

Chatham News + Record

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'Tiger King Park' cats find refuge at Pittsboro's Carolina Tiger Rescue

BY D. LARS DOLDER
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — Carolina Tiger Rescue now counts four celebrity cats among its newest residents: rescued tigers from Tiger King Park, the Oklahoma private zoo made famous in a Netflix true-crime series. The tigers were among 68 big cats seized from the complex last month in a large-scale rescue by the U.S. Dept. of Justice and several accredited sanctuaries, including Carolina Tiger Rescue. The cats included lions, tigers, lion-tiger hybrids and a jaguar, according to CTR officials. The operation was the latest in a series of federal interventions as

part of a months-long investigation into "Endangered Species Act violations" at Jeff and Lauren Lowe's Tiger King Park, a CTR release said. In early May, "a judge found the couple in contempt for failing to comply with court orders to employ a qualified veterinarian and establish a program of veterinary care for the animals," according to the Associated Press. The facility and animals are most famous, though, for their prominent role in the Netflix show, "Tiger King: Murder, Mayhem and Madness," which explored an investigation into the park's former zookeeper. Joseph Maldonado-Passage — better known as Joe Exotic, an eccentric,

mullet-sporting, cultural sensation, singer and one-time presidential candidate — is now serving a 22-year prison sentence for attempted murder. Carolina Tiger Rescue is caring for the four tigers in its possession while the Justice Department seeks their permanent forfeiture. "While in Carolina Tiger Rescue's care, they will receive the best in veterinary care, diets, daily enrichment and enclosure space and design," Louise Orr, the sanctuary's communications director, said in a release. Orr declined a News + Record request for further comment on See **TIGER**, page A7

CHATHAM BEVERAGE DISTRICT

The Plant unveils new Bath House

BY D. LARS DOLDER
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — It's not often businesses host ribbon-cutting ceremonies for their lavatories, but last Wednesday's Bath House reveal at The Plant on Lorax Lane matched the site's commitment to "quirkiness." The new Bath House isn't what it might sound like — it's not a meeting place for public bathing, nor any of the more tawdry operations sometimes associated with the name. It's a new standalone building housing three private bathrooms. "You might think this is a bit quirky to celebrate a bunch of toilets," said Tami Schwerin, The Plant's co-owner and founder of Abundance NC, an event-planning company and non-profit incubator. "But this is by far a lot more." In keeping with The Plant's whimsical aura, the Bath House bathrooms were decorated to distinguish each stall from run-of-the-mill restrooms. The aesthetics were designed and assembled by a

See **BATH HOUSE**, page A9

EQUITY IN EDUCATION

Nearly 32% of CCS students are Hispanic. What services are offered to them?

BY VICTORIA JOHNSON
AND HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

Editor's note: In this second of a series of reports, the News + Record is examining school equity in Chatham, looking specifically at the services the district provides for Hispanic students and families. Future installments in the series will provide a deeper dive into various areas of school equity.

Sitting in Jordan-Matthews' auditorium nearly four years ago, Mexican immigrant Guadalupe Tavera remembers thinking, "My God, why don't I know English?"

Her son, Ervin Martinez, was just about to start 9th grade at J-M, and the school held a meeting to inform parents about its requirements and curricula. While various school staff presented in English, a school interpreter translated the information for Tavera and other Spanish-speaking parents via translation headsets. Still, Tavera said she didn't understand the meeting.

"It was very fast," she told the News + Record in Spanish. "(The interpreter) said a little, nothing more, just what little she could say before another speaker came and said something else. ... I had a lot of questions, but there wasn't time for them to help me clear up my doubts.

"So I felt, wow, overwhelmed because I asked myself, 'How am I going



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Ricardo Valladares, dual-language teacher at Chatham County Schools, in his 2nd-grade classroom at Siler City Elementary.

to help my son?"

Later, the Hispanic Liaison's Selina Lopez answered her questions. Still, that experience, Tavera said, stands out to her as one of the only times she felt disadvantaged as a Spanish-speaking mother in a predominantly English-language school system.

Chatham County Schools has more than 2,700 Hispanic students, according to the district's May 2021 Ethnic Enrollment report, or 31.6% of its total student population. In the district's Siler City schools, those numbers are higher: 65.5% of students at Siler

City Elementary are Hispanic, 73.4% at Virginia Cross Elementary, 71% at Chatham Middle School and 62.6% at Jordan-Matthews High School, according to the same report.

In recent years, the district — which offers a certified dual language program at five of its schools — increased its translation services, CCS's Amanda Hartness told the News + Record, after recognizing the need to provide better access to information and services for Hispanic/Latino students and families.

See **EQUITY**, page A3

Siler City Police Department carries out major drug investigations

BY D. LARS DOLDER
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — The Siler City Police Department, in partnership with North Carolina Alcohol Law Enforcement, conducted two search and seizure operations last month, producing almost 200 charges for drug sale and other crimes.

On May 5, SCPD officers and ALE agents "executed several search warrants for the sale and distribution of illegal narcotics, weapons violations and violations of probation and parole," SCPD Chief Mike Wagner said in a press release.

The months-long investigation produced 173 charges against 12 people, including seven for illegal alcohol sales, 91 drug charges, six miscellaneous charges and 69 felony charges. Seven firearms were also seized, according to the press release.

On the same day, Siler City Police Dept., ALE agents and the North Carolina Highway Patrol served a search warrant on the home at 812 North Chatham Ave. Siler City. Officers located and seized 61.2 grams of marijuana, 6.7 grams

See **RAID**, page A9

DA's office initiates extradition of suspected Siler City murderer

BY D. LARS DOLDER
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — A specialized team of law enforcement agents will retrieve Sergio "Yovani" Rodriguez Pereira — the primary suspect in a Siler City murder case who was found last month in Georgia — and return him to Chatham County to begin court proceedings within about two weeks, according to the managing assistant district attorney for Chatham and Orange counties.

Rodriguez has been wanted for almost six months since the killing of Ramon Hernandez in Siler City. Hernandez, 28, died Dec. 20 in the UNC-Chapel Hill Medical Center after he was shot several times in the torso.

He'd been found earlier the same day on Waterford Street after authorities received reports of several gunshots.

A witness later identified Rodriguez — a Siler City resident and Hernandez's brother-in-law — as the shooter. The Chatham County Sheriff's Office charged Rodriguez, 24, with one count of first-degree murder and three counts of assault with a deadly weapon, but were unable to find him. On May 18, U.S. Marshals apprehended Rodriguez in Gwinnett County, Georgia, where he remains in custody without bond, according to Chatham County Sheriff's Office Lt. Sara Pack.

Rodriguez will stand trial for his suspected crimes in Chatham County after an extradition team, in cooperation with the local district attorney's office, returns him to local custody.

"What most people don't know is we

See **MURDER**, page A7

THE CN+R Q&A | FRANKLIN GOMEZ FLORES

Chatham's first Latino commissioner reflects on his first six months in office

Last November, Chatham County narrowly elected its first Latino county commissioner, Franklin Gomez Flores, to replace incumbent Andy Wilkie as District 5's representative. Gomez Flores took office a month later and has now been serving as commissioner for nearly six months. This week, we speak with him to see how the job's been treating him as well as how he's used his role to advocate for the county's Hispanic community, which was a central part of his campaign.

You've been a county commissioner for about six months now. So, is the role what you expected it to be? In what ways has the job met and/or defied your expectations?

I definitely had my expectations. I think the first months of my first time serving were unique. It began during a pandemic, in the midst of the cyber incident, with the first significant project being the Capital Improvement Plan. It definitely has required a lot of reading, listening and learning.

Meetings can occur at various times during the day, and some weeks are heavier than others, making it difficult to have a full-time job during the first or second shift. I am glad I had anticipated that and that I positioned myself for the time commitment.

See **REFLECT**, page A13

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

Siler City's City Hall is currently under renovation. The 1st and 2nd floors are closed to the public. The Planning and Community Development Department is located in the basement and can be accessed through the far left door facing E. 3rd St. Parking is available at the 100 block of E. 3rd St.

The Friends of the Chatham Community Library has canceled 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: friends-cl.org.

Chatham County Council on Aging: Both centers are closed at this time until July. If you need to pick up supplies, call the Siler City or Pittsboro location or check our website at chatham-coa.org.

ON THE AGENDA

The Siler City Board of Commissioners will meet at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, June 7, at the Library Conference Room at 500 N. Second Ave. in Siler City.

The Chatham County Board of Education has changed the date for the next regular meeting to June 7. The meeting begins at 5:30 p.m. in the George Moses Horton Middle School multipurpose room.

The Chatham SWCD Board Meeting will take place at 7 p.m. on June 10. If you wish to attend this meeting, reach out to Brandy Oldham at 919-545-8440 for details. We will also have a teleconference number for attendees who wish to attend remotely.

Chatham County Public Libraries has reinstated its pre-COVID hours of operation, at all three branch locations.

In honor of LGBT Pride Month in June, **Chatham Community Library** will play a role in highlighting diversity and the many contributions of the LGBT community by offering a weeklong virtual screening of the documentary, *Deep Run* (2015), running June 10-17. This program is free and open to the public. Access to the virtual screening will be available beginning June 10. A password is required at the time of viewing. Individuals should contact social.library@chathamlibraries.org to request the password or for additional information. Residents may also visit the libraries' website, www.chathamlibraries.org, or contact the Library at (919) 545-8084 or rita.vanduinen@chathamlibraries.org for more information.

Siler City Parks and Recreation invites you to start your days off right with a few laps at the Indoor Walking Program each weekday morning, Monday thru Friday, from 7 to 9 a.m., at the Ernest Ramsey Gymnasium Indoor Walking Track, 512 East 6th Street. The program is free and no pre-registration is required. Operations are subject to COVID-19 guidelines and mask requirement indoors. For more information, visit www.silercity.org or contact Siler City Parks and Recreation at 919-742-2699 or email recreation@silercity.org.

THURSDAY

Pittsboro Farmers Market is open with seasonable items year-round from 3 to 6 p.m. on Thursdays, at 287 East St.

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:

The Siler City Parks and Recreation Department announces the Bray Park Aquatic Facility had opened for the 2021 season with modified operations. The pool will operate through Labor Day weekend and is open Monday-Friday from 4:30-6:30pm during the School Year, Monday-Friday from 12 - 6 p.m. during the summer months, and Saturday and Sunday from 12 - 6 p.m. General admission includes a \$5 entry fee for ages 3 and over. Children ages 2 and under receive free entry. Senior Citizens, 50 or better receive a 50% discount. Siler City is offering Two-Fifty Tuesdays again where patrons may enjoy the pool each Tuesday when the entry fee is only \$2.50. To adhere to COVID-19 guidelines, masks/face coverings are encouraged for all patrons when in the bathhouse and not able to socially distance at least 6-feet from others. Pool furniture will be available with sanitation stations located on the pool deck for patrons to utilize. Outside furniture is not permitted. To schedule swim times for daycares and camps, to register for swim lessons, purchase season passes, or to rent the pool for a pool party, contact Carolina Pool Management at 336-854-8884.

Chatham County Public Libraries invite families with young children to enjoy the great outdoors while

experiencing the joy of reading this summer with Outdoor Story Time. These programs will be offered June 14 through August 31, with the following weekly schedule: Mondays at 10:30 a.m. - Natural Chef Café seating area on the Central Carolina Community College, Pittsboro Campus, adjacent to the Chatham Community Library, 197 NC Hwy 87 N, Pittsboro; Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m. - Washington Avenue Park picnic shelter, 1305 Washington Avenue, Siler City; and Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. at Goldston Public Library lawn, 9235 Pittsboro-Goldston Rd, Goldston. Story time is geared toward children who have not yet entered kindergarten (ages 2-5), but anyone is welcome to join in on the fun. Children will hear stories, sing songs and enjoy more activities. Story times will be offered rain or shine. Chatham County Public Libraries are pleased to partner with Central Carolina Community College and the Siler City Parks and Recreation Department to offer these programs.

Chatham County Public Libraries invite children and teens to participate in its 2021 Virtual Summer Reading Challenge "Tails and Tales" from June 3 through July 31. This program, sponsored by the Friends of the Chatham Community Library, is open to children and teens, ages 2 and up. Readers will participate online this year by signing up on the libraries' Beanstack site, https://chathamnc.beanstack.org, and win prizes for completing 10 hours of reading. Using Beanstack, readers can log their time and titles online, as well as create book reviews for others to see. All readers who reach the 10-hour goal will earn a free book and will be entered into a grand prize drawing for a \$50 gift certificate to McIntyre's Books. The Virtual Summer Reading Challenge kicks off online on June 3rd at 4 p.m. with a special program "Animal Stories in African Art," an interactive virtual program hosted by the N.C. Museum of Art. This event will be most appropriate for children ages 4-10, but everyone is invited to participate and learn. Registration information can be found on the libraries' online Events Calendar.

Everyone is invited to the **Ribbon Cutting Ceremony** of the New Chatham County ABC Store at 10435 U.S. 64 Hwy. East, Apex, Wednesday, June 16 at 10 a.m., located next to Cruiser's at the intersection of Hwy. 64 E. and Farrington Road.

Central Carolina Community College will host a basketball camp for 3rd through 8th graders from 5:30-8:30 p.m. July 26-29. The \$100 cost includes

snack and drink each day, and a CCCC camp T-shirt. For more information or to register for the Cougar Basketball Camp, visit www.cccc.edu/sports-camps/ or contact Athletic Director Jonathan Hockaday at jhockaday@ccc.edu.

Central Carolina Community College summer volleyball camp will be held Monday through Friday, July 12-16. It is open to rising 3rd to 5th graders. Registration fee of \$75 includes T-shirt. Registration/check-in is at 8 a.m., with sessions from 8:30-11 a.m. Class limited to 12 participants. The Cougar Volleyball Camp for rising 6th through 8th graders (middle school) will be held Monday through Friday, July 12-16. Registration/check-in time is 1 p.m., with session times from 1:30-4 p.m. Registration fee of \$75 includes a T-shirt. Class limited to 16 participants. The Cougar Volleyball Training Workouts for rising 9th through 12th graders will be held Monday through Friday, July 12-16. Registration/check-in time is 6 p.m., with session times from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Registration fee of \$75 includes a T-shirt. Class limited to 16 participants. For more information or to register for the Cougar Volleyball Camp, visit www.cccc.edu/sports-camps/ or contact Athletic Director Jonathan Hockaday at jhockaday@ccc.edu.

The Chatham Historical Museum is open Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. We will be following the Governor's directive on occupancy, masks, and social distancing. Adult and kid friendly; no admission fee. Don't miss our new exhibit of the paintings of Annie Lutterloh Bynum. 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 open at the Food Lion Shopping Center. Store hours are Tuesday until Saturday, 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. Masks are required and hand sanitizer

is also available. Proceeds provide support for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and promote community education in collaboration with Chatham County.

Pittsboro Youth Theater. All campers will learn a variety of theater skills, rehearse and perform a live play at Sweet Bee Theater. Camps will be led by experienced Pittsboro Youth Theater Director(s) and Assistant(s). Camp themes include Princess Camp, Fairy Camp, Jungle Camp, and Alien Camp. There will also be a 3-week musical intensive one resulting in performances of Frozen Jr., as well as a 2-week intensive for younger campers resulting in performances of Frozen Kids. Enrollment is open now on a first-come, first-served basis. Ages: 6-12; 3 weeks for ages 10-18. Dates: Weekly camps, 2-week summer intensive, and 3-week summer intensive, June 14 - August 13, 9 am to 5 pm, (early drop-off and late pick-up for an additional fee). Frozen Jr. and Frozen Kids: See website for details, COVID-19 Precautions, full details and accommodations - PYT Marketing Team, pytmktg@gmail.com - 18A E. Salisbury St., Pittsboro; 919-533-6997.

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 year did S&T's Soda Shoppe open in Pittsboro?
 Find the answer in this issue for your chance to win a \$25 Visa Gift Card!

Wednesday Spotlight
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VIEWPOINTS

Making the most of an 'I'm sorry'

Parenting is a difficult job, an enterprise made tougher when the chemistry of multiple blood-related kidlets interacting within the same four walls turns combustible.

BILL HORNER III
 Publisher + Editor

I've seen it happen a lot. My wife and I raised three children to adulthood. So many things about that experience were remarkable, but two things in particular never failed to astonish us:

1. Babysitters who cared for the kids at our house, or at their own, always, *always* marveled to us about how well-behaved they were. We always, *always* were incredulous at

that bit of news, and, as parents who can't possibly fathom their own being nice to each other, we'd wonder aloud who made off with our brood and replaced them with courteous, polite and mannerly replicas.

Which made #2 all the more vexing ...

2. Put all three of our kids in the same room (or car, particularly) and let enough time go by, and chaos (and inevitably tears) often occurred. Drop that number to two, though — any two, the combination didn't matter — and they paired off as best friends. Three = turbulence; two = tranquility.

Thankfully, today, our three — now ages 28, 26 and 24 — are close. No more fighting, name-calling, hitting or pestering. Rather, they're mutually supportive, loving and gracious, and go out of their way

when a brother (or sister) is in need.

What was our secret? Danged if I know.

But one practice we insisted upon, I think, may have played a role: we taught our children how to apologize, and to do it the right way.

Apologies weren't a matter of facing each other, uttering a grunted "SORRY!" under duress and then making up with a stiff side-hug. Figuring that unreasonable behavior was a problem of the heart, we focused there. Doing so gave the offender room (space and time) to look inward to think about the cause of the conflict and their role in escalation.

We knew we'd taught and trained them well; reflection on the matter at hand should, given the love we poured into them and a little time for an

emotional re-set, result in enough self-reflection that awareness (and regret) would occur. The nurtured heart would come alive.

Here's the kicker: next, the offender would have the responsibility of writing a letter of apology. We didn't dictate the terms, but we insisted on two simple things: say **WHAT** you're sorry for (specifics, please) and **WHY** you're sorry. In writing.

Once delivered to the hurt party, then *that* child would have a chance to practice the art of forgiveness.

This process wasn't always smooth. It happened with enough regularity, however, that my wife Lee Ann kept many of those little hand-scribbled notes of apology — including a few our children wrote to us for infractions we weren't

even aware of until said note was placed in our hands by a contrite child.

An ancillary benefit, of course, is that the principle was reinforced as we parents practiced what we preached. Not being a perfect dad, I've had a number of occasions (including one on a family trip back in April) to sit with Zachary or Addison or Karis and simply say: "I blew it. That was wrong of me. I'm so sorry. Can you please find it in your heart to forgive me?"

They always did. We nurtured our kids' hearts. Now they nurture each other's. I can't be more thankful to see their hearts flourishing still.

Bill Horner III can be reached at bhorner3@chathamnr.com and on Twitter @billthethird.

Saying 'never' good way to wind up being wrong

Through the years I've tried to avoid making too many absolute statements.



BOB WACHS
 Movin' Around

It's not that I don't have some basic core beliefs that, while maybe open for conversation, aren't open for change.

Rather, it's that I've come to realize that the saying which I heard for years before experiencing it myself is true — namely that you ought to keep your words soft and sweet because you never know when you might have to eat them.

So I don't often say or use the word "never," as in when I was a boy I noted to anyone who would listen, "You'll never catch me eating turnip greens." The transformation in my taste buds is complete and today, I often order them when eating out.

Through the years, however, there have been a few other similar revisions of behavior associated with "never." I once was given a pink dress shirt which I vowed never to wear but which I did, since it was a gift, a time or two, before accidentally spilling ink or gravy — I forget which — across the front of it. And it really was an accident.

And then my uncle was the local Ford dealer and it was sort of family tradition that we would never drive anything other than one of his offerings. Today we have a Dodge and not too long ago drove around in a Chrysler. I hope he wouldn't be upset with me if he were still around.

The list could go on for a little ways, but of all the times "never" crept into my vocabulary the biggest reversal came about over the issue of bottled water. Water is, of course, a necessity for life and still, I think, in most places fairly plentiful. The folks in Texas might dispute that but around here we're not all that close to running out. Water used to be that thing that was always "free," as in no charge for it. Restaurants would give you a glass; there was no charge if you had it with your meal.

I'm not sure who the fellow was or exactly when it all started but sometime since the Spanish-American War somebody started putting water into plastic bottles and selling it for a quarter or 50 cents or whatever they could get for it. Soon entire industries were busy bottling it and selling it in containers from one-swallow size to office dispensers.

For a while there was the general feeling that some bottles that said "Crystal Clear Mountain Water" on the label, complete with a picture of a waterfall from somewhere, was actually tap water out of the Newark, New Jersey, water system. And maybe some of it was early on but I don't think the Federal Trade Commission would or did allow that.

As the interest and the acceptance of it grew I often said, "I can't believe people pay a dollar for an 8-ounce bottle of water. My grandfather or my father wouldn't believe it. I'm never going to buy a bottle of water."

I still don't think they would but I can't make that statement any longer. Actually it's been awhile since that fateful day and while I still don't do it much, I have done it — that is buy a bottle or two ... or three .. or more, depending on how hot and/or thirsty I was.

I still remember the event. We were at a theater while on vacation watching a play. The show was long; it was the dead of summer and the heat must have been a gazillion degrees, both outside and inside, perhaps as an incentive to buy some water. At intermission, sugary sodas just didn't seem like a good idea so I gave in and bought water. Kept the empty bottle for a long time. Couldn't believe I'd done what I did.

I don't give it a second thought now; I've bought water out of the cooler at the convenience store as well as the 24-pack on sale at my favorite grocer. But I am working on a project along those same lines, a business venture that, if successful, will bring me untold fame and fortune. I call it "Air in a Jug."

See, the deal is the air is already in there; I don't have to bottle it. I just can't figure out how to market it. But I don't think a couple of dollars per jug is too much. Do you?

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.



In limbo, do no harm

Limbo refers to an uncertain period of waiting for a decision or resolution.



ANDREW TAYLOR-TROUTMAN
 Hope Matters

Some religious traditions speculate about the limbo status of the soul in the afterlife. My co-columnist today, Paul Isom, says he learned about limbo not from church but from the 1968 Walt Disney movie "Blackbeard's Ghost," in which Dean Jones conjures up Peter Ustinov (Blackbeard) who has been "bound in limbo" by a curse. Blackbeard can only move on to the next place once he has performed a good deed.

Similarly, we want to know, what in the world are we to do with our masks? (How do we move on to the next phase? Hasn't wearing a mask for the past year been enough?)

We met for coffee the other day. We are both fully vaccinated. We wore masks to the sidewalk table, then removed them once we sat down. This is standard protocol and procedure now, but we still made sure we were both comfortable with masklessness. Simple meeting and greeting has its awkward moments these days.

Watching pedestrians, there

was not a consistent use of masks. Some wore theirs over their noses and mouths, others as chinstraps. Still others wore no masks. Some wore their masks inside and outside the coffee shop. Others just inside. Of course, no one pins their vaccination card to the front of his or her shirt, so it's hard to know everyone's reasoning.

But why is there such discrepancy regarding masks worn by vaccinated people?

The term "performative" feels too judgmental. A mask-wearer could have cancer or an autoimmune disorder. That person could have unvaccinated children at home. They could act out of a desire to protect themselves or their loved ones.

Yet, we wonder if some behavior is based more upon feeling than science.

We discussed a recent interview with the mayor of Kansas City, Missouri, that aired on NPR. After deciding to keep a mask mandate in place, citizens argued "You've said listen to the CDC for the last 14 months; you should listen to the CDC" now. The mayor agreed to drop the mask mandate and instead focus on convincing the vaccine-hesitant to get the shot.

Again, we recognize that some vaccinated people need to take extra precautions to protect their health and the wellbeing of loved ones. We also believe that wearing

a mask is an emotionally charged issue. Wanting to follow the science and respect our neighbors, we wish to call readers attention to an ethical guide found in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism: ahimsa.

Literally, ahimsa means "do no harm." The premise is that all living beings have a spark of divine spiritual energy. Ahimsa is an affirmation that, as poet William Blake claimed, "Everything that lives is holy."

There is little evidence to suggest statistical probability that any variant of COVID-19 can break through the vaccine or that a vaccinated person might pass along the virus and infect someone who is unvaccinated.

However, humans being human, we judge risk differently. Wearing or removing one's mask often involves complicated, contradicting feelings. In the spirit of ahimsa, we will keep our masks with us and willingly don them if it puts someone else at ease.

In this limbo time of uncertain resolution of the pandemic, we know one thing: we want to be respectful and kind to all.

Paul Isom lives in Chapel Hill and teaches journalism at N.C. State. Andrew Taylor-Troutman is pastor of Chapel in the Pines Presbyterian Church.

Chatham News + Record

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VIEWPOINTS

Crisis hastened health-care reforms

For all the suffering and damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, there's at least one silver lining: the experience may alter our health care system for the better. North Carolina is among many jurisdictions that adjusted its policies so medical providers could effectively respond to the crisis. The federal government changed its rules to allow more Medicare coverage of telemedicine services. Our state lifted a ban on out-of-state providers offering telemedicine, and also relaxed certificate-of-need restrictions so hospitals could add beds, ambulatory surgical centers could act as emergency hospitals and a range of providers could buy more equipment. The worst of the COVID crisis is over, thank God.



JOHN HOOD
John Locke Foundation

(And thanks to our top-notch pharmaceutical industry.) As lawmakers consider the longer-term consequences and implications, they ought to consider making their temporary policy responses into permanent policy reforms. Ask North Carolinians who did a telemedicine visit at some point over the last year. While some had a poor experience — and of course there are many doctor visits and medical procedures that can only be performed in person — most telehealth patients say they are satisfied with the care and insights they received. Similarly, to the extent medical providers exercised their enhanced flexibility, were patients harmed? Did offering more services in more places make health care less responsive and more expensive? In the main, no. Improving access to health care is about more than who pays the bill. It's about options. It's about price and quality. It's about the size of that bill, in

other words, and who possesses both the information and the incentives to make decisions about it. As American Enterprise Institute fellow Bret Swanson observes, a lack of innovation in the delivery of medical services is a key reason why American productivity isn't going up as fast as it once did. The health-care sector is rapidly approaching 20% of the nation's total gross domestic product. And it is notoriously bureaucratic and hidebound. Here's another way to think about the problem. Since 2000, average consumer prices have gone up by 54%. That average is, however, the result of a very large spread. The prices of high-tech products such as phones, computers and smart TVs have plunged — by 80% or more in some cases. Cars, clothes and furniture have also experienced lower-than-average inflation. Hospital services, on the other hand, cost about 200% more today than they did two

decades ago. And, no, hospital care is not 200% more pleasant, comfortable or efficacious. The late economist William Baumol observed long ago that productivity gains may be inherently more difficult to achieve in sectors such as health care, education and the performing arts because introducing technological innovation doesn't just increase output per worker. It also alters the actual service being delivered — and not for the better. Baumol famously offered the example of symphonic music. Assembling, staging and compensating a full orchestra is an expensive undertaking and reaches an inherently limited audience. You can reach a vastly larger audience by recording the orchestra's performance and selling it. But listening to an audio file is just not the same thing as experiencing a live orchestra. Point taken. But, of course, most of us still listen to most of our music in the form of recordings. We happily take

the tradeoff, because if we can only listen live, our access to music would be severely curtailed. Similarly, while an in-person visit to the doctor has features that a telehealth visit can't duplicate, the difference isn't infinitely valuable. For some routine check-ins and minor afflictions, an online or video consultation is sufficient. By permanently changing our financing and regulatory policies to accommodate that, we save scarce resources for redeployment to other medical services — or to other goods and services — which confer greater consumer benefits per dollar spent. I wish North Carolina had already liberalized its health-care regulations years ago. Naturally, I wish it hadn't taken a deadly pandemic to break the logjam. But broken it is. And it shouldn't be rebuilt. *John Hood (@JohnHoodNC) is chairman of the John Locke Foundation.*

Whirligigs to the rescue

Why make the small eastern North Carolina city of Wilson my first post-COVID break-out vacation trip?



D.G. MARTIN
One on One

In a word, whirligigs. More later. But I had other reasons. Wilson is home to several eating places that were to be featured in a new edition of my "North Carolina Roadside Eateries," a book that was ready for printing when the COVID-19 pandemic forced its postponement in the fall of 2020. Parkers Barbecue, not far from I-95, is still going strong, serving the barbecue and fried chicken that has gained favorable attention in national magazines. Wilson's other barbecue icon, Bill's Barbecue and Chicken Restaurant, suddenly closed in early 2019 after being in business for 56 years. For people in Wilson, it was like a death in the family. All is not lost. After Bill's death, his son Lawrence, who grew up learning the business from his dad, opened his own restaurant and named it after his deceased brother, Marty. Bringing more than 30 years of experience working with his dad, he has turned his new restaurant into a bustling business. People in Wilson are dividing up into Parker's and Marty's fans. The best thing for a visitor to do is sample both. Wilson also has another southern food staple down pat: biscuits. The "cat's head" biscuits at Flo's Kitchen will make you happy if you follow two rules: bring cash and get there before noon. Don't be surprised if there is a big crowd both inside and outside. On my recent visit, I learned about and enjoyed Dick's Hot Dog Stand, at the corner of Nash and Pearson streets. It began in 1921 when a Greek immigrant, Socrates "Dick" Gliarmis, sold his first hot dog. A century later, Dick's family is still there in a cozy building with walls posted full of North Carolina memorabilia. You can bet Dick's will be featured in any revised "Roadside Eateries." Good eating is important, but we came to see the whirligigs. A friend, Susan Hudson, arranged for us to be guided by Henry Walston, who, as chairman of the Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park and Museum, was instrumental in bringing the whirligigs to downtown Wilson. The late Vollis Simpson, a farmer, welder, house mover and handyman turned out to be an important American artist who could turn heaps of metal junk into gigantic, toylike, playful sculptures. Simpson assembled his artwork on his farm, which became a popular, local attraction. Walston was a leader in a community effort to gather, repair and display Simpson's work in downtown Wilson. In 2017 he explained to WUNC's Frank Stasio, "When we embraced this project we had creative placemaking in mind. Creative placemaking being when you take an art/cultural project and you use it as a vehicle to stimulate economic development in the area the project is located." Wilson's loss of its tobacco markets and bank headquarters had stunned the town. The whirligigs have come to the rescue. They are on display from 5 a.m. to midnight. It is the best kind of art museum — no tickets, no lines, no guards — just an open park full of Simpson's quirky, colorful, structures moving differently with every breath of wind. The whirligigs have helped attract other artists and businesses to downtown Wilson. Artist Sebastian Correa, a native of Chile, joined with George Newsome and Reggie Harrison to form Artisan Leaf, where they use epoxies and tobacco leaves to make lovely, sturdy tables and smaller objects that they sell for a fair price. Former Chapel Hillian Barb White moved her art gallery to a downtown building in Wilson called the Edge. In her totally renovated space, she displays and sells her work and that of others. Other artists are bringing life to the town. Thanks in large part to the whirligigs, Wilson is on the move. It was a perfect post-COVID trip.

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.

GUEST COLUMN | ED BRONSON

Good guise

Reflecting on my boyhood, I remember living in a house that sat behind Quaking Aspens in a pretty valley that the locals called "Hawks Hollow." You could see U.S. Rte. 11 out our front windows. Its traffic tenderized asphalt trotted right past our little farm and then park-our'd north toward the U.S. Army Reservation of Fort Drum, home of the 10th Mountain-Light Infantry Division encamped on 107,000 acres. Dad was a Staff Sergeant in the Army National Guard for six years. He was employed as an ag teacher and was an upstate husky version of Popeye, able to literally bend a framing nail with his bare hands. My brother could do herculean deeds as well but I was stuck with a shriveled Olive Oil silhouette. One could say I was the Ichabod Crane (boy) of Hawk's Hollow. The Hollow's geography was idyllic for a scrawny kid hoping to grow into something bigger: I was on constant alert for Army truck convoys from Fort Drum that growled near the horizon. They plodded along at a steady pace and were loud muffler puffers, diesel furious and khaki relentless. The imminent arrival of Jeeps, trucks, tankers and mysteriously covered flatbeds was signaled by a low rumbling sound at first. Just like a groundhog, I'd stand myself tall, freeze in place and slowly rotate my head/ears/eyes. Then, I'd beat feet as fast as my little body could go uphill to a rough outlook that I had built above our house. It was a perfect spot. Out of sight of my parents, I timidly waved and uniformed guys would wave

back or honk their horns or — holy cow — salute! Early settlers, dismissive of Native people in the way of their progress, had a very different army. Chatham County, North Carolina, was named after William Pitt, 1st Earl of Chatham in the Kingdom of England during the colonial era. Trained as a cavalry officer, he managed England's military during wars on two continents: The Seven Years' War in Europe and the French and Indian War in America. More than 150 places in the United States honor, by name, this famous orator that history calls "Chatham" or "Pitt." "It is the people who have sent me here," Chatham thundered at his aristocratic colleagues. For such concerns, he was considered a good guy by English and Scottish Colonists alike. After managing the defeat of France, he advocated for political representatives from the Colonies, as legally mandated, but was stymied by a smug Parliament. Common town and rural folks struggled to live here under unfair policies and excessive taxation, bluntly enforced by an English Governor intent on replenishing the victorious but bankrupt, post-war homeland. I'm older and have a plumper philosophy of life now. It is hard, for example, to find goodness in a man who would whip his sweaty workhorses or coyly lie to them about getting fresh oats later on in the evening shade. Is there anything lower than a bitter fool who kicks away his devoted dog?

Yet even broken men, under a miserable guise and too callous to care about being despised, need more than what they swear about. Is cruelty ever really cured by a "How do YOU like it?" thicker bullwhip? Showing no mercy is scantily disguised revenge. Chatham abhorred callous privilege. His military commission was taken away very early in his political career because of his withering criticism of the government. He was later credited with saving the Kingdom for what he did after announcing, "I am sure I can save this country and nobody else can!" The crucial differences between good guys and bad guys are revealed by identifying their real motivations. Ditto gals. Leadership in the USA too often promotes dubious goals under the guise of being good for the common (wo)man. If only we had a clear picture of Chatham's glaring eyes. He was famous for the penetrating gaze that emphasized his passionate speeches. America seems hopelessly divided by who we put our trust in these days. But we need visionaries that can somehow reunite US(A). *Ed Bronson became a wood shop teacher for exceptional middle school students at age 40. He wonders what became of them as well as thousands of high school students who graduated from a Career & Technical Education campus where he was principal until his retirement in 2015. He has a B.A. in Cultural Studies: Religion and a M.S. in Instructional Development.*

LETTERS

Government should stay out of health care

TO THE EDITOR: The coronavirus pandemic has been tough on everyone. I am one of many Americans who contracted COVID-19, and fortunately, I was able to recover. I cannot say the same for many others in our community. This is a dire time, but the promising results of vaccines give me hope that we may soon emerge from this bleak period. These vaccines are the key to ending this pandemic. My hope is that individuals and communities across the country will soon be inoculated so that we may finally put an end to this devastating moment in time. The shots are safe and effective and offer us long-term protection from a disease that has already taken so much from us. As someone who suffers from heart disease, I am well-versed with the nuances of the pharmaceutical industry. The medication I take is a direct result of free-market innovation among biopharmaceutical companies, something that I hope we continue to promote and support. Unfortunately, not all politicians feel the same and appreciate the industry's work and research. I believe that if politicians were to understand how many patients

lives stand to benefit from innovation, government leaders would stay out of their way and out of health care. Patients stand to lose when politicians get involved, especially when government tries to dictate the price of medication. Price setting and government involvement means companies have less to invest in cures and treatments. Why would we threaten such a future? **Moses Matthews**
Bear Creek

The importance of broadband in ARP

TO THE EDITOR: Gov. Roy Cooper outlined his spending priorities for the American Rescue Plan (ARP) money coming to North Carolina, specifying how he thinks the billions of dollars would best be used. His largest single expenditure would be what he calls Closing the Digital Divide: \$1.2B in broadband access and affordability. Currently, North Carolina is home to hundreds of thousands of people who do not have access to high-speed internet. That leaves a lot on the table: without access to quality internet, businesses and education suffer. With the move to remote instruction over much of the past year,

parents and educators saw how far rural areas like Chatham can be regarding broadband access. But now help is here. In Gov. Cooper's proposed spending plan for the ARP funds, \$1.2 billion will go toward ensuring high-speed internet is equitably adopted across our state. This historic investment in broadband would bring our rural communities up to speed, literally. Gov. Cooper has set a goal of having high-speed internet in 100% of households with children. The recommendation doesn't just provide for the infrastructure needed to expand broadband — it includes ample funding for affordability, too. \$420 million would go toward lowering cost barriers to internet access. It's not enough to build out the capability if people can't afford the service. All told, broadband is just one piece of the American Rescue Plan funding coming to North Carolina. We can build back even better than before the pandemic if we make the right investments. Broadband access is a great place to start. **Rep. Robert Reives**
Goldston

Rep. Reives represents District 54 (all of Chatham County and a portion of Durham County) in the N.C. House.

VIEWPOINTS

GUEST COLUMN | GARY PEARCE

Race defines N.C. politics — again

A national political reporter recently asked me how I would explain North Carolina politics to a class of college students. “One word,” I told him: “Race.”

It has always been about race. It still is.

The latest front is the battle at UNC-Chapel Hill over tenure for a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist. Conservatives cloak their objections to her in academic robes. But they dislike Nikole Hannah-Jones, a UNC alumna and New York Times reporter, because she produced “The 1619 Project” about slavery’s impact on America.

As with conservative complaints about public schools teaching “critical race theory,” opposition to her is aimed at stifling uncomfortable discussions about history — and stirring political passions.

The 1619 Project goes to an inescapable and fundamental contradiction in American

history: Our great nation is the only one founded on a set of ideals: freedom, liberty and equality. Yet, our nation was also built on the cruel, ugly brutality of human slavery.

Our Constitution was designed to “secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.” Yet, it also protected slavery.

Thomas Jefferson wrote eloquently in our Declaration of Independence that “all men are created equal.” Yet, Jefferson owned slaves and fathered children by an enslaved woman. Four of our first five Presidents — George Washington, Jefferson, James Madison and James Monroe — owned slaves.

Slavery caused secession and the Civil War.

This tension between the ideals of 1776 and the reality of 1619 — and its impact on our history — is worth studying.

But powerful forces in North Carolina don’t want that study:

the UNC-CH Board of Trustees, the John Locke Foundation and the James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal.

The latter two are creations of conservative megadonor Art Pope, who sits on the UNC Board of Governors. The ultimate opposition to Hannah-Jones, some at UNC believe, comes from Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger.

This is nothing new in North Carolina politics.

The right of Blacks to vote — and white opposition to that right — dominated the decades after the Civil War. The white supremacy campaign at the end of the 19th Century disenfranchised Blacks for 60 years. The civil rights movement in the 1960s led to the rise of the Republican Party and, ultimately, to today’s politics.

Race has infused modern campaigns since Willis Smith’s “White People Wake Up” campaign against Frank Porter

Graham in 1950. Graham was President of UNC.

Conservatives have always resented the university; they think it turns too many young men and women into liberals. That’s why the General Assembly passed the infamous Speaker Ban Law in 1963.

Jesse Helms, who had a hand in the Willis Smith campaign, editorialized on television in the 1960s against alleged communists at UNC and against civil rights. Race-baiting helped him win five U.S. Senate campaigns. When Jim Hunt challenged him in 1984, Helms filibustered (unsuccessfully) against the national holiday for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Since 2011, the conservative majority in North Carolina’s legislature has pursued a voter ID law that one court said targeted Blacks with “almost surgical precision.”

Now, the targets are “critical race theory” and the 1619

Project.

Growing up in North Carolina and working in politics, I’ve seen this over and over all my life. But I’m hopeful.

Last week, 1,619 UNC-CH alums signed a newspaper ad protesting the handling of Hannah-Jones’s tenure. More than 90% of them graduated after 1990.

They, like many young North Carolinians today, are free of the prejudices of older generations. They’re committed to a fair and just society.

They’re stepping up. They’re ready to move North Carolina forward, not backward.

More power to them.

Gary Pearce was a reporter and editor at The News & Observer, a political consultant, and an adviser to Governor Jim Hunt (1976-1984 and 1992-2000). He blogs about politics and public policy at www.NewDayforNC.com.

Should North Carolina follow California or Texas?

Both California and Texas have developed dominating economies in recent decades. The states are No. 1 and No. 2 in both size of their economy and population. If each were countries, California would have the 5th largest economy in the world, and Texas would be the 9th largest.

Yet, one of the oddities making these accomplishments noteworthy is they were achieved with very different economic models. California is a high-tax, high public spending state, whereas Texas is the opposite: a low-tax, low public spending state. Can North Carolina learn anything from these two states with their different approaches to economic development?

First, here’s some background on California and Texas and reasons why they have approached their economies so differently.

California and Texas have developed their economies around very different business sectors. Technology and entertainment are huge movers of the California economy. The state’s Silicon Valley — a region around San Jose — is the headquarters for numerous global tech firms as well as start-ups. The production of movies, TV shows and music — involving tens of thousands of jobs — has been a major component of the California economy since the 1920s.

In contrast, today’s Texas economy revolves around energy and manufacturing. Texas is a major producer of oil and natural gas, and it refines those resources into finished fuel products. A maze of fuel pipelines sprouts out from Texas to all parts of the country.

The different economies of the two states mean different workforces. California’s workforce includes a large percentage of highly educated and professional workers at the top of the pay scale, and an equally high percentage of service jobs at the lower end of the pay scale, with fewer middle-income jobs in-between. As a result, income inequality in the state is very high, with California ranking 4th among states in the unequal distribution of income.

Texas, meanwhile, has an income distribution that provides relatively more middle-income jobs than California, but also relatively more lower income jobs and fewer higher income jobs. Texas ranks below California and below the national average on income inequality.

These economic differences between California and Texas can provide an explanation for the opposite tax and public spending policies each state follows. In California, high income taxpayers in a very income-unequal state may feel an obligation to pay more taxes in order to fund more generous social programs for low-income residents. Additionally, the elite tech companies attract a highly educated workforce, one that often comes with a more favorable view of income redistribution.

With its more egalitarian workforce, residents of Texas may be less inclined to pay higher taxes to support better funded social programs. Their attitude may be more tilted to a “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” philosophy.

Currently North Carolina’s economy is more like Texas than California. Manufacturing’s share of our state’s economy is 70 percent higher than in California, but it is also 30 percent greater than in Texas. The tech sector’s share of the North Carolina economy is the same as in Texas, but the tech share in both states is 60 percent under California’s share. The split between upper income, middle income and lower income jobs is almost identical for Texas and North Carolina, and income inequality in North Carolina is slightly lower than in Texas and much below California. The biggest difference between the North Carolina and Texas economies is the large size of the energy sector in the Lone Star state.

The state fiscal policies of North Carolina and Texas are also similar. The Tax Foundation ranks North Carolina 10th best and Texas 11th best for tax systems attractive to business expansion. California is ranked 49th. Both Texas and North Carolina are below the average of state spending as a percent of the economy, while California is above the average.

Two key questions are: where does North Carolina want to go from here, and what kind of policy will take the state there? If North Carolina wants to focus on attracting businesses that are labor intensive and increase middle-income jobs, then the current policy may be the best fit. If the state wants to expand its footprint in the technology and professional areas in order to attract higher paying jobs and top educated workers, then making policy more like California’s may be appropriate.

Of course, there are debates about both the California and Texas models. Recently, California has lost some population and companies who, in part, have complained of the state’s high tax rates. At the same time, Texas’s model has been criticized for being too stingy in funding public services and relying too heavily on more regressive taxes.

Ultimately the debate about the best fiscal policy will be decided by North Carolina’s residents. If in the future more of those residents are highly educated professionals working in high-paying industries — such as technology — then North Carolina could easily migrate closer to the California model. Conversely, if most of the state’s future growth is in sectors like manufacturing, agribusiness and perhaps energy, then the pendulum could swing the other way to favoring the Texas model. Either way, the decision will be a “collective you decide.”

Michael Walden is a William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor and Extension Economist in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at North Carolina State University who teaches and writes on personal finance, economic outlook and public policy.

GUEST COLUMN | CRAIG RICHARDSON & QINGXIN HE

43 N.C. economic experts: We ask Tar Heels in Congress to act on climate

The earth is warming at an alarming rate — the five warmest years in recorded history all occurred during the last decade.

There is little doubt that this warming is caused by human activity. Climate change poses a threat to both our natural environment and our economic prosperity. North Carolina is already bearing the costs of climate change.

For example, rising sea levels caused by climate change are eroding beaches, submerging low lands, exacerbating coastal flooding and increasing the salinity of estuaries and aquifers. Stronger storms also increase the risk of inland flooding. Elevated flood risks pose significant challenges for infrastructure investments across the state.

Unfortunately, climate-related damages will continue to worsen if we continue to emit carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases at current rates. Addressing climate change will require effective policies guided by sound economic principles.

To that end, more than 40 professors of economics and related fields from Appalachian State University, Davidson College, Duke University, East Carolina University, Gardner-Webb University, High Point University, UNC-Asheville, UNC-Chapel Hill, UNC-Charlotte, UNC-Greensboro, Wake Forest University and Winston-Salem State University are asking North Carolina’s congressional delegation to support the following policies:

Carbon Price

A national price on carbon dioxide emissions offers the most cost-effective policy lever for reducing carbon emissions. Carbon dioxide is a pollutant created during the production of many goods and services across the economy. These pollution emissions impose indirect damages on other members of society through rising temperatures and changes in precipitation. When polluters do not pay for the damages they

inflict, we experience a market failure — the unregulated economic system does not deliver an efficient outcome for our society.

A carbon price corrects the market failure by sending a clear price signal about the damages of carbon pollution to market participants and makes both consumers and producers pay for damages they cause. In particular, a carbon price creates incentives for producers to use cleaner inputs and encourages consumers to use or purchase less pollution-intensive goods. Notably, a carbon price achieves the necessary emissions reductions at the lowest possible cost to American households and businesses.

Carbon Dividend

All revenue collected under the carbon price should be returned as lump-sum payments to Americans each year. Returning an equal share of the carbon price revenue to each American as a dividend is simple to implement and increases the policy’s equity and fairness. Importantly, the carbon price and dividend policy would benefit most Tar Heels and households across the US, including the most vulnerable. The majority of families would receive a larger dividend payment each year than they pay in increased energy prices and prices of other goods.

Border Tax Adjustment

To ensure that U.S. carbon emissions and production are not diverted abroad, we recommend the carbon price and dividend be paired with a border tax adjustment. The border tax adjustment would tax imported goods, where the tax depends on the carbon emissions associated with producing those goods. In addition, the border adjustment would offer rebates to U.S. producers who export to countries without carbon prices. Therefore, the border adjustment would provide a compet-

itive advantage to U.S. companies that are more energy-efficient and use cleaner production processes. Moreover, the border tax adjustment would encourage other countries to adopt similar climate policies.

Meeting Emissions Reduction Targets

The policy should include emissions reduction targets and mechanisms for enforcement. The carbon price should start low, then increase each year until we achieve these targets. A carbon price that gradually increases over time will give firms and consumers time to adapt to the new policy while also providing a strong incentive to immediately innovate and invest in new low-carbon technologies.

Craig Richardson is the BB&T Distinguished Professor of Economics at Winston-Salem State University. Qingxin He is a Teaching Assistant Professor in economics at East Carolina University. This opinion was signed by the following economists: David M. McEvoy and John C. Whitehead - ASU; Shyam Gouri Suresh, David W. Martin and Fred H. Smith - Davidson; Ravi Bansal, Charles M. Becker, Philip J. Cook, Henry Grabowski, Ron Leven, David McAdams, Marjorie B. McElroy, Manoj Mohanan, Thomas J. Nechyba, Jeremy Petranka and Curtis R. Taylor - Duke; Andrew G. Keeler, Ausmita Ghosh, Gregory Howard, Jonathan M. Lee, Philip Rothman, Nicholas G. Rupp and Vera A. Tabakova - ECU; Anthony Negbenebor - Gardner-Webb; Peter Summers - High Point; Hongkil Kim and Robert Tatum - UNC-Asheville; Rita A. Balaban, Richard E. Bilsborrow, Patrick J. Conway, Lutz A. Hendricks and Peter Norman - UNC-Chapel Hill; John M. Gandar, Peter M. Schwarz and Carol O. Stivender - UNC-Charlotte; Stephen P. Holland, Dennis P. Leyden and John L. Neufeld - UNC-Greensboro; Allin Cottrell, Mark Curtis and Andrew C. Graczyk - Wake Forest.

TIGERS

Continued from page A1

the specifics of CTR's involvement in the rescue operation or on any of the tigers' details, such as names and genders. Despite a challenging year navigating the pandemic, though, she emphasized to the News + Record that CTR has not pared down any of its care services.

"The cats never noticed a difference in their care," she said. "They were and continue to be happy, healthy and well-cared for."

With the addition of Tiger King's four tigers, Carolina Tiger Rescue now cares for 44 big cats, which Orr says it has received from shuttered zoos, backyard breeders, private owners and the entertainment industry. CTR, located at 1940 Hanks Chapel Rd., is not a zoo; its cats are never taken from the wild.

"All in all, we believe that wild cats should never be exploited or kept as private pets," Orr said. "They are wild animals that deserve the utmost care and respect, which is what we strive to give them at Carolina Tiger Rescue. They didn't ask for a captive life, so we want to make sure they can live the rest of their lives in peace. We are here for them, not the other way around."

Carolina Tiger Rescue is North Carolina's only federally and GFAS (Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries)-accredited big cat sanctuary. It is a 501(c)3 non-profit funded mostly through donations and visitor ticket prices. When the pandemic began, the sanctuary was forced to suspend its tours, and revenue plummeted.

"During the height of the pandemic, it was a pretty substantial loss because we do rely on tour tickets as a significant source of revenue for us," Orr said. "But our supporters really rallied around us during that time and helped us with a number of different fundraisers that we held during quarantine..."

Despite financial strain, CTR reopened cautiously after it was discovered COVID-19 infects and afflicts many cat species much like it does humans.

"It manifests very similarly to the way it manifests in humans," Orr said. "(T)hey tend to suffer from an upper respiratory infection and things like a loss of appetite and cough, but so far, all of the animals who have contracted it have recovered. They seem



Courtesy of Carolina Tiger Rescue

One of four tigers recovered by Pittsboro's Carolina Tiger Rescue from 'Tiger King Park,' the Oklahoma zoo made popular by a Netflix true-crime series. CTR Communications Director Louise Orr declined to provide more details, such as this tiger's name or gender.



Courtesy of Carolina Tiger Rescue

Queen Serval was one of four servals Carolina Tiger Rescue acquired in 2019 from a backyard breeder in British Columbia. 'Servals are very popular in the pet trade,' Orr said. 'They are small-ish cats and can appear to be an easier way to keep an 'exotic' pet. On the contrary, servals are wild and have wild instincts that make them dangerous and difficult to care for. Because of this, several of our servals have been turned over to us by private owners who regret their decision to try to keep a serval as a pet.'

to be easily able to pass it amongst one another and can contract it from humans who are either asymptomatic or symptomatic."

So far, no animals at Carolina Tiger Rescue have contracted COVID-19, Orr pointed out, and staff hope to keep it that way. All visitors must wear masks despite the loosening of statewide mask mandates.

"That being said, we are very glad that tours are back at full capacity," Orr said, "and folks who are looking to visit and support us can do so in a variety of different ways."

Carolina Tiger Rescue offers public tours, private tours and twilight tours through the end of summer. Starting on July 22, CTR will host its second Tiger Day 5k virtual fun run in celebration of International Tiger Day on July 29. To learn more about the week-long event, guided tours or how you can donate, visit www.CarolinaTigerRescue.org.

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

Vulnerable Adult and Elder Abuse and Exploitation Awareness Month focuses on protecting the vulnerable

Only 1 in 6 cases of abuse get reported

From the Chatham Council on Aging

PITTSBORO — Having celebrated Older Americans Month in May, the Chatham County Council on Aging is joining the Chatham County Department of Social Services and the Chatham County Sheriff's Office in raising awareness about abuse and exploitation of vulnerable and older adults.

Monday, June 15th, is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. It is a date originally recognized in 2006 by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations.

The Chatham County Board of Commissioners has issued a proclamation in support of this awareness campaign. The commissioners have joined the State of North Carolina in recognizing the period between Mother's Day and Father's Day as Vulnerable Adult and Elder Abuse and Exploitation Awareness Month.

As noted in the proclamation, "Research suggests that 4 to 6% of older adults suffer from some kind of abuse, most of which goes unreported." The research also finds that abuse, exploitation, and neglect (self and caregiver) of vulnerable and older adults affect persons of every social, economic, racial and ethnic background.

"This is a serious issue that too often lacks the attention and the commitment of resources to address," said Dennis W. Streets, director of the Council on Aging.

Various organizations within Chatham County have a role in raising awareness and addressing specific in-

stances of abuse, neglect and exploitation when they become known.

The Chatham County Department of Social Services has legal authority to evaluate reports of abuse, neglect and exploitation. According to state law, "any person having reasonable cause to believe that a disabled adult is in need of protective services shall report such information."

Yet, researchers report that only one of every six instances of elder abuse get reported.

"We can only do our job of evaluating the need for adult protective services if we learn of cases that may require such assistance," said Renae Minor, Adult Services Supervisor at the Chatham County Department of Social Services.

Another form of exploitation affecting many seniors is fraud and scams.

"These acts to defraud and scam our residents usually cause loss of income and dignity," said Mike Copeland, Certified Financial Crimes Investigator at the Chatham County Sheriff's Office.

As Mike Dasher, chairperson of the Chatham County Board of Commissioners, encouraged in signing the proclamation, "we call upon all in Chatham County to honor and respect vulnerable and older adults by helping prevent abuse, neglect and exploitation and take steps otherwise to promote their well-being."

To report possible abuse, neglect or exploitation, contact the Chatham County Department of Social Services by phone during regular office hours at 919-642-6988. To report a concern after hours or on weekends and holidays, contact the 911 Emergency Communications Center at 919-542-2911.

To report a suspected case of fraud or a scam, contact the Sheriff's Office at 919-542-2911.

MURDER

Continued from page A1

have a specialized team of state employees that work in Raleigh that do nothing but extradite people on these serious cases," Kaley Taber, the managing assistant district attorney for Chatham and Orange Counties, told the News + Record.

The district attorney's office typically presides over one or two extraditions per year, Taber said. Right now, though, she is coordinating four extradition efforts, including Rodriguez's.

Upon confirmation from the Gwinnett County Jail that Rodriguez had been detained, Taber notified the extradition team — an independent agency within the N.C. Dept of Public Safety — to facilitate his recovery.

"So, North Carolina gets together a team that travels to Georgia to take custody of him," Taber said, "and return the suspect safely here to North Carolina and place him in our confinement facility, which is the Chatham County Jail."

Sometimes the extradition process is drawn out when arresting authori-

ties or the arrested party demand a local court prove the suspect matches an out-of-state warrant. But Rodriguez relinquished his right to a hearing in Georgia, Taber said, "which allows the process to move quite a bit quicker."

"He did sign a waiver down there in Georgia, which activated the process," she said. "So we're hoping to have him back here in North Carolina, and in our Chatham County Jail for his charges, I would say in two weeks."

After his extradition is complete, Rodriguez will appear before a local judge to be advised of his charges.

"I would expect that to happen pretty rapidly once he's back here in Chatham County," Taber said. "And I would expect, in light of the serious nature of the charges, that a public defender will ultimately be representing him."

Within 15 days of his first appearance before a judge, Rodriguez will attend a preliminary hearing for his case, the first "significant deadline in any felony criminal case," Taber said.

"It's a hearing to

determine whether or not the person charged is probably the person who committed the offense," she added. "It's not proving beyond a reasonable doubt, but just, is it more likely than not this is the person that committed the offense?"

Taber declined to comment on what sentence she might expect in Rodriguez's case if he's found guilty, citing fear of prejudicing the result. But conviction of first degree murder in North Carolina is punishable by life in prison without parole or the death penalty.

First degree murder is a Class A felony, commonly known as premeditated murder. A conviction usually requires the prosecution to prove malicious intent. Besides asserting actual innocence, a defending attorney could try to reduce Rodriguez's charges by arguing the killing was committed in self defense, in the heat of passion, due to insanity or after mistaking the victim for someone else.

Those who knew Hernandez remembered him as "always a happy-go-lucky person." Paul Cuadros, an associate professor of journalism at UNC who knew Hernandez for many years, works as the head soccer coach at Jordan-Matthews. He met Hernandez when the latter was a student and star on the soccer team.

"Ramon was a class act all the way," Cuadros said. "He was a decent and good young man who was developing his leadership skills and was dedicated to helping people in the community."

Hernandez assisted Cuadros as a coach and had begun work as a social worker with Chatham County schools, helping the next generation of young people — especially those in the Hispanic community — to achieve success.

"This was a big loss for the community..." Cuadros said. "It's going to be felt by lots of people in our community; we are all shocked and dismayed by the tragic loss of Ramon. I think that's the general feeling right now — it's one of shock."

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

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BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS

Wren Center staff, B&GC of Central Carolina make big changes, sacrifices during pandemic

Children thankful for a safe and fun environment for learning

BY SHELLEY SMITH
Outreach Coordinator,
United Way of Chatham
County

SILER CITY — Three employees, 50 children, zero volunteers and 10-hour days. The Boys & Girls Club Wren Family Center's programs have made many shifts over the past year.

"It's been hard," said Joy Roberts, club executive director of the Wren Family Center. "Really hard."

The Wren Family Center's Power Hour is an essential part of its after-school program, and typically consists of one hour of tutoring and homework assistance once the children have had their afternoon snack. Once the pandemic reached the U.S. in March of 2020, children were forced out of their classrooms, away from their after-school programs, mentors, tutors and friends, and into their homes to end their school year virtually. Knowing that the lockdown would negatively impact the children, the Boys & Girls Club of Central Carolina acted quickly when they were forced to close in mid-March.

"We completely restructured our programming to virtual," said Elizabeth Colebrook, resource development and marketing coordinator for Boys & Girls Club of Central Carolina.

Power Hour continued, and the Wren Family Center also began virtual tutoring from 3 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. each day.

"It was our way of staying connected with them," Roberts said. "We continued Power Hour, and our Smart Girls and Passport to Manhood programs. We tried to do spirit days and just stay connected with the children."

Traci Newby, the Wren Family Center's mentor coordinator, said he was a little anxious about connecting with the children via Zoom versus in person, but he quickly realized how much the children were excited to connect with something familiar.

"Seeing them light up when they saw us, it calmed my nerves," he said. "It motivated me to keep staying on for them."

While continuing the virtual programming through the end of the school year, the Boys & Girls Club worked with local and state officials to get bills passed to allow their clubs to become childcare facilities.

The Wren Family Center was usually open for three to four hours each day after school, and once it gained certification as an emergency childcare facility, staff reopened the center at 50% capacity last June 8, providing full summer programming from 7:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m., Mondays through Fridays.

Summer programming was a challenge because there were no field trips, and the children had to wash their hands every hour, wear a mask and stay away from each other.

"Keeping them motivated and active while keeping them apart was a challenge," Newby said.

Volunteers were not available either, but Roberts said virtual opportunities proved to be a success, including virtual Bingo and Family Feud games, virtual panel discussions with the girls and discussions with the boys.

"We had to think outside the box," she said. "Our volunteers were able to help us virtually."



Photo courtesy of the United Way

Member Malachi Dean gets his temperature checked during a recent visit to the club.

came in August when the children began a new school year, 100% virtual.

"Power Hour turned into an all-day Power Hour," Roberts said. "All of the kids were on different schedules, so we had to make sure we had everyone's school schedule. We had to teach them how to log on. Wifi was in and out because everyone was pulling from one source."

Roberts said they separated everyone by grades, and then separated the boys and girls. She said they eventually found their routine. The children were also able to gain additional assistance from their teachers — and the teachers helped the staff, too.

"We were lost," Roberts said. "We were able to ask them questions, and they helped us so much."

Because the children were at the Wren Family Center for 10 hours each day, the center provided breakfast and lunch to every child. To provide the meals, the Boys & Girls Club of Central Carolina went through the process of becoming a food distributor. Club staff purchased food from a distributor for the Food Bank of Central and Eastern N.C., prepared the meals, and had a bus drive from Lee County to pick up the meals each day and drive them to the club sites.

Aside from five to six hours of Zoom each day, staff needed to provide breaks for personal development and exercise. They said it was hard to keep the children motivated.

Newby said overtime staff figured out what motivated the children, and determined what did not work as well.

"We provided them with incentives and rewards," he said, and implemented "Fun Days" on Wednesdays and Fridays. Fun Days included making smoothies, a taco bar, time at the park and Pelican's Snowballs days. Another big hit with the children was the creation of a boys' room and girls' room. The children held a doughnut fundraiser, and voted on what they wanted to purchase for each of their rooms.

The girls' room has a makeup station and ring light station for video creation, and the boys' room has a television station with video games, LED lights, posters and weight station.

"The girls' room is the most important part of the Wren Center," said 5th-grader Kylie. "We also like swimming in the summer, and we formed a dance group."

Kylie also enjoys sewing, which Roberts has taught the children the basics of and hopes to continue.

Aireas, a 2nd grader, said she enjoyed having a separate space from the boys, and the girls decorate the room according to holidays and birthdays.

"We like spending time together and celebrating each other's birthdays," she said.

Mental health challenges

Colebrook said retraining and providing new training for staff was one of the biggest challenges they faced. Not only were they facing challenges surrounding the worldwide pandemic, but the nation and world were also responding to the death of George Floyd — with school still in session.

"The murder of George Floyd caused a wave of sadness and disappointment throughout our club community," she said. "Not just at home but nationwide. The accumulation of this and other incidents like these that followed left an indelible mark on our young people, especially young people of color."

Colebrook said that she and fellow club leaders believe they have a responsibility to use their positions as supportive adults to help members process the world around them, especially when times are hard.

"These events, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in a number of issues, many surrounding mental health and fear," she said. "We were facing a mental health crisis along with a public health crisis. We had to work to prepare our staff to be able to assess for trauma — whether it was abuse or neglect, the stress and impact of the pandemic and the murder of George Floyd, trauma associated with loss of family and friends. In response, we went through the process of training all staff on trauma-informed care and resilience training."

Danae Johnson, youth development professional for the Wren Family Center, started her role in February of this year and said she notices the children continue to struggle emotionally.

"This has stressed them out psychologically and emotionally," Johnson said. "Starting with the fear of people around them getting sick, and then dealing with virtual school, it's been crazy."

"The kids were struggling like we were," Roberts said. "We would talk, and I asked them how do you feel, how do you feel not seeing your grandparents? And we shared our own concerns with them, too, and that's how I got the kids to open up. We have helped each other."

Johnson said even though the children are back in school, they are still stressed.

"A lot of them feel like they're so behind," she said. "They feel defeated. It's hard to encourage them. For the younger kids who had never been to school, they missed out on the hidden curriculum

— sitting in chairs, raising their hands, asking permission. So for the younger ones school is helping them now. But it's harder for the older ones."

The silver lining

For the three staff at the Wren Family Center, their main focus continues to be supporting the children in the program and providing them with the resources and attention for academic and personal growth.

"The pandemic showed us why we do what we do," Newby said. "We had kids who weren't being encouraged or motivated. We are that second support system for these kids."

Roberts says she's proud of her staff, and proud of herself, too.

"This was really, really hard — physically and

emotionally," she said. "We just didn't know. I was being pulled in every direction. I'm so thankful and grateful for my staff. None of us got sick, and we were able to be here for the kids."

Now that children are back in school, the Boys & Girls Club will be operating its after-school program until the summer program begins. The staff is vaccinated, but still taking temperatures and asking each child symptom questions before he or she enters the building. Children must continue to wear their masks and wash their hands multiple times each afternoon.

Roberts says she dreams of the day she'll be able to hug the kids again, and she said the kids need the hugs, too. Until then, she and her staff will continue to give them air high-fives.

"Things are getting back to normal now," Roberts said. "We can be excited together. The children are coming in from school and telling us different things now. It's getting better for everyone."

For 3rd-grader Zaria, the Boys & Girls Club continues to be a happy place.

"The Boys & Girls Club helped me because I got to see more friends," she said. "At home it was super boring because I was communicating with the same people. When I came here I was happy."

Second-grader Aireas says she loves tie-dying, being creative and think-

ing of new things to do with each other. But more than anything, she loves "hanging with the girls."

"We love sitting in the shade and talking," she said.

For most of the children with the Boys & Girls Club, the Wren Family Center and its staff have been their silver lining, and a safe space where they can learn, share their feelings and hang out with their friends.


"When I was home all day, I felt like I was in a cage," said 5th-grader Jaysa. "But when I came here, even with my mask on, I felt like I was free to just be me."

About the Boys & Girls Clubs

The Boys & Girls Club of Central Carolina serves Chatham, Lee and Harnett counties. The Wren Family Center is located in Siler City, and a Pittsboro club is in the formation stages. From June through December 2020, 19,000 meals were served to the children at the Wren Family Center, and during the Fall 2020 academic school year, the Wren Family Center provided more than 7,000 hours to school-aged youth. Despite operating at 50% capacity in the past year, the Wren Family Center was able to enroll the children on the waiting list and never turned away a child based on his or her parents' ability to pay. The United Way of Chatham County currently funds 28% of the Power Hour program at the Wren Family Center.

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Back to school

The real challenges

‘Thank you Roy’: New bill lets students get driver’s license sooner

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

A few hours after learning that Gov. Roy Cooper had signed a bill temporarily shortening the length of time required for holding a driving learner’s permit, Northwood sophomore Nellielou Errett decided to make a TikTok about it. The video — captioned, “Thank you Roy!!!” — shows Errett in front of the PDF green screen of the bill, with the audio and captions: “I can finally get my driver’s license! You only need your learner’s permit for 6 months to get a driver’s license in 2021!”

Fittingly, Olivia Rodrigo’s hit debut single “Driver’s License” plays in the background. “In my journalism class, the editor-in-chief came up with the idea of a TikTok and I thought it would be fun,” Errett, who is a part of Northwood High School’s student news magazine, Northwood Omniscient, said. “It took less than 20 minutes to film, edit and post the entire TikTok.”

The legislation, Senate Bill 69, was signed May 24 as a growing number of new drivers wait to get their licenses following pandemic delays. The law temporarily shortens the minimum length of time required for holding a driving learner’s permit before getting a license from 12 to six months; all other requirements are the same. With the state Division of

Motor Vehicles road tests and driving schools shut down due to COVID-19 until recently, many students have been unable to get their permits, despite meeting the state’s age requirement. These delays created a backlog of — and frustration for — thousands of students.

“North Carolina’s teen driver’s license requirements save lives, and as a state senator the Governor sponsored this national standard,” Cooper’s office said in a statement about the bill. “This temporary adjustment keeps life-saving training while smoothing a process disrupted by the pandemic.”

‘Really elated’

The lengthy delay played out in different ways for students and their parents. Some students took the classroom portion of driver’s ed in January or February of 2020, but still haven’t taken the behind-the-wheel portion required before a learner’s permit can be issued. Others became eligible to take driver’s ed during the pandemic and haven’t gotten into a class yet, while some who have done both portions are waiting for an appointment with the DMV.

The bill maintains the requirement that a new driver complete 60 hours of supervised driving with a permit, in addition to driver’s ed and 30 hours of formal instruction. The only change is that those 60 hours can occur over six months, rather than the previ-

ous 12 months. The change is set to expire Dec. 31, 2021.

Northwood’s Errett said the bill is “definitely something (she’s) been looking forward to.” She learned about it from a friend, who’d also received her permit later than usual due to the pandemic. Errett took driver’s ed in February 2020, but didn’t get a call until last September to get her six hours of driving with an instructor.

“I got my permit in October, and have had my permit for almost eight months,” she said.

Under the new provisions of bill, she’s now eligible to get her limited driver’s license.

“I’ve also always wanted to drive on my own since I was little so I am excited for the bill,” Errett said. “I can finally drive myself to work, to my friends’ houses, school, school events, etc. I am definitely excited for the overall independence that comes overall with a license.”

Though Errett, 16, understands some people are concerned that six months is not enough time to practice driving, she thinks the road test alleviates concern in that regard. Many of her friends already received their licenses, but those who hadn’t were also excited about the bill.

“The few people I have talked to are really elated to get their license and to have some more independence,” she said. “The friend who told me about the bill also has a job so this would be helpful for them also because

of the fact that they could drive themselves to work now.”

‘There’s already a backlog’

Chatham parent Kimrey Rhinehardt said the independence that comes from having your license is important for teens, particularly during the pandemic.

Her daughter Tyler completed her driver’s ed road hours right before the pandemic and was able to get her permit in April 2020. She was able to get her limited provisional license, which has a 9 p.m. driving curfew, this past April.

“It’s been really mentally challenging for everyone, but a lot of students are really suffering,” Rhinehardt said. “And to be able to get in the car and drive to a park at 3 p.m. on your own, just observing my daughter and her ability to be independent, and do things that are safe, it’s helped. That helps.”

She’s concerned then, for students caught up in the delay. Her daughter is “one of the lucky ones,” she said.

“But there’s already a backlog,” she said. “I mean, the concern is there’s so many people backed up, how are they possibly going to accommodate that?”

Jaime Detzi, a Chatham resident who is also the director of Chatham Education Foundation, said her daughter, Brooke Detzi, finally got her permit last August; she had become eligible the previous April. Now, according to the new state bill, her daughter will be eligible to get

her license a few months earlier.

Detzi ended up paying for private driver’s ed instruction after the class her daughter signed up for in March 2020 was canceled.

“These things are so expensive. I think it was like \$600,” she said. “This is just one more example of how having money gets you access. Not that it wasn’t challenging to pay the \$600 — it wasn’t like a drop in the bucket, which is why we weren’t doing it to begin with because it is a nice service offered by the public school system.”

In addition to the costs of private instruction, Detzi said there are other non-financial costs, too, such as the time required to take your child to the DMV.

As with many other aspects of the pandemic, Detzi said this process highlights equity concerns, even if the process is frustrating for all students.

“Those with means can still find a way to get around the arduous process of state regulations and the way the public schools are funded,” she said, “but kids that probably need their driver’s license more than my child, because they’re working or their family’s working multiple jobs, are those kids that didn’t get it yet.”

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

RAID

Continued from page A1 of cocaine, four firearms, U.S. currency and “multiple items of drug paraphernalia indicating drug usage and manufacturing,” a press release said.

Harry Raymond Watson, 47, of Siler City, was arrested in connection with the investigation’s findings and charged with possession of a firearm by a convicted felon; possession with intent to manufacture, sell, and/or deliver cocaine; and possession with intent to manufacture, sell, and/or deliver marijuana. Watson received a \$5,000 secured bond.

Police are still investigating Watson, Wag-

ner said in the release, and more charges are possible. Lt. Jason Boyd, commander with the Criminal Investigations Division, is leading the SCPD’s investigation. Wagner did not respond to the News + Record’s request for additional comments before press time.

Both operations were part of the department’s ongoing effort to crack down on Siler City’s notorious crime scene, and they represent the latest in a history of collaboration between SCPD and ALE. Shortly before the pandemic, the two agencies partnered for an eight-hour sting, known as Operation Wolfpack, which led to the arrests or citations of 39 people on 58 charges and

yielded several counts of underage alcohol possession, underage tobacco purchase, alcohol sales to an underage person, possession of and intent to sell marijuana and possession of cocaine, according to the police department’s report.

Since arriving in Siler City two years ago, Wagner has lobbied for additional resources to better address the town’s criminal activity, which surpasses that seen in other Chatham municipalities. At the town’s budget retreat in February, Wagner cited startling statistics in his call for added funds. In the two major divisions of crime — violent and property-related — Siler City’s trends depicted a troubling landscape.

“In both those categories, we’re well elevated above both the state and national level,” Wagner said in the meeting. “We’ve had 67 violent crimes (between Nov. 2019 and Oct. 2020) in Siler City, and they are from homicide to rape, sexual assault and shootings.”

There had also been 325 property crimes during the same period.

Siler City’s board of commissioners were alarmed by Wagner’s presentation and vowed to shore up his department. In the proposed budget for fiscal year 2021-22, which the board is likely to adopt this month, the police department is awarded four new positions: three police officers and one evidence technician.

“Priority was set by the board to focus on the needs within the police department,” Town Manager Roy Lynch previously told the News + Record. Only eight new positions, including the police department’s four, are represented in the proposed budget for all of the town’s departments. SCPD is slated to receive \$813,000 to fund the new jobs and other needs.

Other Chatham agencies have likewise sought increased budget allocations to expand law enforcement operations in the next year. Chatham County government’s proposed budget calls for multiple expansions for the Public Safety CIT, which includes departments that respond to emergencies, crimes and

other safety hazards. The budget recommends 11 new detention officer positions to “address improvements needed in cell block monitoring” and return officers currently assigned to the county’s detention center to its Law Enforcement Division — a \$655,688 cost.

If approved, the budget will also add a Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement (\$39,697) and various staff positions to respond to increased demands in emergency communications. Pittsboro’s proposed budget calls for a new deputy chief of police.

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BATH HOUSE

Continued from page A1

collaboration of local artists, including Janice Rieves, Marcela Slade, Maxi Molina, Gillian Corzine and others.

Each bathroom features a unique theme. The first is Death Faire, The Plant’s yearly festival exploring grief, healing and different cultural beliefs on death. The second stall includes several music motifs with a special tribute to Bruce Springsteen. The third is an homage to nature.

“We like to do things different here,” Schwerin said, “and that’s true even of our bathrooms.”

More than 50 people attended the outdoor celebration — the first such event Pittsboro has hosted since before the pandemic — including many town leaders.

“It’s been well over a year since we’ve had a ribbon cutting in Pittsboro,” said Pittsboro Mayor Jim Nass, who spoke at the event and cut the “ribbon” — in fact a string of toilet paper ornately draped across the building’s entrance.

“When I asked the mayor to come out for it, I asked him if he’d ever done something like this,” Schwerin said, laughing. “And he definitely hadn’t.”

But Nass was glad to do it, he said. The Plant has long embodied the attitude and character he and other town leaders have worked to promote, he said. “This whole area really epitomizes the soul and heart of Pittsboro,” especially its “funkiness.” Keeping the funk in Pittsboro has been a recurring theme at board of commissioner meetings as the officials endeavor to preserve the town’s charm without stifling its growth.

Besides Nass, attendees at the ribbon cutting included County Commissioners Karen Howard and Mike Dasher, Pittsboro Commissioners Michael Fiocco and John Bonitz and Pittsboro Public Works Director John Poteat, who was the town’s primary liaison to the project. Tim Smith of Summit En-

gineering and Taylor Hobbs of Hobbs Architects designed the building, which Integrated Commercial constructed.

The Bath House has been more than a year in development as part of The Plant’s ongoing expansion. There are about 15 active businesses within the complex, Schwerin said, with limited restrooms to serve them all. The area has long been known as the Chatham Beverage District, but newer businesses include hemp product distributors, a coffee roaster, a bike rental shop and Copeland Springs Farm & Kitchen, which serves seasonal meals made from produce grown on site. So far, Copeland Springs has been The Plant’s only food option, but Schwerin says more is on the way, including a possible butcher and sandwich shop.

The Bath House’s primary beneficiary, though, will be BMC (Bite My Cookies) Brewing, a taproom and brewery set to open at The Plant in the next few weeks. BMC’s owners, John and Carmen Rice, settled on The Plant for their new brewery after John — a 30-year home brewer — ditched his career in pharmaceutical research to craft beer full time. Almost immediately thereafter, the pandemic began.

“But it kind of worked out,” Schwerin said. “The town told us we needed three more bathrooms if BMC was going to open their business. So things slowing down in the last year sort of gave us the chance to get this important stuff out of the way and finished when there weren’t that many customers walking around.”

Now, with pandemic mandates receding and normalcy making a comeback, Schwerin hopes The Plant’s new offerings will bring back old regulars and attract new visitors. Nass hopes the complex will further burnish the town’s budding reputation.

“The word is out on Pittsboro,” he said. “This is the place to be.”

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



Staff photo by Kim Hawks
Pittsboro Mayor Jim Nass cuts the ‘ribbon’ — actually it’s toilet paper — to officially open the new bath house at The Plant.



Staff photo by Kim Hawks
The Plant in Pittsboro features several new businesses, including a brewery. The bath house was built to accommodate local codes for restroom availability.

OBITUARIES

Continued from page A10

JOHNNIE MIKE MILLER

Johnnie Mike Miller, 68, of Deep River Community, passed away on Monday, May 31, 2021, at First Health Moore Regional Hospital.

The family will greet friends at the home.

He was born in Lee County on October 12, 1952, to the late Johnny Willie Miller and Callie Jane Benton. Mike was the owner and operator of his own painting business; he worked as the Paint Pro at Lowes Home Improvement, Wyeth, Sandoz, and Carolina Meadows in Chapel Hill. He served as Chief of Deep River Fire Department and was a Mason. Mike was preceded in death by his three brothers and one sister.

Survivors include his wife,

Debra Phillips Miller of the home; daughters, Tammy Bridges of Sanford, Brandy Johnson of Bear Creek, and Sherry Stackpole of Sanford; a sister, Billie Hunter of Sanford; and nine grandchildren.

Arrangements by Bridges-Cameron Funeral Home.

Condolences may be made at: www.bridgescameronfuneralhome.com.

ROBERT LOUIS DENNY

Robert Louis Denny 85, passed away on Monday, May 24, 2021, at U.N.C. Hospitals, Chapel Hill.

Funeral service was held at 11 a.m. Tuesday, June 1, 2021, at Knotts Funeral Home in Pittsboro, with burial following at the Pittsboro Church of God Cemetery.

GREGORY DALE SANDERS

A memorial service will be held for Gregory Dale Sanders on Sunday, June 6, 2021, at 3 p.m. at Solid Rock Baptist Church, 3903 U.S. Hwy. 64 West, Pittsboro.

Mr. Sanders is the son of Jerry and Louise Sanders, pastor of Solid Rock Baptist Church.

LUCILLE JACKSON MIMMS

Lucille Jackson Mimms, 86, of Broadway, passed away at her home on Monday, May 31, 2021.

The family will receive friends on Thursday, June 3, 2021, from 1 to 2 p.m. at Bridges-Cameron Funeral Home. A funeral service will follow in the chapel at 2 p.m. with Chaplain Randy Beasley officiating. Burial will follow at Jonesboro Cemetery.

She was born on June 15, 1934, to the late James William and Belva Tickle Jackson. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Daniel George Mimms; son, Daniel Ray Mimms and siblings, Lester Ray, Ralph, Calvin, Glenn, James, Margaret and Mary.

She is survived by her children Lorraine Mimms Bunnell of Broadway, Ricky Dale Mimms of Broadway, Marsha Mimms of Augusta, Ga. and Janet Mimms of Broadway; brother, John Jackson of Sanford; sister, Dorothy Stanley of Sanford; ten grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Arrangements by Bridges-Cameron Funeral Home. Condolences may be made at www.bridgescameronfuneralhome.com.

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Chatham News - Record

CHARLES KEITH SMITH



Charles Keith Smith, age 57, of Asheboro died Monday, May 3, 2021.

Mr. Smith was born August 5, 1963, to Charlie Smith and Patrice Rummage who preceded Keith in death. He was employed with Lazar Industries in Siler City. He attended First Wesleyan Church in Siler City, Fellowship Baptist Church in Asheboro and Vintage Church in Randleman. Keith loved everyone and led many people to Christ.

The family would like to give a special thanks to Evelyn Gongaware, Todd Brady and Chris Knox and so many others too numerous to mention for their loving support during this time.

He is survived by his wife of 17 years, Sandra Lee Smith; son, Josh Smith and wife Stephanie of Siler City; grandchildren, Madysin, Josselin, Judah and Conor; stepson, Christopher Canter of Climax; brother, Chad York of Pleasant Garden; stepfather, Larry Rummage of Pleasant Garden; aunt, Helen Honbarger of Siler City.

The family will receive friends on Saturday, June 5, 2021, from 1 to 2 p.m. at First Wesleyan Church, 608 North 3rd Avenue in Siler City. A Celebration of Keith's life will follow at 2 p.m.

Memorials may be made to Hospice of Randolph, 416 Vision Dr., Asheboro, NC 27203, www.hospiceofrandolph.org

Pugh Funeral Home in Asheboro is serving the family. Remembrances and online condolences may be made at www.pughfuneralhome.com.

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TRACK & FIELD

'Everybody has fun': J-M, Chatham Charter track programs thriving under first-year coaches

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — As far as passion goes, high school track & field coaches — and parents — are rarely lacking.

Spending hours in the blistering heat, setting up and hosting meets and helping out with events in addition to coaching their student-athletes, among other things, are all indicators of coaches who love the sport they're involved in and want to see their students thrive.

In a sport often overshadowed by some of high school's more popular choices, Jordan-Matthews and Chatham Charter have managed to roll out competitive track programs spearheaded by first-year coaches that have worked hard to drum up interest and keep things afloat during a pandemic-shortened season. "A lot of it is just getting

them out here, just showing them the events," Lamont Piggie, J-M's head track & field coach, said after last Tuesday's meet in Siler City. "Because everyone's familiar with football, basketball, baseball, stuff like that. A lot of them aren't familiar with track. ... But once they learn it and grasp it, it takes off from there."

On Tuesday, May 25, the Jets hosted their second home meet of the year alongside the Knights and two PAC-7 conference rivals — the Wheatmore Warriors and Eastern Randolph Wildcats — finishing first place in the men's competition (83 points) and second place in the women's competition (41 points, 30 behind Wheatmore's 71 points).

Six days earlier, in the PAC-7 Championship Meet, the Eastern Randolph men narrowly edged out J-M by just two points, 102-100, to take the conference crown after senior

Jacquez Thompson was held out of the boys 200-meter dash due to injury, which could have acted as a meet-winner depending on his placement.

Last week's meet was a taste of revenge.

In total, the Jets took first place in seven events — five men's, two women's — as the men's team claimed the top spot over the Wildcats by a razor-thin margin of four points, J-M's 83 to ER's 79.

The Jets were led by some of the team's usual suspects, including Thompson, who won the boys 100-meter dash (11.15); senior Eral Jones, who placed second in both the boys 200-meter dash (23.87) and high jump (6-02.00) and junior Geneva Woolford, who won both the girls 100-meter hurdles (21.00) and 300-meter hurdles (1:03.47), though she was the only runner in the latter.

See **TRACK**, page B4



Staff photo by Kim Hawks

Chatham Charter junior Brooke Garner (left) and Jordan-Matthews junior Geneva Woolford jump over hurdles in the girls 100-meter hurdle event in their teams' quad meet with Eastern Randolph and Wheatmore on Tuesday, May 25. Woolford edged out Garner by .09 seconds.

Cape Fear Museum to host virtual 'Los Jets' event for team's 20th anniversary



Submitted photo

Promo photo for the NUVOTv six-part series 'Los Jets,' which aired in 2014.

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
News + Record Staff

WILMINGTON — Wilmington is giving you a chance relive a piece of Chatham sports history.

The Cape Fear Museum in Wilmington is hosting a virtual event to honor the 20th anniversary of Jordan-Matthews' famed soccer program on Wednesday, June 9. The hour-long affair will be-

gin with a showing of an episode from the six-part television series, "Los Jets," which originally aired on NUVOTv in 2014. The episode will be followed by a discussion about the TV series and the soccer program, which will feature J-M men's soccer coach — and the man behind the soccer program's formation — Paul Cuadros, along with a couple of Jets alumni.

"I was notified by the person in

charge of the event — her name is Jorey Stanley — and she wanted to do a program with 'Los Jets' and do some history," Cuadros said. "This is going to be a conversation, kind of like a gathering."

This isn't the first time that the Jets have been the focal point of a museum's attention.

In 2016, the North Carolina

See **JETS**, page B2

The NBA's fan problem illustrates why athletes deserve respect

As the number of vaccinated Americans continues to increase, so has capacity at many sports venues across the country.

For the NBA playoffs, seven of the 16 teams participating in the first round have opened their stadiums to more than 80% capacity, including the Atlanta Hawks, Boston Celtics and Milwaukee Bucks.

Other teams, like the New York Knicks, have planned to only sell tickets to fully vaccinated patrons if they advance further into the playoffs — by the time you're reading this, however, the magic at Madison Square Garden may have already run out — in an effort to increase capacity even further. As of now, the Knicks are open at around 75% capacity with no vaccination required to attend.

Having the ability to attend games or watch them on TV with louder crowds and visibly full stands has many breathing a sigh of relief as a sense of normalcy slowly trickles back into sports.

But if these last seven days in the NBA have shown us anything, it's that fans have clearly been cooped up for too long. Some of them have forgotten how to act like decent human beings, much less respectable spectators.

Since May 26, the NBA has had five incidents of unruly fan behavior targeted toward athletes or their families in Philadelphia, New York, Utah, Boston and Washington.

That's five too many.

It all started with Wizards star guard Russell Westbrook leaving the court in Game 2 of his team's series with the East's top-seeded Philadelphia 76ers on May 26.

See **RESPECT**, page B4



VICTOR HENSLEY
Sports Editor

Chatham high schools announce variety of summer youth camps

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — As the school year comes to an end and summer approaches quickly, high schools across Chatham County are gearing up for their annual athletic summer camps — many of which weren't able to take place last year, thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic.

From Jordan-Matthews to Northwood, camps give kids — from elementary to middle school — a chance to meet coaches, learn the sports' fundamentals and get a head start on their high school athletic journey.

To get more information on camps, please visit each school's website.

Here is a list of all of the

announced high school camps happening around Chatham this summer, with likely more announcements to come later:

Chatham Charter Basketball

Who: Rising 2nd through 8th graders

Where: Chatham Charter School

When: June 21-24, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Cost: \$45 per camper

Tennis

Who: Rising 2nd through 9th graders

Where: Chatham Charter School

When: June 14-18, 8-11 a.m.

Cost: \$90 per camper (or family discount of two campers for \$170)

Volleyball

Who: Rising 3rd through 9th graders

Where: Chatham Charter School

When: June 28-30, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Cost: \$50 per camper

Jordan-Matthews Baseball/Softball

Who: Rising 1st through 9th graders

Where: Jordan-Matthews High School

When: July 19-22, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Cost: \$60 per camper

Basketball

Who: Rising 1st through 9th graders

Where: Jordan-Matthews High School

When: July 19-22, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Football

Who: Rising 1st through 9th

graders

Where: Jordan-Matthews High School

When: July 26-29, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Cost: \$60 per camper

Soccer

Who: Rising 1st through 9th graders

Where: Jordan-Matthews High School

When: June 28-July 1, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Cost: \$60 per camper

Volleyball

Who: Rising 1st through 9th graders

Where: Jordan-Matthews High School

When: July 26-29, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Cost: \$60 per camper

Northwood Cheerleading

Who: Kindergarten students

through 8th graders

Where: TBA

When: July 26-28, 6-8 p.m.

Cost: \$65 per camper

Soccer

Who: Rising 1st through 8th graders

Where: Northwood High School

When: July 12-13, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Cost: \$60 per camper, paid on the first day of camp

Softball

Who: Rising 1st through 9th graders

Where: Northwood High School Softball Field

When: July 16-17, 4-7 p.m.

Cost: \$60 per camper

Reporter Victor Hensley can be reached at vhensley@chathamnr.com or on Twitter at [@Frezeal33](https://twitter.com/Frezeal33).

CHARGERS 2, TIGERS 1

'We're going to be deadly': With playoff hopes slim, Northwood's young core learns in win over Chapel Hill

BY BRENNAN DOHERTY
News + Record
Correspondent

CHAPEL HILL — Whatever you want to call it — a turning point, a momentum shift, a pivotal moment — Northwood head baseball coach David Miller has been around the game long enough to know how one play in a game can quickly change a team's fortunes.

A team hanging on for dear life can suddenly become the one in charge.

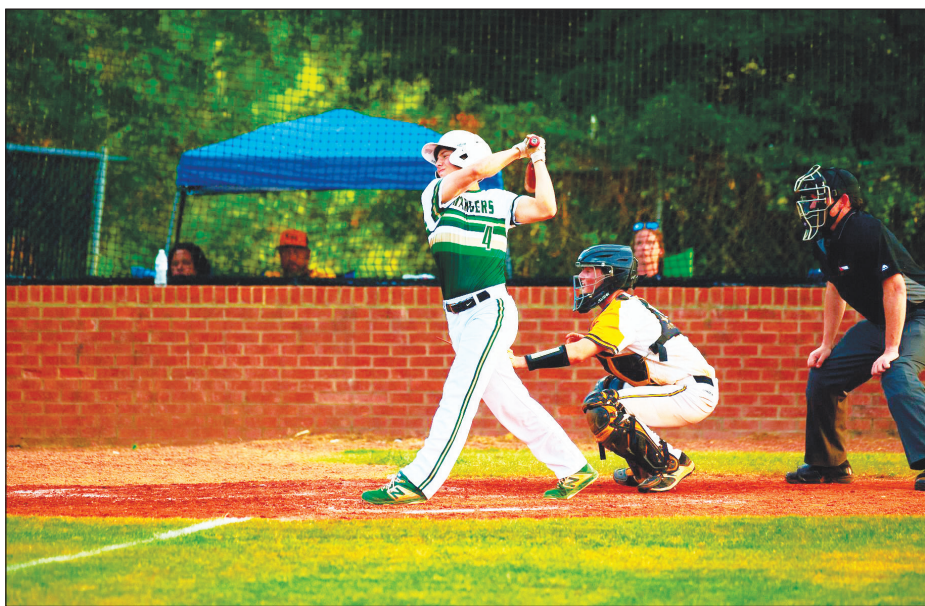
Such was the case for Northwood Thursday night on the road at Chapel Hill, where the Chargers used stellar pitching, timely hitting and — most importantly — a moment of defensive brilliance to top the Tigers, 2-1, improving to 6-5 on the season (5-4 in the Big Eight).

Starting pitcher Salvador Delgado went four innings and picked up the win for the Chargers, while sophomore third baseman Zach Barnes delivered the go-ahead two-run single in the top of the fifth.

Not long before the Chargers took the lead, however, they found themselves on the brink as Chapel Hill batted with the bases loaded and only one out in the bottom of the fourth. Up to that point, Delgado, a sophomore, had done well to limit the Tigers, commanding the strike zone. Getting out of a jam like this, though, appeared to be a tough task to face.

His teammates in the field gave him a helping hand.

Chapel Hill junior Will



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Northwood junior designated hitter Walker Johnson swings at a pitch during his team's 2-1 win at Chapel Hill last Thursday. Johnson reached base twice on a pair of walks in the victory.

Epstein hit a grounder to Barnes at third, who fired home to Northwood catcher Luke Smith for the force out at the plate. Smith took a glance at first, saw there was no play to be made, then quickly pivoted and threw a bullet to third, where Barnes tagged out Chapel Hill sophomore Tyler Stillson, who had come off the bag.

Just like that, Northwood turned two and got out of the inning unscathed. Considering what could have been, the one-run deficit the Chargers faced felt doable.

"Momentum is a crazy thing," Miller said. "That flipped the game right there. We took the momentum, scored two runs and then we held on."

For Delgado, the play was the perfect way for his night on the mound to end.

Throughout his four innings of work (2 H, 1

ER, 2 BB, 2 K), the right-hander gave his club a chance to win. Chapel Hill's lone run came in the bottom of the first on a sacrifice bunt by junior Taran Coyne-Smith, but the Tigers could never break through otherwise.

Delgado's approach was to be content with Chapel Hill putting the ball into play — as long as he didn't give them anything too good to hit — because he trusted the guys behind him.

"To me, it's all about the defense," Delgado said. "It's all about my defense behind me. I'm not the biggest guy on the field, but I put it where it needs to go, and my defense, they had my back."

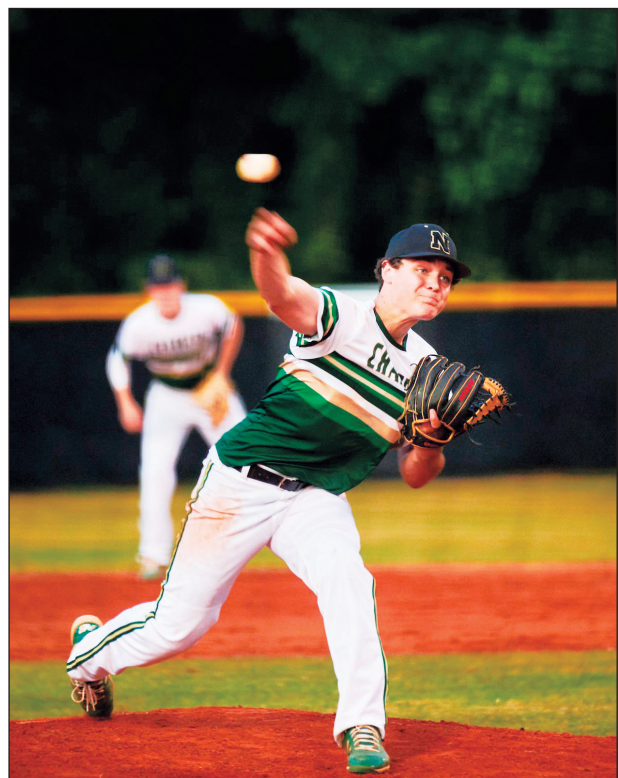
For much of the night, Northwood couldn't muster together enough solid at-bats to get on the board. The Chargers struggled against Chapel Hill junior starter Josh Campos, who threw

three scoreless innings, although Northwood leadoff man Mason Bae (3-for-4, three singles) came close to scoring in the top of the third on a single by sophomore Seth Davis before being thrown out at the plate.

Following the momentum-shifting play in the field, the Chargers took advantage in the top of the fifth. Junior nine-hole hitter Martin Gallegos got things going with an infield single, then Bae and Davis each followed up with singles of their own.

With the bases loaded and one out, Barnes — who has also featured prominently as a pitcher for Northwood this season — delivered with a grounder through the left side of the infield, scoring Gallegos and Bae to put Northwood ahead.

"You hit it where they're not," Miller said. "The ball that got into left



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Northwood sophomore pitcher Salvador Delgado delivers a pitch during his team's 2-1 road win against Chapel Hill last Thursday. Delgado earned the win, giving up one run in four innings of work.

field wasn't the hardest ball we hit, but there's nobody standing between the third baseman and the shortstop and we hit it in the right spot."

Delgado earned the win on Thursday, but Northwood junior reliever Nick Lovingood also massively helped his team by closing the night out with three scoreless innings.

While Delgado primarily offered fastballs and changeups, Lovingood provided a different look with his slider, which proved effective. Lovingood only needed to face 10 batters to record the final nine outs and pitched 1-2-3 innings in both the fifth and seventh.

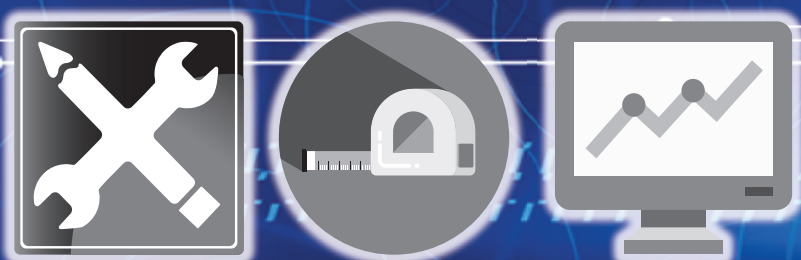
"He's a fastball and slider guy, and he came

in and hammered the sliders and located it," Miller said. "He did a great job. We couldn't ask any more of (Delgado and Lovingood)."

With three games remaining, Northwood's playoff hopes are slim, according to Miller, as the NCHSAA postseason will feature half the number of teams as a normal year. Yet, both he and his players understand the importance of finishing strong for a young team that features zero seniors and had seven freshmen and sophomores in its starting lineup Thursday night.

"Give us a couple of years," Delgado said with a smile. "We're going to be deadly."

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Chatham's recommended budget to be approved June 21, with "relatively minimal" changes

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

The Chatham County Board of Commissioners concluded its work sessions for the county's recommended \$149.9 million 2021-22 budget early on May 20, and canceled the remaining sessions scheduled for May 21st and 25th.

The next and final step in the budget process is for it to be approved at the board's regular meeting on June 21 to meet the state-required June 30 budget adoption date. The county's fiscal year begins July 1.

"Based on the discussion at the work session, and the direction of the Board at that time, there are a few (relatively minimal) changes to the manager's recommended budget," Chatham County Budget Director Darrell Butts said in an email to the News + Record.

Two of those changes include correcting errors identified in the budget message.

On page 21 of the recommended budget, one paragraph says intergovernmental reve-

nues are expected to increase by 11%, when they're actually expected to decrease by 9%. Other places in the budget message listed this correctly.

The other error, found on page 22 of the PDF budget message document, said other taxes and licenses revenue was expected to decrease by 5%, when it should actually increase by 29%. That revenue represents locally collected taxes apart from the property tax.

The board approved making both of those corrections.

The only other change to the recommended budget, Butts said, was the explicit inclusion of the Board of Commissioners in the 3% salary adjustment recommended by the county manager for all employees.

During the May 20 work session, board members discussed how the current salary might discourage manged qualified residents from seeking office. The 3% increase equates to an increase of \$450 annually for board members and \$481.50 for the board chairperson, Butts

said. "If approved, this will be the first adjustment of the Board of Commissioners salary since FY2006-2007 when it was increased by \$3,000," he said.

The work session followed the board's regular May 19 meeting, at which technical difficulties with the virtual offering of the meeting prevented remote attendees from hearing the majority of meeting business, which was supposed to include a public hearing on the county's recommended budget.

Two people who signed up to speak remotely couldn't speak because of those audio glitches. One person who signed up to speak in-person did not show up, county Public Information Officer Kara Dudley said. All comments were submitted before the meeting to be entered into public record, she said.

Those comments included requests to prioritize conservation of Chatham's natural resources and "necessary improvements" to the Bynum Mill site and trail along the Haw River to Route 6 in this

year's budget. The board discussed such input at its May 20 work session, acknowledging that there wasn't much input, and that what was received concerned the trail coordinator position and expanding land conservation along the Haw River.

Near the end of the work session, Vice Chairperson Diana Hales stated the budget was just shy of \$150 million, and inquired what it was four years ago. Butts said it was just under \$111 million in FY2018; it was just over \$94 million in FY15.

The recommended budget represents a 10.4% increase in expenditures from the current budget — funded in part by expected additional tax revenue, including an increase in property taxes, permitting, excise and sales tax collections. The proposed budget, expected to be approved later this month, also includes an additional \$2.4 million to support the opening of Seaforth High school, funding for 31 new county positions and a 3% pay raise for all coun-

ty employees. County Manager Dan LaMontagne previously said in regard to the budget that the county was in a good position to recover from challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic and last October's cyber attack, but needed to look ahead to prepare for population and development growth.

"For several years, we have discussed the need of being properly prepared for growth. As a county, we are now at the point that the rapid growth and development we have long expected is happening," LaMontagne said in a May 4 news release about the proposed budget. "Throughout this budget, you will see that we are focused on ensuring that the development that is occurring is well monitored and aligns with the long-term vision that Plan Chatham has laid out for Chatham County."

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

Graduation season is back



Staff photo by Peyton Suckles



Staff photo by Peyton Suckles

Chatham Charter School celebrated its annual commencement last Friday, where its 44-member class of 2021 graduated following more than a year of school amid a pandemic.

Chatham Charter graduate Landon Oakley embraces his mom after receiving his diploma. The school's graduation ceremony took place at the school's baseball complex last Friday night.



The Chatham School of Science & Engineering had 14 graduates this year. The graduation services were held at the Chatham County Agricultural and Conference Center in on Friday.



Staff photo by Kim Hawks

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NEWS BRIEFS

CARE kicks off 'Pet-Casso' contest

Do you think your pet is talented? Maybe he or she is the next Picasso or Renoir? Now's your chance to show off their talent! Chatham Animal Rescue and Education (CARE) is looking for pet artists with a Pet-Casso contest. CARE is asking pet owners to go to the CARE website at www.chathamanimalrescue.org to watch the instructional videos to see how to get your pet to paint a picture for the contest. All you need is some paper, a gallon-sized plastic sealed bag, some acrylic paints and something

your cat or dog will lick off the top of the plastic to get them to spread the paint around. Then, take a photo of your pet's creation and upload it to the website. Entries will be accepted through June 11. Starting on June 12-26 get your friends and family to vote for your entry from CARE's fundraising site, also found at www.chathamanimalrescue.org. Each vote is a \$10 donation to CARE! The winning entry will have their artwork hung in Liquidambar Gallery and Gifts in downtown Pittsboro and will be featured in a CARE newsletter.

— CN+R staff reports



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!!



CHECK IT OUT: Chatham's public libraries welcoming patrons again

More than a year after a pandemic turned operations at Chatham County's public libraries upside down, they've re-opened to patrons. This week, Rita Van Duinen, the branch manager for Pittsboro's Chatham Community Library, talks about opening doors, going back to "pre-COVID-19" operating hours and other goings-on at the county's three-library system.

A native of Greensboro, Van Duinen has been a Chatham County resident for more than 20 years. She began working in libraries while pursuing a degree in Russian Language and Literature at the University of Oregon in the 1980s. Van Duinen returned to North Carolina and in the early 1990s began a 17-year career at the UNC University Library system, during which she earned a Master of Science in Library Science from the school. Following a stint as lead instructor for Central Carolina Community College Library and Information Technology program and time spent as a consultant to the Washington, D.C.-based Council on Library and Information Resources, she became branch manager of the Chatham Community Library in 2017.

Nothing — aside from going into a grocery store unmasked (if you're fully vaccinated) —

says "post-pandemic" like the Chatham County Public Libraries announcing the resumption of pre-COVID hours of operation. You and your staff have been working without patrons for 14 months now ... first, let's talk about how that feels to each of you, being able to welcome visitors inside the county's three libraries again...

Chatham County libraries did a "soft" reopening on April 5, with limited hours and limited services. Admittedly, it's been quite slow at the Pittsboro branch, but we think that will change once more people are fully vaccinated and our COVID numbers continue to trend down. I also think it's a matter of personal comfort levels; most staff are fully vaccinated, and we continue to mask up while inside the building as a matter of personal choice.

It's been a very quiet 14 months without our patrons, so we are delighted to have visitors inside our facilities again. It's what we do! The library is one of the most public-facing services I can think of.

For the record, what are the hours of operation and what other procedural changes are being made (any post-COVID changes, or are we essentially turning the clock back to pre-pandemic operational plans)? And what's the word on mask requirement?

Effective May 24, Chatham County libraries returned to their pre-COVID hours of operation, which vary slightly at each branch. Hours of operation are:

Chatham Community Library (Pittsboro):

- Monday – Thursday: 9 a.m. – 8 p.m.
- Friday: 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.
- Saturday: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Goldston Library:

- Monday & Wednesday: 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., 2 – 6 p.m.
- Tuesday: CLOSED
- Thursday: 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., 2 – 8 p.m.
- Friday: 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., 2 – 5 p.m.
- Saturday: 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Wren Memorial Library (Siler City):

- Monday: noon – 8 p.m.
 - Tuesday – Friday: 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
 - Saturday: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- Per NC Executive Order 215 (issued May 17), masks are no longer required in a public setting such as the library, especially for the fully vaccinated. Masks are recommended for the unvaccinated, but not required. Free masks are available at the Pittsboro branch for anyone who might want to be extra cautious

while inside. Capacity limitations inside the libraries has also been lifted as a result of the executive order.

Curbside pickup is still available, right?

Curbside service is still offered at all three branches for those patrons who aren't yet comfortable coming indoors and as a convenience. Curbside service hours remain the same, Monday-Friday, from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Call your local branch to schedule a pick-up time.

How did you all come to the decision to re-open to the public?

Once Executive Order 215 was signed, we knew we (had) to act quickly to reconstitute our services. We followed the lead of county management who in turn, follows that at the state level. We've been busy changing signage, moving furniture back in place, and making the library as welcoming as ever while also providing plenty of hand sanitizer and contactless service points.

One of the staples of the Chatham Community Library is programming. Lectures, classes, etc. What has to happen in order for those to resume in-person?

At present, all library programming will remain virtual until further notice. This includes our Summer

Reading program, an adult programming in the works, and instruction. One exception is the new Outdoor Story Times which will begin each week in June and held at three different locations across the county, outdoors on the patio at CCCC's Natural Chef Café, outdoors at the Goldston Library and at Washington Street Park in Siler City. Kudos to our Youth Services staff who've been working diligently to return to some sense of normalcy in their programming. And as a result, have created a new partnership with Siler City Parks and Recreation. Visit the library's website for more details on Outdoor Story Time, www.chathamlibraries.org.

In person programming can take months in advance to plan. I don't foresee us returning to in-person events until the fall at the earliest.

Anything else you want to highlight or discuss?

Our Friends of Library is currently planning a return to their fall book sale in September. They are still working out all the details so stay tuned for more information on that. The book sales are quite popular and a great community event. We are excited to return to a sense of "community" with reopening and the eventual return to programming and events!

Weekly COVID-19 vaccination clinics continue in Pittsboro, Siler City and Goldston

From Chatham County Public Health Department

PITTSBORO — The Chatham County Public Health Department announced today that COVID-19 vaccination clinics that occurred regularly through May in Pittsboro, Siler City and Goldston would continue throughout the month of June.

As of May 29th, 36,208 Chatham County residents had received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, making up 48.6% of the county's population; 32,339 are fully vaccinated, 43.4% of the county's population.

Even more Chatham residents have the opportunity to receive their vaccine at these locations:

The Chatham County Public Health Department is offering first- and sec-

ond-dose Moderna COVID-19 vaccinations at its Siler City clinic (1000 S. 10th Ave.) on Fridays. To make an appointment, call 919-742-5641. Walk-ins will also be welcome.

StarMed Healthcare is continuing to operate Pfizer COVID-19 vaccination clinics at the Chatham County Agriculture and Conference Center in Pittsboro on Fridays and Saturdays from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.. To pre-register, visit starmed.care or call (980) 445-9818. Walk-ins are also accepted.

StarMed Healthcare is providing Pfizer vaccinations at the Goldston Town Hall (40 Coral Ave. #A) from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Wednesdays. Second-dose appointments will follow three weeks later. To pre-register, visit starmed.care or call (980) 445-9818. Walk-ins are also accepted.

"We are thankful to all of the COVID-19 vaccine providers in Chatham County, who have been instrumental in our efforts to beat the pandemic," said Chatham County Public Health Director Mike Zelek. "We remain grateful to them for their ongoing commitment to ensure access to COVID-19 vaccines across the county."

CCPHD has also been boosting its communications efforts about the COVID-19 vaccine and young people. The department created a new webpage with a video created by CCPHD staff specifically for parents of children who are now eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. The page also includes some frequently-asked questions and locations to receive the Pfizer vaccine. The page can be found

at www.chathamcountync.gov/covid-vaccineyouth.

By visiting myspot.nc.gov, residents can put in their city or ZIP code and find multiple locations in their area to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Locations are also sortable by type of vaccine: the Pfizer vaccine, which is available to all individuals 12 years of age and older, and the Johnson & Johnson and Moderna vaccines, which are available to all individuals 18 years of age and older.

To learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine and the CCPHD's vaccination plans, visit www.chathamcountync.gov/coronavirusvaccine. To learn more about the Chatham County Public Health Department, visit www.chathamcountync.gov/publichealth or www.facebook.com/chathamhealth.

NEWS BRIEFS

Siler City Town Clerk honored

SILER CITY — Jenifer Johnson, Siler City's town clerk, has been awarded for the second time the prestigious designation of "N.C. Certified Municipal Clerk" (NCCMC) from the North Carolina Association of Municipal Clerks, along with the School of Government of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for achieving its high educational, experience, and service requirements.

As an established member of NCAMC, Johnson was among the class of municipal clerks from North Carolina who received their initial State designation in 2016, and after meeting extensive continuing education requirements has been awarded the N.C. Certified Municipal Clerk designation through July 2026.

The NCAMC is a professional organization of city, town and village clerks from across the state, dedicated to the continued growth and development of clerks and their municipalities.

Established on November 5, 1975, the Association, among other things, promotes educational and professional development opportunities for municipal clerks to enhance their knowledge and effectiveness. This is no small task, considering the wide array of duties performed by municipal clerks, which often

vary from municipality to municipality. The Association partners with the North Carolina League of Municipalities, the School of Government of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the

International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC) to meet the needs of each individual municipal clerk.

The North Carolina Certified Municipal Clerk Program is a five-year designation with requirements

for continuing education to sustain and develop the ever-changing knowledge of the profession of municipal clerks. The NCAMC, together with the International Institute of Municipal Clerks, strives to

promote educational and professional development to enhance the clerk.

This Certification Program was developed with the assistance of the UNC School of Government at Chapel Hill and will be administered

in cooperation with the School of Government. Qualifications of applicants are reviewed and approved by the NCAMC State Certification Committee.

— CN+R staff reports

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JM honors top student artists at JMArts Awards

From JMArts

SILER CITY — Ten Jordan-Matthews High School artists received awards on May 27 during an annual ceremony highlighting outstanding student musicians, actors and visual artists.

Awards are usually announced as part of JM Awards Night, an annual presentation highlighting top students across all disciplines. But because of the pandemic, arts awards were announced by faculty members in video presentations on JMArts Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

The ceremony is pinned to the top of JMArts Twitter at twitter.com/JMHSArts or is accessible on all platforms with the hashtag #JMAawards2021.

Karsyn Vann, a freshman, received the 2021 Young Actor Award for her outstanding work in a particularly challenging role, as Old Man Warner in the spring theater workshop production of “The Lottery.”

Jennifer Diaz Garcia, a junior, received the 2021 Young Artist Award for her outstanding talent, ability to work in various media and willingness to experiment and take risks.

Andy Ayala Jimenez, a freshman and tuba player, received the 2021 Young Instrumentalist Award for his musicianship, dedication and ability to overcome obstacles.

Cassidy DeShazo, a freshman, received the 2021 Young Vocalist Award for her outstanding voice, understanding of music theory and quality work.

Hannah Redding, a senior, received the 2021 Kaitlin James Theater Award for her exceptional work as Tessie Hutchison in the spring theater production of “The Lottery.” Though the award is presented annually to an actor or crew member for their contribution to a production’s success, this year’s presentation also honored Redding for her dedication and leadership over four years of theatrical work.

Wesley Apple and

Daniel Escalona Fernandez were named the 2021 Outstanding Graduates in Band, the first time two artists jointly received an outstanding graduate award. Both trumpet players were honored for their musicianship and impressive growth as musicians over four years. Apple will begin undergraduate study this fall at East Carolina University with a major in music education and a minor in music performance.

Conrad Suits was named the 2021 Outstanding Graduate in Theater. The JMArts Scholar performed most recently at Jordan-Matthews as Hutchison in “The Lottery,” The Baker in “Into the Woods” and Eric in “The Little Mermaid.” He enrolls at Appalachian State University this fall with plans to complete the B.A. in Theatre Arts.

Tiana Brooks was named the 2021 Outstanding Graduate in Visual Art. The 2020 JMArts-Rotary Scholar’s digital work, “symbol of strength,” was commissioned this winter for the first JMArts spring greeting cards and her painting, “Say Their Names,” was one of only 35 student works statewide selected to exhibit at The 2021 Emerging Artists Invitational, an annual exhibition for high school artists sponsored by the Sechrest Gallery of Art and the High Point University School of Art and Design. She will enroll at Appalachian State University this fall to study arts management.

Rilee Rains was named the 2021 Outstanding Graduate in Vocal Music. The vocalist has not only performed with JM vocal ensembles, but appeared on stage in musical productions, performing as Rapunzel in “Into the Woods” and Adella in “The Little Mermaid.” She begins undergraduate study this fall at Central Carolina Community College.

More information about JMArts, including details about JMArts Scholars and upcoming events, is available at jmartarts.org.

William ‘Chip’ Pate honored with JMArts Community Hero Award

From JMArts

SILER CITY — William “Chip” Pate, a marketing and public relations consultant serving clients in the education and nonprofit sectors, was named the 2021 Community Hero by JMArts, the Jordan-Matthews Arts Foundation.



Pate

The annual award was created to honor a volunteer from the community who has contributed significantly to the success of the arts at Jordan-Matthews High School.

The award was presented on May 27 by JMArts President Rose Pate as part of the JMArts Awards, an online ceremony highlighting outstanding student musicians, actors and visual artists. Arts awards are usually announced as part of JM Awards Night, an annual event highlighting top students across all disciplines. But because of the pandemic, arts awards were announced by faculty members in video presentations on JMArts Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

The awards ceremony is pinned to the top of JMArts Twitter at twitter.com/JMHSArts or is accessible on all platforms with the hashtag #JMAawards2021.

Chip and Rose Pate are married; Chip was one of the founders of JMArts, working with, Rose, the current JMArts president, to create the foundation one decade ago. Since then, Chip, the owner

of Pate and Associates Marketing in Pittsboro, has donated more than one-third of his billable hours every year to help nonprofit organizations, most of those hours contributed to JMArts.

He has been involved in setting the strategic direction for JMArts and has handled the nonprofit’s marketing and public relations — including its website, social media, news releases, JMArts Update newsletter, photography and media relations.

Drawing on his Ph.D. in higher education from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chip also has helped develop the foundation’s educational programs. He helped create JMArts’s “Performing in College” educational roundtable for high school students considering majoring in performing arts in college and he designs the foundation’s annual New York Arts Adventure.

That signature educational trip is built from the ground up each year around the interests of traveling students. Chip books hotels and flights, plans meals and works with associates in New York City to arrange special events like backstage tours on Broadway and extended lunches for students to learn from nationally respected theater critics, actors and producers.

While students have enjoyed the benefits of his work with JMArts, he says he’s been blessed as well.

“I’ve said this many times before, so it’s no secret, that these student actors, musicians and

visual artists are the one thing that gives me hope for the future,” he said. “They work unbelievably hard, even without some of the advantages that many schools take for granted. They’re genuinely outstanding people and, most of all, they encourage each other and take care of each other.”

“It’s something you probably don’t see unless you’re backstage, at rehearsal or in the art studio, but, honestly, it’s impressive. I just wish everyone else could see what I’ve seen, so they could be encouraged and inspired, too.”

Because Chip is involved each year in preparing and promoting the arts awards, Rose had to tell her husband about the honor in advance. She prefaced that discussion by saying, “This was the committee, not me,” knowing it could be a little uncomfortable presenting an award so close to home.

On the other hand, the decision made sense.

“We both got involved with supporting the arts programs at JM when our son was a student here, and we found it so fulfilling that we’ve stayed active,” Rose said. “There’s no way we could have had the impact we’ve had without Chip’s service. If you’ve ever heard of JMArts, it’s because of his work.”

All arts award winners over the last several years are listed online at jmartarts.org/awards.

More information about JMArts, including its flagship JMArts Scholars program, is available at jmartarts.org.

About 90 student artists exhibit at 2021 JM Spring Art Show

From JMArts

SILER CITY — Tiana Brooks and Chloe Johnson took top prizes at the 2021 JM Spring Art Show, a juried event held on May 26 at Jordan-Matthews High School.

Work from about 90 artists from across the academic community was on display during a show usually held over a full week in downtown Siler City. But because of pandemic complications, this year’s show was moved to one night in the high school media center.

Tiana Brooks received the \$100 first prize for “Say Their Names,” a mixed media work. The piece also was one of only 35 student works statewide selected to exhibit at The 2021 Emerging Artists Invitational, an annual exhibition for high school artists sponsored by the Sechrest Gallery of Art and the High Point University School of Art and Design.

Chloe Johnson received the \$50 second prize for her untitled acrylic and wax series of six works.



“Say Their Names,” a mixed media work by senior Tiana Brooks was awarded first place in the 2021 JM Spring Art Show.

Four other artists were recognized for honorable mention. They were Carlin Brown for “Galactic Cruise,” an acrylic painting; Anna Brooke Fuller for “Tic-Tac-No,” an acrylic painting; Linda Ocampo for “Man with Cello,” a mixed media collage; and Isabella Palacios for “Bubbles,” an acrylic painting.

Local artists Barbara Hengstenberg and Bronwyn Watson, who returned as judges this year, were impressed with the art, which included works from several classes — Art 4 Honors, Art 3 Honors, Art 2, Art 1 and Basic Life Skills.

“After this past year, we are amazed to find such introspective and expressive works of art here at JM,” Hengstenberg said. “We have high regard for all of the artists and their teacher.”

Rahkie Mateen-Mason, the art teacher at Jordan-Matthews, said this year’s show reflected a wide range of topics. This unusual semester in the pandemic focused on “choice-based” art — a direction that allowed students to develop their own projects after instruction in media and methods. “That meant they had a lot of freedom, but also a lot of responsibility,” she said. “I’m proud so many of them followed through with their plans.”

Photos of many works from the 2021 JM Spring Art Show are available in an album on the JMArts Facebook page at facebook.com/jmhsarts.

Dance instruction returns to J-M with spring theater workshop

From JMArts

SILER CITY — Formal dance instruction returned to Jordan-Matthews High School for the first time in decades with a two-day workshop that kicked off next school year’s production of the Broadway musical, “Oklahoma!”

The six-hour stage dance workshop in mid-May was organized by JMArts, the Jordan-Matthews Arts Foundation, thanks to a Grassroots Grant awarded last fall by the Chatham Arts Council. It taught dance terminology and basic steps, helped students understand what to expect at a dance audition and allowed the performers to work through some choreography for the upcoming theatrical production.

“For most of our students, this was a real challenge,” said JMArts President Rose Pate, who created the workshop. “Only a few have ever had dance lessons. But it was great to see their enthusiasm and delight in learning something new, and I’m extremely proud of how hard they’ve worked. And this dance is going to be a memorable moment in our production of ‘Oklahoma!’ next year.”

More than a dozen students



Courtesy of JMArts

Peggy Taphorn, Producing Artistic Director for Temple Theatre in Sanford, teaches steps during the six-hour JMArts Theater Dance Workshop at Jordan-Matthews High School.

participated in the free workshop. They filled the auditorium stage two Monday afternoons, beginning slowly with stretching before moving into more rigorous steps introduced by workshop instructor Peggy Taphorn, who is in her 14th season as the Producing Artistic Director at Temple Theatre in Sanford.

It was a rare opportunity for young actors to work with

someone like Taphorn, who has directed, choreographed and performed across the world, including numerous productions on Broadway, London’s West End, and touring the United States, Canada, South America and Asia.

After learning some basic steps, the pace picked up and focus shifted to choreography for “Kansas City,” a well-known number from the Rod-

gers and Hammerstein musical.

At times, Taphorn walked methodically through segments of the dance with the entire group. At other times, she split the group in two and worked with each half separately. Every time she turned on the music, things got almost frenetic, with bodies moving across the stage and Taphorn’s voice towering over the score, keeping the rhythm with short words reminding the dancers about their techniques, turns and steps.

Though she works with some of the most talented theater professionals in the world, Taphorn said it’s also rewarding to teach beginning actors and dancers.

“It was very enjoyable to work with such a committed and fun group of young people in this class on learning this classic dance,” she said. “We also talked about a life in the theater and the different opportunities on and behind the stage. A lot of the skills learned in theater and the arts are transferable to 21st century learning, including learning how to cooperate and how to think creatively.”

Judging from upbeat banter during water breaks, enthu-

siasm on stage and responses after the workshop, it was a huge hit with the students — including junior Wendy Castillo Mejia, for whom it was all a new experience.

“This is my first time doing anything with theater, but the theater kids seem like they have everything together and they are having fun,” she said. “Even though this is new, I’m feeling good. I’m still trying to decide between working backstage and auditioning for the show.”

Sophomore Buck Thornton had a similar reaction to this flurry of activity to kick off the production, “It’s a work in progress, but that’s what makes it fun,” he said. “This is my first time having dance lessons and I am excited to learn more!”

The Grassroots Grant Program that provided funding for the dance workshop is made possible by individual contributions to the Chatham Arts Council’s general operating fund — and by the Grassroots Arts Program of the North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.

POLICE REPORTS



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Volunteers help distribute boxes of food in Pittsboro in July as a part of CORA's SNACK! Program. The program provides free and nutritious meals for school-aged children during the summer.

CORA expands age group for SNACK! program

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

Following the posting of a complaint in a popular Chatham Facebook group, CORA — Chatham Outreach Alliance — updated its SNACK! Program age requirements to include more school-aged children in its services.

The Facebook post, published May 19 by Chatham resident Veronica McPherson, raised concerns with the program's 5- to 17-year-old age requirement. This range left out older students, McPherson wrote, such as her 19-year-old daughter who is disabled and still in high school.

Later that evening, CORA's Executive Director Melissa Driver Beard responded, thanking McPherson for her post and explaining that the age parameters for SNACK — Summer Nutritional Assistance for Chatham Kids — were originally put in place to serve school-aged students when school "backpack" programs pause during the summer.

"Perhaps it is time we reconsider that," Beard wrote in the Facebook "Caremongering Pittsboro" group less than three hours after McPherson's post. "It's possible the age restrictions should be changed. ...I'll admit in the absence of better information, we've continued to run the program as it is. Not being a fan of 'doing things the way we always have,' I'm happy to consider change and would be happy to delve further into the issue with you."

Since then, the SNACK program — which provides participating children with 21 nutritious meals each week from mid-June through mid-August — updated its age requirements. Now, students as young as 3 and as old as 19 can qualify, given they're enrolled in school, with students of any age eligible for registration.

"I want to thank Melissa Driver Beard and CORA Food Pantry for taking the time to listen to my concerns and work with me," McPherson posted May 25. "Adjusting the age requirement of the SNACK program will help to make some families' lives a little less stressful!"

The SNACK program has been operating for 12 years. During that time, CORA's offered as many as 21 pickup locations in the county; last year, there were five pickup spots and this year the organization plans to offer 11.

After Beard discovered the Facebook complaint, she said she "just immediately responded."

"That was just a very honest, transparent response," she said. "As

I said in my response to Veronica, I don't believe in continuing to do things just because we've always done them that way. And I did believe that it was a little bit of a technicality that, if there are children that are older or younger, who were enrolled in school and need assistance, that we can bend that way."

Several community members thanked Beard for her reply.

"Great response Melissa," commented Jaime Detzi, who lives in Chatham and is the director of Chatham Education Foundation. "You are always willing to find ways to make things better."

"Wonderful response... Helpful, informative and gracious!" County Commissioner Karen Howard posted from her personal Facebook page. "Thank you for what you are doing."

In Chatham County, 50% of public school children receive free or low-cost meals, CORA's website says, leaving more than 4,450 school children in Chatham without "adequate replacements for these meals during the summer in 2021."

Families can register for the SNACK program on a Google form on CORA's website (<https://tinyurl.com/p36wztnb>), which is in English and Spanish. Registration runs through June 14, when food pick-ups start, but Beard said people can also enroll on-site.

CORA offers several programs besides SNACK, including its food pantry, celebration station, Commodity Supplemental Food Program and Emergency Food Assistance Program. Beard emphasized that people of all ages can get food if they need it, even if they don't qualify for SNACK.

"You don't have to rely on a summer program for help," she said.

While this language change in the SNACK requirements is a relatively minor one, it reflects myriad changes CORA implemented over the last year and a half during the pandemic.

CORA's new building in Pittsboro is nearly complete; the organization is exploring hybrid and online shopping models that might remove additional barriers for clients.

"We're really trying to think about how to better serve the community and better be a resource for those that we do serve," Beard said. "And so I think we've really embraced this year of change and are gonna roll with that."

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

CHATHAM COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

On May 19, James Ronnie Brooks, 70, of 31 Lewis Brown Road, Bennett, was arrested by Deputy Joshua Sammons for indecent liberties with a child. He was issued a \$100,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on June 7.

On May 19, Andrew David Allison, 36, of 6464 Bonlee Bennett Road, Bear Creek, was arrested by Deputy Brooke Roberts for obtaining property by false pretenses. He was issued a written promise to appear in Chatham County District Court on June 7. Allison was returned to the custody of the Chatham County Detention Center on his previous bond.

On May 20, Lisa Renee Thomas, 35, of 149 Bonlee Bennett Road, Bonlee, was arrested by Deputy Rami Amer for misdemeanor probation violation. She was issued a \$1,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on June 2.

On May 22, Johnny Clifton Fogleman III, 36, of 1444 Henderson Tanyard Road, Pittsboro, was arrested by Deputy Alberto Estrada for possession of a firearm by a felon. He was issued a \$10,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on June 7. On May 22, Johnny Clifton Fogleman III, was arrested by Deputy Alex Lukasewycz for injury

to real property and injury to personal property. He was issued a \$2,500 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court on June 2.

On May 21, Tony Brown, 62, of 1012 Long Avenue, Rocky Mount, was arrested by Deputy Alex Lukasewycz for three counts of failure to appear. He was issued a \$1,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Wilson County District Court in Wilson on June 1.

On May 23, Naim Amar Solomon, 23, 2238 Kirkwood Street, High Point, was arrested by Deputy John Beach for domestic violence protective order violation. He was held on a 48-hour domestic violence hold and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on June 9.

On May 23, Janet Lee Baldwin, 57, of 95 Ricky Road, Staley, was arrested by Deputy Brandal Harrington. She was held on a 48-hour domestic violence hold and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on May 25.

On May 23, Jaquan Timothy Woodward, 26, of 4820 Mann's Chapel Road, Chapel Hill, was arrested by Deputy Reggie Griffin on a warrant from another jurisdiction. He was assigned a 24-hour hold and is scheduled to appear in Orange County District Court in Hillsborough on May 25.

On May 24, William Howard Payne Jr., 65, of 100 Grady Apt. 103, Chapel Hill, was arrested by Deputy Reggie Griffin for stalking.

He was held on a 48-hour domestic violence hold and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on June 9.

On May 24, Jack Daniels Wyman, 41, of 3711 Mt. Gilead Church Road, Pittsboro, was arrested by Deputy Alberto Estrada for forgery of instrument, uttering forged instruments, illegally accessing computers, exploiting disabled/elder trust, larceny, obtaining property by false pretenses, identity theft, possession of methamphetamine and possession of drug paraphernalia. He was issued a \$3,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on June 7.

On May 24, Javier Montiel Dela Cruz, 37, of 13155 US Hwy 64, Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Branden Havens for failure to appear. He was issued a \$2,500 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Bladen County District Court in Elizabethtown on June 11.

On May 24, Kevin Lee Keeny, 38, of 92 Pine Hill, Carrboro, was arrested by Deputy Reggie Griffin for failure to appear. He was issued a \$1,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on June 7.

On May 24, Courtney Lee Gauthier, 36, of 110 Carter Brooks Road, Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Mackenzie Abbott for failure to appear. She was issued a \$100 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Guilford County District Court in Greensboro on June 14.

NEWS BRIEFS

County addresses issues at Collection Center Swap Shops

PITTSBORO — The Chatham County Collection Centers' Swap Shops re-opened on April 19, but since re-opening, the Swap Shops have been overrun with items that are not acceptable.

"The Swap Shops are a place for residents to leave and take gently used items, so someone else can use them and they do not have to be disposed of in a landfill," said Kevin Lindley, Chatham County Environmental Quality Director. "Since re-opening, residents have been placing items in the Swap Shops that are not accept-

able, from bags of actual trash to oversized items. We want to take this opportunity to remind residents about what items are and are not accepted in the Swap Shops, as it has been overwhelming for our attendants to try to manage."

The following items are not accepted at the Swap Shops: Items too large to fit in the Swap Shop or for one person to carry, (which would include large pieces of furniture, construction materials, etc.) adult materials, chemicals or cleaners, clothing that is dirty, torn or wet, (these can be put into the green clothing recycling bin) food or beverages, mattresses (bed, futon, sleeper sofa) or box springs, medicine

or medical devices, paint, personal care products, TVs larger than 25 inches or electronics weighing more than 50 pounds, undergarments and weapons or ammunition.

The following are examples of items that are accepted at the Swap Shops (items should be gently used and in working condition): Art, films, music, etc, bicycles, books & magazines, clothes & shoes, furniture, (small) household items & decorations, small appliances, small electronics (residents should remove all personal information), sporting equipment, tools and toys.

Residents must have a 2021 Collection Center decal to use the Collection Centers, including the Swap Shops. Items placed

in the Swap Shops are available on a first-come, first-served basis and items cannot be set aside for future pickup. Residents are limited to two 15-minute visits per day at the Collection Centers.

Local donation stores, like Habitat for Humanity and the PTA Thrift Stores, can take some items that are not accepted in the Swap Shops. Please contact them directly for details.

Learn more about Solid Waste & Recycling at www.chathamcountync.gov/recycle. Residents who have questions may contact the Main Office Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 919-542-5516 or at recycle@chathamcountync.gov.

— CN+R staff reports

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Deposits are FDIC-insured up to \$2.5 million (\$5 million for joint accounts of two or more people). Amounts that exceed the program's FDIC coverage limits will be removed from the program and invested in the Edward Jones Money Market Fund, unless you opt instead to deposit such amounts in an Excess Bank as outlined in the program disclosure. More information about the Insured Bank Deposit Program, including the program disclosure, is available from your financial advisor or at www.edwardjones.com/bankdeposit. For more information about FDIC insurance, go to www.fdic.gov.



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Penguin Place
Paul A Shockley
114 Russet Run Suite 120
919-542-3020

Chatham 250 celebration announces five upcoming community events

PITTSBORO — As Chatham 250 continues its celebrations throughout 2021, the planning committee is thrilled to announce five upcoming community events. The events are part of the Chatham 250 Passport Experience, a self-guided tour meets scavenger hunt, which is designed to assist in the exploration of Chatham County in honor of its 250th anniversary. The events focus on the five key areas of Chatham 250 celebration — Creative Arts, Growth and Change, Community and Diversity, Agriculture and Natural Environment.

The Chatham 250 events are also the first activity featured on each of the corresponding passports. The events will occur virtually, in-person and in hybrid formats and will all be free and open to the public. Residents are encouraged to mark their calendars for the events over the next six months that will further help residents and visitors alike to engage with the unique places, people, cultures and experiences in Chatham County.

Growth and Change Event (Series): Chatham County History of Communities of Color

Dates: June 11 and June 19
Sponsors: Deep River Chapter Pittsboro, National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR)

The public is invited to join the Chatham Community Library for a three-part virtual lecture series chronicling the history of communities of color in Chatham County. The first lecture, held May 28, was in honor of Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

The second lecture titled “Chatham County — Discovering Our Heritage Through Genealogy” will focus on the genealogical and heritage resources available through the County’s public libraries and other related resources and will occur from 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. on Friday, June 11.

The series will conclude with a much-anticipated lecture titled “From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans in Chatham County” 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. on Saturday, June 19. This lecture, by Charles Johnson, Associate Professor and Director of Public History at North Carolina Central University, is also part of Juneteenth Celebrations in Chatham County.

All lectures will occur virtually, and pre-registration is required to access the login information. Interested participants

can learn more and RSVP by visiting the Chatham 250 event page: <https://www.chatham250.com/event-details/chatham-county-history-of-communities-of-color>, or by visiting the Chatham County Calendar: <https://www.chathamcountync.gov/government/county-calendar>.

Natural Environment Event: Great Chatham County Camp Out

Date: Saturday, June 26
Sponsor: Central Electric

Chatham County families are invited to spend the night camping at a designated campsite, in their own backyard, or even in a homemade fort in their living room. Participants can follow along on their own time with many community organizations that will be releasing videos about camping tips and the natural environment of Chatham County.

“B. Everett Jordan Dam is looking forward to partnering with Chatham 250 on the Great Chatham County Camp Out by offering a one-night-only camping experience,” said Blake Johnson, Natural Resource Specialist with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at B. Everett Jordan Lake. “We’re planning multiple cultural and nature programs for the in-person campout, including storytelling with a Bynum Front Porch storyteller, a campfire sing-a-long, guided hikes and ranger programs with the staff from B. Everett Jordan Dam. We hope to also live stream

these programs for our remote campers. It should be an unforgettable night!”

Agriculture Event: Agricultural Photo Contest

Submissions due Sunday, August 1. Winners announced in September.

Sponsor: Chatham County Farm Bureau
Chathamites are invited to get out their cameras and set their sights on Agriculture. The Chatham 250 Agriculture Photo Contest is the perfect opportunity to learn about the amazing farms and farm history in Chatham County. Contestants will upload one photo of their choosing and give insight into why they chose this photo in 200 words or less. Coordinating this contest is Kaley Lawing, Community Resource Development/4-H Youth Development Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension — Chatham County Center.

“The Chatham 250 Agriculture Photo Contest gives both youth and adults the opportunity to share their photographs of Chatham County Agriculture with everyone,” said Lawing. “Contest participants will upload their photo submission by going to the Chatham 250 event web page. Contest rules, submission form, and updates can be found there as well and will be available in the upcoming months. Submissions are due by August 1st, and winners will be announced in September.”

Creative Arts Celebration Theme Event: Sidewalk Chalk Festival

Date: Saturday, September 11

Sponsor: Carolina Meadows
Residents are invited to express their creativity by joining Chatham 250 at the Sidewalk Chalk Festival from noon - 4 p.m. on Saturday, September 11. Community Members are welcome to participate on site at the Park at Briar Chapel or send in a photo of their masterpiece that they created at their own home. The competition will be split into age divisions and the winner will be selected by a panel of judges.

“Whether participating or spectating, people can look forward to celebrating Chatham 250 using sidewalk chalk as a creative outlet. I am excited to have people from across the county, and of all ages, show off their creativity and love for Chatham County,” said Mallory Peterson, Program Supervisor with Chatham County Parks and Recreation and co-liaison for the Chatham 250 Events and Activities committee.

Learn more by visiting the Chatham 250 Sidewalk Chalk Festival event page: <https://www.chatham250.com/event-details/sidewalk-chalk-festival>

Community and Diversity Event: Chatham 250 Parade/Carvana

Date: 2 p.m., Saturday, October 23, in Siler City. (Rain Date: Sunday, October 24th) Sponsor: Town of Siler City

The Chatham 250 celebration will be coming to a cheerful close with the Parade/Carvana taking place in Siler City at 2 p.m. on Saturday, October 23. Chatham 250 welcomes all community members, businesses and organizations to either participate in or watch the parade in celebration of Chatham County.

For more information on Chatham 250 events and activities, residents may visit www.chatham250.com, or follow Chatham County on Twitter and Facebook. People may RSVP on Facebook for the events. Facebook events can be found on the Chatham 250 website: www.chatham250.com/chatham250-events.

Another great way to stay up to date with Chatham 250 activities is to register for the Chatham 250 Passport Experience through the Chatham 250 website home page: www.chatham250.com or Passport page: www.chatham250.com/passportoverview. Registered participants will receive monthly updates throughout the Passport Experience. Already more than 100 individuals have registered to participate in the Passport Experience, and more community members are encouraged to sign up for these fun, unique and memorable activities.

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Some progress, some regress

Work on the \$2.48 million traffic circle project in Pittsboro continues. Officials had hoped the circle would be fully open for automobile traffic by June 1, but that wasn't quite the case. Pleasant Memorial Day weather brought out a smattering of Confederate protestors to the historic courthouse on Monday amid the work debris, making themselves most visible to passersby on the section of road which remains open. Construction — and reconstruction — will continue on the project. Downtown business owners hoping to emerge from a pandemic and construction-induced slump have expressed hope that the protestors would find a home elsewhere to wave flags and shout insults to those who attempt to engage them in conversation. One protestor told a News + Record photographer that by taking photos of the demonstration, he was 'professing faith to the communist regime.'



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Kid Scoop .COM THE AWARD-WINNING PRINT & ONLINE FAMILY FEATURE

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Why the Bear has a Stumpy Tail

This tale is told all over the world! There are versions from Germany, Poland, Norway and from many of the Native American tribes in the United States. Read the story and look at the pictures. **Can you number the pictures in the correct order?**



Once upon a time, bears had beautiful long tails. One bear was very, very proud of his tail. Bear would brag about his magnificent tail to anyone who would listen. Fox got tired of listening to bear brag day after day. So, he came up with an idea to trick Bear.

Fox stole a big bunch of fish and waited for Bear to walk by.

Bear saw the fish and asked Fox, "How did you get so many tasty fish? Can you teach me how to get fish like that?"



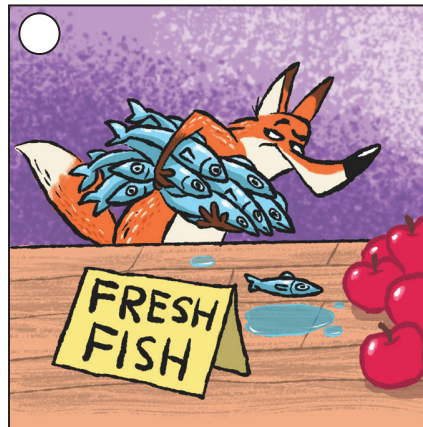
"Oh, it is so easy!" said Fox. "Start by going to the frozen pond, cut a hole in the ice and then drop your tail into the hole and wait as long as you can! The longer you wait, the more fish you'll catch. If your tail starts to hurt, don't worry about it," Fox explained. "It means that the fish are biting." Bear did just as Fox said.

Bear waited and waited. His tail started to hurt, but he remembered Fox's advice and he stayed put. After a while, he fell asleep.



Fox came by the next morning to find Bear sleeping and covered with snow. The hole in the ice had frozen over, trapping his long tail. Fox shouted, "GOOD MORNING!" in Bear's ear, causing him to jump up in surprise and yank his tail out of the ice.

Bear's tail snapped right off and that is why bears have stumpy tails to this very day.



Kid Scoop FIT & FUN

Fox and Bear Fitness

Summertime is a great time to get some exercise while also having fun with family and friends. Try these animal exercises this summer.



Roll on your back like a happy fox.



Walk on all fours like a great big bear.



Run fast like a fox!



Climb playground equipment like a bear.

Fiction or Non-Fiction?

Fiction is any story made up by an author. It's a creation of the author's imagination. It is not based strictly on history or facts. The opposite of fiction is **non-fiction**, writing that deals with facts.

Was the story of how the bear lost his tail fiction or non-fiction?

Why do you think this?

Tales That Teach

Folktales were often told to teach people lessons. What do you think is the lesson being taught in tale, "Why the Bear has a Stumpy Tail"?

Extra! Extra!

Hooray for Homophones!

Homophones are words that are pronounced the same but have different meanings. For example, **tail** and **tale** are homophones. T-A-I-L is the rear part of an animal's body that sticks out from the backbone. T-A-L-E is a story. Look through the newspaper for five or more words that are homophones. For example: **sun and son • buy and by stair and stare**

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Recognize homophones.

Kid Scoop Puzzler

Prefix Fox

Help Fox use the prefixes UN and DIS to create new words. Look at each word and write UN or DIS on the line. Can you find one root word that works with both UN and DIS?

- | | | | |
|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| ___safe | ___civil | ___obey | ___true |
| ___own | ___real | ___hinge | ___joint |
| ___sure | ___miss | ___card | ___taste |
| ___like | | ___loyal | ___tidy |
| ___known | | ___plug | ___gust |
| ___common | | ___latch | |
| ___color | | | |
| ___play | | | |
| ___usual | | | |



Standards Link: Language Arts: Identify and know the meaning of common prefixes.

Double Double Word Search

- BEAUTIFUL
- FICTION
- HISTORY
- STUMPY
- FROZEN
- PROUD
- FACTS
- OFF
- BEAR
- TALE
- TAIL
- BRAG
- HURT
- FISH
- YANK

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

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

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

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What book do you recommend other kids read this summer? Have fun describing the details but don't give away the ending!

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Get ready for fuel (read: everything) to cost a lot more money

Chaos erupted when the Colonial Pipeline shut down last month, temporarily suspending fuel supply on the east coast. But the drama we saw then was just a glimpse of something worse to come, though for unrelated reasons.

D. LARS DOLDER
Enterprising Chatham

The U.S. has weathered fuel shortages before. In 1973 and again in 1979, tensions with foreign nations and internal strife in the Middle East strangled supply chains and inflated gas prices to before-unseen levels. We saw something similar, though less severe, in the mid-2000s.

But the country's gas industry is facing a new systemic shortcoming, a different kind of shortage, that threatens to squeeze supply for years to come: there aren't enough drivers to deliver fuel.

"Fuel shortages have never been tied to drivers," said Brad Ball, president of Roadmaster Drivers School. "Fuel shortages were tied to foreign countries or some other types of supply-related issues. But it was never tied to drivers, and now it is."

Roadmaster Drivers School is a national training organization for truckers based in St. Petersburg, Florida. More than 100,000 graduates have learned the trucking trade through the organization's 15 regional training facilities. One of the company's smaller operations in Dunn, in Harnett County about 52 miles northeast of Pittsboro,

has graduated several Chathamites. Ball has been with Roadmaster from the start, more than 25 years ago. The industry has had its ups and downs in the past, he said, but never has the driver pool shrunk as dramatically as in the last year. "The shortage of drivers is becoming pretty intense," Ball told me, "and I haven't had this many phone calls on a daily basis from shippers and trucking companies looking for drivers ever. Literally every single day I have several calls from people trying to figure out how to get more drivers."

In 2019, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported an impending shortfall of 65,700 drivers for 2020 as the average trucker approached retirement age. Then COVID-19 hastened a mass exodus. "The average age of a truck driver is about 50 years old," Ball said, "so a lot of drivers are retiring. And the rate at which drivers are retiring is just basically exceeding the demand."

Tightening restrictions from federal agencies have also pruned the driver pool. In 2020, new standards and enhanced record-keeping forced about 50,000 truckers out of the business. Using the Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse, an online database under the U.S. Dept. of Transportation, prospective employers could see when drivers failed drug and sobriety tests at previous companies.

"If they failed at one trucking company, they used to be able to just basically go to another trucking company and pass a drug test," Ball said. "They can't do that anymore because the results are sent to the database."

Of course, no one wants impaired drivers operating 18-wheelers and tanker trucks, but the problem remains: there just aren't enough qualified drivers to meet exploding demand, and the problem is only getting worse. Some national tank truck carriers estimate 25% of the industry's vehicles might sit idle through the summer, as first reported by ABC 13.

"When demand was increasing, supply was being severely pinched, and here we are with a more severe shortage than we've had in a long, long time," Ball said. "And basically, it's expected that the demand for drivers will outpace supply for the foreseeable future, maybe the next 10 years."

A fuel shortage may be the first and most radical result of a depleted national trucking industry, but it won't be the only commodity to suffer accelerated price inflation. Almost everything from retail goods to food supplies spend some time on a truck before reaching their destination.

"At the start of the pandemic, people weren't really spending money on travel and sporting events and everything else, so the effects were muted," Ball said. "Come May, June, though, they started buying goods, and e-commerce exploded. Everything in your house moves by truck. So all of a sudden, trucking exploded in the summer of 2020, and at the same time truck driving schools across the country were closed down."

Under normal circumstances, Roadmaster schools might enroll about 15 students at a time for its four-week trucking courses, although capacity varies between locations. With pandemic restric-

tions, operations were briefly shuttered before reopening at limited capacity.

"We could only produce about 60% of the students that we have previously been able to produce," Ball said, "and that goes for all schools across the country."

To combat the driver shortage, Roadmaster plans to open about five new facilities by end of year. Demand is "through the roof," Ball said, "so we can't grow fast enough right now to take advantage of it."

But more schools won't fix the problem — not fast enough, anyway.

"I mean, you still won't have enough drivers to drive your trucks, so you have to pay people more," Ball said. "And that ends up meaning that you have to charge people more for your product, if you can even get it where it needs to go. And that's what's happening across the board is all the trucking companies in the country are increasing pay for drivers. So if it costs them more to move product, it's ultimately costing more to the consumer."

To learn more about Roadmaster Drivers School, visit roadmaster.com. Tuition across all locations costs \$6,995 and sees most students through testing for their CDL license. Enrollment requires minimal education, but applicants must submit to a background check and interview process. Average starting pay for graduates is about \$50,000, according to Ball.

Have an idea for what Chatham business topics I should write about? Send me a note at dldolder@chathamnr.com or on Twitter @dldolder.

Victory in the pastry wars

It took forever and at times seemed like a futile pursuit, but I finally did it.



DEBBIE MATTHEWS
The Curious Cook

biscuits that would make

any little old Southern lady proud.

They were flaky. They were yummy. The insides were tender and soft as a cloud. The crust was crispy, buttery and a little bit chewy, with a dusting of toasted flour on top. They were gorgeous and golden.

It hasn't been an easy road. But as a food writer in the South, I felt like my street cred was at risk if I couldn't go into a kitchen and produce a pan of the

culinary calling card of any Southern cook; from random grandmothers to food virtuosos like Ashley Christenson and the late, great Mildred Council — or as the world knew her, Mama Dip.

But every darn biscuit I made had a fatal flaw.

Flat was a very frequent defect. This was solved in two ways.

First, I found the correct amount of leavening. Enough for lift, but not so

much that tainted the taste.

Secondly, I used a method I've never tried: Folding.

That's it. For rise and flakiness, roll or pat the dough into a rough rectangle, then fold it into thirds, flatten again and refold.

In pastry lingo, this is known as lamination. With laminated doughs like croissants, this is done hundreds of times (for large output, a machine called a sheeter is used). For biscuits, folding five or so times is good.

Another problem that comes with pastry is developing the gluten in the flour which results in a stretchy, elastic product. Which is great and extremely desirable in making a sourdough boule, it's murder for biscuits. It's handling which produces gluten. After adding the buttermilk you can only manipulate it so much before it becomes tough and rubbery — so take care.

My biscuits were made with butter. Early in the day, I retrieved cold butter from the fridge, and grated it. That gave me very small bits. Then I put it into the freezer for a few hours. That gave me very cold bits. About 90 minutes before I baked



Triumph biscuits, ready to eat!

off the biscuits, I sifted together the dry ingredients. I took the butter out of the freezer and rubbed it into the flour until it looked like coarse corn meal. Then I put it back in the fridge until I was ready to finish making the dough and bake. Intact fat produces lightness and flakiness when the water in the butter turns to steam in the oven.

I haven't been so proud of making something since The Kid was born. Later, after seeing it on a cooking show, I decided to use the recipe and technique to make one of Petey's favorite sweets: cinnamon buns. They're usually made with a yeast

dough, but the biscuit dough gives them a singularly flaky buttery-ness that yeasty dough just can't reproduce.

I won't lie to you. Not only does this take practice and patience, it is a singularly messy enterprise. My hands look like I'd dipped them in cement when I'm done, and I don't even want to talk about the state of my kitchen counter.

Maybe I should wear latex gloves...and maybe a plastic poncho.

Too much? Nah, no sacrifice is too much for the perfect biscuit.

Thanks for your time. Contact me at dm@bullcity.mom.

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Triumph biscuits

2 cups all-purpose flour + more for kneading and rolling	powder 1 teaspoon salt 1/4 teaspoon baking soda	Big pinch of sugar 7 tablespoons butter, grated and frozen 1 cup cold buttermilk
--	---	--

Whisk flour, baking powder, salt, sugar, and baking soda together into bowl.

Cut frozen, grated butter into flour mixture until it resembles coarse meal. Refrigerate for 90 minutes.

When ready to bake, preheat oven to 425.

Pour buttermilk into butter and flour mixture. Mix in buttermilk just until there's no liquid in the bowl. It will still need to come together more, but you'll do this on the counter with very gentle kneading.

Turn onto a floured surface, and mix by hand until it becomes a roughish dough, using only as much flour you need. Shape into rectangle.

Fold the rectangle in thirds. Flatten back down and refold. Do this 3 or 4 more times.

Roll dough on a floured surface to about 1/2 inch thick. Cut out 12 biscuits using a 2 1/2-inch biscuit cutter.

Transfer biscuits to parchment-lined cookie sheet. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until golden brown, rotating pan 180 degrees midway through.

Buttermilk Biscuit Cinnamon Rolls

Make the Triumph biscuits to the point of having a half-inch thick rectangle, then fold in thirds once more and roll it into a 1/4 inch thick rectangle about 18X10 inches.

Preheat oven to 400°.

Mix together filling:

1 cup toasted pecans, finely chopped	of filling, leaving 1/2 inch of one edge of the long end free of filling mixture.	Chill for thirty minutes, then cut into 1 1/2 inch slices. Place on a cookie sheet and chill for 30 minutes.
1/2 cup brown sugar	Starting at the end with filling, roll long end tightly without pulling or ripping. Once rolled, reposition so that seam is on the bottom.	Bake for 12-15 minutes or until golden brown and puffed. Let rest for 10 minutes then glaze.
1/2 teaspoon Chinese five-spice powder		

Melt one stick (1/2 cup) butter, and let cool slightly

Paint the 1/4 inch thick rectangle with the melted butter, then sprinkle an even layer

Glaze:

1 cup powdered sugar	heavy cream	spice powder
2 tablespoons butter, melted	1 teaspoon vanilla extract	1/8 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons honey	1 pinch Chinese five-spice powder	

Whisk together and spread onto warm biscuits.

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LEGALS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY HAVING QUALIFIED, as Administrator, CTA of the Estate of **MABEL CRITE JONES**, 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 August 17, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. This the 13th day of May, 2021. RONALD P. COLLINS, Administrator. CTA of the Estate of MABEL CRITE JONES 117 West Raleigh Street Siler City, North Carolina 27344 (919) 663-2533 My13,My20,My27,Jn3,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY ALL PERSONS, firms and corporations having claims against **JOHN THOMAS MCGEE**, deceased, of Chatham County, N.C., are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before August 13, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make

immediate payment. This 13th day of May, 2021. Elizabeth McGee Weaver and Katherine Elaine McGee, Co-Executors, c/o Timothy A. Nordgren, Sands Anderson PC 1005 Slater Rd., Ste 200, Durham, NC 27703 My13,My20,My27,Jn3,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY The undersigned, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of **PHYLLIS ELAINE LAMBERT** 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 Charles N. Griffin, III, Esq., P. O. Box 19766, Raleigh, North Carolina, 27619-9766, on or before the 13th day of August, 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 13th day of May, 2021. Aaron E. Link, Administrator c/o Charles N. Griffin, III Kirschbaum, Nanney, Keenan & Griffin, P.A.

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ON-LINE AUCTION


Real Estate & Personal Property
Home on 10+ Ac w/Shop, Antiques, Collectibles
Bidding Begins to close June 15th -6pm
560 Goldston Glendon Rd, Goldston NC
Home on 10+ Acres w/5 Bay Shop & 2 Car Carport in Goldston NC
Pottery, Antiques, Furniture, Collectibles, Plus More!!



REAL ESTATE AUCTION! 10.4 Acres of Beautiful Chatham County Land, 2 Bedroom, 2 Full Bath Manufactured Home w/ stunning brick work and a metal roof. There is a 5 bay shop with office space, outbuilding, stamped concrete patio and a screened porch. Elgin Chicago Windmill remains.

PERSONAL PROPERTY AUCTION! NC Pottery, Antique Furniture, Coca-Cola Drink Box, Goldston NC Collectibles, Vintage Clocks, Morgan & Peace Silver Dollars, Hay Rake, Farm Bell, Fire Hydrant, Hummels, .270 & .22Cal Ammo, Nu-Grape Soda Clock, 1 Cent Gumball Machine, Plus Lots More!!

SCOTT L. HARRIS, AUCTIONEER - BROKER NCAL #8420 (919) 498-4077
www.JerryHarrisAuction.Hibid.com FIRM #8086 15%BP



Open House Career Fair

THURSDAY, JUNE 3RD, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM @ AMERICHEM IN LIBERTY, NC
Looking for a Career (not just a job)? Americhem offers **excellent pay, full benefits, generous 401(k), annual bonus plan, 10 paid holidays & 15 paid days off per year!**

EXTRUSION OPERATORS & QT TECHNICIANS
\$16-17+ DOE plus \$1.75 Shift Differential
Mechanical Aptitude Troubleshooting Skills

MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT LEADER
\$75-90K + Generous Bonus
Strong Maintenance Department Leader Experience
Strong Multi-Craft Technician Experience

MAINTENANCE TECHNICIANS
\$23-28 DOE plus \$1.75 Shift Differential
Proven Electrical/PLC Skills Proven Troubleshooting Skills
Strong Multi-Craft Technician Experience

Competitive Compensation, Benefits, and Incentives
Highly Valued Relationships and Teamwork
Personal and Professional Development
Purposeful and Challenging Work

CAN'T MAKE THE EVENT?! NO PROBLEM! APPLY ONLINE TODAY AT AMERICHEM.COM

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Liberty, NC 27298

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www.americhem.com

