knotts Funeral Home, Sanford.

IDA PAMELA (HEADEN) REEVES

Ida Pamela (Headen) Reeves, 65, of Pittsboro passed away on Friday, March 12, 2021, at UN.C. Hospitals in Chapel Hill.

Funeral service was held at 4 p.m. Saturday, March 20, 2021, at Knotts Funeral Home.

EUGENE BRYAN MARLEY JR.

Eugene Bryan Marley Jr., 75, of Siler City, passed away on Saturday, March 20, 2021, at UN.C. Hospitals, Chapel Hill. The funeral services were held at 2 p.m. Wednesday, March 24, 2021, at Faith Baptist Church with Rev. Bobby Shutt officiating. Burial followed at Oakwood Cemetery. Mr. Marley was born in Chatham County on January 18, 1946, the son of Eugene B. Marley Sr. and Dorothy Richey Marley. Eugene was an Air Force Veteran serving in Vietnam. He was a member of Faith Baptist Church in Siler City, and was a member of the Ruritan Club in Silk Hope. In addition to his parents, Eugene is preceded in death by his son, David Eugene McCarty; and brother, Dan Riffle. He is survived by his wife of 23 years, Barbara Northern Marley; daughters, Cara Marley-Woozley, Virginia Werner of Mishawaka, Indiana; Cyndi Presnell of Lakeville, Indiana; Rita Reed of South Bend, Indiana; Edie Walker of Niles, Michigan; Laura Schaffert of Niles, Michigan; and Ellen Grattenthaler of Elkhart, Indiana; sons, Chad Marley of New Port Richey, Florida; John McCarty of Elkhart, Indiana; and Phillip Northern of South Bend, Indiana; sisters, Carol Miller of Mishawaka, Indiana; and Mary Plasterer of Elkhart, Indiana; 39 grandchildren, 56 great grandchildren, and 18 great-great grandchildren. Smith & Buckner is assisting the Marley family. Online condolences may be made at www.pughfuneral-home.com.

JEROME LAWRENCE CLARK

Jerome Clark, 77, of Broadway passed away on Tuesday, March 9, 2021, at his residence. Funeral services were held at 2 p.m. Saturday, March 20, 2021, at Knotts Funeral Home in Sanford.

United Way of Chatham County announces 2021 issue-based grant

<p>CN+R Staff Report</p> <p>PITTSBORO — Because of the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and the fact that the needs of the Chatham County community continue to rise, the United Way of Chatham County is providing additional funding opportunities to nonprofits which tackle housing/homelessness and education, in the form of its 2021 Issue-Based Grant.</p> <p>The United Way will hand-select Chatham County nonprofit programs which address utility assistance and housing and homelessness prevention, including domestic violence emergency housing needs. Nonprofits with programs which address summer slide prevention, tutoring and e-learning and/or internet accessibility for children will also be invited to apply for funding. Nonprofit agencies will be contacted by United Way at the end of March, and the funding application will open mid-April.</p>	<p>The 2021 Issue-Based Grant is something United Way staff has wanted to offer for some time, according to Katie Childs, the organization’s executive director. After reviewing the mid-year reports and COVID-19 challenges the United Way’s partner agencies submitted in January, reviewing 211 call data, and speaking with Chatham County community leaders, the United Way’s local board of directors selected housing/homelessness and education as the two issues for this grant to address.</p> <p>“Providing resources to local human service nonprofits to address Chatham’s most pressing needs is at the core of the United Way mission,” Childs said. “Ensuring that our community members have the necessities to thrive in Chatham County is a responsibility we don’t take lightly. As we begin to see the light at the end of this pandemic’s tunnel we realize that the damage of the last year is far-reaching and long-lasting. As a</p>	<p>result, we are focusing a portion of our resources on the most critical needs to continue moving the needle for change in Chatham.”</p> <p>The additional funding for the issue-based grant was created following a successful 2020 campaign, unexpected revenue, as well as reductions to the United Way budget. The United Way of Chatham County’s operating budget percentage is currently 11.28% of its revenues — the lowest in its history of operation. United Way hopes to offer additional grant opportunities in the future if funding allows.</p> <p>United Way will be contacting Chatham County businesses for matching donations to increase the amount of available funding for the grants. Please contact Shelley Smith, outreach coordinator, if you are interested in partnering with United Way on this funding opportunity at 919-542-1110 or shelley@unitedwayof-chathamcounty.org.</p>
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United Way of Chatham County

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NOTICE OF MEETING OF THE CHATHAM COUNTY BOARD OF EQUALIZATION AND REVIEW

Pursuant to N.C.G.S. 105-322 the Chatham County Board of Equalization and Review will meet as required by law.

PURPOSE OF MEETING
To hear upon request, any and all taxpayers who own or control taxable property assessed for taxation in Chatham County, with respect to the valuation of such property or the property of others, to schedule hearings, and to fulfill duties and responsibilities required by law.

TIME OF MEETINGS
The Board will convene Tuesday, April 6, 2021 at 10:00 AM. The meeting will be held at 1192 US Hwy 64 West Business, Pittsboro NC (Chatham County Agriculture & Conference Center). The Board will be open to receive appeals of value and will adjourn on May 6, 2021 at 5:00 PM. At that time the Board adjourns, no additional appeals can be accepted by the Board of Equalization and Review for tax year 2021.

Those individuals with written requests for hearings received prior to 5:00 PM on May 6, 2021, the advertised date for adjournment of the Board of Equalization and Review, will be notified when and where to appear for their individual hearings.

In the event of earlier or later adjournment, notice to that effect will be published in this newspaper.

The schedule for the hearing of appeals timely filed will be posted at the Office of the Assessor, serving as Clerk to the Board of Equalization and Review.

All requests for hearings should be made in writing to:

Tax Administrator
PO Box 908
Pittsboro, NC 27312
Telephone (919) 545-8404

Cooper lifts more pandemic gathering restrictions for individuals, businesses

BY VICTORIA JOHNSON & HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

North Carolina will ease several mass gathering restrictions, Gov. Roy Cooper announced Tuesday, thanks to North Carolina's improving COVID-19 metrics and accelerating vaccine rollout. The executive order will go into effect Friday, March 26 at 5 p.m.

"North Carolina has done the work to slow the spread of this virus and get people vaccinated, and I'm grateful for the efforts of people across the state," Cooper said. "This pandemic is not over yet. We're only able to keep the virus in check while we ease restrictions if people act responsibly and follow safety protocols."

Under the order, indoor gathering limits may increase to 50 people from 25; outdoors, 100 people may now gather together, up from 50. Cooper also lifted restrictions limiting the 11 p.m. curfew for on-sight sale and service of alcohol on bars, restaurants and others.

Museums, retail businesses and personal care businesses among others may open at full capacity indoors and outdoors, under the order. Other businesses, including restaurants, breweries and gyms, may now open indoors up to 75% and at full capacity outdoors.

Likewise, a third category of venues — which includes bars, movie theaters and conference spaces — can now open up to half capacity indoors and out. The order also specifies that outdoor movie theaters and gaming facilities may operate at up to 75% capacity.

The state's mask mandate remains in effect. Businesses must still uphold the state's six-foot physical distancing requirement and carry

More about the executive order: ALLOWED TO OPEN INDOORS AND OUT AT FULL CAPACITY:

- Museums and aquariums
- Retail businesses
- Salons, personal care and grooming businesses, tattoo parlors

ALLOWED TO OPEN INDOORS UP TO 75% AND OUTDOORS AT FULL CAPACITY:

- Restaurants
- Breweries, wineries, and distilleries
- Recreation (bowling, skating, rock climbing)
- Fitness and physical activity facilities (gyms, yoga studios, fitness centers)
- Pools
- Amusement Parks

ALLOWED TO OPEN INDOORS AND OUT AT HALF CAPACITY:

- Bars
- Movie theaters (outdoors up to 75%)
- Gaming facilities (outdoors up to 75%)
- Meeting, reception, and conference spaces
- Lounges (including tobacco) and nightclubs
- Auditoriums, arenas, and other venues for live performances
- Sports arenas and fields (includes professional, collegiate, and amateur)

out other safety protocols when opening up to more people. This order is set to expire April 30 at 5 p.m., if not extended. As in the past, this order exempts religious gatherings, funerals, weddings and "other activities constituting the exercise of First Amendment rights."

"These are significant changes, but they can be done safely," Cooper said. "We've said all along that the science and data would be our guide in this dimmer switch approach, and they show we can do this."

Cooper also pointed to the increase of in-person learning across the state as another cause for optimism in continuing to ease COVID-19 restrictions. Earlier

this month, he signed a school reopening bill that requires all districts to offer daily in-person learning to K-5 students and hybrid or daily in-person learning to middle and high schoolers.

As restrictions ease, Cooper urged North Carolinians to continue doing their part to curb the spread of the virus by wearing a mask and social distancing.

"For us to truly turn the corner and leave this pandemic behind, we have to stay strong to the very end," he said. "We have to continue keeping ourselves and each other safe. That way we'll be able to move forward once and for all into a stronger and healthier future."

PITTSBORO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Board talks land use, high school graduation and upcoming events

BY D. LARS DOLDER
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — The board of commissioners spent most of its regular meeting Monday evaluating land use requests — zoning amendments and a final plat approval — in addition to fielding citizen comments and looking ahead to important future business.

Town Planner and Interim Planning Director Theresa Thompson commanded the floor through most of the commissioners' session, presenting requests from local developers and town staff.

Graham Scott Oldham, owner of about 13 acres on U.S. Hwy 15-501, is hoping to build a new shopping center on land currently zoned for residential and agricultural use. Oldham requested the board rezone his property for highway commercial conditional zoning. The land currently hosts Poultry Villa Landscaping and Supplies.

"This building and any other buildings will be demolished before the shopping center is built," Thompson said.

The land is not within town limits, and might under different circumstances violate the terms of commercial zoning, she added. But its location adjacent to other commercial properties, and immediately north of the Mosaic development, makes it a fitting candidate for a shopping center.

"It is located near town limits, providing practicality, easy access and reduced travel times to the community," Thompson said.

The commissioners generally approved of the project's scope, and agreed to forward the request to the town's planning board for consideration.

Commissioners Michael Fiocco and John Bonitz, however, expressed concern with the shopping center's current mock-up.

"My biggest concern is that the layout just has a sea of parking lot as we enter Pittsboro," Fiocco said. "I'd ask the developer and designer to consider that."

Thompson next requested the board amend three zoning ordinances to better comply with the town's future Unified Development Ordinance, which must be approved by mid-summer. The first amendment — adjusting requirements for "multiple means of vehicular access" — underwent serious commissioner scrutiny and revision.

All developments must provide at least two separate access points if they meet any of five criteria. A full list of adjustments to the ordinance will be available on the town's website, but the biggest change is as follows:

"Where two apparatus roads are required, they shall be placed a distance apart equal to no less than on-half of the length of the maximum overall diagonal dimension of the property or area to be served, measured in a straight line between accesses."

At least one road must be constructed to Town of Pittsboro and NCDOT roadway standards.

The requirements will be generally binding, but may be "modified and/or waived" by the board of commissioners after approval from the "Fire Code Official."

"For the benefit of the audience," Town Manager Chris Kennedy said, "the definition of the fire code official is the fire chief or other designated authority charged with the administration and enforcement of the code or a duly authorized representative."

In her final presentation, Thompson requested the board grant final plat approval to Chatham Park Investors for a new subdivision comprised of 42 single-family detached lots. The commissioners unanimously approved.

Citizen comments

Heather Johnson of Chatham Business Services attended Monday's meeting to request the board approve a pandemic-measure to commemorate high school senior graduations.

"I've been talking with the board by email about a high school senior sign project," she said.

She and some partners organized a similar event last year for "high school seniors who found themselves without a traditional year or graduation."

Signs commending seniors and acknowledging their accomplishments lined East Street — a pandemic substitute for an in-person graduation ceremony. Johnson requested the board permit her to launch a similar campaign for the class of 2021 to begin on May 1.

"Last year I remember being at several places across the state that did similar things," Mayor Jim Nass said. "... It was really a good thing to see wherever they were; it really worked out well."

Other commissioners seconded his approval and the board officialized its consensus to support the effort. A formal motion and vote were not required.

The commissioners were unsure whether town ordinance or NCDOT regulation might prohibit such a display. They requested Kennedy further investigate the projects logistics and report back.

Looking ahead

The board of commissioners have several important discussions scheduled in coming weeks. Interested residents can attend commissioner meetings via Zoom. Meeting links are posted on the town's website at pittsboronc.gov.

• Audit report and tax reveals
"We'll have a couple of interesting topics at our April 12 commissioner meeting," Kennedy said, "that will easily draw the interest of the public."

The first is Pittsboro's annual audit. "For those who may recall," Kennedy said, "we usually have the audit much earlier in the year if not in the previous year."

Yearly audit reports are typically due by Oct. 31 of the preceding year and available for town review shortly after. But pandemic setbacks delayed the town by several months.

Chatham County representatives are also expected to attend the April 12 meeting to present findings from the recent tax revaluation. Pittsboro residents will receive notices of property revaluations starting at the end of this week.

"So, anybody who has any questions can certainly listen in that evening," Kennedy said, "and you'll have a Pittsboro-centric conversation about the reval, and where the values are trending towards for the next few years."

• Budget retreat

The board will host its annual budget retreat starting at 9 a.m. on Sat. April 17.

"It will be in person for the board," Kennedy said, "but virtual for those who wish to listen in."

Budget retreats are public meetings and must be accessible for interested viewers. A Zoom link will be posted on the town's website.

• Budget hearings

Following Pittsboro's budget retreat, the board of commissioners and town staff will host budget hearings before the public. The first is scheduled for May 10.

"The budget will be open for public inspection," Kennedy said, "... to allow those who want to dig in, make suggestions, or make any other comments."

A second hearing is scheduled for May 24.

"If all goes well," Kennedy said, the commissioners should be able to adopt the town's budget at its regular meeting on May 24.

"A lot of things coming up on the docket," Kennedy said, "both on the business meetings and outside of it, but we look forward to having those occur and keep us moving along."

Reporter D. Lars Dolder can be reached at dldolder@chathamnr.com and on Twitter @dldolder.

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WASHINGTON 4, JORDAN-MATTHEWS 2

Jets eliminated in second round on road against Washington

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — The Jets' awe-inspiring year officially came to an anti-climatic end over the weekend.

A season that featured plenty of postponements and unforeseen circumstances culminated in a messy second round of the NCHSAA 2A men's soccer playoffs on Saturday, where the Jordan-Matthews Jets were downed on the road by the Washington Pam Pack, 4-2, being eliminated from the postseason and finishing the year with an 11-2 overall record and a PAC 7 conference championship.

The game was originally scheduled to be played on Thursday at Riverside High School, but due to inclement weather — something Jordan-Matthews has been all too familiar with this season — it was pushed to Friday night. Then, poor field conditions at Washington moved the game



Jordan-Matthews' Zander Ocampo (7) rushes to get the ball in the net as Northeastern's goalkeeper, Christian Wolfen, falls on it during the Jets' 2-0 victory over the Eagles in the first round of the NCHSAA 2A men's soccer playoffs last Tuesday. While Ocampo wouldn't score here, he gave his team a two-goal lead after a penalty kick in the first half.

back to Saturday at 4 p.m. at P.S. Jones Middle School. Jets' head coach Paul Cuadros said he wasn't aware of the potential change until it had

already been made. "Washington was able to convince the state to move this game to a middle school in Washington and those condi-

tions were not good," Cuadros said. "They had already secured permission to do this before consulting us. That did not favor our style of game."

After the two and a half hour trip to Washington, the field the Jets found at P.S. Jones was, according to Cuadros, smaller than a typical high school field and had grass that hadn't been freshly mowed.

It wasn't suited for the way Jordan-Matthews hoped to play.

"We were playing against two opponents on Saturday: the first opponent was Washington, the soccer team, and the second was the conditions and travel that we had to do," Cuadros said. "The ball just moved slowly and that was not conducive to our style of possessive play and moving the ball around."

In the first half, the Pam Pack had the wind to their back, allowing them to play exactly the style they game-planned for — kicking the ball

into the air and using the wind to their advantage rather than keeping the ball on the ground.

This helped Washington get out to an early 2-0 lead, but the Jets battled back.

Jordan-Matthews sophomore Zander Ocampo scored a goal off of an assist from Alexis Ibarra, who split the defenders and delivered a nice centering pass for Ocampo to set up the score.

Later in the half, however, with the game at 2-1, the Jets had an opportunity for a penalty kick on a handball call in the box. But the officials convened and determined it should be a non-call.

"We were looking to equalize and we would have gotten that penalty kick," Cuadros said. "We didn't prevail on that call and that would have changed the tone of the game. It wasn't our day."

Washington added a goal before halftime to make it 3-1.

See **JETS**, page B2

The Madness of March

I feel sorry for anyone who doesn't watch college basketball.



VICTOR HENSLEY
Sports Editor

Every year around this time, that same thought creeps into my mind. As fun as the Super Bowl is, with all of its advertising hilarity, halftime theatrics and on-field excitement, it just doesn't compare. As thrilling as the Summer Olympics is — I'm not much for the winter version — with its participants from nearly every nation, extravagant opening and closing ceremonies and wide range of off-the-wall events, it just doesn't compare.

The same goes for the FIFA World Cup, MLB World Series, NBA Finals, Stanley Cup Final, Wimbledon and The Masters. To me, they just don't compare.

March Madness is king, queen, prince, princess, jester, knight — and any other medieval term you can come up with — of the international sports landscape. And you can't convince me otherwise.

Last Thursday, I woke up to a worrisome thought, my heart skipping a beat as my eyes adjusted to the morning sunlight: the NCAA Tournament starts today — and I forgot to fill out my bracket.

Brackets are a staple of March Madness.

Everyone reading this has likely filled one out at some point in their lives. Maybe it was for an office pool where you chipped in \$5 to potentially win a pot of \$100, or a friendly competition to see who could have the most accurate bracket out of a group of your buddies.

There are endless possibilities when it comes to filling out a bracket.

If you're an expert at college basketball, you can carefully fill it out with the knowledge you have of the teams in the tournament.

Or, if you're not, fill it out by coin flipping each matchup: heads for Florida, tails for Virginia Tech, and so on.

Or fill it out by picking the schools with the best mascots.

Or the best uniforms.

Or the most seven-footers.

Or the best engineering programs.

Or the highest graduation rate.

See **MADNESS**, page B5

After travel teams' early success, Siler City FC planning for fall youth leagues this year



Siler City Futbol Club's U17 men's soccer team poses for a team photo during the Southern Soccer Boys Showcase at Truist Park in Bermuda Run, N.C. The club won the Gold Division after posting a 3-0 record in its first tournament under the Siler City FC crest.

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — Local soccer is kicking off in Siler City.

Siler City Futbol Club — a non-profit soccer club aiming to "create an inclusive soccer community through opportunities in Siler City," according to its website — has officially had its first two travel teams take the pitch.

The under-17 men's team competed in the Southern Soccer Boys Showcase

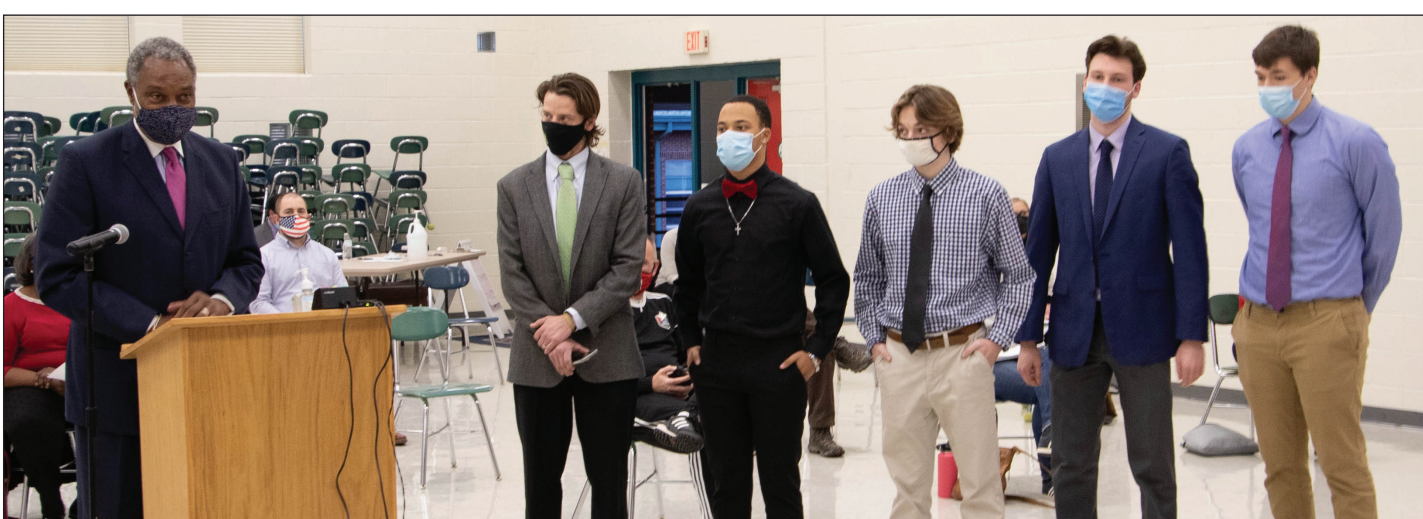
from Feb. 26-28, coming in first place in the Gold Division with a 3-0 record (wins of 3-1, 7-4 and 6-1), while the under-15 men's team just finished up competition in the Durham Futsal League, where they finished second in their division for the season.

"That was really successful, just getting the guys playing and getting the name out there," said Siler City FC's interim president Chad Morgan. "And 90% of the players are from Siler City or the surrounding area and they've been

together for a while. ... I told those guys, 'Y'all are kind of carrying the flag for us. We want kids to look up to you. This is what we want our kids to strive for.'"

The U17 and U15 men's teams were already well-established teams in the Chatham Soccer League that ended up being "left out" and their teams were going to dissolve, according to Morgan. That's when Siler City FC came in, scooped them up, got the teams regis-

See **SOCCER**, page B4



Recognizing the runners-up

Dr. Randy Bridges (left), the interim superintendent of Chatham County Schools, presents representatives of the Northwood High School varsity basketball team during the March 8 meeting of the Chatham County Board of Education at Horton Middle School. Next to Bridges are (left to right) Northwood coach Matt Brown, along with Northwood seniors Troy Arnold, Colby Burleson, Tucker Morgan and Aidan McLandsborough. Northwood played for the 3A state championship March 6, losing to Weddington High School, 56-47.

Submitted photo

NORTH ROWAN 56, CHATHAM CENTRAL 8

In return from COVID-19 pause, Chatham Central trounced by visiting North Rowan

BY MITCHELL NORTHAM
News + Record
Correspondent

BEAR CREEK — Malachi Moore swallowed the handoff, then plunged into the gut of the defense, desperate to find the end zone. The Chatham Central High School junior fought and stumbled his way through a gaggle of defenders.

When the play was finished, he glanced up and found a referee with both arms raised high, signaling a touchdown.

Moore's third-quarter scoring dive was an impressive display of grit and athleticism, and a highlight for the Chatham Central Bears, who hadn't played a football game in more than two weeks due to a team pause related to COVID-19.

Unfortunately — on Friday night against the North Rowan Cavaliers — Moore's score was one of the few times when the masked Chatham Central fans got the chance to throw their full weight behind cheering for their team.

On a surprisingly frigid March evening at Chatham Central's football stadium, the Bears were thoroughly worked by the visiting Cavaliers, 56-8.

"We have to learn from it, for one," Bears' head coach Sherman Howze said. "Just a game where you really just look at the film and get rid of it. And then get ready for next week. ... I'm still



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Chatham Central senior wide receiver Tyler Oldham holds the ball behind him after catching a pass from senior quarterback Michael Moore for a two-point conversion in his team's 56-8 loss to North Rowan on Friday.

satisfied with my kids, man. They didn't give up. We had some bad breakdowns, a lot of missed tackles and everything. But we're still young. I'm not mad. Not upset about anything. It is what it is, right?"

Perhaps the biggest difference in the game was that the Cavaliers were equipped with the services of Zay Davis and the Bears were not. After fumbling the ball near the goal-line in the first quarter, Davis shifted his play into extra gear for North Rowan.

On the Bears' ensuing possession, they seemed to be piecing together the makings of a decent drive. They had marched 22 yards in four plays. But on the fifth play, senior quarterback Michael Moore dropped back and fired. Instead of finding a fellow Bear, the

ball landed in the mitts of an opportunistic Davis, who picked off the pass and sprinted 44 yards down the sideline before waltzing into the endzone untouched.

"My coach always says, 'When you mess up, you mess up 100%, and you keep going.' So, I kept going," Davis said. "Couple of plays later, I caught me one and seen straight green field. ... I fumbled, so I owed my team that touchdown."

Davis would intercept another pass in the third quarter, leaping up — with his baggy long white sleeves covered in mud — to catch a jump ball lofted up by Moore. On offense, the senior Cavalier finished the day with 128 rushing yards and two touchdowns on 12 carries. Davis' first rushing score of the day came late

in the second quarter, and North Rowan entered halftime with a 34-0 lead.

The game seemed out of reach at that point, but Chatham Central came out in the third quarter with some newfound focus. The Bears put together a 10-play, 72-yard drive that was assisted by a pair of penalties from the Cavaliers. Malachi Moore's score capped the drive off, and Michael Moore found Tyler Oldham with a short pass for a successful two-point conversion.

That segment of the game film is one that Howze won't be throwing out.

"We blocked. We caught the ball. We did what we were supposed to do," Howze said. "And if we sustained drives like that throughout the game, there's a different

score on that board."

Malachi Moore finished the day with 31 yards of offense on 10 touches. Michael Moore ran for 17 yards and completed 14 of 27 passes for 102 yards. Parker Crowley was his leading receiver, hauling in five catches for 47 yards.

While momentum seemed to briefly be on the Bears' side after that score, the Cavaliers struck back quickly, covering 64 yards in just five plays to add to their scoring total. Davis' second interception ended the next Bears' drive, and then he scored on a three-yard dash and converted a two-point conversion for good measure, putting the Cavaliers up 50-8.

On the final play of the game, North Rowan cornerback Zion Milton iced it by picking off Moore and running it back 62 yards for an additional Cavaliers' touchdown.

In all, North Rowan's defense came up with three turnovers. On offense, the Cavaliers rushed for 235 yards and quarterback Kyree Sims passed for 111 yards and two touchdowns. His lone interception was picked off by Central's Haisten Paige in the second quarter.

The defeat stung for Howze, but he doesn't want the feeling to linger. He seemed eager to get his team refocused and ready for its next challenge.

Of Chatham Central's

26-man roster, 10 of those players are freshmen or sophomores, and Howze says that several others are just playing organized football for the first time. That made the two-week lay-off due to COVID-19 sting a bit more, because the Bears had the chance to build some real chemistry and cohesion after beating Albemarle to open the season.

"It was tough, because you lose time. And plus, you lose that momentum from that first win. You know, that momentum could have took us a long way," Howze said. "But you know, I'm happy with the results. I mean, I'm not happy with what happened tonight. But the better team just showed up. I think we prepared. We had a good week of practice, but it just didn't show on the field."

Now, with a 1-1 record, Chatham Central has just three games left, but still has a chance to go 4-1 and make the postseason.

The road to that reality begins Friday, March 26, at South Stanly.

"We got to learn how to tackle, you know, the proper way. They know how to tackle, but it's just getting those hats to the ball," Howze said. "South Stanly is a really good team, very coached-up, very disciplined. Where we fit in, is how we play. We can't dictate how they play, but we can dictate the outcome of the game."

JETS

Continued from page B1

Jordan-Matthews was able to settle down and get back into a rhythm in the second half, but the most the Jets could muster was a goal by senior Cristian Escobedo with five minutes remaining in the game, making it 4-2.

"We started creeping up on them, but it was just too little, too late to come back from that deficit," Cuadros said. "We didn't get the lucky breaks that came normally for us."

Despite the end of the year coming sooner than the Jets hoped, a conference title and an 11-2 record, including a final loss to an unbeaten Washington squad in less-than-ideal field conditions, was something to be proud of, he said.

"After the game, I told the guys that we had actually done some wonderful things for this season and overcome a lot of obstacles, and I think everybody has who's played high school athletics this season," Cuadros said. "We're extremely grateful that we were able to get a season in and that we played this beautiful game."

From March 16: J-M 2, Northeastern 0

Jets shut down Northeastern's offense, advance to second round

(Report from last Tuesday's first-round game)

Fort Knox may be the most impenetrable place on earth, but the Northeastern Eagles might say it's whatever goal Jordan-Matthews is defending.

The Jets defeated 12th-seeded Northeastern, 2-0, on the rain-soaked pitch at Jordan-Matthews on Tuesday to advance to the second round of the NCHSAA 2A men's soccer playoffs.

The Eagles, traveling more than 200 miles for their first-round date with the Jets, ran into

a defense playing at an unbelievably high level. And they simply weren't ready for it.

Not only did Jordan-Matthews finish with its fourth clean sheet of the season — allowing zero goals — but it also didn't give Northeastern many chances.

In an entire 80-minute game, the Eagles mustered just three shots — one in the first half, two in the second — and converted on none of them. To put it into perspective, they averaged one shot every 26 minutes of game time.

It's nearly impossible to win if you aren't able to put the ball in the direction of the net. You'd need a miracle to do so, which Northeastern simply didn't have.

"I think I only counted two or three shots," said Paul Cuadros, Jordan-Matthews' head coach. "The old saying is, 'A good offense is a good defense,' so our offense definitely put them on their heels and took them out of their game in terms of their attack."

In comparison, the Jets took around 26 shots on the night, averaging one every three minutes. A drastic difference between their offense and the Eagles'.

There were three main reasons why Jordan-Matthews was able to hold Northeastern to such a limited number of goal-scoring opportunities: offensive control, midfield dominance and superb goalkeeping.

Offensively, the Jets were on another level. They controlled the ball for most of the game and gave themselves a plethora of good looks to score, but Northeastern junior goalkeeper Christian Wolfen was impressive, making save after save to prevent Jordan-Matthews from running up the score.

And if it wasn't Wolfen making a save, it was either a teammate of his jumping in at the last second to block a shot or a Jordan-Matthews attempt sailing over the goal or ricocheting off the post.

"We had plenty of

chances to go up 3-0, 4-0, we weren't able to do that," Cuadros said. "That had a great keeper. He saved them a few times, so I've got to give it up to them for that. ... Sometimes you can shoot, shoot, shoot and it just doesn't go your way."

In the first half, the Jets opened the scoring fairly quickly as Cristian Escobedo, Jordan-Matthews' goal-scoring aficionado, received a fantastic centering pass from Alexis Ibarra — who fought off three defenders to the left side of the goal — and booted it to the right portion of the net to give his team a 1-0 lead.

Despite numerous opportunities, that was the only non-penalty kick goal the Jets scored all night.

Later in the half, in the 35th minute following a penalty on Northeastern, Zander Ocampo lined up for a penalty kick and sent it to the upper left corner for an easy

goal, putting the Jets up 2-0 and wrapping up the scoring for the remainder of the contest.

From there, with Jordan-Matthews having a comfortable lead, it was the defense's job to maintain that lead and solidify the win. And that they did.

The Jets made it nearly impossible for the Eagles to get within proximity of the goal.

There were many times where Northeastern would begin marching up the pitch with the ball and attempt to settle into its offense, but sloppy play and constant pressure from J-M's midfielders would often result in an intercepted pass, a tackle that knocked the ball free or a battle for possession that the Jets would often win.

And if the Eagles got by the midfielders, it was the Jets' defenders — including the tag-team of Cristian Cruz and Irvin Campos Cervantes — who would block attempt-

ed shots or do any of the aforementioned things to get them off of their game and cause them to lose possession.

In the rare moments when Northeastern fired off a shot, it was Jordan-Matthews goalkeeper Ricardo Rocha who saved the day, making a couple of great saves on an unpredictable, slippery ball to maintain the shutout.

That includes a free kick by the Eagles in the 55th minute that was rocketed to the upper right corner of the net by Rigoberto Molina, but Rocha barely got a hand on it and sent it flying above the goal.

"The last shot they had here on the upper right corner, that was a goal," Cuadros said. "And Ricardo put a hand on it and that was an amazing save on his part because that should've been a goal."

Jordan-Matthews'

defensive showcase provides another reason why this is a dangerous team moving forward. The number of shots the Jets take paired with their defense playing at a high level is a recipe for success. Some of those shots are bound to go in.

"This is a young team and for the juniors on this team who have gone up from J.V. to varsity this year, they're feeling that intensity," Cuadros said. "There are a lot of expectations on them. The community has expectations on them, I do too, and they want to fulfill them, so they have to get over those jitters. And I think they did that tonight, I think they realized tonight that they can hang with people."

Reporter Victor Hensley can be reached at vhensley@chathamnc.com or on Twitter at @Frezeal33.

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CHATHAM COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

Pollard girls, Horton boys crowned 2020-21 middle school basketball champions



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

The Pollard women's basketball team poses for photos with the trophy after their 50-40 win over Horton in the Chatham County girls' championship game on Saturday morning. This is the Mustangs' fifth straight undefeated season leading to a championship.

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
News + Record Staff

MONCURE — On one side, there was excitement and relief from finishing the inevitable.

On the other, pure joy from finally getting over the hump.

The Chatham County Middle School Basketball Tournament concluded on Saturday morning at Moncure Elementary School. The finals took place a day later than scheduled after the boys' semifinals were postponed due to inclement weather on Thursday.

The Margaret B. Pollard Mustangs were crowned the girls champions after a comfortable victory over the Horton Wildcats, 50-40, earning them their fifth straight championship trophy.

The Wildcats, however, were crowned the boys champions after a nail-biting win over the J.S. Waters Cubs, 51-46, that featured plenty of heart-pounding moments,

resulting in the Wildcats' first-ever middle school boys basketball title.

The championship games — one a blowout, the other a barnburner — could not have been more different. A fitting tribute to the stark difference between the championship history of the Pollard girls and Horton boys.

The dynasty reigns

Historically speaking, Pollard fits somewhere between Bud Wilkinson's Oklahoma Sooners football team (47 straight wins from 1953-57) and John Wooden's UCLA Bruins men's basketball team (88 straight wins from 1971-75).

Few programs are as dominant at their sport as the Pollard girls are at theirs.

After their 50-40 title game win over rival Horton on Saturday, the Mustangs claimed their fifth straight Chatham County championship, but in an even more impressive feat, they also completed their fifth

straight undefeated season, finishing 9-0.

Over the last five years, they have a combined 77-0 record.

A local dynasty. "We believe in building a program," said Pollard Head Coach Harold Baldwin. "That's what we started out doing, just building a program so we can win every year."

Saturday's game was just another piece of evidence to prove how successful that program is.

At the start of the third quarter, the Mustangs found themselves leading by just three in a close contest.

Six minutes later, Pollard was in full control, cruising to another championship.

Horton scored the first two buckets of the third period, including one in the paint by Sheylah Glover to give the Wildcats a 25-24 lead. From there, however, it would be all downhill for Horton as Pollard's core players began to heat up.



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Horton's men's basketball team poses for photos with the trophy after their nail-biting 51-46 win over J.S. Waters in the Chatham County boys' championship game on Saturday morning. This is the Wildcats' first official tournament championship.

A trio of Mustangs — Sidney Ballard, Gabby White and Natalia Whitaker — were excellent for Pollard all day, but at no point better than they were as soon as Horton took the lead.

Ballard scored immediately after to put her team back up by one, followed by a Horton turnover and a White jumper from the free-throw line to make it 28-25. A few moments later, White stole the ball, sped past everyone into the lane and drew contact on an and-one layup. She missed the free throw, but Ballard scored on a putback on the offensive rebound. In the blink of an eye, the Mustangs led 32-25.

White's knack for finding the ball on defense, along with her confidence and speed, made her dangerous for the Wildcats. If she saw the opportunity and a hole in the lane, she would shoot the gap as quickly as she could and gracefully lay it in.

Ballard, on the other hand, made a name for herself in

the trenches. Standing at 6-foot-2, she had three blocks in the third quarter alone and refused to allow anything positive to happen in the paint for Horton. Her ability to rebound — especially on the offensive end — was crucial to the Mustangs' success down the stretch.

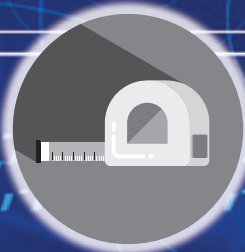
By the end of the third quarter, Pollard had a 44-27 lead, outscoring Horton 20-6 in the period.

Baldwin credits the explosive quarter to a halftime switch in the team's defense.

"We went from zone to man-to-man because they were hitting some outside shots, I can give them that," said Baldwin. "They can shoot. (Horton head coach Wanda Blair's) got an excellent team. But we switched from zone to man and once we did that, we turned the pressure up, that's what did it. That's why we ended up blowing it out in the third quarter,

See **CHAMPS**, page B5

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CHATHAM COUNTY ATHLETICS RUNDOWN

This week's schedule and last week's results

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
News + Record Staff

This week features a variety of sports (women's soccer and softball, men's tennis and football) from all five Chatham high schools as the next batch of spring sports begin to get off of the ground. While the men's soccer and men's/women's lacrosse playoffs continue across the state, each of the Chatham County teams which qualified were eliminated in the first or second rounds last week. Here are this week's schedules and last week's results.

THIS WEEK

Wednesday, March 24

Soccer: Jordan-Matthews women at Trinity, 6 p.m.
Soccer: Northwood women at Orange, 6:30 p.m.
Soccer: Woods Charter women at Raleigh Charter, 3:30 p.m.
Tennis: Chatham Central men at South Stanly, 4:30 p.m.
Tennis: Chatham Charter men vs. Research Triangle, 4 p.m.
Tennis: Northwood men vs. Orange, 4:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 25

Softball: Chatham Central women at South Stanly, 5:30 p.m.
Softball: Jordan-Matthews women at Trinity, 6 p.m.
Softball: Northwood women at Orange, 5:30 p.m.

Friday, March 26

Football: Chatham Central at South Stanly, 6:30 p.m.

Football: Northwood vs. Orange, 6:30 p.m.
Saturday, March 27
Football: Jordan-Matthews at Southwest Randolph, 5 p.m.

LAST WEEK

Monday, March 15

Lacrosse: The Northwood men earned a lopsided victory over the 10th-seeded Swansboro Pirates in the first round of the NCHSAA men's 1A/2A/3A lacrosse playoffs, 17-8, to advance to the second round. The close score doesn't truly reflect the Chargers' dominance, which came primarily in the second quarter as they scored five goals in a three-minute span, including two possessions that took 10 seconds and eight seconds, respectively. At the end of the game, Northwood pulled its starters, allowing the Pirates to score four goals — half their goal total — in the final period, making the game seem tighter than it actually was. Leading Northwood were senior attackers Jake Mann (6 goals, 2 assists) and Terry Moore (4 goals, 1 assist).
Soccer: The Jordan-Matthews women lost their season opener to the Lee County Yellow Jackets, 2-0, to drop to 0-1 on the year.
Soccer: The Northwood women won their season opener against the Cedar Ridge Fighting Red Wolves, 5-2, during a senior night performance.
Soccer: The Woods Charter

women earned a dominating road win over the Cornerstone Charter Academy Cardinals, 5-1.
Tennis: The Chatham Charter men fell to the Clover Garden Grizzlies, 9-0.
Tennis: The Jordan-Matthews men fell in their season-opener to the Carrboro Jaguars, 8-1.
Tennis: The Northwood men lost a close match to the Cedar Ridge Fighting Red Wolves, 5-4, to open their season 0-1.

Tuesday, March 16

Soccer: The Jordan-Matthews men handled the 12th-seeded Northeastern Eagles at home, 2-0, to advance to the second round of the NCHSAA 2A men's soccer playoffs. The Jets played a masterful defensive game, only allowing three shots by the Eagles and producing a clean sheet. Leading Jordan-Matthews were Cristian Escobedo and Zander Ocampo, each with one goal. (See game report in this edition.)

Wednesday, March 17

Lacrosse: The Northwood men lost a close game to the second-seeded Orange Panthers, 10-9, in the second round of the NCHSAA 1A/2A/3A men's lacrosse playoffs, eliminating them from the postseason. The Chargers ended the year at 6-5 with a loss in the Sweet 16.
Soccer: The Woods Charter women earned a commanding 4-0 home win over the Clover Garden Grizzlies to improve their record to 2-0 on the

season.
Soccer: The Woods Charter men suffered a narrow loss to the fifth-seeded Gray Stone Day Knights, 3-2, in the first round of the NCHSAA 1A men's soccer playoffs, eliminating them from the postseason. The Wolves ended the year at 5-4 with a Round of 32 loss.
Softball: The Northwood women won an offensive battle, 17-16, over the Cedar Ridge Fighting Red Wolves in 8 innings, fighting off a furious Cedar Ridge comeback in their season-opener.
Tennis: The Chatham Charter men lost a road match against the Cornerstone Charter Academy Cardinals, 6-3. Winning for the Knights were junior Collin Semrad (singles; 7-5, 6-2), sophomore Cedric Schwartz (singles; 6-6 (3-7), 6-3, 0-0 (10-5)) and freshman Colton Todd and Semrad (doubles; 8-6). Chatham Charter is now 0-3 on the season.
Tennis: The Jordan-Matthews men lost a lopsided match to Randleman, 5-1. The Jets are now 0-2 on the season.

Thursday, March 18

All athletic events were postponed due to inclement weather.

Friday, March 19

Football: Chatham Central played its first game in nearly three weeks, losing a rough one to the North Rowan Cavaliers, 56-8. Bears' QB Michael Moore completed 14 of 27 passes for 102 yards and three interceptions, and also

ran for 17 yards. Chatham Central RB Malachi Moore scored the lone touchdown of the night for the Bears on a short run in the third quarter, capped off by a Tyler Oldham pass from Michael Moore for the two-point conversion, but at 34-8, it was much too late to mount any sort of comeback. Chatham Central is now 1-1 on the season. (See game report in this edition.)
Football: Jordan-Matthews dropped a close road game to the Trinity Bulldogs, 19-12. The Jets remain winless on the season at 0-4.
Football: Northwood lost its first game of the season to the Southern Durham Spartans, 33-23, after leading by 14 in the second half. The Chargers are now 2-1 on the season.

Saturday, March 20

Soccer: The Jordan-Matthews men lost to the unbeaten, fourth-seeded Washington Pam Pack, 4-2, on the road in the second round of the NCHSAA 2A men's soccer playoffs. Washington scored just after halftime to put itself up 4-1, and while the Jets scored again with five minutes left, there wasn't enough time to spark a miracle. Jordan-Matthews ends the year with an 11-2 record and the final PAC 7 conference championship trophy. (See game report in this edition.)

Reporter Victor Hensley can be reached at vhensley@chathamnr.com or on Twitter at @Frezeal33.

SOCCER

Continued from page B1


tered under U.S. Soccer and put them under the club's umbrella.
However, the club's travel soccer opportunities start and end there.
Since the first story about Siler City FC appeared in the News + Record on Jan. 6, Morgan and the club's 10 other board members have been working diligently to solidify their plans for its future, choosing to bypass the possibility of a spring season in hopes to gear up for recreational leagues in the fall of this year.
Siler City FC's focus will be on co-ed rec leagues for ages 4-13 this fall, with more competitive — and travel — opportunities coming in the future for ages 10 and older.
“The comments (from parents) have been, ‘Why aren't you playing in the spring?’” said Morgan. “We want to jump in, but at the same time, we want to make sure we're organized and doing this right and that we have something that's worth putting out on the field and worth the parents wanting to be a part of.”
Morgan cited other organizations that “have rushed and failed” to create soccer leagues in Siler City as a reason to take things slower and shoot for fall instead of spring. He mentioned he wants to take the time to build relationships within the community before recreation play begins.
As a non-profit, Siler City FC continues to look for ways to help fund the club ahead of its inaugural season by applying for grants, working to initiate partnerships with local businesses for sponsorship opportunities and encouraging donations from the community.

“We are a non-profit, really sticking to bringing affordable soccer to Siler City and with that, it's going to require costs,” said Morgan. “We're not doing this to become a business, we're doing this to get opportunities for kids in the community that really have very limited opportunities.”
Siler City — deemed “Soccer City” on the club's website — is an area rich with passion and talent for soccer. Yet, there are few chances for the city's youth to play organized soccer in their own backyard.
Siler City FC was created with the idea that kids shouldn't have to travel to the other side of Chatham County — or any other counties — to practice and play the sport they love. Morgan and the other board members had a vision for a soccer organization that gave Siler City “something to be proud of,” so they brought it to life.
In addition to the business side of the club, Siler City FC plans to reach out to schools in the area to partner with and secure spots to host practices and games this fall. That's next on the agenda.
“Right now, many of our kids are having to play outside of the county, so one thing this is going to address immediately is for kids and families to be able to play in-county, at their home,” said Paul Cuadros, Jordan-Matthews men's soccer head coach and Siler City FC board member. “That's really significant because of travel, for one thing, and the ability for parents to go see their kids play and be able to host games in their community.”
Morgan hopes Siler City FC will be able to host a “come and see event” for interested families at Bray Park in June, where they'll be able to learn all about the club and what it has to offer.
In an attempt to reflect its mission of affordability, registration for

the club's youth leagues will also begin at the kickoff event in June, with fees amounting to \$70 for registration with an extra \$20 tacked on for first-time players as a uniform fee. The plan would be for players to keep their uniforms for use in multiple seasons, hence the one-time payment.
Play is scheduled to start in August.
In comparison, Chatham Soccer League's fees range from \$115 to \$135 per player, except for its U4 team, which costs \$30.
For Morgan, the success of Siler City FC will truly be a community effort, including keeping it afloat financially through local means and parents donating their time to be volunteer coaches, fundraisers or behind-the-scenes helpers.
“It's going to take the community to make this successful,” Morgan said. “That's why it's going to be important for us to get out and start sharing our message and sharing our vision with the community, with business owners, with individuals, to get them on board.”
His pitch to parents who are thinking about getting their kids involved in soccer?
“This is really open to everybody, soccer is for everybody,” Morgan said. “You don't have to be a certain size, you don't have to have a certain skill set, because you're going to learn the skill sets. ... We just want to give our kids opportunities, see where this can take them and have fun.”

Reporter Victor Hensley can be reached at vhensley@chathamnr.com or on Twitter at @Frezeal33.





Chatham COA Events & Announcements

March 25th – March 31st

Thursday, March 25th

- [Chair Yoga with Liz](#) at 10:00 AM 📶
- [Tech Café Training with Conor](#) at 11:15 AM 📶
- [Tai Chi for Arthritis](#) at 3:00 PM 📶

Friday, March 26th

- [Strong & Fit with Jackie](#) at 9:00 AM 📶
- [Weekly Call with Director, Dennis Streets](#) at 10:15 AM 📞

Monday, March 29th


- [Chair Yoga with Liz](#) at 10:00 AM 📶
- [Bingo with Joe](#) at 11:15 AM 📶
- [Tai Chi for Arthritis](#) at 3:00 PM 📶


Tuesday, March 30th

- [Strong & Fit with Jackie](#) at 9:00 AM 📶
- [Virtual Health & Wellness Expo: The Medicare Annual Wellness Visit & Evidence-Based Preventative Services](#) at 11:15 AM 📶


Wednesday, March 31st

- [Veterans' Update w/David Kennedy, Chatham County Veterans Service Officer](#) at 11:15 AM 📶
- [Short Stories with Chris](#) at 12:30 PM 📞

**On Zoom**

**On Conference Line: 727-731-8717**


For more information or to register for these programs, visit our website:
<https://chathamcouncilonaging.org/coa-virtual-activities/>



Virtual VITA Income Tax Preparation Assistance

Virtual VITA is coming! NO APPOINTMENTS. Pick up your information packet at the Eastern or Western Chatham Senior Center in the VITA box, 24/7.

Drop-off your tax documents for processing from February 9th through April 6th. Complete info packet before dropping off your tax documents at the Eastern Chatham Senior Center in Pittsboro on Tuesdays 1-6 PM, Thursdays 8:30 AM-2 PM or on Saturday March 27th from 11 AM - 3 PM. **Call 919-542-4512 for more info.**



Join the Trivia Hunt & Win!

Each week the COA will offer a trivia question in the *Chatham News + Record*. Find the correct answer in the paper and enter to win a \$25 VISA gift card in the COA's monthly trivia hunt contest drawing. Look in **Section A** for this week's question.

The Chatham COA is Here for You!

For more information on our ongoing programs & services visit our website at chathamcoa.org or call our centers, Monday-Friday, 8 am - 5 pm.

Eastern Chatham Senior Center
365 NC-87 N
Pittsboro, NC 27312
919-542-4512

Western Chatham Senior Center
112 Village Lake Road
Siler City, NC 27344
919-742-3975

Eureka!

You found the answer!

A: Pittsboro. Tourists would come from the coast to escape the heat.

To enter the COA's monthly drawing for a \$25 Visa Gift Card, call the COA at 919-542-4512, extension 223 and follow the prompts on the voicemail.
February's winner will be drawn from eligible entries provided by 3/2/2021. The February winner will be announced in a March issue of the Chatham News + Record. One entry per household, per week. Employees of the COA and their dependents not eligible.

CHAMPS

Continued from page B3

we had to change some stuff.”

In the fourth, Whitaker — a quick, tenacious ballhandler — came out shining, scoring a layup, getting a steal and hitting a jumper to open up the quarter.

However, it was one of the last plays the starters would be in the game that truly showed Pollard’s talent, skill and dominance.

As Horton brought the ball up the court, White stole the ball and knocked it toward the right corner of the Wildcats’ goal. As the ball was sailing out of bounds, White jumped toward the sideline, grabbed the ball and threw it with one hand halfway down the court, where Whitaker was running in stride. She took the ball on a fast break and laid it in.

White’s vision — finding Whitaker down the court — and Whitaker’s basketball intelligence (knowing to look for the pass) were on full display there, putting the Mustangs up 50-27 and sealing the deal.

Shortly after, Baldwin took out his starters and put in his bench with around three minutes left in the game, leading to the 13-point fourth-quarter surge by Horton that featured

a few inbound steals and easy buckets. But it was much too late.

White led the team in scoring with 18 points, followed by Whitaker with 16 points and Ballard with 14 points. As a trio, they scored 48 of the team’s 50 points on the day.

For Horton, Neah Henry led the Wildcats with 15 points.

That third quarter solidified the Pollard girls as the Chatham champions, a title they’ve protected for most of the last decade. Even in a sports year impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, the Mustangs’ success in women’s basketball remains constant.

“It’s come from hard work from day one,” said Baldwin. “You’ve got to buy into the system, you’ve got to buy into our system. Once you buy into our system and everybody turns around and works hard and puts in team effort, that’s what does it. ... When they learn that system that I’m teaching, that’s when we’re able to win these games. And I hope we keep winning.”

First time for everything

The first one is always the sweetest.

A fist pump. A look to the sky with arms spread wide. A pair of hands covering his face.

The emotions were visible on the face of Horton boys basketball head coach Kenneth Scurlock from the moment the final buzzer sounded and the results became official on Saturday.

Excitement. Relief.

At last, his Wildcats are the Chatham County champions.

“We’ve been here six times and this is the first one I’ve won today,” said Scurlock. “I had a little AAU program and these guys had been with me a while from that. They’ve sort of just been grooming together, working for this day and it finally happened.”

The win over the J.S. Waters Cubs capped off an undefeated (8-0) season for the Wildcats, ending with the championship trophy.

While the game never truly felt in doubt for Horton, it probably should have.

After leading by as many as nine in the first half, the Wildcats found themselves down by one with less than a minute left in the third quarter, the Cubs’ first lead.

Just before the buzzer sounded, however, Horton’s Chad Graves, who scored 11 points for the Wildcats on Saturday, got a put-back attempt to go off of an offensive rebound, reclaiming a 36-35 lead at the end of the third.

The fourth quarter was a back-and-forth period between the two teams, scoring one after the other as Horton fought to fend off J.S. Waters.

With the game tied at 38 and a little over four minutes to play, Horton’s Antoine Brewington drilled a right corner three-pointer to put his team up 41-38 and seemingly give them the breathing room they needed.

But soon after, J.S. Waters’ Luke Gaines hit a baseline jumper in transition to put the Cubs within one.

Gaines and Reid Albright continually posed problems for Horton throughout the game. Gaines, a smaller guard, was essentially the Cubs’ version of Horton’s Hayes Burleson. Both can shoot extremely well and, even if they’re missing shots, they aren’t afraid to keep shooting until they get back on track.

Albright, the Cubs’ leading scorer on the day with 19 points, is a bigger and versatile forward, getting it done from both close and long range.

Despite the challenges those players created, the Wildcats always seemed to have an answer when J.S. Waters came close to taking the lead.

Graves might make a great effort for a bucket in the paint. Isaiah Blair might drive into

the lane for a score. Burleson might knock down a shot from outside.

Time and time again, Horton would get close to losing its lead, then someone would immediately provide a spark, reignite the team and allow them to pull away again.

“We practice (close-game scenarios),” said Scurlock. “I try to put them in game-like situations before we get to the game, that way when it happens, you don’t panic.”

With 29.4 seconds left in the game, J.S. Waters’ Aiden Johnson grabbed an offensive rebound and put it back up, scoring to cut the deficit to one, 47-46.

But both Burleson and Blair with ice in their veins, knocked down pairs of free throws to lock-in the 51-46 victory and the school’s first-ever Chatham County boys basketball championship.

It took six title game appearances, but the Wildcats finally made it over the mountain that’s stood in their way for years.

“They trusted each other,” said Scurlock. “They believed in each other and they felt like if they worked together, they could do it.”

Reporter Victor Hensley can be reached at vhensley@cha-

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This Community ROCKS!

Abundance NC is matching folks in need during this Covid-19 period with volunteers and locals that have time and resources. Here is a recap of what **YOU** have accomplished since the pandemic started:



To DONATE:



For help or to help:



- Approximately 100 able + generous community members have bought & delivered groceries and paid utility bills directly for about 100 families in need, sometimes repeatedly. ~\$20,000
- Abundance NC has raised \$16,000 and paid \$11,000 worth of utility bills.
- You have avoided evictions several times by pooling in money to cover unpaid rent due to lack of work or reduced hours due to the pandemic.
- You have avoided disconnection of utilities and helped people get their utilities reinstated for about half a dozen families.
- We have connected approximately 50 families with other community resources available.
- We have been able to cover Abundance NC staff time to run this Neighbor2Neighbor program! !!

Thank YOU!

Much LOVE and BLESSINGS from the families YOU help! This is community resilience! !!

MADNESS

Continued from page B1

It doesn’t matter how, just fill it out.

And if you are one of the people who pick the winner of each matchup by studying the teams, doing your homework and using every ounce of knowledge you have about that particular college basketball season to make your selections, I’ve got news for you: you’ll be wrong.

In fact, the best and worst part about filling out brackets and trying to predict the trajectory of the tournament is that you’re always going to be wrong. Every. Single. Time.

And next year, you’ll probably come back for more.

That unpredictability is what makes the tournament so much fun.

It was that lack of unpredictability and drama that made the cancellation of the NCAA Tournament last year due to COVID-19 that much more painful.

So, having not hosted March Madness for two years, there was no question that this year’s first weekend — the rounds of 64 and 32 — would make up for everything we lost.

It sure delivered.

In the men’s round of 64, we saw a total of nine double-digit seeds make it to the Round of 32, including four teams seeded 13 or worse, an NCAA Tournament record.

We saw the pure joy on the faces of No. 15 seed Oral Roberts, which upset No. 2 seed Ohio State (75-72 in OT) and No. 7 seed Florida (81-78) in the South Region to become the second-ever No. 15 seed to reach the Sweet 16.

We heard the story of Justin Preston, a blogger-turned-basketball-star who led No. 13 Ohio to an upset victory over No. 4 Virginia (62-58) — the defending national champions — in the West Region.

We witnessed plenty of dramatic moments, overtime finishes, Sister Jean prayers, boneheaded plays, upsets, tears, celebrations, storylines and controversies. And it’s only the first weekend. There are still 15 games and four rounds to go. Strap in.

The joy I felt from spending four straight days with wall-to-wall basketball — the only breaks coming from 1 a.m. to 12 p.m., giving me just enough time to sleep, eat breakfast and get ready to do it all over again — was

unmatched.

My head may be throbbing from staring at the T.V. for too long. My diet over the last few days may not be up to the standards of any licensed nutritionist. My sleep schedule may be all out of whack.

But all of that is totally worth it. When it’s the season of March Madness, the negative simply cannot outweigh the positive.

You can have your qualms about the NCAA. I sure do.

You’re allowed to criticize it as a governing body, one which greedily profits off of its student-athletes, who aren’t even allowed to let a friend buy them a side of tater tots during a trip to Sonic without putting their eligibility in jeopardy.

You’re allowed to question the gender disparity between men’s and women’s sports and the support they receive. This was most recently exhibited in the drastic difference in size and quality of the weight rooms in the men’s and women’s basketball “bubbles” for the NCAA Tournaments in Indianapolis and San Antonio, respectively.

But boy does the NCAA know how to put on a show. That’s something you just can’t criticize.

As it turned out, when I woke up last Thursday, my worried thoughts were all for naught.

The men’s tournament wouldn’t start for another 27 hours or so, beginning on Friday this year instead of the traditional Thursday.

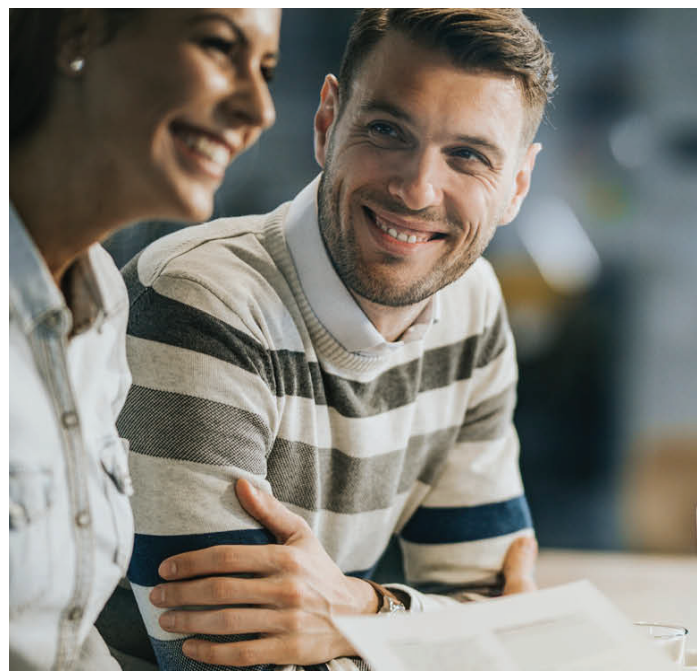
I made sure to fill out my brackets — two real ones I spent time and energy on, two that I decided entirely by flipping a coin and 21 others that I let ESPN’s Tournament Challenge app fill out randomly for me.

After the Tournament’s first weekend, one of my brackets is better than 60.9% of the 14.7 million brackets submitted through ESPN. The other? Better than just 15.1%. They’re far from perfect.

My brackets may have been busted after day one, but I wouldn’t trade this past weekend — or the next couple — for anything.

Welcome to the Madness.

Reporter Victor Hensley can be reached at vhensley@chathamnr.com or on Twitter at @Frezeal33.



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180 Providence Rd
Suite 1c
984-219-6635

Penguin Place
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114 Russet Run Suite 120
919-542-3020

CCCC receives Aviso Aspire Award

From Central Carolina Community College

SANFORD — Central Carolina Community College is recipient of the Aviso Aspire Award, the Aviso Retention organization has announced.

“The Aviso Aspire Award celebrates an Aviso Retention partner who has put forth emphasis on the importance of student success,” Aviso noted in its award announcement. “We want to recognize an institution that has a significant impact, through innovation, commitments to internal training, dedication to continuous improvement with internal processes and provides never-ending support to students.”

Aviso Retention is a student retention solution that helps colleges and universities solve some of the biggest challenges in higher education: keeping students engaged, optimizing the chances of student success and increasing retention. Aviso does this in a holistic way, by combining proven coaching methodologies with supportive software tools and predictive analytics.

In 2012, Central Carolina Community College entered into partnership with Aviso Retention when CCCC was awarded a five-year, \$1.65 million Title III Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP Grant) from the U.S. Department of Education. This grant helped to bring Success Coaching to CCCC.

The partnership continued to grow when CCCC was awarded one of only two validation grants by the Department of Education’s First in the World program in 2015. The goal of the grant, the Carolina Works Validation study, was to increase student persistence across 10 North Carolina Commu-

nity Colleges. The study came to a successful conclusion in 2020.

“CCCC has been a trailblazer with the Aviso Retention platform from the implementation of the early alert/case management technology to participating in the First in the World study through a Department of Education grant with Aviso Retention,” according to the Aviso award announcement. “With their campus-wide support for Aviso Retention, CCCC has had transformative efforts in advising, coaching and student support. The data from Aviso Retention shows the success of intrusive advising by success coaches coupled with the creation of student success plans and intentional student support. Since 2012, retention for CCCC has increased by an average of 9% for full-time students and 18% for part-time students. In addition to its outstanding student retention rates, CCCC’s graduation rate has increased by 19%. This transformation shows the dedication and support CCCC has for holistic student success.”

B. Seth Buchanan, CCCC Director of Academic Success and Aviso Administrator, said the college was honored to be the inaugural recipient of the Aviso Aspire Award.

“Our partnership with Aviso Retention has helped us make positive strides in advising, coaching and student support,” Buchanan said. “CCCC’s overall goal is to provide our students with the best possible support that we can to help ensure their success. This award represents the culmination of many years work in redefining how we as an institution support our students.”

For more information on Central Carolina Community College, visit www.cccc.edu.

Chatham County Council on Aging maintains current status

From the Chatham Council on Aging

The board of directors of the Chatham County Council on Aging has decided to continue an emphasis on safety and keep offices closed to in-person programming through March and April.

The board will reassess the situation in early May.

The board and management of the council remain steadfast in their reliance on what science and public health indicate. This includes information about the effect of the new variants of the virus.

“While we are excited about reported reductions in cases, hospitalizations and deaths due to vaccinations and practicing the three W’s, we know this is still a very serious and tenuous situation,” said Larry Ross, the COA’s board president.

In the meantime, the council is continuing to identify ways to reengage with participants in a more active and personal way.

Since March 16, 2020, the Chatham County Council on Aging has closed its two centers to in-facility programming due to COVID-19 precautions. Over the past year, the Council on Aging has continued its many services and programs — just in different ways.

For example, the council has provided food assistance to more than 320 seniors, including 112 participants who are new to the COA meals program. Many of these seniors also receive supplies and friendly check-in calls from staff to stave off isolation and loneliness.

“While participants used to come to our two centers for a hot lunch and to enjoy a wide range of activities, under COVID, we

have been taking meals to them and offering them opportunities for social, recreational and educational programming through various virtual means,” said COA executive director Dennis Streets. “We know this is no substitute for being able to meet in person, but our primary focus has been on keeping our senior participants, volunteers and staff members safe.”

According to the N.C. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Chatham County has moved from substantial community spread down to significant community spread in the last month, showing Chatham residents are making progress in combating the virus. Still, all residents must remain vigilant and do their part to further reduce spread and protect seniors and others who are most at risk

of the worst effects of COVID-19.

As Chatham County Public Health Director Michael Zelek shared with the council, “I know many are eager to gather and socialize after nearly a year of living through this pandemic. While case numbers are improving after a difficult winter, the threat of COVID remains present and I appreciate your caution with indoor public gatherings, which we know are settings where transmission is more likely to occur.”

“If all of our staff, as frontline workers serving a vulnerable population, have the opportunity to be vaccinated within the next two months, we will explore what changes in programming we can safely make,” Streets said. “While we cannot predict with confidence

any specific day when things can be different, I can promise we look forward to when we can welcome our participants back into our centers for a hot lunch and in-person activities. The sooner people get vaccinated, the sooner this can happen. In the meantime, everyone must remain vigilant in wearing masks, waiting a safe distance apart and washing our hands.”

For information about the work of the Council on Aging, visit www.chathamcoa.org, or call 919-542-4512 or 919-742-3975.

For information about vaccination availability in Chatham County, visit: www.chathamnc.org/coronavirusvaccine (Spanish: www.chathamnc.org/coronavirusvacuna), or call the Info Line at 919-545-8323, Monday-Thursday 10am-4pm.

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COA continues to promote health and wellness

CN+R Staff Reports

PITTSBORO — With the support of the University of North Carolina School of Nursing and the Chatham Health Alliance, the Chatham County Council on Aging has continued its tradition of promoting good health practices.

“In previous years, we have held in-person health fairs that were very well received by the community,” said Liz Lahti, manager of the Council’s Eastern Center and coordinator of the Council’s health promotion programs. “But with COVID-19, we have decided to go virtual as we have so many of our other events and activities.”

The Council on Aging is offering its 2021 version of a health fair throughout the month of March. Its Virtual Health & Wellness Expo began on March 2 with a very

informative and well attended seminar focused on the COVID-19 vaccine. UNC nursing students led the planning and presentation.

Every Tuesday at 11:15 a.m., UNC nursing students, faculty and other experts will explore a range of topics including:

- Health Is Wealth — Being Active: March 9
- Home Safety Tips & Falls Prevention: March 16
- Eating Good, Feeling Better: March 23
- Prevention Is Key to Great Health: March 30

To register for these free sessions, go to <https://www.chatham-healthalliancenc.org/healthwellnessexpo>

For more information, go to <https://www.chathamhealthalliancenc.org/healthwellnessexpo>, or contact Liz Lahti at 919-542-4512 (extension 228), liz.lahti@chathamcoa.org.



Please Join Us for Our Online Spring Author Event!

You won't want to miss this live online presentation with local authors **Jill McCorkle** and **Tom Rankin**.

Tuesday, April 20 from 11:00am to 12:15pm Chatham Literacy presents a Virtual Spring Author Event with noted novelist and award-winning short story writer Jill McCorkle and Duke Professor, photographer, folklorist and author Tom Rankin.

This online event includes live discussions with the couple about their acclaimed book, *Goat Light*, showcasing vivid photography and reflective stories about their rural Piedmont life.




Ticket sales: \$100/person, beginning February 15 at www.chathamliteracy.org and 919-742-0578.

Each ticket purchased includes one raffle ticket for the door prize drawings done throughout the event.

- 1) Golf for four at the Golf Course at Chapel Ridge, carts included
- 2) Two-night stay at the Inn at Celebrity Dairy
- 3) One-night stay at the Inn at Celebrity Dairy
- 4) Autographed copies of *Goat Light*
- 5) \$50 gift card to the Sycamore at Chatham Mills

Theater returns to Jordan-Matthews this spring with outdoor performance of 'The Lottery'

From JMArts

SILER CITY — Rehearsals for “The Lottery” had barely started when the world turned upside down.

At the time, what became a global pandemic seemed more like a short pause. Nothing was canceled right away, even though the news kept getting worse day by day. And certainly nobody expected it would be more than a year before actors at Jordan-Matthews High School returned to the stage.

But it looks like that return is finally happening. Live theater is on the schedule once again.

“The Lottery,” that same play that barely went into rehearsal last spring, returns in May, pandemic permitting, with two free, outdoor performances with limited seating. And, in some ways, the pandemic and the changes it has forced in how the play will be performed actually add real gravity to what audiences will see unfold on stage.

The 30-minute, one-act play — based on a short story by Shirley Jackson and dramatized by Brainerd Duffield — begins with people assembling for a lottery. Only as events build swiftly to their climax do audiences begin to suspect the nature of the lottery. The shattering final scene has brought wide acclaim to both the short story and the play.

Director Jessica Nunn won't say exactly how the pandemic will shape the production, but there's no way of ignoring its



Photo courtesy of JMArts

Jordan-Matthews actors — Rilee Rains, from left, Lindley Andrew, Laci Burt and Hannah Redding — rehearse 'The Lottery' one year ago, just before the pandemic took hold. Burt and Redding will be on stage this year when the play finally returns.

impact. Because, without giving away any spoilers, there are parallels to what we've all been experiencing over the last year.

“Because we've had a year to think about this play, it holds a very different meaning now than it did before the pandemic,” says JMArts President Rose Pate, who is producing “The Lottery.” “It asks the uncomfortable question: How much will a community sacrifice to preserve their prosperity? Great theatre doesn't have to be Shakespeare to shift the way we look at our world, and this will almost certainly change the way we view ourselves.”

Technically, things will be different as well. Most students cast last year will resume their roles, but auditions for charac-

ters played by students who graduated last year will be held virtually in late March. Rehearsals and performances will follow guidelines issued by the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and by Chatham County Schools to limit the coronavirus spread, which includes masks and social distancing.

Even though theater will be different than normal, everyone is anxious to return when rehearsals begin on April 12.

“I can't wait to get back to theatre and to get back to these kids,” says Nunn, who has directed all of the Jordan-Matthews theatrical productions over the last five years. “I've missed both of those things very much, and I love that we will get a chance to finish what we

started a year ago.”

But no one is as anxious to return to the stage as the student actors who love theater and just got started on “The Lottery” last spring before weeks-long delays turned into months and then a year. Hannah Redding, a senior who will perform the central role, was particularly glad to get the news that theater was returning.

“If you know me, you know I love the stage and can't wait to be back,” she said. “I'm extremely excited to play Tessie Hutchinson in JM's “The Lottery” this spring.”

Performances of “The Lottery” are scheduled for May 7, at 5:30 and 6:30 p.m., in the outdoor courtyard at Jordan-Matthews High School between the cafeteria



Photo courtesy of JMArts

Zy'kiuh Marsh, from left, Wilson Ramos Meza and Mia Lopez-Calvo had just started rehearsal for 'The Lottery' before the pandemic last spring. The 30-minute, one-act play will be performed twice on May 7 in an outdoor production with limited seating.



Photo courtesy of JMArts

Billed as a ‘chilling 30 minutes of drama,’ ‘The Lottery’ will hit the Jordan-Matthews High School stage more than one year after this early rehearsal with Litzzy Garcia-Santos, Louis Graham, Gisselle Aleman Moreno and Cristian Esquivel.

and main office. Tickets will be very limited due to pandemic guidelines, with reservations being accepted beginning April 26. Visit [JMArts.org/events/](https://www.jmarts.org/events/) in April or follow JMArts on social media for more information

about tickets and performances.

More information about JMArts, including a schedule of upcoming arts events and information on membership, is available online at [JMArts.org](https://www.jmarts.org).

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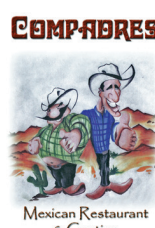
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POLICE REPORTS

PITTSBORO YOUTH THEATER

Rehearsals begin for PYT's spring plays

CN+R Staff Report

PITTSBORO — Pittsboro Youth Theater held its first in-person theater rehearsals for each of the organization's four spring plays on a recent Saturday. Social distancing was enforced but that did little to dampen the enthusiasm. "It was invigorating to see all our kids' smiling faces again," said Tammy Matthews, the theater's artistic director. "We all had a great time."

PYT old-timers, teenagers with years of experience with the theater, jumped back into their dusty but well-remembered theater rehearsal exercises. "Some of these kids have been in several online casts over the last year but have never actually rehearsed in person before," said Craig Witter, PYT's technical director. "Everybody was



Photos courtesy of Pittsboro Youth Theater

Pittsboro Youth Theater actors Lila Paukovich (center), Natalie Hinde (right) and Cooper Karstaedt rehearse.

excited — parents too!"

PYT will be having Saturday rehearsals in-person outside the offices of Preston Development in Chatham Park while PYT's own Sweet Bee Theater space in the Center for the Arts in downtown Pittsboro is sitting fallow. "With COVID it's safer to gather outdoors," Wit-

ter said. "Hopefully we'll be back in the theater with the windows open for camps this summer."

PYT plans to perform all its spring plays to live audiences outside this May and June. For more information, call Witter at 919-949-7181 or go to www.PittsboroYouthTheater.com.



Photos courtesy of Pittsboro Youth Theater

The cast of the Pittsboro Youth Theater production of 'Gooney Bird Greene and Her Fabulous Animal Parade' rehearse at Chatham Park.

CHATHAM COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

On March 16, Dhezmond Nahsiir Blayd Sneed, 20, of 105 Oldsmobile Drive, was arrested by Deputy Shannon Parker for breaking and entering into a motor vehicle and larceny. Sneed was issued a \$2,500 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Davidson County District Court in Lexington on April 14.

On March 17, Joshua Brandon Lint, 33, of 112 Dock Street, Wilmington, was arrested by Deputy Jonathan Frazier for a misdemeanor probation violation. Lint was issued a \$20,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in New Hanover County District Court in Wilmington on April 14.

On March 17, Richard Nicholas Blalock, 33, of 252 Lake Pointe Drive, Fuquay-Varina, was arrested by Deputy Matthew Mitchell for cruelty to animals and communicating threats. Blalock was issued a \$3,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on March 22.

On March 18, Shawn Seeley, 42, of 14226 NC Hwy 902, Bear Creek, was arrested by Deputy Dalton Oldham for failure to appear. He was jailed under a \$400 secure bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on May 4.

On March 18, Andres Zagada del Angel, 44, of 404 W. 8th St., Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Jonas Lassiter for indecent liberties with a child, soliciting prostitution of minor, and sexual battery. He was jailed under a \$75,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on March 22.

On March 18, Angela Johnson, 49, of 277 Hudson Rd., Siler City, was

arrested by Deputy Justina Knox for allowing dog(s) to run at large. She was assigned a \$300 cash bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on April 7. Ms. Johnson was also arrested by Deputy Knox for second degree trespass and was given a written promise to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on May 5.

On March 19, Cathy Maxine Harris, 61, of 80 Hinton Rd., Chapel Hill, was arrested by Deputy Alex Lukasewycz for exploiting disabled/elder trust. She was issued a \$5,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Orange County Superior Court in Hillsborough on April 6.

On March 19, Lewis Johnny Jacobs, 66, of 28 Jay St., Chapel Hill, was arrested by Deputy Jonas Lassiter for possession of drug paraphernalia. He was issued no bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on March 24.

On March 20, Christopher Lee Davis, 26, of 1110 Hal Clark Rd., Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Johnny Griffin for failure to appear. He was issued a \$500 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on April 24.

On March 21, Royce Morgan, Jr., 41, of 316 Barker Rd., Bear Creek, was arrested by Deputy Johnny Griffin for failure to appear. He was issued a \$300 cash bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on April 7.

On March 21, Brittany Lauren Comer, 23, of 281 Hyatt Ct., Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Jonas Lassiter for simple affray. She was released on a written promise to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on April 6.

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Don't get too cozy in your at-home office

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D. LARS DOLDER
Enterprising Chatham

nounced plans, or at least options, for remote workers to keep their at-home vigils. Dropbox, the online file hosting service, announced it would permit all employees to work from home permanently.

Facebook, the social media giant, will let half its workforce stay at home forever.

Microsoft will keep a 50% at-home schedule, with options for full-time remote work subject to manager discretion.

It makes good financial sense — employers can downsize office space, save big on limited business travel and, presumably, eek more productivity out of their time-flush workers.

The numbers, too, suggest resounding success from pandemic-piloted remote work programs.

The engineering recruitment agency, Apollo Technical, recently synthesized data from several studies and concluded that “on average, those who work from home spend 10 minutes less a day being unproductive, work one more day a week and are 47% more productive.”

That's pretty generous, though. Many reports, based on a consequential 2015 study in China, cite a modest 13% uptick in teleworker productivity. But don't be fooled. Widespread remote work is the employer's coup de maitre — not the employees'.

While that 2015 study, conducted by Stamford economist Nicholas Bloom, has been widely used to extol the benefits of remote work, Bloom's findings suggest at-home work can tank career prospects. Employees working from home are less than half as likely to receive promotions as comparable, in-office colleagues, Bloom concluded.

“Leadership is in the office generally,” Jessica Reeder, an expert on

remote work who works on strategy at GitLab, recently told Axios. “So if you're going in, you have access to leadership. You see them in the halls, and you're visible to them. That applies to promotions.”

Without face-to-face networking, you may stifle and shortchange future job opportunities.

But that's not even the worst of remote work's consequences. Chances are, those of you most concerned with job opportunities — I'm looking at you, ages 18 to 25 — can't stand remote work anyway, and your mental health is faltering (plus, you don't even own a La-Z-Boy).

According to a recent Microsoft survey, which polled more than 30,000 workers in 31 countries, about 40% of respondents said they might leave their jobs, Bloomberg first reported. Gen Zers were the most widely represented group among negative responses.

The problem? Remote work has no boundaries. Work is home and home is work. It's madness, and some can't take it.

All those great stats on worker productivity are true, but they're achieved at the worker's expense.

Most in Microsoft's poll were nearing burnout; another 39% said they were exhausted.

In contrast, business leaders who responded to the survey said they were “thriving.”

“Leaders are out of touch,” Microsoft Vice President Jared Spataro told Bloomberg. “Sixty-one percent say they are thriving — that's 23% higher than the average worker, so there is a disconnect there. They're like, ‘This is great!’”

In a pandemic, the hallmark of which is widespread isolation and disenfranchisement, it's no surprise that employers and employees are disengaged.

To Chatham business leaders, then, I implore you: touch base with your employees — individually. And go back to the office when it's finally safe. Humans need schedules. And we need boundaries.

Other business news

• Need a lawyer? Soon you can find two of Chatham County's longest tenured attorneys in the same place.

Ben Atwater and Joshua Lee announced on Monday their plans to merge Moody, Williams, Roper & Lee and Atwa-

ter Law Firm. They will become the law firm of Moody, Williams, Atwater & Lee.

Former judge and Siler City native J. Lee Moody began the law firm that would become Moody, Williams, Roper & Lee in 1927. Moody's son, Jack Moody, joined the firm in 1955 and practiced with his father until 1970 when Sam Williams began practicing with the firm as Moody, Moody and Williams. In 1960, Todd Roper came aboard, and the group practiced as Moody, Williams & Roper until Joshua Lee joined in 2007.

Jack Moody and Sam Williams have since retired, and Todd Roper recently became the newest district court judge for Judicial District 18, serving Chatham and Orange counties. Roper replaced retired judge and Siler City native Joseph Moody Buckner on the bench.

Ben Atwater and Phil Edwards formed Edwards & Atwater Attorneys in 1977. They practiced together until Edwards' retirement in 2004.

Moody, Williams, Atwater & Lee will have offices located at 122 South Chatham Ave. in Siler City, and 157 West St. in Pittsboro, providing

services in most areas of the law.

• In a major snag for the Triangle, Google announced last week its plan to open a new cloud engineering hub in Durham, as first reported by the News & Observer.

The office is expected to host more than 1,000 jobs and will be one of Google Cloud's top five engineering hubs in the U.S., the N&O report said. The other four are San Francisco's Bay Area, New York, Seattle and Kirkland, Washington.

The announcement could foster new interest in Chatham County real estate from Google transplants and new-hires. The company's temporary office will be at 200 Morris St. in downtown Durham, about 40 minutes from several communities in northeast Chatham, including Chatham Park, Briar Chapel and Farrington. Google is still scouting for its permanent Durham location.

Have an idea for what Chatham business topics I should write about? Send me a note at aldolder@chathamnr.com or on Twitter @aldolder.

CHATHAM CHAT | COURTNEY COOPER-LEWTER

County's 2020 Census leader reflects on count, and what's next

The 2020 Census count is over, the work of the Chatham County team is



Cooper-Lewter

we speak with Courtney Cooper-Lewter, who served as the Chatham County Complete Count Committee chairperson for the duration of the 2020 Census. Cooper-Lewter works as the management analyst for the County Manager's Office collaborating on various projects. Even though the 2020 Census has ended, Cooper-Lewter says she's happy she has the opportunity to continue serving Chatham County.

Let's start with what we know about the data from the 2020 Census. The Census Bureau's plan was to have that first round of redistricting data delivered by March 31. Then came COVID. What's the plan and timeline now?

On Feb. 12, 2021, the U.S. Census Bureau announced that it will de-

liver the state population counts for apportionment to the president by April 30th, which — due to the pandemic — is later than the usual deadline of December 31st. Apportionment is the division of the 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives among the 50 states based

on population. In an effort to get this data to the President as quickly as possible, the U.S. Census Bureau has had to delay other efforts such as generating the redistricting counts. The U.S. Census Bureau expects to deliver redistricting data to the states and public by Sep-

tember 30th.

So what will we know by Sept. 30, the new “single national delivery” date?

The U.S. Census Bureau data will include counts of the state's population by race, ethnicity (Hispanic or Latino origin), voting age, housing occupancy status, and group quarters population at smaller levels including towns and counties.

The Chatham County Complete Count Committee spent more than a year encouraging the community's participation in the census as this data impact our funding for programs like Medicaid and Head Start and our planning for schools, roads, hospitals and more.

Did the cyberattack on the county's computer network impact your work at all?

Thankfully, the 2020 Census came to an end before the cyber incident, and it did not impact the ability to get Chatham County residents counted. However, the incident impacted the Complete Count Committee's ability to conduct an internal assessment on its activities. The committee was able to complete its assessment in early

March.

As for Chatham County ... what did response rates look like?

Chatham County did a great job completing the 2020 Census despite all of the many challenges we were faced with last year. We do not have the overall response rate yet. However, we do know that 70.8% of Chatham County residents completed the 2020 Census online, by mail or by phone. This self-response rate is 4.1% higher than that of 2010.

And the overall response rate?

As for the overall response rate, I have gotten some conflicting information about when we will get those final results, but I anticipate that they will likely become available on September 30, 2021.

What kind of feedback did you, your volunteers and Census workers get throughout the process?

Here's a summary: • We received feedback for the need for Spanish-speaking Census workers. Hiring was actually done on a regional level and other than promoting and encouraging folks to apply, the Complete Count Committee did not have much influence on who was hired.

• We received great feedback about the bilingual media toolkit, which included flyers, social media and other communications materials in many languages.

• We also received positive feedback about the ease of the online census form and how quickly you could complete the 2020 Census.

• Before COVID-19 was present in our community, I received great feedback about our in-person presentations that we conducted in communities across the county. Myself and another Complete Count Committee member created a bilingual presentation about the 2020 Census. Before the pandemic, we were able to give six presentations to different community groups throughout the county. These groups

included Latinx youth, English language learners, employees at nearby businesses, and a genealogy group. At one presentation, I met one woman beforehand, and she told me that she would not preemptively fill out her census, that she would wait until a census worker came to her door. After the presentation, she stated how she had a better understanding of the census, and she would complete it as soon as it became available.

You and your committee have accomplished a lot: a Census hiring event, in-person Census information sessions, youth Census training, creating a bilingual media toolkit, social media posts, putting out water bill inserts, poster and flyer distribution, creating activity packets for homebound seniors and youth, and more. As you look back on this work, what do you think you'll remember most, or be most proud of?

The 2020 Census definitely did not pan out the way that the Complete Count Committee initially planned or imagined. As I look back on our collaboration and work, the thing I will remember most is everyone's continued commitment to Chatham County and making sure that we secure the resources our community deserves. Despite the challenging times, committee members still showed up and pivoted to continue encouraging Chatham County residents to complete the 2020 Census in creative and new ways.

Based on a recent survey I conducted with the Complete Count Committee, members rated our community engagement efforts a 4.2 out of 5 stars and rated their overall experience a 4.6 out of 5 stars.

What work remains for the committee?

The remaining work for the committee is to reflect on our experience and to work promoting the results of the 2020 Census. If we did not receive a 100% overall response rate this time around, we want to set ourselves up to obtain that for 2030!

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Causey visits Chatham County




Submitted photo

N.C. Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey, right, who is also the State Fire Marshal, presents a SAVE Award to Tonya Stafford, a trauma pediatric nurse educator at UNC Hospitals, for going above and beyond the call of duty when she noticed a toddler and an infant left unattended in a car at a Wake County shopping center parking lot.



Submitted photo



N.C. Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey presented smoke alarms to the Siler City Fire Department on March 11. The fire department plans to canvass an mobile home park later this year to make sure the homes have properly working alarms.



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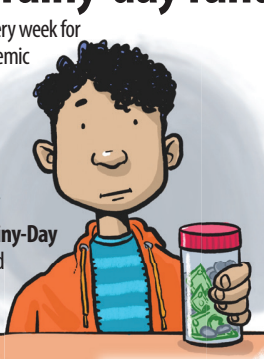
Save for a Rainy Day!

Why have a rainy-day fund?

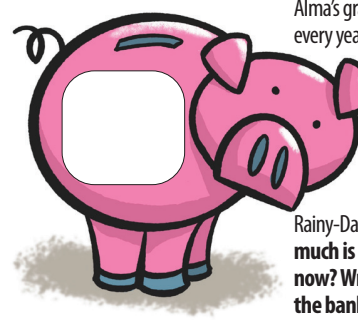
Tomas' parents gave him \$2 every week for allowance. But when the pandemic caused his father's company to close for a few months, his dad could no longer give Tomas an allowance.

Tomas had been putting 50¢ of his weekly allowance into a **Rainy-Day Fund jar** for a year. That totaled \$26. So even though he wasn't getting an allowance, Tomas still had some money if he needed it.

When his dad's company opened back up, Tomas started getting his allowance again. But this time, he started adding 75¢ to his rainy day jar every week.




By saving 75¢ each week, how much will be in Tomas' jar after one year?

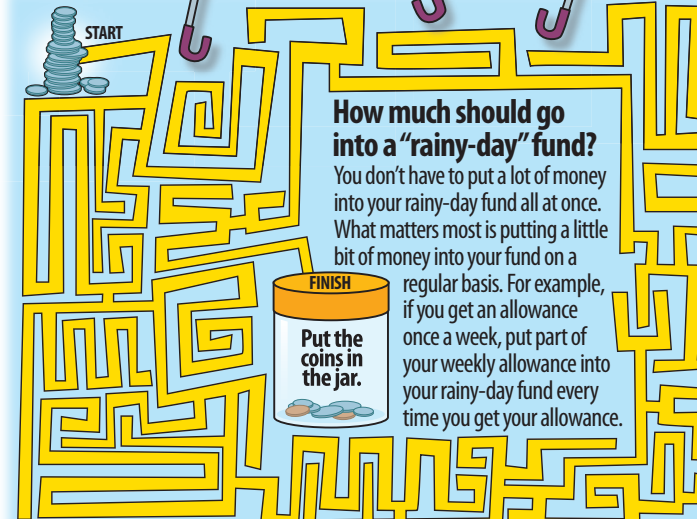


How much is in Alma's bank?

Alma's grandmother sends her \$25 every year on her birthday. Alma is 11 years old, and her grandmother started sending the money to her on her 5th birthday. Alma saved half of the money each year in her Rainy-Day Fund piggy bank. **How much is in Alma's piggy bank now? Write the amount on the bank's label.**



Can you draw lines to connect each umbrella's twin?



How much should go into a "rainy-day" fund?

You don't have to put a lot of money into your rainy-day fund all at once. What matters most is putting a little bit of money into your fund on a regular basis. For example, if you get an allowance once a week, put part of your weekly allowance into your rainy-day fund every time you get your allowance.

Put the coins in the jar.

Martina's Money Mistakes

Martina earned \$5.00 each week watering and weeding her neighbor's garden. Unfortunately, Martina spent almost all of that money every week building up her sticker collection.

Martina's neighbor moved away last month. Martina's bike got a flat tire and she doesn't have the money to get it replaced. She now wishes she had saved money in a Rainy-Day Fund jar like her cousin Tomas.

Can you think of a time when you could have used a Rainy-Day Fund jar of your own?

My Rainy-Day Fund Pledge

NAME: _____

I will put _____ into my rainy-day fund each week.

This money will come from:

☐ Allowance

☐ A weekly chore

☐ A weekly job

☐ Other _____

Expanded Numbers

Look through the newspaper for five 4-digit numbers. Rewrite each one in an expanded form using words instead of digits.

For example:

4,1862





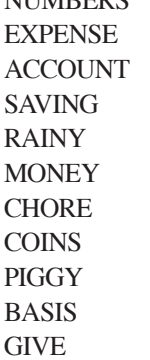
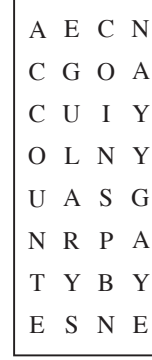
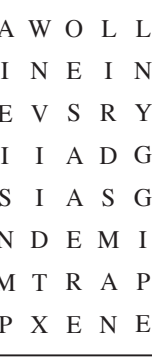




Four thousand eight hundred sixty two.

Standards Link: Math: Write out number amounts.

Kid Scoop Puzzler

Coin Count

Kevin puts 50¢ into his Rainy-Day Fund each week. Amy puts 75¢ into her Rainy-Day Fund each week. Circle the coins that add up to 75¢ in blue. Each coin can only be used once.

Double Word Search

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

ALLOWANCE

PANDEMIC

REGULAR

NUMBERS

EXPENSE

ACCOUNT

SAVING

RAINY

MONEY

CHORE

COINS

PIGGY

BASIS

GIVE

PART

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

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

Kid Scoop Together: Idioms

"Save for a rainy day" is an idiom. An idiom is a phrase that doesn't literally mean what it says. Work with a parent to write the number of each idiom's definition in the circles.

Idioms

- ☐ Back to the drawing board
- ☐ Missed the boat
- ☐ Fit as a fiddle
- ☐ Costs an arm and a leg
- ☐ Wild goose chase
- ☐ Once in a blue moon
- ☐ By the skin of your teeth
- ☐ Piece of cake

Definitions


1. In good health
2. Just barely achieving
3. Starting over
4. Something very expensive
5. A task that's easy to do
6. Lost an opportunity
7. A rare occurrence
8. A pointless activity

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Improved, mammoth ‘Zack Snyder’s Justice League’ is a cinematic singularity

Like so many superhero origin stories, the 2017 “Justice League” was an orphan, left fatherless and later adopted by a foster parent who, while experienced in the role, mistreated his ward and did not raise



NEIL MORRIS
Film Critic

it for success. The result was the black sheep in the DC Extended Universe, a patchwork of half-baked ideas and ill-fitting elements, every bit the Frankenstein’s monster as one of its central characters, if substitute director Joss Whedon had cared about fleshing out such allegory.

The true-life tragedy that wrested filmmaker Zack Snyder away from the “Justice League” project was the suicide death of Autumn, his adopted daughter, in March 2017. After rebuilding his life — along with a much-publicized social media campaign spurred by spurned fans — Snyder got the studio money and support to finish his original vision. The aptly titled “Zack Snyder’s Justice League” is a mammoth re-imagining in both size and scope. The four-hour behemoth is a cinematic singularity. It is good and bad; epic and intimate; bombastic and quiet; sprawling and focused, absorbing and plodding. It defies description, yet stirs examination. It is mind-numbing and soul-stirring.

And yeah, it’s better than the last one. The central narrative from the ersatz “Justice League” remains: in the wake of Superman’s death in “Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice,” the world’s remaining, dispa-



Photo courtesy of HBO Max

Jason Momoa, Gal Gadot and Ray Fisher star in ‘Zack Snyder’s Justice League.’

rate superheroes must band together to combat otherworldly forces bent on global destruction. What is vastly, stunningly different is the film’s approach to world building and character development. The most stark example is Ray Fisher’s Victor Stone, aka Cyborg, now a full-formed tragic character, estranged from his biotechnician father (Joe Morton) until a car wreck kills his mother and leaves the dismembered, near-death Victor as the only thing that could apparently bring him closer to dad: a science experiment.

The gizmo that transforms Victor into a half-man, half-machine is a Mother Box, the on-the-nose name for a trio of ancient cubes that, when unified, would raze the planet. They are coveted by the omnipotent worldeater Darkseid, and gathering the boxes falls to Steppenwolf (voiced by Ciarán Hinds), a horned foot soldier sent to Earth with an army of flying cannon fodder. Like everything else in

Snyder’s “Justice League,” Steppenwolf gets an upgrade in both appearance and backstory — this Steppenwolf is a damaged demigod who just wants to earn dad’s approval.

Snyder’s two previous DECU entries — “Man of Steel” and “Batman v Superman” — were steeped in a fickle conception of loss as a mere framing device. Undoubtedly and understandably chastened by his personal travails, Snyder’s focus in “Justice League” sharpens to the lingering effects of death on the living, particularly as it relates to the connection between parents and children. There is Victor’s love-hate feelings for his father coupled with the demise of both his mom and his humanity, a pain that binds Victor to Wonder Woman (Gal Gadot) and her history of loss and regret. There is Barry Allen, aka The Flash (Ezra Miller), whose mother was allegedly killed by a father who now demands that his loyal son stop visiting him in prison, that he

ZACK SNYDER’S JUSTICE LEAGUE

GRADE: B +
DIRECTOR: Zack Snyder
STARRING: Ben Affleck, Gal Gadot, Henry Cavill, Ray Fisher, Jason Momoa, Ezra Miller, Jeremy Irons and Amy Adams
MPAA RATING: R
RUNNING TIME: 4 hr. 2 min.

abandon him. There is Arthur Curry, aka Aquaman (Jason Momoa), a mixed-race misanthrope who resents the Atlantean mother who abandoned him as a child and rejects the underwater birthright she left him. Even with Bruce Wayne (Ben Affleck), the paragon of superhero orphans, there is the retooled relationship with Alfred Pennyworth, played by Jeremy Irons. It is not accidental that this is the first version of Alfred not depicting performing any butler duties. This Alfred is not a man-servant, but instead a partner, a father figure.

When the eventually resurrected Superman (Henry Cavill) ventures on a path of self-rediscovery, the journey is accompanied by the voices of his two fathers, one Heavenly and one Earthly. This is Superman, transfigured. One of the most striking changes from the previous “Justice League” is that Wonder Woman goes from being steadfastly against the idea of raising Superman from the dead to passively going along with the plan — only Aquaman registers an objection this time around. Bruce Wayne is still the spearhead, complet-

ing Batman’s turnaround from once wanting to kill Kal-El.

Still, I like that in Snyder’s hands, Wayne never quite shakes the notion that while the world cannot survive without Superman, it might not ultimately be able to survive with him, either. That Clark Kent might be just one broken heart away from becoming a dystopian dictator.

That lingering fear of “something darker” is projected in the film’s coda, another episode in Wayne’s recurring “Knightmare” about an apocalyptic alt-future. The 18-minute scene is most popularly received for the return and redemption of Jared Leto’s Joker (first and last seen in “Suicide Squad”). While Heath Ledger remains the best movie Joker, Leto establishes himself here as the most disquieting version, a grotesque amalgam of audacity, lunacy, savvy and true terror. However, the true import of this seemingly globbed on sequence is to illustrate the alternative consequences of loss, the razor-thin margin between loss as a spark for transcendence or a catalyst for corrosion, evidenced here by the dire alt-paths that possibly could be followed by Superman, Bruce Wayne, Joker, Curry’s love-interest Mera (Amber Heard) ... and perhaps Snyder, as well?

“Zack Snyder’s Justice League” feels like an epic-long counseling session, the cinematic embodiment of its creator working some things out. It is not a great movie, but it is a noteworthy, engrossing, demanding, and provocative one. As his last act in the film, Aquaman tells his new kinspeople that he’s going to visit his dad. Wouldn’t, and shouldn’t, we all? He, like the film, is an orphan no more.

‘Nobody’ doesn’t hold a candle to Wick

“Nobody” is the “RED” of “John Wicks.” Indeed, this middle-aged pastiche hews so closely to the Keanu Reeves resurrection vehicle that you periodically ponder whether it was meant as a parody. Better that it would have been, since otherwise the film’s title essentially summarizes its target audience.

Hutch Mansell (Bob Odenkirk, “Better Call Saul”) is a middle-aged, mild-mannered everyman stuck in a weekly loop of work, exercise, family dinners and sleep. He forgets to take out the garbage and buy the milk. Hutch and his wife Becca (Connie Nielsen) sleep with a bed divider be-

tween them, and his kids don’t much respect him either, especially after home invaders attack the clan and Hutch refrains from any violent defense to avoid “complications.” He’s an über-nebbish who is clearly holding something back.

Like John Wick, Hutch snaps once pushed too far by the petulant son of a Russian ganglord and his buddies. As with Wick, the Ruskie — here named Yulian (Aleksei Serebryakov) — pledges violent reprisal. There is a dark past awakened, a muscle car, and even a new pet that captures his fancy — a puppy for Wick, a kitten for Hutch. Besides originality, what

NOBODY

GRADE: C
DIRECTOR: Ilya Naishuller
STARRING: Bob Odenkirk, Connie Nielsen, Aleksei Serebryakov, RZU and Christopher Lloyd
MPAA RATING: R
RUNNING TIME: 1 hr. 32 min.

“Nobody” mainly lacks in comparison to its cinematic antecedent is backstory and world building. We glean that Hutch was once a CIA spook of sorts,



Photo courtesy of Universal Studios

Bob Odenkirk stars in ‘Nobody.’

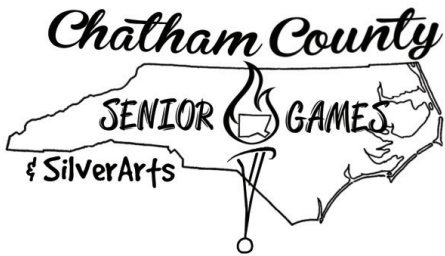
“the last person you’d want to see at your door.” That is the extent of his clandestine past we learn; from there, we merely left to assume and accept

Hutch’s violent bona fides. The same goes for Hutch’s inscrutable partners: a half-brother (RZA) who’s mostly a disembodied voice heard through a hi-fi

system, and Hutch’s dad David (played by Christopher Lloyd, adopting the Nick Nolte role from “Angel Has Fallen”), who lounges away at his rest home until brandishing a sawed-off gets the adrenaline pumping again.

Whereas Wick-world was festooned with an elaborate, engrossing milieu of criminals and assassins with their own code and hierarchies, “Nobody” just has bad guys and old good guys, with little connection or elucidation between them. There is a cheeky, even kitchy undercurrent to “Nobody” that makes it a passable diversion. Unfortunately, that also makes it instantly forgettable.

2021



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- | | | |
|------|----|--------------------------------------|
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| | 3 | SilverArts Entry Drop off |
| | 4 | Archery |
| | 21 | Tee shirt and Packet Pick-up |
| | 22 | Track/Field |
| | 22 | Football & Softball Throw |
| | 22 | Fun Walk |
| | 24 | Golf |
| | 24 | Croquet |
| | 25 | Disc Golf |
| | 25 | Swimming |
| | 25 | Tennis—Women’s Singles/Men’s Doubles |
| | 26 | Men’s Bocce |
| | 26 | Tennis—Men’s Singles/Women’s Doubles |
| | 27 | Horseshoes |
| | 27 | Tennis—Mixed Doubles |
| | 28 | Women’s Bocce |
| | 28 | Bowling |
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| | 1 | Corn Hole |
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ing, and design regulations, issues correction requests, approves plans, certifies compliance, and conducts follow-up inspections. Prepares ordinances or revisions to ordinances related to land use and development issues in compliance with and to implement the Land Use Plan and other policy direction. Provides guidance to junior staff, serves as liaison to assigned boards and organizations, oversees commercial development review team consisting of various departments and agencies to facilitate and coordinate plan review and adjudicate conflicts between various agency regulations. Assists with complex problems and situations, providing technical expertise in long-range planning, code development, zoning administration, site plan review, or other special projects as assigned. Participates in and oversees public outreach efforts and public information projects related to departmental activities and performs customer service and provides information and answers questions regarding Department activities, projects, proposals, processes, and procedures. Performs other related duties as assigned. - **KNOWLEDGE AND QUALIFICATIONS:** Thorough knowledge of principles and practice of urban planning, zoning, and land use. Ability to present the results of research effectively in oral, written, and graphic form. Ability to respond to effectively to the most sensitive inquiries or complaints. Ability to identify problems and review related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions that are in accordance with laws, ordinances, and established principles. Ability to establish and maintain effective, professional working relationships. Ability to act independently in carrying out specific tasks, while at the same time being able to participate in or coordinate team-oriented projects. - **EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE, AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS:** Graduation from an accredited school with a Bachelor's Degree in Planning or closely related field and two (2) years of related experience, or Equivalent combination of education and experience, Valid North Carolina driver's license. - **PHYSICAL DEMANDS AND WORK ENVIRONMENT:** Work is performed primarily in a standard office environment and occasionally outdoor. May be required to lift and carry items weighing up to 10 pounds. A qualified applicant or employee with a disability may be afforded reasonable modifications to perform the essential job functions of a position in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. - **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** Interested applicants must submit a completed online application to be considered. This is a continuous recruitment; review of applications will begin immediately. Prompt application is highly encouraged. Recruitment will close without notice when a sufficient number of qualified applications are received or all hiring decisions have been made. Successful candidates will be subject to a background check and drug screening. Applications are available on the Town's website at <https://pittsboronc.gov> - Mail applications and resumes to the Town Clerk at P.O. Box 759, Pittsboro, NC 27312 or email to cbullo-ock@pittsboronc.gov

M25,A1,8,15,22,5tc

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LEGALS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY The undersigned, having

qualified on the 23rd day of February, 2021, as Co-Executors of the Estate of **BETTY JEAN PHILLIPS aka BETTY J. PHILLIPS**, deceased, of Chatham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 7th day of June, 2021, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned. This 4th day of March, 2021. Tracey E. Parker and Scott R. Phillips, Co-Executors Estate of Betty Jean Phillips aka Betty J. Phillips c/o J Alan Campbell Law PO Box 850 Hillsborough, NC 27278 M4,M11,M18,M25,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21-E-122 All persons having claims against **MARGIE MARTIN KIVETT**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 4th day of June, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 4th day of March, 2021. Diane K. Saylor, Limited Personal Representative 220 North Tenth Avenue Siler City, NC 27344 M4,M11,M18,M25,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY Having qualified on the 23rd of February 2021, as Co-Administrators of the Estate of **CHARLES NEWELL HANCOCK, JR.**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the decedent to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 4th day of June, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to the estate should make immediate payment. This the 1st day of March, 2021. Daune Honeyutt and Shara Bunker, Co-Administrators of The Estate of Charles Newell Hancock, Jr. 213 Sugar Mill Road Sanford, NC 27332 1940 Chris Cole Road Sanford, NC 27332 Attorneys: Law Offices of W. Woods Doster, P.A. 115 Chatham Street, Suite 302 Sanford, NC 27332 M4,M11,M18,M25,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY ALL PERSONS, firms and corporations having claims against **GARY DEAN JACKSON**, deceased, of Chatham County, N.C., are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before Friday, June 4, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This day, Thursday, March 4, 2021. Rachel Jackson, Executor of the Estate of Gary Dean Jackson 278 Woodfield Court, Fuquay Varina, NC 27526 M4,M11,M18,M25,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY ALL PERSONS, firms and corporations having claims against **JOSEPH FIELDS ROBERTSON**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 11th day of June, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 11th day of March, 2021. William L. Robertson, Executor 1312 B Louisa Ln. Wilmington, NC 2840 3 M11,M18,M25,A1,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY The undersigned, having qual-

ified as Executor of the Estate of **TRUDY LETITIA SHAPCOTT** of Chatham County, North Carolina, hereby notifies all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned c/o David P. Nanney, Jr., Esq., P.O. Box 19766, Raleigh, North Carolina, 27619-9766, on or before the 11th day of June, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to the said estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned. This the 11th day of March, 2021. Robin Goldcott, Executor c/o David P. Nanney, Jr. Kirschbaum, Nanney, Keenan & Griffin, P.A. P. O. Box 19766 Raleigh, NC 27619-9766 M11,M18,M25,A1,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY The undersigned, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of **WILLIAM A. KOEHLNLINE**, Deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned at the offices of Marcus Hudson, Attorney at Law, 641 Rock Creek Road, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514, on or before the 14th day of June, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment. This 11th day of March, 2021. Evelyn Koehnline, Executor, Estate of William A. Koehnline Marcus Hudson, Attorney at Law 641 Rock Creek Road Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514 M11,M18,M25,A1,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21-E-120 All persons having claims against **JOSEPH FIELDS ROBERTSON**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 11th day of June, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 11th day of March, 2021. William L. Robertson, Executor 1312 B Louisa Ln. Wilmington, NC 2840 3 M11,M18,M25,A1,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21-E-134 All persons having claims against **MARY FANNIE BURKE (LOPOSSAY)**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 11th day of June, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 11th day of March, 2021. 1. Jeffrey Ray Burke, Co-Administrator 2. Dawn Marie Burke (Pate), Co-Administrator 785 Glovers Church Rd Siler City, NC 27344 M11,M18,M25,A1,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY The undersigned, having qual-

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY The undersigned, having qual-

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NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21 E 145 The undersigned, having qualified as Executrix of the Estate of **JERRY WALTER CATES**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, notifies all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned at her address, 1985 Andrews Store Road, Pittsboro, North Carolina, 27312, on or before the 11th day of June, 2021, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment. This 8th day of March, 2021. Lynn Rimmer Cates 1985 Andrews Store Road Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312

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M11,M18,M25,A1,4tc

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS
NORTH CAROLINA
CHATHAM COUNTY**
All persons, firms and corporations having claims against **FLORENCE AUTRY McCACHREN**, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit them to Susan Tera McCachren as Administrator of the Estate of Florence Autry McCachren on or before June 11, 2021, c/o Thomas J. Neagle, Attorney at

Law, 605 W. Main Street, Suite 104, Carrboro, North Carolina 27510, or this notice will be pled in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to the decedent are asked to make immediate payment to the above-named Administrator.
This the 11th day of March, 2021.
Susan Tera McCachren, Administrator
c/o Thomas J. Neagle, Attorney
605 W. Main Street, Suite 104 Carrboro, North Carolina 27510
Attorney for Estate: Thomas J. Neagle
Neagle Law Firm, PC
605 W. Main Street, Suite 104 Carrboro, North Carolina 27510

(919) 368-3536
M11,M18,M25,A1,4tc

PUBLIC NOTICE
Chatham County Schools' federal projects under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 are presently being developed. Projects included: Title I (Helping Disadvantaged Children Meet High Standards) Title II Title III (Language Acquisition) Title IV A Student Support and Academic Enrichment McKinney-Vento (Homeless Education) Migrant Education Program Career and Technical Education High school students can enroll, without cost, in college credit classes through the Career and College Promise program. This includes Career and Technical Education pathways of study. IDEA (Students with Disabilities) The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA-Part B, Public Law 108,446) Project is presently being amended. The Project describes the special education programs that Chatham County Schools proposes for Federal funding for the 2021-2022 School Year. Interested persons are encouraged to review amendments to the Project and make comments concerning the implementation of special education under this Federal Program. All comments will be considered prior to submission of the amended Project to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction in Raleigh, North Carolina. The IDEA-Part B Project is open to the public for review and comments during the week of April 12-16, 2021 in the office of Melvin Diggs, Executive Director Exceptional Children and Academically and Intellectually Gifted located at Horton Middle School, Central Office-South, Pittsboro, NC. These projects describe the programs that Chatham County Schools proposes for federal funding for the 2021-2022 school year. Non-profit private schools and interested persons are encouraged to review these federal guidelines for the above listed projects and indicate their interest in participation of the projects if qualified. These projects are being developed during April and May and are due to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction on June 30, 2021. The initial Equitable Services for Private Schools meeting will be held on April 20, 2021, at 2:00 PM via virtual platform. Interested parties are encouraged to contact the office of Carol Little, Executive Director Federal Programs and School Improvement, at Chatham County Board of Education, P.O. Box 128 / 369 West Street, Pittsboro, N.C., prior to April 20, 2021.
M11,M18,M25,A1,A8,A15,6tc

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS
NORTH CAROLINA
CHATHAM COUNTY
21-E-141**
All persons having claims against **CHARLOTTE BARE ALLSUP**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 18th day of June, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.
This the 18th day of March, 2021.
Thurman Allsup, Executor
1743 Dewitt Smith Rd
Pittsboro, NC 27312
M18,M25,A1,A8,4tp

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS
NORTH CAROLINA
CHATHAM COUNTY**
HAVING QUALIFIED, as Administrator of the Estate of **FRANCES MARSH**, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned on or before June 23, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.
This the 18th day of March, 2021.
Ronald P. Collins, Administrator of Frances Marsh Estate
117 West Raleigh Street
Siler City, North Carolina 27344
(919) 663-2533
M18,M25,A1,A8,4tp

**PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
TOWN OF GOLDSTON**
The Goldston Town Board of Commissioners will hold one (1) Legislative Public Hearing on Monday, April 6 at 7:00 pm. The Public Hearing will be conducted in person and remotely via teleconference software for the following items:
A Legislative public hearing request by the Town of Goldston to consider amendments to the Goldston Unified Development Ordinance; specifically, chapters 8.1.3 Exemption to Applicability, 8.1.9 General Definitions, and 8.5.1 Watershed Administrator and Duties Thereof.
SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES IN THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS MAY BE MADE FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC HEARING.
The purpose of the legislative public hearing is to provide interested parties with an opportunity to comment on the request. Pursuant to Section 2.17.5 of the Town's recently adopted Unified Development Ordinance, the hearing will be held jointly with the Town Planning Board.
If you wish to participate in the legislative public hearing you may speak in person (subject to Covid -19 limits), via Zoom or submit written comments for consideration by the Board.

The Comments will not be read but will be provided to the Board and included in the minutes. Written comments may be sent (via email or USPS) to the Town Clerk, Annie King-Gaines at akkgaines@americansouthgc.com. The Clerk will receive written comments to be included in the minutes for 24 hours after the meeting. Please sign up with the Clerk by 4:00 p.m. on April 6, 2021 if you wish to participate. Instructions on how to join the Meeting can be found on the Town's page under the County Planning Department website: <https://www.chathamnc.org/government/departments-programs/planning/town-of-goldston>
M25,A1,2tc

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS
NORTH CAROLINA
CHATHAM COUNTY**
All persons having claims against **JUNE ANN FILER aka JUNE A. FILER** of Chatham County, North Carolina, who died on the 9th day of November, 2020, are notified to present them to Trust Bank and James G. Filer, Co-Executors of the Estate of June Ann Filer aka June A. Filer in c/o Dean P. Broz, Attorney for the Estate, at Higgins, Frankstone, Graves & Morris, P. A., 1414 Raleigh Road, Suite 203, Exchange West at Meadowmont, Chapel Hill, NC 27517-8834 on or before July 1, 2021. Failure to present a claim in timely fashion will result in this Notice being pleaded in bar of recovery against the estate, the Co-Executors, and the devisees of June Ann Filer aka June A. Filer. Those indebted to June Ann Filer aka June A. Filer are asked to make prompt payment to the Estate.
Dean P. Broz
Higgins, Frankstone, Graves & Morris, P.A.
1414 Raleigh Road, Suite 203 Exchange West at Meadowmont
Chapel Hill, NC 27517-8834
M25,A1,A8,A15,4tc

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS
NORTH CAROLINA
CHATHAM COUNTY**
The undersigned,Suzanne L. Rose, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of **CABELL JEFFREY SLAYDON**, deceased, late of Chatham County, this is to notify all persons having claims against said estate to present them to the undersigned on or before the 25th Day of June, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned. This 25th day of March, 2021.
Suzanne L. Rose, Executor
c/o Moody, Williams, Atwater & Lee
PO Box 629
Siler City, NC 27344
919-663-2850
benatwater@chathamlawfirm.com
M25,A1,A8,A15,4tp

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS
NORTH CAROLINA
CHATHAM COUNTY**
The undersigned, Judy K. Branch and Janet C. Foxx, having qualified as Co-Executors of the Estate of **BETTY L. FOXF**, deceased, late of Chatham County, this is to notify all persons having claims against said estate to present them to the undersigned on or before the 25th Day of June, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned. This 25th Day of March, 2021.
Judy K. Branch, Co-Executor
3705 Brentwood Road
Raleigh, NC 27604
1-919-877-9754
Janet C. Foxx, Co-Executor
7108 W. Friendly Ave, Unit 310 Greensboro, NC 27410
1-786-374-1296
Moody, Williams, Atwater & Lee
PO Box 629
Siler City, NC 27344
919-663-2850
benatwater@chathamlawfirm.com
M25,A1,A8,A15,4tp

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS
NORTH CAROLINA
CHATHAM COUNTY**
The undersigned, Gladys W. Mattice, having qualified as Executrix of the Estate of **RAYMOND EARL MATTICE**, deceased, late of Chatham County, this is to notify all persons having claims against said estate to present them to the undersigned on or before the 25th Day of June, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned. This 25th Day of March, 2021.
Gladys W. Mattice, Executrix
300 Doc Gaines Road
PO Box 138
Bear Creek, NC 27207
1-919-548-5331
W. Ben Atwater, Jr.
Moody, Williams, Atwater & Lee
PO Box 629
Siler City, NC 27344
919-663-2850
benatwater@chathamlawfirm.com
M25,A1,A8,A15,4tp

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS
NORTH CAROLINA
CHATHAM COUNTY
21-E-171**
All persons having claims against **JOYCE POE**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 25th day of June, 2021, or this notice will

be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.
This the 25th day of March, 2021.
Jeanette G. Teague, Executrix
412 West 8th Street
Siler City, NC 27344
M25,A1,A8,A15,4tp

**IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE
NORTH CAROLINA3CHATHAM COUNTY**
DISTRICT COURT DIVISION
FILE NO. 08-CVD-456
COUNTY OF CHATHAM
Plaintiff, vs.
THE HEIRS, ASSIGNS OR DEWISEES
OF CHARLES GLENN HARRIS, ET AL
Defendants
PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
TO: The HEIRS, ASSIGNS or DEWISEES of CHARLES GLENN HARRIS and spouse, if any, or any other person or entity claiming thereunder, The HEIRS, ASSIGNS or DEWISEES of LUCILLE H. EVANS and spouse, if any, or any other person or entity claiming thereunder, and The HEIRS, ASSIGNS or DEWISEES of DAVID L. ATWATER and spouse, if any, or any other person or entity claiming thereunder
A pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action and notice of service of process by publication began on March 25, 2021.
The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: Foreclosure on tax parcel(s) more completely described in the Complaint, to collect delinquent ad valorem taxes (assessments). Plaintiff seeks to extinguish any and all claim or interest that you may have in said property.
You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than forty (40) days after the date of the first publication of notice stated above, exclusive of such date, being forty (40) days after March 25, 2021, or by May 4, 2021, and upon your failure to do so, the party seeking service of process by publication will apply to the Court for relief sought.
This the 17th day of March, 2021.
Zacchaeus Legal Services
Mark D. Bardill/Mark B. Bardill
Attorney for Plaintiff
NC Bar #12852/56782
310 W. Jones St.
P. O. Box 25
Trenton, North Carolina 28585
Telephone: (252) 448-4541
M25,A1,A8,3tc

**IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE
DISTRICT COURT DIVISION
FILE NO. 17-CVD-591
NORTH CAROLINA
CHATHAM COUNTY
COUNTY OF CHATHAM**
Plaintiff, vs
WILLIE D. ALSTON A/K/A WILLIS D. ALSTON, ET AL
Defendants.
NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
TO: JOSEPH L. RIGGSBEE and spouse, if any, and any HEIRS, ASSIGNS or DEWISEES of JOSEPH L. RIGGSBEE and spouse, if any, or any other person or entity claiming thereunder
A pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action and notice of service of process by publication began on March 25, 2021.
The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: Foreclosure on tax parcel(s) more completely described in the Complaint, to collect delinquent ad valorem taxes (assessments). Plaintiff seeks to extinguish any and all claim or interest that you may have in said property.
You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than forty (40) days after the date of the first publication of notice stated above, exclusive of such date, being forty (40) days after March 25, 2021, or by May 4, 2021, and upon your failure to do so, the party seeking service of process by publication will apply to the Court for relief sought.
This the 17th day of March, 2021
Zacchaeus Legal Services
Mark D. Bardill/Mark B. Bardill
Attorney for Plaintiff
NC Bar #12852/56782
310 W. Jones St.
P. O. Box 25
Trenton, North Carolina 28585
Telephone: (252) 448-4541
M25,A1,A8,3tc

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS
NORTH CAROLINA
CHATHAM COUNTY**
ALL PERSONS, firms and corporations having claims against **JOSEPH ANTHONY TARESCO**, deceased, of Chatham County, N.C., are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before June 25, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.
This 25th day of March, 2021.
Desiree Collins, Executrix
c/o Monroe, Wallace & Mor-den, P.A.
3225 Blue Ridge Road, Suite 117
Raleigh, NC 27612
M25,A1,A8,A15,4tp

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF CHATHAM**
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 10th day of March, 2021, as Executor of the ESTATE OF **CHERYL ELAINE JUNKMANN** Deceased, of Chatham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 24th day of June 2021, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted

to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 25th day of March 2021.
Brian Craig Junkmann, Executor
Estate of Cheryl Elaine Junkmann
c/o E. Jack Walker, Esquire
WALKER LAMBE, PLLC
PO BOX 51549
Durham, NC 27717-1549
M25,A1,A8,A15,4tc

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS
20-E-377
NORTH CAROLINA
CHATHAM COUNTY**
The undersigned, Joy McPherson, having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of **JOHN RUSSELL MCPHERSON**, deceased, late of Chatham County, this is to notify all persons having claims against said estate to present them to the undersigned on or before the 25th day of June, 2021, or this notice will be plead in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned. This the 25th day of March, 2021.
Joy McPherson, Administrator
C/O Shanelle K. Edmonds
Attorney for the Estate
Hopper Cummings, PLLC
Post Office Box 1455
Pittsboro, NC 27312
M25,A1,A8,A15,4tc

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS
20-E-587
NORTH CAROLINA
CHATHAM COUNTY**
The undersigned, Curtis Clark, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of **DORIS ELLIS CLARK**, deceased, late of Chatham County, this is to notify all persons having claims against said estate to present them to the undersigned on or before the 25th day of June, 2021, or this notice will be plead in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This the 25th day of March, 2021.
Curtis Clark, Executor
C/O Shanelle K. Edmonds
Attorney for the Estate
Hopper Cummings, PLLC
Post Office Box 1455
Pittsboro, NC 27312
M25,A1,A8,A15,4tc

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS
21-E-137
NORTH CAROLINA
CHATHAM COUNTY**
The undersigned, Richard Torbert and Arnold Torbert, having qualified as Co-Executors of the Estate of **REBA W. TORBERT**, deceased, late of Chatham County, this is to notify all persons having claims against said estate to present them to the undersigned on or before the 25th day of June, 2021, or this notice will be plead in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This the 25th day of March, 2021.
Richard Torbert and Arnold Torbert, Co-Executors
C/O Shanelle K. Edmonds
Attorney for the Estate
Hopper Cummings, PLLC
Post Office Box 1455
Pittsboro, NC 27312
M25,A1,A8,A15,4tc

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS
21-E-154
NORTH CAROLINA
CHATHAM COUNTY**
The undersigned, Laurie Feranec, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of **RICHARD H. MARKS**, deceased, late of Chatham County, this is to notify all persons having claims against said estate to present them to the undersigned on or before the 25th day of June, 2021, or this notice will be plead in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This the 25th day of March, 2021.
Laurie Feranec, Executor
C/O Shanelle K. Edmonds
Attorney for the Estate
Hopper Cummings, PLLC
Post Office Box 1455
Pittsboro, NC 27312
M25,A1,A8,A15,4tc

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS
21-E-153
NORTH CAROLINA
CHATHAM COUNTY**
The undersigned, Angela Foster, having qualified as Limited Personal Representative of the Estate of **GENEVA MCTILLMAN RODGERS**, deceased, late of Chatham County, this is to notify all persons having claims against said estate to present them to the undersigned on or before the 25th day of June, 2021, or this notice will be plead in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This the 25th day of March, 2021.
Angela Foster, Limited Personal Representative
C/O Shanelle K. Edmonds
Attorney for the Estate
Hopper Cummings, PLLC
Post Office Box 1455
Pittsboro, NC 27312
M25,A1,A8,A15,4tc

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS
NORTH CAROLINA**

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YOUR AD can be promoted in multiple markets with one easy and affordable ad placement. Your ad will be published in 114 NC newspapers for only \$375. You reach 1.7 million readers with the North Carolina Statewide Classified Ad Network. Call this newspaper's classified department at 919-663-3232 or visit www.ncpress.com.

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High-Speed Internet. We instantly compare speed, pricing, availability to find the best service for your needs. Starting at \$39.99/month! Quickly compare offers from top providers. Call 1-866-925-1505

ARE YOU LOOKING for a job or business opportunity? Roof Coatings manufacture looking for Sales team members and Installers, in North & South Carolina. Call LaVern Zook 740-656-0177.

FTCC. Fayetteville Technical Community College is now accepting applications for the following positions: College and Career Readiness Instructor - Adult High School English. Senior Grounds Technician. For detailed information and to apply, please visit our employment portal at: <https://faytechcc.peopleadmin.com/HumanResources> Office Phone: (910) 678-7342 Internet: <http://www.faytechcc.edu>. An Equal Opportunity Employer

FTCC. Fayetteville Technical Community College is now accepting applications for the following positions: Senior Secretary - Corporate & Industry Training. Data Management Technician - Instructional Design & Quality Assurance. For detailed information and to apply, please visit our employment portal at: <https://faytechcc.peopleadmin.com/> Human Resources Office Phone: (910) 678-7342 Internet:<http://www.faytechcc.edu>. An Equal Opportunity Employer.

COMPUTER & IT TRAINING PROGRAM! Train ONLINE to get the skills to become a Computer & Help Desk Professional now! Grants and Scholarships available for certain programs for qualified applicants. Call CTI for details! Call 833-990-0354. (M-F 8am-6pm ET)

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CHATHAM COUNTY
Having qualified as Executor of the Estate of **KATHERINE LYNNE MOHRFELD**, deceased of Chatham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned Executor, in care of Wendy A. Craig, P.A. Attorney-at-Law, 207 East State Street, Black Mountain, North Carolina 28711, on or before June 25, 2021, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.
All persons, firms or corporations indebted to the said estate will please make immediate payment.
This the 25th day of March, 2021.
Katherine Hamilton Ross, Executor of the Estate of **KATHERINE LYNNE MOHRFELD**, Deceased
c/o Wendy A. Craig, P.A. 207 East State Street
Black Mountain, North Carolina 28711
M25,A1,A8,A15,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
All persons, firms and corporations having claims against **PAUL MILOWSKY**, Deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are hereby notified to exhibit them to Andrew S. Bullard, Executor, on or before the 23rd day of June, 2021 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to the Estate are asked to make immediate payment to the above-named Executor.
This 23rd day of March, 2021.
Andrew S. Bullard, Executor
Smith Debnam
PO Box 176010
Raleigh, NC 27619-6010
M25,A1,A8,A15,4tc

PUBLIC SALE
ACE SELF STORAGE ("LIENOR")
105 WEST FIFTH STREET, SILER CITY, NC, WILL HOLD THIS PUBLIC SALE OF PERSONAL PROPERTY AT ITS STORAGE FACILITY ON FRIDAY, APRIL 30, 2021 AT 11:00 A.M. IN SILER CITY, NC.
THE FOLLOWING PERSONS AND PROPERTY ARE SUBJECT TO SALE:
UNIT B-33-MAMIE ALSTON
1305 NEW HAVEN STREET
SILER CITY, N.C. 27344
UNIT B-35-SANDY ALSTON
618 NORTH SECOND AVE., APT. B
SILER CITY, N.C. 27344
UNIT B-3D-CECIL CHEEK
1305 NEWLAND
SILER CITY, NC. 27344
UNIT B-3E-TARA DOWNING
311 JOE BROWN ROAD
SILER CITY, N. C. 27344
UNIT B-29-AL MENDEZ
120 GREEN MEADOW COURT
PITTSBORO, N.C. 27312
UNIT B-27- JOHN MCNERNY
2951 NORTH OCEAN BLVD.
BOCA RATON, FL 33431
UNIT B-7A-DANIELLE RILEY
3379 WOODY STORE ROAD
SILER CITY, N.C. 27344
UNIT B-23-ERICK UMANA

1525 DUET DRIVE
SILER CITY, N.C. 27344
UN IT B-6-GERALD GREENE
868 SILER CITY GLENDON ROAD
SILER CITY N.C. 27344
M25,A1,A8,A15,A22,A29,6tc

TOWN OF PITTSBORO
2021 ANNUAL RESURFACING PROJECT
AMENDMENT NO. 1, MARCH 22, 2021
The following is an amendment to the Town of Pittsboro's resurfacing project. The bid was originally stated to be accepted on March 26, 2021. The bids will now be received April 1, 2021 and must be received by 11:00 A.M. Proposals may be mailed to: John Poteat, Director of Public Utilities, Town of Pittsboro, P.O. Box 759, Pittsboro, N.C. 27312
AND Kent Jackson, Town Engineer, Town of Pittsboro, P.O. Box 759, Pittsboro, N.C. 27312
Or they may be hand delivered to: Kent Jackson, Town Engineer, Town of Pittsboro, 480 Hillsboro Street, Chatham Mills, Suite 400, Pittsboro, N.C. 27312
Chatham Street From US 15-501 to Masonic, Length: 873, Width 24, Quantity [SY], 2328
Chatham From Masonic to Small, Length: 552, Width 16, Quantity 981
Masonic From East to Thompson Length: 757, Width 32, Quantity 2692
Masonic From Thompson to End Length: 1387, Width 18, Quantity 2774
MLK From East to Thompson Length: 550, Width 19, Quantity 1161
MLK From East to End Length: 262, Width 19, Quantity 553
Rectory From Hanks to West Salisbury Length: 356, Width 18, Quantity 712
W Salisbury From West to Hwy. 87 Length: 953, Width 20, Quantity 2117
M25,1tc

CHATHAM COUNTY REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)
Solid Waste & Recycling Scrap Tire Recycling & Disposal
Chatham County is issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) from qualified companies for collection, transportation, recycling and disposal of tires and other scrap rubber and has the necessary equipment, personnel, facilities, expertise, financial resources and management skills to provide a high level of service.
The complete RFP document and details are located on the Chatham County Current Bids and Proposals webpage at: <http://www.chathamnc.org/government/current-bid-proposal-opportunities>.
The County is requesting 2 hard copies and one electronic PDF file, included on appropriate media, with all attachments, including signatory pages. The submittal package must be received by April 22, 2021 at 5:00 PM EST, to one of the following delivery addresses:
Postal Address: Kim Johnson,

Chatham County Finance Office, P. O. Box 608, Pittsboro, NC 27312, or Street Address: Kim Johnson, County Managers Office, Courthouse Annex, 12 East Street, Pittsboro, NC 27312.
All inquiries relating to this request must be in writing and submitted by e-mail to Kim Johnson at purchasing@chathamcountync.gov. Late submittals will not be accepted under any circumstance and will not be opened or reviewed. All inquiries must be made no later than 12:00 PM on Thursday, April 15, 2021 to purchasing@chathamcountync.gov or by fax to (919) 542-8272. No RFP inquiries by telephone please.
All addenda will be posted by 5:00 pm on Friday, April 16, 2021 and available at <http://www.chathamnc.org/government/current-bid-proposal-opportunities>.
Chatham County is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of sex, marital status, race, color, creed, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or disability.
M25,1tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
All persons having claims against **LILLIE PORTER BOULDIN**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 25th day of June, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.
This the 25th day of March, 2021.
Co-Executrix: Glenda Bouldin Andrews
1841 Hillside Dairy Rd
Pittsboro, NC 27312
Co-Executrix: Donna Bouldin Moore
1322 E. Meadows Rd
Eden, NC 27288
M25,A1,A8,A15,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
The undersigned, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of **CAROL WHARTON PAGE**, Deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate to exhibit them to the undersigned at the offices of Tillman, Whichard & Cagle, PLLC, 501 Eastowne Drive, Suite 130, Chapel Hill, NC 27514, on or before the 25th day of June, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the estate will please make immediate payment.
This 25th day of March, 2021.
Philip Howard Page, Executor
Estate of Carol Wharton Page
Tillman, Whichard & Cagle, PLLC
501 Eastowne Drive, Suite 130
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
M25,A1,A8,A15,4tp

‘Mom, we have a situation’

One recent Monday, The Kid joined us for dinner. While I was out in my pursuit of filthy lucre at my new job, Petey cooked. And, it wasn't canned soup, frozen pizza, or microwave

popcorn.
He made slow-cooked country pork ribs.
But, with an asterisk.
You see, Gentle Reader, the night before, I had prepared them for the oven. Petey just had to set

the oven, turn it on, and place the ribs inside. But



I came home to a delicious smelling house, and dinner was almost prepared.
The menu was buttery grits with a big helping of sauteed spinach (peas and carrots for my spouse, who's not a fan of cooked spinach), covered in silky, shredded, unctuous pork. Sounds great, right? Yeah, not so fast.
When I went to stir the grits, cooking in a big pot of 2% milk and the water the grits had soaked in, it looked kind of strange. It looked like we were making cheese, rather than grits. It looked like the milk had curdled.
Evidently, the milk on its way to the grocery store and then me had been handled badly. I

stirred the grits and saw those tiny little curds of doom. I looked at The Kid, The Kid looked at me, and we knew we had to come up with a plan B for dinner.

I always keep a pack of ciabatta rolls in the freezer, and all that shredded pig and sauteed greens gave us an idea.
We would make sandwiches. I sent Petey to the store for a bag of our favorite chips. The Kid got Cool Ranch Doritos, I requested those deeply browned kettle potato chips, and my husband chose sour cream cheddar Ruffles.
It was one of the best sandwiches I've ever had.
The leftover pork then made another delicious sandwich.
We made Cubans.
But what we really did —when handed the lemons of curdled milk in our grits — was to make pork lemonade.
Delicious, delicious pork lemonade.
Thanks for your time.
Contact me at dm@bullcity.mom.



Photo courtesy of Debbie Matthews
A pressed Cuban sandwich is a tasty treat.

Petey Pork

3 pounds country pork ribs, cut into 1 1/2 chunks	individual cloves
1 large white onion, cut into chunks	Kosher salt
1 head of garlic, broken into	Orange pepper (found in Latino markets, use lemon pepper if you can't find it)

Place the meat and veg onto a very large piece of parchment. Fold the paper closed. Cover and seal completely with a very large piece of foil. Place into large, shallow pan. Place into middle rack of the oven. Set oven to 300°. Cook for 5 1/2 hours.
Remove from oven, open the pack, let cool before removing from pack and pan.
When it cools so that you can work with it, remove all the veg and discard
Shred with fork or by hand and use as desired.

Sauteed Spinach

1 pound baby spinach	vegetable oil
1 yellow onion, chopped	Juice of 1 lemon
15 gratings of fresh nutmeg	Salt and pepper to taste (so don't forget to taste!)

1 tablespoon
Wilt spinach: press all the spinach into a large microwave-safe bowl. Cover with a paper towel. Microwave about 3 1/2 minutes or until it's all completely wilted. When it's cooled enough to handle place on cutting board and roughly chop.
Heat a skillet and add oil. Place in chopped onions, salt, pepper, and nutmeg. Cook until the onion has begun to brown. Add spinach and cook, stirring occasionally, until it's dry, and it begins to stick a little to the skillet bottom.
Remove from heat, add lemon juice, check for seasoning, and serve.

Plan B Sandwiches

4 ciabatta rolls	Mrs. Campbell's Chow
Cooked, shredded pork	chow
Sauteed spinach	Garlic mayonnaise

Heat the rolls in the oven; set the oven for 350°. When it came to temp, put the frozen rolls under running water. Put them right onto the oven rack, and before closing the door, splash in about ¼ cup of water (the steam gets the crust bakery-fresh crispy). Cook for 13 minutes before removing them to a cooling rack.
Split the rolls and spoon on a bed of the spinach, then layer on the pork. Top it with some sweet and tangy chow chow and a drizzle of garlic mayo.

Cuban Sandwiches

1 loaf of bread with fluffy insides and a crust that's not too hard (like unseasoned Italian or Puerto Rican bread)	7 or 8 slices of deli ham
2 cups shredded pork	4 or 5 slices Swiss cheese
	Bread and butter pickle slices
	Yellow mustard

Slice the bread lengthwise. Spread mustard on the bottom slice, then layer on pork, ham, cheese, and 10 or so pickles.
Best made on a panini press, but I don't have one, so I made one using my electric griddle.
If you don't have a griddle, cut it in half and use two skillets.
On a griddle: place the sandwich on the preheated (325°) griddle. Cover with a metal 9x13 baking pan. Place heavy cans on top of pan. This will press and toast the bread, and the steam under the pan will get the cheese melty.
When the first side is done (8-10 minutes), carefully flip to the other side and cover with pan and weights again for another 8-ish minutes. When it's fully toasted and crispy on both sides, lay on cutting board and allow to sit, undisturbed for 5 minutes.
Slice into four rectangles then cut the four pieces in half on the diagonal. Serves 4.

MARCH IS NATIONAL COLORECTAL CANCER MONTH

PREVENTION IS THE BEST MEDICINE

— Pop Quiz —

1 Which of the following cancers can be *prevented* with screening?

(a) Prostate (b) Breast (c) Colon

Colon Cancer

Both breast and prostate cancer are diagnosed after cancer has already formed. In the colon, polyps form before cells become cancerous.

2 At what age should you get a colon cancer screening?

Age 50

If you have a family history of colon cancer, you may need to be tested at a younger age.

3 Where should you have your colon cancer screening?

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