

Chatham News + Record

Chatham County, N.C. | JANUARY 27 - FEBRUARY 2, 2022 | www.chathamnewsrecord.com | \$1

Amid Omicron surge, quarantines accentuate CCS staffing shortages

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — By the end of the second week of class following winter break, Chatham County Schools counted 703 students and 68 staff members as absent from school due to either testing positive for COVID-19 or quarantining due to exposure, according to district data shared with the News + Record.

That week, Jan. 10-16, saw 197 positive COVID-19 cases among students and staff, according to the district's archived case dashboards, and one cluster at Horton Middle School. Still, with 10,500 people at CCS, that's 1.9% of the



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Superintendent Anthony Jackson (far right) visits Northwood High School as a part of his first week of school tour last August. Chatham County Schools saw significant absences from students and staff alike during January due to COVID cases and quarantines.

population — a higher positive rate than at any previous point in the pandemic, but still much

lower than the county's overall positive rate, though that number counts from people tested,

not the overall population. (In January, the rate of positive tests fluctuated between 20-30% in Chatham.)

Still, even with updated quarantine rules to minimize unnecessary school absences, exposed students and staff still usually have to miss classes for at least five days — and amid soaring Omicron trends following the holidays, that's a lot of absences.

Such a large number of quarantines put a strain on school operations, intensifying the impact of pre-existing staffing shortages.

"While our community, like the rest of the state, continues to see numbers go up, our students and staff have followed

safety protocols," CCS Public Information Officer Nancy Wykle told the News + Record. "That has enabled us to remain in person and safeguard our school community as much as possible. While we are operating with reduced staffing, we have continued to ensure our students are learning, we are able to get them to and from school and lunches are provided."

In light of such trends, the CCS Board of Education voted 3-1 to extend universal masking on all CCS campuses at its Jan. 11 mid-year retreat, with board member David Hamm again dissenting. (Board mem-

See STAFFING, page A3

County: expect more turnover during Great Resignation

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — By the end of this fiscal year in June, Chatham County Government is projected to have a yearly turnover of 65 employees — the highest number in recent years, up approximately 38% from 2019, or the difference of about 18 staffers.

"That's one of those projections that I hope I'm wrong," Carolyn Miller, assistant county manager for human resources, told the News + Record. "There's a bit of uncertainty there, but I look at the first half of the fiscal year — we had data through the end of December — and I also included retirements that I know are happening, so those I can predict, but some of it really is an estimate."

Such projections follow a year of local, state and national employers alike struggling

to hire and retain staff, leading to staffing shortages across a wide array of industries — notably education, health care and service and hospitality, as workers seek higher pay, more benefits or jobs that better suit their lifestyle needs.

Within the county, which has more than 225 job classifications and more than 500 employees, turnover in the public safety sector is the highest by nearly 20 percentage points — a trend consistent of at least the last three years, according to the data Miller presented to county commissioners at their Jan. 14 budget retreat. In 2021, the turnover rate in the county's public safety department was 44%, followed next by human resources, at 26%. Those departments had the highest turnover rates in 2020 as well, at 51% and 22%, respectively.

Public safety includes positions such as law enforcement officers, emergency telecommunicators and animal service staffers. Human services includes community outreach workers, children's services supervisors and park managers, among other

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Navigating the N95 mask maze following changing CDC guidance

BY BILL HORNER III
News + Record Staff

NOTE TO READERS: The CDC is now recommending the use of N95 face coverings, another shift in guidelines in the new pandemic landscape. In light of that, here's a perspective on masks, mask use, the debate over masking and the frustration it can all engender. Share your own thoughts about these subjects by writing to news@chathamnr.com, and we'll publish selected responses in next week's edition.

SILER CITY — I set off on a recent vacation armed to the teeth with masks.

Our travels involved airports, planes, confined spaces and locales where indoor and outdoor masking was required, so I carried with me a Ziploc bag full of face coverings — nine in all, sourced from a variety of places, and enough to make the Lone Ranger green with envy.

They included a pair (one solid black, one white) of monogrammed surgical-type masks I pocketed at the recent wedding of a second cousin, featuring the happy couple's



Courtesy of CCPHD

The CDC now recommends that an N95 respirator, as shown here, or KN95 face masks 'provide the highest level of protection from particles, including the virus that causes COVID-19.'

initials. My "Chatham News + Record" mask custom-made by Pittsboro's own geekchic-fashion. A snazzy-looking BOLD Real Estate mask I scored from my business partner, Chris Ehrenfeld. A mask I'd ordered online a year ago after a newspaper publisher friend posted a selfie wearing the same, along with a testimonial that he'd finally found

a comfortable face covering that wouldn't fog his glasses. (My glasses still fogged, but the mask is comfy, at least.) And an expensive "best travel mask" I ordered after seeing happy air travelers sporting them on Instagram, swearing it was the most comfortable thing they'd ever strapped to

See MASK, page A6

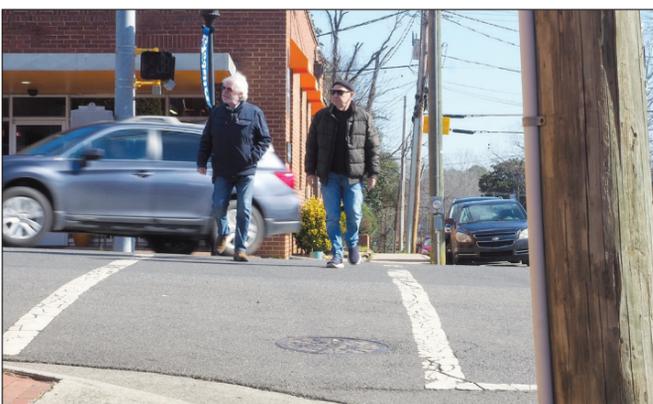
PEDESTRIANS STRUCK IN 3 DIFFERENT INCIDENTS

Pittsboro PD looking at problematic Hillsboro intersection

BY TAYLOR HEEDEN
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — The Pittsboro Police Department and town engineers are working to address one of downtown's main intersections after a series of vehicular collisions with pedestrians.

Police Chief Shorty Johnson said NCDOT was called in by town engineers in November to investigate where Hillsboro and Salisbury streets intersect. There have been three separate incidents involving



Staff photo by Kim Hawks

Several accidents have occurred at the crosswalk on East Salisbury Street in Pittsboro.

See POLICE, page A3

How prepared is Chatham for more winter storms?

BY VICTORIA JOHNSON
News + Record Staff

You're sitting at your table eating breakfast and checking the week's forecast one chilly morning when you spot an ominous sign: on your phone's weather app, just a few days out, lies a snowflake.

The temperatures listed beside it — high and low — are in the low 20s and 30s, which prompts you to search the internet for other local forecasts and weather reports. As you read through it



Steve Newton

all, you realize with a sinking feeling that yes, your (mostly unreliable) weather app might be correct this time and that yes, it's time to prepare for wintry weather once again.

Meanwhile, Chatham County Emergency Management and its partners are also launching their own preparations, pushing out information, coordinating with other public safety agencies and readying necessary equipment and infrastructure.

Over the past two weekends, Chatham County, like much of North Carolina, has played host to several inches of snow,

See WINTER, page A14

IN THE KNOW

Georgia, Michigan interested in Northwood's Gus Ritchey. PAGE B1

STAY UP TO DATE ON THE LATEST CHATHAM COUNTY NEWS



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 available at the 100 block of E. 3rd St.

ON THE AGENDA

The Siler City Board of Commissioners will meet at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 31, at Wren Memorial Library's Multipurpose room.
The Chatham Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors will meet at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 10, via teleconference. If you wish to attend, call 919-545-8440 for more information and to receive the teleconference number.

OTHER

The Town of Siler City intends to identify and select an individual or group to provide concessions services at the Bray Park Sports Complex during all local league play, tournaments and special events. Concession services require many nights and weekends. Group shall be responsible for all supplies. Servsafe Food Safety training required. For Scope of Work and General Terms and Conditions, please contact Jack Clelland jclelland@silercity.org 919-742-2699 or visit www.silercity.org. Proposals should include what should be expected from your concession services and any prior experiences. Proposals are due no later than 2 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 4.
The Chatham County Board of Health will have a vacancy in March 2022 that must be filled by a professional engineer who lives in the county. Applicants must have a

current North Carolina engineering license, but they do not have to be actively practicing. The deadline to apply is Wednesday, Feb. 2, at 5 p.m. Board of Health meetings are held on the fourth Monday of each month, beginning at 6 p.m., with dinner provided and reimbursement for mileage. Meetings are not held in July and December. The application to serve can be completed online: <https://chathamnc.seamlessdocs.com/f/CommitteeForm>. Applicants also may contact Lindsay Ray at 919-545-8302 or lindsay.ray@chathamcountync.gov to get an email version or printed copy. Those with questions about serving on the Board of Health may call 919-545-8391.

LCAC19 All Hands Meeting, Jan. 26 at 05:30 PM PT / 08:30 ET. Register at: <https://zoom.us/join/register/tJAvf-usrDsqGNfA6oHq38uZ5eH-cyJUspME>.

Siler City Parks and Recreation announces Homeschool Recess - Enjoy the Open Homeschool Recess Program (a non-structural program open for families to play and have fun). Free program - no registration is required, however a waiver must be signed at each session. Guardians must supervise their children. Program is not designed to meet official Homeschool requirements. Basketballs will be provided. Face coverings required while inside the gym. If you have any questions, (919) 742-2699, recreation@silercity.org, or www.silercity.org. Thursdays, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at Paul Braxton Gym, February thru March, 2022, 115 South Third Avenue, Siler City.

Celebrity Dairy announces their Open Barn and Tours, beginning Feb. 5. Currently anticipating over 100 baby goats, we are opening the farm for others to enjoy. Visitors will get a tour of the dairy farm with a chance to frolic with, pet and snuggle with baby goats. For more information: www.CelebrityDairy.com - or Contact The Inn at Celebrity Dairy, Attn: Bett Foley (919) 742-5176.

Siler City Parks & Rec launches Tennis & Pickleball Classes, partnering with Tennis Bloc. Classes are now open for enrollment and will be offered to all ages and skill-levels. All classes will be held at the Bray Park Sports Complex, 700 Alston Bridge Rd, Siler City. **Spring Tennis classes** will be offered February 28 - May 4. Lessons for ages 8 and younger will be held Mondays 5:30 to 6:30pm (beginner-intermediate), ages 9-10 will be held Mondays 4:40-5:30 p.m. (beginner-intermediate), ages 11-18 will be held Wednesdays 4:30 to 5:30 p.m (beginner-intermediate), and adult beginners will be held Wednesdays from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. -- **Spring Pickleball classes** will be offered March 5 - May 7. Lessons for ages 11-18 will be held Saturdays 2:30 to 3:30 p.m., adult beginners will be held Saturdays 4:30 to 5:30 p.m., and adult intermediates will be held Saturdays 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Registration is now open with a registration fee of \$85 which covers the entire season. Multi-participant discounts available. To register, please visit tennisbloc.com and search for programs offered in Siler City. Registration will remain open until sessions are full. For more information, email info@tennisbloc.com or contact the Siler City Parks and Recreation Department at (919) 742-2699, email recreation@silercity.org, or visit the Town Website at www.silercity.org.

The Central Carolina Community College Small Business Center, Chatham Chamber of Commerce, and Mountaire Farms have partnered on a new entrepreneur-development program that will introduce prospective and new business owners in Chatham County to the concepts and practices that will lead to business success. The new eight-week Chatham SPARK Program will run from March 1 through May 3 and will assist participants in developing a business plan and gaining insight into financing, legal considerations,

marketing, bookkeeping, and taxes. The evening classes will be held on Tuesday evenings from 6 to 9 p.m. at C.C.C.Siler City Center, 400 Progress Blvd. For more information or to register for the program, visit www.chathamcbc.com/spark or call 919-545-8015. The application deadline is Jan. 31, 2022.

The Chatham County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) has scheduled its 2022 quarterly meetings at 10 a.m. and the locations will be announced on the county website at readychatham.org under the LEPC tab. For information concerning hazardous material facilities in Chatham County or the LEPC in general, contact Emergency Management at 919-545-8191. The first scheduled meeting is Thursday, Feb. 10.

Siler City Parks and Recreation - Coed Youth T-Ball is offered to participants ages 3-6 (age determined as of May 1, 2022). The **Youth T-Ball** league introduces new and returning players to the game of baseball. The league focuses on teaching and improving fundamentals including hitting, throwing, catching, and baserunning. **Youth Coed Coach Pitch** is offered to participants ages 7-8 (age determined as of May 1, 2022). **Youth Baseball** is offered to participants ages 9-12 (age determined as of May 1, 2022) and **Youth Softball** is offered to participants ages 9-12 (age determined as of August 1, 2022). There are 4 ways interested participants can register. Registration is now available online on the Town of Siler City website at www.silercity.org, in City Hall (311 N 2nd Avenue, Siler City) Monday-Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., by mailing the registration form and fee to P.O. Box 769 Siler City, NC 27344, or by dropping the registration form and fee in the drop box located on the exterior of City Hall. Registration is only \$25 and the deadline to register is March 4, 2022 (or until full).--- Siler City Parks and Recreation is actively seeking vol-

unteer coaches for the upcoming season. Volunteer coaches are the backbone to a successful program as they donate their time and knowledge to teach our young participants the values of teamwork, dedication, sportsmanship, and fundamental skills in each sport. Anyone interested in coaching, please contact Siler City Parks and Recreation at 919-742-2699 or email recreation@silercity.org. All volunteer coaches must submit an application for consideration. For more information, please contact Siler City Parks and Recreation Department at 919-742-2699, email recreation@silercity.org, or visit the Town Website at www.silercity.org.

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.

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. 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 at <https://chathamhistory.org>.

Second Bloom has begun winter hours, 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. We are located at 630 E. St., Pittsboro, in the Food Lion Shopping Center. We are accepting donations of gently used men's and women's clothing and accessories. Credit cards are accepted. All proceeds provide support for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and promote community education in collaboration with Chatham County.

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

AI-Anon Meeting — Pittsboro Serenity Seekers AI-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 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.

NEWS BRIEFS

Chatham County Council on Aging's executive director to retire Feb. 1

PITTSBORO — Chatham County Council on Aging's executive director, Dennis Streets, will retire on Feb. 1, after nearly eight years of service with Chatham County government and decades of serving seniors in various capacities. Streets joined the Chatham County Council on Aging in May 2014, following a long and distinguished career with the State of North Carolina. During his tenure in Chatham County, Streets played an instrumental role in advocating for and celebrating seniors and raising awareness of issues important to that population. Streets oversaw the development of the 2018-2023 Aging Plan, which maps out goals and objectives for the Council on Aging and the entire community. Under his leadership, both centers operated by the Chatham County Council on Aging earned the state designation as Centers of Excellence. The Chatham County Board of Commissioners recognized Streets with a special resolution at its Jan. 18 meeting in Pittsboro.

"As Chatham County's older population continues to grow, it is vital that we continue to address the needs of our seniors, and Dennis has been instrumental in his forward-thinking vision with the development of the Chatham County Aging Plan," said Chatham County Board of Commissioners Chairperson Karen Howard. "Dennis has left a long-lasting mark on so many of us. He will be sorely missed not only for his accomplishments, but for the kind, generous and charming person that he is."

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Streets and the Council on Aging staff and volunteers made adaptations to ensure that the needs of Chatham's most vulnerable residents continue to be met.

"Under Dennis's leadership, the Council's vital work has kept older residents connected to health care, critical services like shelf-stable meals and social enrichment in a safe manner," said Chatham County Manager Dan LaMontagne. "We are so grateful for Dennis's leadership, passion and commitment to serving Chatham County's seniors and their families. His impact on our entire community undoubtedly will last for many years."

Streets says while he will miss the

people and partners he has served alongside, he is also excited about the future of Chatham County.

"I will miss the friendships and personal interaction and the opportunity to make a positive difference in people's lives every day — whether that is loaning an item of assistive equipment, serving a meal, providing information to a family caregiver, or engaging in conversation with someone who is anxious or feeling alone," he said. "I look forward to continuing to hear about the outstanding work of our Council on Aging. I leave it in such capable hands — with an outstanding staff, a supportive and engaged board of directors, a dedicated volunteer corps, strong county support, and caring community partners."

Streets says he will continue to serve on the boards of the N.C. Senior Games and Chatham Hospital. During retirement, he looks forward to spending more time with his family, becoming more competitive in the Chatham County Senior Games, and completing some special projects at home.

Council on Aging Deputy Director/ Finance Officer Lacey Monte has been appointed as interim director. The Chatham County Council on Aging makes

a difference in the lives of seniors. For more information, visit chathamcouncilonaging.org.

CCCC's 12-week classes begin Feb. 8

SANFORD — Whether you are looking for flexible course choices to meet your personal schedule or starting a new program of study, Central Carolina Community College's 12-week term allows you to find courses that fit your academic and career goals.

The next batch of 12-week classes will begin Feb. 8.

To register for courses, contact your advisor or the Admissions office at 919-718-7300 (Lee Main Campus), 919-545-8025 (Chatham Main Campus), and 910-814-8827 or 910-814-8851 (Harnett Main Campus). You can also connect with an Advisor virtually by visiting www.cccc.edu/admissions/ contacts or visit us in person at any Main Campus.

See www.cccc.edu/12and8 for a list of classes. For more information on Central Carolina Community College — which is dedicated to providing pathways to achievable dreams — visit www.cccc.edu.

—CN+R staff reports

Chatham News + Record

www.chathamnewsrecord.com

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The Chatham News + Record (USPS #101-160) is published weekly, 52 weeks a year, by Chatham Media Group LLC, 303 West Raleigh Street, Siler City, N.C. 27344. Subscription rates: 1 year print + digital — \$52; monthly — \$5.99. Digital only — \$3.99 monthly. Periodicals postage paid at the U.S. Post Office in Siler City.

N.C. POSTMASTER:
 Send address changes to The Chatham News + Record, PO Box 290, Siler City, N.C. 27344

SHORTAGES

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things.

The overwhelming majority of the projected turnovers for this year are resignations; followed by retirements and, minimally, dismissals.

That projection, calculated by looking at employment data from the first half of the year, is an 18% overall turnover rate. In 2021, that rate was 13%.

“We are certainly not alone, and that is true,” Miller said of increased resignations among employees. “This is common across government agencies, when I have conversations with other HR folks in other jurisdictions. It is a different type of turnover than I’ve seen in my tenure.”

‘Increased demand in service’

In her 23 years as Chatham’s director, then assistant manager, for human resources, Miller said one factor this year is different from previous high and low trends: the pandemic.

The pandemic created a greater sense of urgency for employees, Miller said, or what she calls an “If not now, when?” mentality. There are also more opportunities for employees in many sectors, she said.

In Chatham, for example, there were 31 new county staff positions funded by the county’s \$149.8 million 2021-22 recommended budget, expected to cost approximately \$1.8 million. The 31 budgeted new positions include multiple positions in building inspections, social services, MIS, emergency communications and the Sheriff’s Department — which is currently facing a greater share of staffing shortages in the county, along with other law enforcement positions. The budget also funded positions in central permitting, register of deeds, watershed protection, facilities, social services, parks and recreation, telecommunications and pretrial release.

“We can no longer delay responding to the increased demand in service that accompanies growth,” County Manager Dan LaMontagne previously said of the new positions.

“This is the largest number of positions we’ve added to my recollection that are not tied to a specific capital project (such as the opening of the detention facility),” Miller told the News + Record last August, “but Chatham County has never experienced the level



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Chatham Assistant HR Director Courtney Jones (left) and Carolyn Miller, assistant county manager for human resources, stand by one of the county’s new recruitment signs. Like employers across the country, the government has struggled to hire and retain staff this year.

of growth we are seeing either. Our turnover rate has remained steady (between 11-13%), and we experience on average between four to eight retirements a calendar year.”

The county currently has 25 open positions posted on its website (<https://bit.ly/3nTBTVF>), some of them from the new positions approved in this year’s budget. Other openings are vacancies due to resignations or retirements.

At Chatham County Schools, the largest employer in the county, the district has offered multiple bonuses to employees in an effort to maintain student services in the face of drastic staffing shortages. At some schools, principals and teachers have worked as bus drivers and school nutrition workers just to keep up with standard bus routes and meal services.

CCS used part of its \$17.4 million COVID-relief money to fund such bonuses; the county government announced on Monday that it will seek public input Feb. 1 through March 31

regarding how to spend its \$14 million of the one-time COVID funds.

The county implemented its pay study from last year on Jan. 2, which is meant to bring any potentially lagging salaries to more comparable market ranges. The county is also working to expand its benefits — be it enhanced flexibility or adding paid family leave (which includes caregivers, not just parents).

“In government services, often you’ve got retirement, you’ve got 401k, you’ve got good health benefits,” Miller said. “And I think that for so long, and I’m talking for us and others, we relied on that as the big attraction and that’s not it anymore. It is about talking very openly about workplace culture, expectations about growth potential in positions — we’ve added more, I call them career development ladders, growth opportunities within a job class in the last five years than any other time.”

‘A good job through all those stressors’

Effective last Oct. 5, all county employees were required to either show proof of vaccination or results from weekly testing, until further notice.

At the board’s budget retreat earlier this month, Commissioner Franklin Gomez Flores asked whether this policy contributed to the county’s overall increase in resignations. “Only a handful” of employees resigned due to the policy, Miller said.

That directive, she told the News + Record, was established to protect the health and safety of employees and the public, as well as to maintain services at a consistent level. In other words, the policy could hopefully help prevent any mass spreading events that could lead to temporary department shut-downs.

“It was important for us also, to make sure that we had a directive that would help us be informed about, and employees be informed about, their own status or making sure that service delivery was also going to be consistently provided,” she said. “Employees under this directive do have a choice about whether they want to be vaccinated or provide proof of that or test weekly — and I think the choice was very important for us.”

“The overwhelming number of employees” chose to comply with the directive, Miller said; approximately 78% of county employees are vaccinated, according to the January presentation.

In addition to hiring and retaining

policies, Miller said stress and impact of the pandemic on employees — professionally and personally — “is hard to put a cost to.”

In addition to implementing its pay study, the county (led by the human resources department) also adopted an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) plan and appointed an EEO working group that is headed up by Courtney Jones, assistant HR director.

The plan, approved by the county’s board of commissioners in April, focuses on complying with federal anti-discrimination laws, and creating a more equitable, fair and diverse workplace. It will also include an analysis of county programs and policies, the race and gender composition of staff, the development of a method and working group, and more.

Jones said the plan began as an effort to more formally keep a record of its employment policies and practices.

“This does not mean that the county has not done this in the past, but it does create more formal avenues for auditing our existing programs and policies,” she told the News + Record at the time, “to make sure that we are not, either intentionally or unintentionally, discriminating against a particular group of people. It is simply a more formal system of checks and balances.”

Such accomplishments, Miller said, point to the continued growth on the horizon for both her department and the county at-large.

“I’m very proud of this department,” Miller said. “And we’ve done I feel like a good job through all of these stressors. We have grown significantly... and I think that, particularly in HR, we recognize that one of the hallmarks of a great organization is the ability to adapt to the changing needs of the public.”

“So our goal is to be a strong resource for departments and offices to help them acquire the best talent, work through issues, recommend changes that benefit the employees as a whole — and that is going to serve us well as we deal with some of these other overarching issues like growth,” she continued. “How do we best construct a Human Resources system that serves the organization in the best way both now and as we go forward into a future that we don’t know what that’s going to look like? If we have a good foundation, we’ll be able to handle those changes as they come along.”

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

POLICE

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people crossing the street since October of last year at that exact intersection, according to Johnson.

The first, on Oct. 20, involved a pedestrian on a mobility scooter heading east across Hillsboro Street. A car turning left from Salisbury onto Hillsboro collided with the pedestrian, knocking the rider into the street. The victim wasn’t injured.

The second and third incidents occurred within the crosswalk on East Salisbury and involved vehicles turning right from Hillsboro. Neither of the incidents — one on Nov. 16, the other Jan. 12 — resulted in major injuries.

NCDOT engineers came to Pittsboro in November and suggested increasing the window of time pedestrians have to start crossing the street.

“They did a study where DOT looked at the Leading Pedestrian Interval, or the LPI,” Johnson said.

According to studies done by the U.S. Dept. of Transportation, LPIs are “low-cost

adjustments to signal timing to increase pedestrian safety at signalized intersections.” This is done by providing a time buffer between when the crosswalk signal indicates pedestrians can cross and the traffic light turning green for oncoming traffic.

Some benefits from LPIs include increasing the likelihood of drivers yielding, enhancing safety for slower-moving pedestrians, as well adding right turn on red restrictions, accessible pedestrian signals and more.

Johnson said in Pittsboro, the LPI buffer used to be three seconds before NCDOT changed it to be three and a half seconds. Since the third accident in January, however, the police department is looking to see what more can be done at the intersection to make it safer for pedestrians.

“We’ve had officers that will go up, and they watch the intersection,” Johnson said. “We also looked at some of the environmental issues.”

One of the potential environmental issues around the intersection Johnson mentioned involves parking spots and trees along Hillsboro Street

that reduce visibility. Johnson said concerns arose that the trees could block drivers’ field of vision when driving. He also was concerned that a car parked in the closest spot to the intersection could also create a blind spot for other drivers, but the department ruled that out after a study of the incident reports.

“I know during two of those [accidents], there were no cars parked there, so you can’t blame the parking spot,” Johnson said.

So what’s causing the accidents?

Johnson believes it’s simple: the fault falls on inattentive drivers.

“We’re looking to do some educational programs to try to inform the community and tell the community that when you turn, it is not always clear,” he said. “You need to be paying attention because there could be somebody in that crosswalk.”

Pedestrians have the right of way if they’re crossing streets via crosswalks in North Carolina, according to Johnson. But he said pedestrians still need to be mindful when walking across Salisbury or Hillsboro streets.

“Pedestrians do have the right of way in the crosswalk, but we always need to be watching as we are walking because unfortunately, people don’t pay attention and that’s what caused these accidents,” he said.

N.C. General Statute 20-173(a) states “where traffic-control signals are not in place or in operation the driver of a vehicle shall yield the right-of-way, slowing down or stopping if need be to so yield, to a pedestrian crossing the roadway within any marked crosswalk or within any unmarked crosswalk at or near an intersection, except as otherwise provided” — meaning drivers do not have to yield to pedestrians unless they are in the middle of a marked or unmarked or unmarked crosswalk.

But Johnson said drivers should be more courteous of people trying to walk across downtown and yield to those waiting to be able to safely go across the street.

“We get several calls about cars not stopping for pedestrians while the pedestrian is waiting to cross the street at our marked crosswalks or near intersections,” he said. “A

vehicle does not have to stop, yield or slow down for a pedestrian unless the pedestrian is actually inside a marked or unmarked crosswalk. However, I do think more drivers should be more courteous and allow pedestrians to cross the street if they see someone waiting to cross. It’s just being nice.”

Johnson said after the January incident, he and town staff are considering consulting with NCDOT again. State engineers may recommend include additional signage around the intersection, increased LPI timeframes, or other changes, he said.

He hopes to be able to have some kind of resolution for the intersection before the weather warms and the foot traffic increases.

“Right now, with the weather, there are not as many people walking, but with spring-time coming and summer, we just want to make sure there is not an issue at that intersection,” he said. “We’re trying to do what we can to make it safer.”

Reporter Taylor Heeden can be reached at theeden@chathamnr.com.

STAFFING

Continued from page A1

ber Melissa Hlavac was absent for the vote.)

District administrators and local health officials have consistently followed public health guidance recommending that mask mandates remain in place until the county’s transmission rates fall below the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s suggested levels. The county’s three public charter schools each also still have universal indoor masking policies in place.

According to the CDC and the state health department, schools should continue requiring universal masking in counties with higher levels of community transmission.

In Chatham as of Tuesday, there are 1,505.5 cases per 100,000 people and a 30.18% positive rate, according to CDC data, with 11 new hospitalizations in the last week. To move into the low transmission at which the state and CDC advise school masking can be optional, Chatham would need to move below 10 cases per 100,000 people and a 5% positivity rate.

CCS administration has long cited masking as the most important tool for keeping students in the classroom by

mitigating case transmission within school buildings. There have been 928 cases among students and staff since the first day of school, and just three clusters, according to the district’s COVID dashboard on Tuesday.

Still, even with low community spread, absences due to COVID-19 or exposure among staff members can reduce school operations to an unsustainable level for students and staff alike.

Last spring, district officials suggested that CCS might off-ramp from in-person classes should too many staff members get sick with COVID-19 or be forced to quarantine to teach and carry out school functions.

Across the state, the N.C. Department of Public Instruction said earlier this month that 26 schools had notified them of temporarily switching to remote instruction due to COVID-19, the Raleigh News & Observer reported. At Wake County Schools, one middle school announced Jan. 14 that it would switch to remote learning for the day due to an anticipated absence of 30% of staff.

To help address such staffing shortages accentuated by Omicron, Gov. Roy Cooper announced on Jan. 12 a temporary policy allowing state employees to use volunteer days with supervisor approval to work in the state’s public schools as substitute teachers, bus driv-

ers and cafeteria staff. Without further action, the policy will end Feb. 15.

The directive allows state employees to use paid leave to work as substitutes while also keeping any compensation they earn as substitutes. Full-time employees are eligible for 24 hours of paid community service leave every calendar year, according to the State Human Resource Commission.

“It is critical that we keep children learning in the classroom safely,” Cooper said in a release announcing the policy. “This policy will encourage state employees to lend a helping hand to our students at a time of severe staffing challenges for our public schools.”

At CCS, Wykle said the district gladly welcomed Cooper’s directive.

“We are grateful for our community partners and volunteers,” CCS Superintendent Anthony Jackson said. “Volunteers have been part of the fabric of Chatham County Schools because of strong parental and community stakeholder involvement. We are pleased that this will provide additional opportunities and incentive for engagement with our schools.”

In neighboring counties, some districts have temporarily been unable to run their bus routes, or offer school meals, due to staffing shortages or worker strikes.

Though CCS hasn’t ended any services, the district has faced drastic staffing shortages since this fall. Such shortages led the district to approve one-time bonuses with COVID funds, and to use school principals and teachers as bus drivers and nutrition services workers to keep school services running.

Even with extra COVID-19 funding, finding new employees isn’t an easy task, district officials previously told the News + Record. Lower pay than in private sectors and often sparse benefits, particularly for part-time or hourly workers, has long led to school staffing shortages, national labor advocates say, and the pandemic has only emphasized such factors — underscored now by COVID absences that can lead to teachers filling in additional roles.

It’s a challenge likely to remain even once the Omicron surge is over.

“The level of service across the board has had to be rearranged. Now we are still absolutely teaching and learning,” CCS Assistant Superintendent for Operations Chris Blice told the News + Record in September. “We’re going to keep on doing that. We’re going to have to be creative on how we make it happen.”

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

VIEWPOINTS

School districts: Please don't take away snow days

When I was still in school, every snow day felt like a wintry gift from God.

The second I'd hear an inkling of a snowy weather forecast, I swear I'd spend the rest of the day with a spring in my step. For me,

a snow day meant an unexpected break from the grind of daily life and school work. It meant a day of rest, time to catch up on any work I'd fallen behind on, at least three cups of piping hot chocolate, and a great time with friends, especially in college.

My college roommate and I would perform the snow dance for our dormmates, stumbling (me), giggling (my roommate),

and changing our routine every time. While wearing our pajamas inside out — another fun snow superstition — we'd probably check our emails or alerts every five minutes, looking for that oh-so-beautiful phrase, "Condition 2," which signified classes at UNC-Chapel Hill had been canceled on account of treacherous wintry weather.

Once the announcement came, we'd breathe out a sigh of relief, sleep in the next day, and awake to a day of snow, rest and fun. When news broke about North Carolina's second snow storm last Thursday, I imagined students from elementary school to college would enjoy the same.

For the most part, that prediction bore out: the Wake County school system, Johnston County Schools, Durham Public Schools and Franklin County Schools

all closed their doors and proclaimed Friday a snow day for students and staff. Even UNC-Chapel Hill and Central Carolina Community College followed suit.

Chatham County Schools did not.

Instead, the district opened its doors virtually and proclaimed Friday and Monday remote learning days.

Now, I'm not a CCS student, but even I felt a little deflated by that news.

Thanks to the times we live in, many educators and school administrators have presented several sound arguments against preserving snow days.

It makes sense to shift over to remote learning when bad weather strikes now that schools have more of the necessary infrastructure for distance learning in place. It makes even more sense thanks to how badly pandemic

learning loss has hurt some students.

Classes can stay on schedule. Students no longer need to worry about making up school days in the summer or over scheduled breaks if ice and snow keep them out of the classroom for, let's say, nearly two weeks. Parents no longer need to chew out the district for using four days of spring break as snow makeup days, as many Guilford County Schools parents did in 2014.

These arguments, however, imply that snow days can only ever do more harm than good — and that's just not true. For many students, parents and even teachers, snow days can reap unexpected rewards.

Snow days can force you to slow down and rest, to take a mental health day. They offer parents, especially young parents, an extra day to bond with their children and teach

them important life lessons, like how to build a snowman, or for teenagers, how to shovel the driveway.

Snow days give perennial procrastinators — a.k.a. most high school and college students — an extra day, or even more, to wrap up papers they would've stayed up until 3 a.m. doing otherwise. At its most basic level, snow days can bring pure fun: snowball fights, snow cream and slushies, snowmen, and my personal favorite, sledding.

Sure, too many snow days can impede learning and prove disruptive, but holding one every once in a while won't bring about the Apocalypse.

Please don't take away snow days.

Victoria Johnson is the News + Record's La Voz de Chatham reporter. She can be reached at victoria@chathamnr.com.

VICTORIA JOHNSON
La Voz de Chatham

To be sentimental, or not

According to an online survey in last week's New York Times, I am a sentimentalist. This is because I want Pluto back as the ninth planet of our solar system.

I have heard the counter arguments. Other "dwarf planets" are Pluto's size and shape. There are Pluto-like spheres orbiting the sun in the Kuiper belt, a ring in space beyond Neptune, as well as other orbiting objects between Mars and Jupiter. If Pluto is a planet, why not Eris, Ceres, Quaron, Sedna and a dozen others with equally strange names? Why should Pluto be special? I say that Pluto is special!

I am not sentimental for the Roman god of the underworld or the lovable dog of Disney. Yet, I miss the 3rd grade when I first learned about the solar system. That was a time when I could count on clear, specific answers. A time when I could count the number of planets and count on there being nine of them, always ending with the tiny one that I drew as a blueberry on the edge of my notebook paper.

Maybe I am guilty of sentimentality. I would be less inclined to wax nostalgically about the good old days if I were a different gender or race.

But, in terms of Pluto, my opinion is more than nostalgic. Pluto is the scrappy underdog. I think of the planet as the skinny kid, like me, who preferred to watch the big guys from a distance.

These days, I have a son in 3rd grade. He learned the eight other planets. Good old Pluto is nothing more than a footnote, having been demoted in 2006 which was six years before my son was born.

Many things have changed since my childhood. There are pressures on today's elementary school students, teachers and staff unlike anything I had to endure. We had tornado drills, but an active shooter was only a part of video games. The other day I saw an unusual looking backpack worn by my son's classmate. It was bulletproof and designed to be used as a shield.

Today's students face other new threats as well. Students and essential workers have risked exposure to the coronavirus on a daily basis. Yet, many adults are still unwilling to do simple things to prevent the spread of COVID-19 like wearing masks and getting vaccinated. Are some nostalgic for the pre-pandemic days? But at whose expense?

My fellow columnist Bob Wachs penned a lovely ode to Christmas tradition in these pages. ("Traditions, old and new, big part of Christmas.") Among other things, he expressed sentimentality for cutting down a Christmas tree with his father and reading the editorial "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus" reprinted in this newspaper. Wachs reminded me that some things of the past are far more personal than distant, icy planets — traditions that "revolve around family and friends and faith."

But a desire to return to the past can get us into trouble, for such an attitude may prevent us from making changes today, including changing our minds.

Though I am an alleged sentimentalist, I recognize that it doesn't really matter how many planets we count in our solar system. Pluto certainly doesn't care!

Sentimental or not, what counts is how we take care of one another on this planet.

Andrew Taylor-Troutman is the pastor of Chapel in the Pines Presbyterian Church. His newly-published book is a collection of his columns for the Chatham News + Record titled "Hope Matters: Churchless Sermons."



ANDREW TAYLOR-TROUTMAN
Hope Matters



Meeting teenage markers is a dose of reality — for others

It wasn't so long ago — three years, to be exact — that my first-born grandchild entered a world known as "teenager."

For the longest while, he was the only male in the group, although the other bookend is now occupied by one of his species.

When that event occurred, he took great delight in asking his mother, my first-born, for about two months or so before the event, "Do you know you're going to be the mother of a teenager soon?" I'm pretty sure she knew that although she, her mother and I all think he still should only be about 6.

The reality, though, is the numbers don't lie and it's now been 16 years since that night at Rex Hospital in Raleigh when he announced his arrival. I got my hands on him as soon as possible, partly so I could endow him whatever greatness I might possess, if any.

At least, that's what my mama often said. She was big on whoever carried the baby from the hospital would find that the infant would grow up to be like that person in nature and personality. I didn't get to do those honors but I did hold the little guy as much and as often as I could.

Today that would be kinda hard, as in dang near impossible. He's now a shade taller than me. His doctor said he's a little more than 6 feet tall, which seems strange since I always thought that's how tall I am but he occupies more "up" than I do.

In his infancy I watched him learn to sit up, to crawl, to walk and to run. It's hard to remember those unsteady attempts at left-right stepping today as I watch him run up and down the basketball court, dribbling the ball and weaving in and out of traffic. In the interest of full disclosure, I must admit that ability is not a characteristic I gave him. My brief and feeble school basketball career consisted of being the last guy down the court, hence earning the nickname "Light-

ning" as a behind the back slap in the face.

I do hope, however, I have instilled some other traits in the young lad. Reading, for instance. He has quite a library already and I'd like to think some of that got started as he sat on the couch with Shirley and me as we read, "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?" a gazillion times.

And there were other things we shared — corny jokes, puns, meals at the Waffle House, episodes of the original "Twilight Zone" (the one with Rod Serling), an understanding and sense of right and wrong. I know I'm not in this business alone: there are his folks, his extended family, his church and teachers, good friends, his dog Peter ... and who knows who in the future.

But as meaningful as that day was when "teen" was added to his age, another has now appeared on the radar. He's 16 and now doesn't need his mother or me or any other adult to make it possible for him to slide behind the steering wheel of a set of wheels.

I have told his mother/my first-born that such a situation would improve her prayer life, just as her similar event and that of her little brother did for my Better Half and me back in the day.

I want to stay around as long as I can and spend more time with him (and those who followed him), provided he can work me into his growing busy schedule. And therein is the rub: as he gets older, he — and others — spreads his wings and flies farther and longer.

I love him dearly; I think he knows that, as much as a 16-year-old boy will admit or say it. I hope he remembers me when he's a granddaddy.

And if you meet him on the road, please drive safely.

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



BOB WACHS
Movin' Around

LETTERS

Carbon pricing would reduce emissions, help address climate change

TO THE EDITOR:

I enjoyed seeing the Chatham News + Record begin 2022 with a review of key stories from last year. The environment section described local officials starting to take action to address climate change. This is exciting and commendable and a great start, but after a year of record-breaking weather events exacerbated by climate change it is clear we need to use every tool at our disposal and work on a bold solution at the federal level.

The most important of these tools is a carbon price. Modeling from Resources for the Future shows a carbon price alone starting at \$15/ton could reduce emissions 45% below 2005 levels by 2030.

Rep. David Price (D-N.C., 4th Dist.) who represents half of the county has worked with the Biden Administration on climate legislation. However, without the climate measures included in Build Back Better and a price on carbon, the U.S. will fail to meet the 50% reduction promise that Biden pledged on Earth Day. Congress must continue to work to reach an agreement on this legislation and pass it.

And the money from a carbon fee could be returned to American households. A carbon price becomes affordable for ordinary Americans when the funds collected from polluters are given as a dividend, or "carbon cashback" payment, to every American. This protects low- and middle-income Americans who otherwise might not be able to afford the transition.

This plan would incentivise everywhere the kind of action local officials are exploring in Chatham County.

Steve Woolford
Silk Hope

VIEWPOINTS

Freedom is worth the risk

During each election cycle, we are treated to an endless parade of politicians extolling freedom. Given how many of them subsequently vote to restrict our freedom in myriad ways, we have ample reason to be skeptical about politicians.

But we should not let our skepticism become cynicism, or realism become defeatism. The cause of freedom is not a sports team for whom we root but whose defeat does us no real harm. Nor is freedom simply an abstraction to which we should occasionally salute while going about our daily lives.

Freedom is of great practical value. The more government suppresses it, the poorer and unhappier its citizens become.

Back in the 17th century, France's Louis XIV showed just how foolhardy it can be to restrict freedom. The "Sun King" ruled a mostly Catholic country with a significant Protestant minority, the Huguenots. After decades of religious conflict, Louis's grandfather Henry IV had promulgated a new policy of toleration, the Edict of Nantes, in 1598. Under its protection, the Huguenot community had grown and prospered, producing a disproportionate number of the doctors, lawyers, financiers and merchants of France.

But Louis XIV disliked the policy of toleration. When he took the reins of power in 1661, Huguenots began to lose their freedom. Louis formally renounced the Edict of Nantes in 1685. He ordered Huguenot ministers into exile while forbidding the rest of the Huguenots from leaving France. If they were caught trying to leave, the penalty could be compulsory naval service for

men, imprisonment for women, or death.

While the king's policy did force many to convert to Catholicism, a significant percentage of the Huguenots — including many of France's ablest professionals and entrepreneurs — defied his command and sought escape to the Low Countries, Switzerland, England and beyond.

Among them were two teenagers, Abraham Michaux and Suzanne Rochet, who were engaged to be married. They decided to flee separately and meet in Holland. Abraham made it out on the first attempt. Suzanne didn't. She had hidden herself in a wagon with her sister, who had an infant son. His cries resulted in their capture.

Later, two of Suzanne's sisters escaped, promising to send a coded letter to Suzanne when they thought the time was right for her to make a break for it. The code would read: "It would be perfectly fine to send

the little nightcap which we left behind." When the signal letter finally arrived, Suzanne was determined to try again for freedom — this time, by secreting herself in a wine cask on an English ship bound for Holland.

Imagine young Suzanne, 18 years old, sealed up in a dark, cramped, smelly cask for hours. At one point she had to stifle a scream when she heard French policemen whacking the cask with their guns to see if anything was hidden inside. Then she felt the cask being lifted and loaded onto the ship. Only after it reached the open sea could she safely emerge.

Suzanne Rochet — known to Huguenot history as "Little Nightcap" — made it to Holland and reunited with her beloved, Abraham Michaux. They married in 1692 and made their home in Amsterdam, where she gave birth to the first seven of their 12 children. In 1702, the Michaux family joined other French exiles on a ship bound for a new Huguenot

settlement on the James River in Virginia. That's where Abraham and Suzanne's remaining children were born, including my 7th great-grandmother, Elizabeth Michaux.

Louis XIV's revocation of the Edict of Nantes wasn't just morally wrong. It was a colossal blunder. It weakened his own country and enriched his enemies. We should learn from his mistakes, and from those of other rulers who treat people as cogs in a machine that only some ruling elite can operate.

We are not cogs. We are citizens. Politicians should protect our rights, perform only the necessary functions of a limited government, and otherwise leave us alone. They'll be glad they did.

John Hood is a John Locke Foundation board member and author of the new novel "Mountain Folk," a historical fantasy set during the American Revolution (MountainFolk-Book.com).

He made me famous

The man who made me briefly famous died last week.



D.G. MARTIN
One on One

Tom Clark was 93.

Dr. Clark taught me Old Testament at Davidson College in 1958-59. It was his first year teaching at Davidson, and I was a freshman. Later he became better known as an artist and sculptor than as a religion teacher. But he showed some of his creative spirit and artistic talent in that Bible course.

When we got to the book Song of Songs, he went to the blackboard and drew illustrations of the verses describing a young maiden, in chapter 4: "Your eyes are doves behind your veil."

"Your hair is like a flock of goats, moving down the slopes of Gilead. Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes that have come up from the washing."

To help us visualize that description, Dr. Clark first fashioned an outline of a face on the blackboard. Then he drew doves for eyes, goats for hair, and ewes for teeth. It was a beauty of a mess.

He laughed. We laughed.

Then he quickly moved on to Isaiah, the next book in the Bible after Song of Songs.

Clark was an unforgettable Bible teacher. But, as his blackboard drawing performance showed, it was his talent as an artist that gave him real joy. It was that talent that later made him known throughout the world.

He had always enjoyed sculpting busts of students and his friends. His bust of my father so beautifully captured my dad's warmth and gentility that we will always treasure it.

This hobby of sculpting busts led, indirectly, to his very successful business venture with gnomes. One day in 1978, while waiting for a student to sit for a bust, Clark saw a picture of a gnome and began a sculpture of it.

Joe Poteat, who became Clark's business partner and best friend, saw the potential and organized an operation to reproduce the figures and manage their sale and distribution.

To reproduce the gnome

figures and make them look like wooden carvings was a challenge. Clark told me in 2009, "I was very fortunate to have grown up in North Carolina because the furniture industry here had developed a method of reproducing furniture that looks like wood. It looks like wood, but it is a resin mixed with a flour."

Clark's former student, furniture man Alex Bernhardt, helped make the contacts to learn how to manufacture the artwork. Soon Clark was turning out gnomes at the rate of about one a week, and each one was then made into thousands of copies that were sent to outlets across the world.

Clark's business, Cairn Studios, referred to him as an artist. He certainly viewed himself as an artist. But in his hometown of Davidson some people turned up their noses and said his work was, while popular and commercially successful, something less than real art.

I disagree. When I see the expressions he captured on my father's bust and on the varied and joyful faces of his gnomes, I experience Clark's artistry.

But I admit that I am also captivated by Norman Rockwell and Charles Dickens whose critics denied their greatness.

In my mind Tom Clark was one of the world's great artists.

Now, how did Clark make me famous?

Back in 1984, I was running for the U.S. Congress, and Clark had become a national celebrity as the creator of the popular gnomes. My campaign persuaded him to create a "DG" gnome to use as gifts for people who made contributions to the campaign. Clark sculptured a likeness, put an Army uniform and green beret on it, and added a Susan B. Anthony coin and other symbols for our campaign themes. I didn't win the election, but as one of the few actual humans made into a gnome figure, I have been set apart.

Famous, if only briefly. Thanks to Tom Clark, whose fame will endure.

D.G. Martin hosted "North Carolina Bookwatch," for more than 20 years.

To view prior programs: <https://video.pbsnc.org/show/nc-bookwatch/episodes/>.



Keep the kids in class

Omicron is spreading faster than Kudzu, especially among our children.

Some educators and health officials are suggesting we halt in-class learning and return to virtual learning.

That would be a disaster. It's indisputable that Omicron is spreading rapidly in our schools, but data suggests it doesn't last long and isn't as severe as was the Delta variant. The threats of illness are not as great as other damages to our children.

Consider this: Between March 2020 and the same month in '21 when schools were closed and we depended on virtual learning, the average school-age student lost 55 instruction days, almost one-third of a school year. Test results quantify the damage. Only 45% passed state exams, compared to almost 60% in 2019, the year before COVID. Fifty-three percent of students in grades three through eight were graded "not proficient" in grade-level reading skills. End-of-grade tests in 2019 revealed more than 50% failed math 1, math 3, biology and/or English exams, and one in six students failed to be promoted from the pivotal 9th grade, a predictor of future high school graduation success rates. Our children essentially lost a year of their educations.

It wasn't just in learning that students suffered. The Journal of the American Medical Association Pediatrics compiled studies from across the globe and found clinically elevated depression in 25% of children and anxiety in 20%. Child suicides hit new peaks. Children knew they weren't keeping up or

getting the help they needed. They heard the angst and concern from parents worried about jobs, bills and food; anxiety often played out in tension and screaming at home. Children, who heard the horror stories, were frightened of getting the virus and knew their lives had changed. Many doubted they would ever return to the way things were. They missed their friends and classmates and their personal freedoms. All of this resulted in children feeling frightened and lonely.

The best way to minimize the scariness and uncertainty is to restore their lives to as normal a routine as possible, particularly the return to in-person learning. We need to understand there's much to be done and it is going to cost our personal involvement and money ... lots of it.

Safety must be a high priority, including both physical safety from the disease as well as safety from physical danger. We must thoroughly and frequently sanitize our schools every day. To control virus spread, we need to return to spacing desks as far as possible and require that all wear masks. It's time to put your political preferences aside and do what is best for the most. Off-duty officers are going to be extremely necessary to restore confidence and keep order.

As was always the case, teachers are the fulcrum to in-class success. Too many teachers are leaving due to burnout or fear for their own or their family's health, as well as outrageous behavior. We must provide a great deal more support in the classroom, including a large cadre of substitutes, teaching assistants, mentors or volunteers to backstop instruction, provide remediation and coaching or just give the classroom teacher a break. Administrators get no pass for not ensur-

ing their schools have enough bus drivers, cleaning and janitorial help, food service workers or counselors and medical assistance. Help can come from other educators, the business sector, elected officials, concerned citizens ... even administrators themselves.

And parents can be of great assistance. This will include spending time with their students, listening to them read, looking at papers returned to them, asking questions to hear how their student is doing. They need to frequently communicate with educators, supporting them as they support our children.

In summary, North Carolina needs to come together like never before. Yes, there costs, risks and sacrifices to be made, but ask yourself what is the cost for an improperly educated generation of children? What if they drop out, unprepared to graduate or get additional education they will need to thrive? Our society will pay to support them, feed them, counsel them and perhaps even police them. Our state will be unattractive to employers, who might move elsewhere because they can't find the workforce they require.

This isn't a Chicken Little sky-is-falling preposterous scenario. Failure cannot be an option. We will prove how much we care about the next generation and each other by how dedicated we are in helping them succeed. It all begins with a steadfast commitment to keep kids in class.

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

Chatham News + Record

www.chathamnewsrecord.com

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MASK

Continued from page A1

their heads.

I'm a sucker for a good marketing ploy.

Which made me all the more disappointed with the masks I *didn't* have.

A couple of weeks prior to our trip, I took it upon myself to go for extra safety by ordering a box of 30 KN95 masks. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — the CDC — had, after all, just put out an advisory to avoid traveling on a cruise ship, regardless of vaccination status. The agency cited an increased risk of severe illness on ships and announced that nearly 100 ships were “under observation” because of increased COVID cases.

Undaunted, and determined to go on our cruise, I ventured onto Amazon.com to score some KN95s, ensuring they'd get delivered in plenty of time for our trip. Alas, immediately after my order, the estimated arrival time of the KN95s mysteriously changed from four days prior to our departure to a week *after* we'd be getting home.

And by the time they arrived, after our vacation was over (no COVID issues whatsoever, by the way), the CDC had put out a fresh warning: be aware of the surfeit amount of counterfeit KN95s.

Sure enough, the box of KN95s I'd plopped down \$35 on were fakes.

Oh, and one more thing from the CDC while I was away: what you really *should* be doing is wearing an N95 mask.

Which I didn't have.

The third rail

A 2020 survey done by the Chatham County Public Health Department and posted on its website said 90.7% of Chatham residents polled mask up. My own observation, a year and a half and two major variants later, is that the actual number is far, far less.

My favorite grocery store has a sign at the entrance politely requesting all customers to wear face coverings, regardless of vaccination status. On a good day, maybe 60% of customers comply.

It also depends on where you are. You're more likely to see masking in Pittsboro than Siler City, for example. I recall walking into one Siler City eatery back during the state's indoor masking mandate. A sign on the business' door said face coverings were required for entry, yet not one of the three customers inside and none of the four employees there — including the two who worked on my to-go order — were masked.

Now in 2022, two years into a politicized pandemic, masking (and vaccinations, which I'll refrain from talking about here) remain third rail topics. Highly charged disagreements, of course, are *de rigueur*. At the Chatham County Board of Education's retreat on Jan. 11, for example, an extended discussion — comments from anti-masking parents and debate among board members — lasted 45 minutes.



Courtesy of CCPHD

The CDC now recommends that an N95 respirator, as shown here, or KN95 face masks provide the highest level of protection from particles, including the virus that causes COVID-19.'

One frustrated parent said to board members, “Facts don't matter.” “We know masks don't work,” she said, then accused board members of being under hypnosis and “drunk on power.”

Board member David Hamm, who alone has advocated for optional masking among that group, made the tongue-in-cheek suggestion that if we're going to continue to require students to be masked, we should also buy lots of bubble wrap to keep them safe — in case they were to fall. (The board voted at the retreat to keep the system's mask requirement in place for another month; a follow-up motion Hamm made to make masking optional for athletes failed to receive a second and wasn't voted upon.)

So we talk a lot about masks, but what kind of masks — a topic Hamm touched on — is suddenly very relevant.

What's an N95 mask?

N95s are one type of specialized filtering masks which typically provide a tighter fit to your face than cloth masks and are made with a special material designed to block 95% of harmful particles. The fibers that qualify N95s as such are pressed closer together than in cloth masks and contain an electrostatic charge that attracts molecules to stick to the mask — rather than passing through.

The CDC, again, in its evolving guidance for mask-wearing, previously said N95 masks should be reserved for health care workers because of supply shortages. But the new guidance includes the recommendation of N95s for everyone, with an added emphasis that a good-fitting mask that is worn properly, and consistently, is most critical.

The agency didn't formally recommend N95s over cloth masks. “Any mask is better than no mask,” CDC spokeswoman Kristen Nordlund said. But it did emphasize that properly fitted N95 and KN95 masks offer the most protection against COVID-19 — better than cloth — particularly given the transmissibility of the Omicron variant.

So how do you get one? An authentic one?

The Biden administration announced a plan to make 400 million N95 masks available for free to U.S. residents. The federal government has a stash of more than 750 million N95 masks as a part of the Strategic National Stockpile, and the White House plans to make the masks available for pickup at pharmacies

and community health centers across the country. The masks began arriving at pharmacies and grocers around the country on Monday.

In North Carolina, the state's Dept. of Health and Human Services already sent N95 masks to every local public health department, according to Zachary Horner, a spokesman for the Chatham County Public Health Department (and my eldest son, by the way.)

“Last week, we received 7,300 N95s and promptly distributed them to prioritized settings in the county, including the Chatham County Council on Aging, The Hispanic Liaison, Brookwood Farms and Chatham County Emergency Management to distribute to fire stations across the county,” he said.

Most of that distribution happened within a day or two.

“We're so grateful for this distribution, as the CDC has stated that NIOSH (National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health)-approved respirators like the N95 ‘provide the highest level of protection from particles, including the virus that causes COVID-19,’” Horner said, quoting the CDC directive. “However, other masks and respirators, like cloth face masks, still provide good protection.”

Confused? Don't be.

If the changing recommendations from the CDC seem confusing to you, you're not alone. But understand: N95s are hard to find, they're difficult to wear for long periods of time, and because they're so often counterfeited, your elusive search for the best protection possible may end up with you getting bamboozled.

But you can still safeguard yourself. You can, and you should.

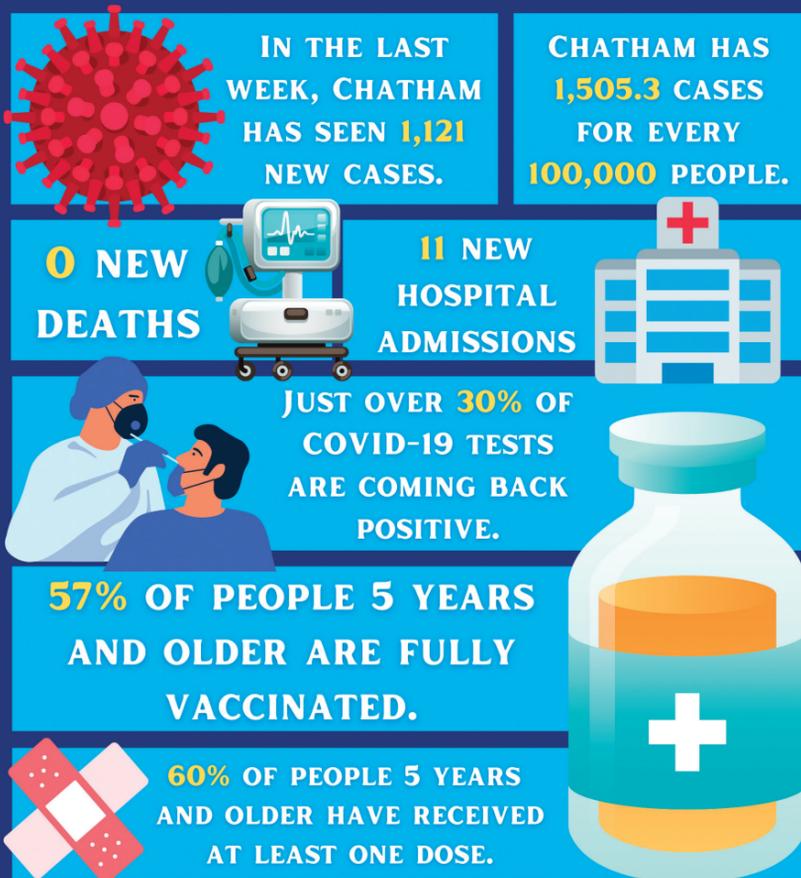
“The most important thing is to wear a well-fitting mask consistently and correctly,” said Mike Zelek, the director of Chatham's Public Health Department. “Throughout the pandemic, including during the recent Omicron surge, we have mostly seen COVID spread in settings with prolonged close contact where masks are not worn consistently, like gatherings and household contact.”

The high transmissibility rate of Omicron should prompt Chatham residents to “up your mask game,” he said.

“An N95 or KN95 can give you as the wearer an additional level of protection,” Zelek said.

A CHATHAM COUNTY COVID-19 UPDATE

JANUARY 18 TO 25, 2022



SOURCES: THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION COVID DATA TRACKER, THE NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES VACCINATIONS DASHBOARD.

Chatham News + Record

CN+R graphic by Victoria Johnson

“Prioritize the masks for situations where you are spending more time indoors close to others outside of your household, especially if masks are not being worn by those around you. Even with these masks, it is still most important that it is well-fitting and worn consistently and correctly.”

Cloth masks are designed to be washed and reused — which typically isn't the case for N95 masks. (Honestly, when's the last time you washed your cloth mask? Have you *ever* washed your cloth masks?)

But still, Zelek says, there are some things you can do to make masking more effective.

“Rotating masks is an easy option,” he said, “storing them in a breathable paper bag. It is best to limit to five uses per mask if possible. If your mask becomes dirty or poorly fitting, discard it. And going back to the settings where they provide most benefit, if you have a limited supply, prioritize them for higher risk activities, for example, when indoors in close proximity to others for longer periods of time, especially if others aren't masked.”

I also posed the mask question to Eric Wolak, the chief operating officer and chief nursing officer at Chatham Hospital. He gave it to Johnnie Hubble, the infection preventionist at Chatham Hospital, who also emphasized proper wearing.

“The fit of the mask is important, and they go over that with tips to improve the fit or add layers of protection,” she said, referring to guidance on the CDC's coronavirus site. “N95 masks are the best option and can be found for purchase; but do not get one with a vent. You need one without a vent. They fit very snug against the face and are secured behind the head. Therefore some will have problems wearing them for long periods due to discomfort.”

And this is important: Cloth masks alone are not that protective against Omicron, Hubble said, but can work for many people when placed over a surgical mask to improve fit and add layers of protection.

As for KN95 masks, Hubble said many on the market are “not up to meeting U.S. mask

standards of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).”

Also: KF94 masks from Korea are supposed to be the equivalent of an N95; see the CDC web page for more information.

“But if you can find a KN95 that is not counterfeit, then those are a good option,” she said.

I should have checked with Johnnie earlier. It was from the CDC site that I learned my box of masks labeled KN95s were fake.

I tried to post a negative review on Amazon, citing stories from the New York Times and guidance from the CDC, but my post was rejected. “*It appears your content did not comply with our guidelines,*” Amazon told me in an email. “Your review should focus on specific features of the product and your experience with it ... Please do not include URLs external to Amazon or personally identifiable content in your review.”

The other purchasers whose reviews were published — 260 of them — gave the masks an average rating of 4.5 out of 5 stars. Most probably don't peruse the CDC site or bombard Zelek, Wolak and Hubble with emails like I do.

So here 'tis: “HALI-DOD masks are a Prime example of a counterfeit product. Don't buy them.” (By the way, those masks are now “unavailable” on Amazon, so ... there's that.)

Deny care?

As someone who masks when he's supposed to, I'm ready for the pandemic to end. It's brought out the best in many of our health care professionals and the worst in too many others. It's not surprising that, two years into this — with health care workers overwhelmingly overwhelmed — there are some who suggest we deny medical care to unvaccinated adults.

I said I wasn't going to talk about vaccinations, and I'm not; this is an argument that has gotten a lot of airtime. Ed Yong, writing in *The Atlantic*, spelled it out this way:

Every adult in the U.S. has been eligible for vaccines since April. At this point, the unvaccinated have made their choice. That choice is hurting everyone else, by perpetu-

ating the pandemic and, now, by crushing the health-care system. Most of the people hospitalized with COVID are unvaccinated. It's unethical that health-care workers should sacrifice for people who won't take care of themselves. And it's especially unethical that even vaccinated people, who did everything right, might be unable to get care for heart attacks or strokes because emergency rooms are choked with unvaccinated COVID patients.

It's a theoretical argument, Yong writes, but it's out there. When he asked medical professionals about not treating the unvaxxed, he said: “... all of them said that it was an awful idea — unethical, impractical, and founded on a shallow understanding of why some people remain unvaccinated.”

Then there's the death-shaming — websites and social media accounts dedicated to celebrating the deaths of anti-vaxxers and COVID deniers who died from COVID.

Like I said, we've seen some people at their worst. But two years on, most of us have seen death, too. Some of us pretty close up.

I get it. “Get fully vaccinated and live a somewhat normal life.” Then Omicron.

Writing in *The Atlantic*, Melinda Wenner Moyer said, “It feels like we don't have anything momentous to look forward to. There is no much-anticipated cure just over the horizon anymore. There is merely more of the same.”

Which can make masking up a deary thing. On Monday, I ran into Alice Pearson, a medical assistant at Pinehurst Surgical Clinic. She was wearing an honest-to-goodness authentic N95 mask, and wearing it properly. I was jealous.

I asked her what she thought about masks, and whether she was tired of wearing them all the time.

“I hate 'em,” she said. “But I'd rather be behind a mask than behind a ventilator.”

She's seen things in the last two years I hope I never have to. So I'm with her.

Bill Horner III can be reached at bhorner3@chathamnr.com or @billthethird.



Staff photo by Bill Horner III

The author's box of counterfeit KN95 masks.

ELECTION 2022

Bill to delay N.C. primaries further sharply divides parties

Republicans say delaying primaries further will avoid confusing voters. Democrats warn of interfering before Supreme Court hears challenge to maps.

BY JORDAN WILKIE
Carolina Public Press



Screenshot

North Carolina lawmakers in session last Wednesday discussed a bill to delay the state's primary elections further.

Politicians are maneuvering, the courts are set to deliberate, and voters are continuing to wait for finalized political maps and a date for the North Carolina 2022 primary elections.

Last Wednesday, Republicans passed a bill on party-line votes in the House and Senate to again delay the primary elections, this time until June. This comes in the context of the political and legal fight over the state's redistricting maps, which could shape the political future of the state's legislature and U.S. congressional delegation for at least a decade.

The current maps, which the legislature drew in the fall, would all but lock in Republican control over state politics. If the court overturns those maps, Democrats have a chance to land on a more even playing field in a state whose geography slightly favors Republicans but votes nearly 50-50 in statewide races.

After a Democratic Party-affiliated group and two pro-democracy advocacy groups sued the state legislature over the maps they drew in the fall, the state Supreme Court delayed the elections from March to May to give courts time to review the case.

Republicans now aim for an additional delay to give the legislature time to redraw the political maps should the court rule the current maps violate the state constitution.

In the state courts' landmark redistricting case from 2002, called Stephenson, the courts ruled the maps were unconstitutional, created some new re-

quirements for drawing maps, then asked the legislature to try again, said Michael Bitzer, a professor of political science and history at Catawba College.

Political map-drawing "is an inherently legislative duty," Bitzer said.

Both through legal filings in the lawsuit and in public statements supporting postponement of the primaries until June, Republican leadership stresses the importance of the General Assembly being able to draw, then redraw the maps.

But courts can and have, both at the state and federal levels, put conditions on how legislators can redraw maps once their first attempts are deemed unconstitutional. The courts could appoint a "special master," or independent outside expert, to review the maps before approving them, Bitzer said.

The Supreme Court could also decide to go with an en-

tirely different process should it deem the maps unconstitutional. In 2018, the Republican-controlled legislature made appellate judicial elections partisan. Now, the state's highest court sits four Democrats and three Republicans, perhaps explaining Republican anxiety over the decision and timing of drawing new maps.

"Never be surprised by anything that happens in North Carolina politics nowadays," Bitzer said.

Timelines and justifications

The state Supreme Court is scheduled to hear the redistricting case on Feb. 2. The court will then have to issue a ruling, a process that often takes months but in this case is expected to take only days.

If the court rules that there is no problem with the maps, there seems to be little issue

with carrying out the elections on the current timeline.

The debate starts with the possibility that the state Supreme Court rules that the maps are unconstitutional. In that case, either the legislature or a special master will need to redraw the maps.

In order to run elections on the current schedule with primaries on May 17, the N.C. State Board of Elections will need finalized maps no later than Feb. 23, according to board spokesperson Pat Gannon.

Republicans say that is not enough time for the court to make its decision and for the legislature to redraw the maps.

Speaking for the Democrats, House Minority Leader Robert Reives II said the legislature should not interfere with the court's schedule before it even has a chance to hear the case, let alone make a decision.

Each party claims that if it doesn't get its way, voters will

lose confidence in the election. Reives said passing the bill gives the appearance that the legislature is interfering with the courts.

During discussion on the Senate Redistricting and Elections Committee, Republican Co-Chair Warren Daniel said passing the bill will reduce voter confusion.

Neither politician provided any evidence for those claims.

Daniel also stated that delaying the primary date would give potential candidates more time to decide whether they would like to run and which district to run in.

Both in that Senate committee and on the House floor, Democrats asked about the timing of the June primary, which is currently scheduled for the last week of school. Schools often close and serve as voting locations on election days, but that would likely not be an option in the final week of classes, making it more difficult to find places to vote.

Gov. Roy Cooper has not said whether he will veto the bill. If he does, the unanimous Democratic opposition to the bill in the legislature would suggest Republicans would not have enough votes to override the veto.

Instead of commenting on the veto, Cooper's press secretary, Jordan Monaghan, said, "Legislators should avoid additional attempts to undermine the voting process."

Monaghan did not respond to questions about how a further postponement of the election would undermine voting. The State Board of Elections will be able to run the primaries on May 17 or June 7, according to Gannon.

Watch For Changes in RMDs

If you're a certain age, you'll need to withdraw money from some of your retirement accounts each year. But in 2022, the amount you must take out may be changing more than in other years — and that could affect your retirement income strategy.

Here's some background: Once you turn 72, you generally must start taking withdrawals, called required minimum distributions, or RMDs, from some of your retirement accounts, such as your traditional IRA and your 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored plan. Each year, your RMDs are determined by your age and account balances. This year, the life expectancy tables used by the IRS are being updated to reflect longer lifespans. This may result in lower annual RMDs than you'd have to take if this adjustment hadn't been made.

If you've started taking RMDs, what does this change mean to you? It can be a positive development, for a few reasons:

- **Potentially lower taxes** — Your RMDs are generally taxable at your personal income tax rate, so the lower your RMDs, the lower your tax bill might be.

- **Possibly longer "lifespan" for retirement accounts** — Because your RMDs will be lower, the accounts from which they're issued — including your traditional IRA and 401(k) — may be able to last longer without becoming depleted. The longer these accounts can stay intact and remain an asset, the better for you.

- **More flexibility in planning for retirement income** — The word "required" in the phrase "required minimum distributions" means exactly what it sounds like — you must take at least that amount. If you withdraw less than your RMD, the amount not withdrawn will be taxed at 50%. So, in one sense, your RMDs

take away some of your freedom in managing your retirement income. But now, with the lower RMDs in place, you may regain some of this flexibility. (And keep in mind that you're always free to withdraw more than the RMDs.)

Of course, if you don't really need all the money from RMDs, even the lower amount may be an issue for you — as mentioned above, RMDs are generally taxable. However, if you're 70½ or older, you can transfer up to \$100,000 per year from a traditional IRA directly to a qualified charitable organization, and some, or perhaps all, of this money may come from your RMDs. By making this move, you can exclude the RMDs from your taxable income. Before taking this action, though, you'll want to consult with your tax advisor.

Here are a couple of final points to keep in mind. First, not all your retirement accounts are subject to RMDs — you can generally keep your Roth IRA intact for as long as you want. However, your Roth 401(k) is generally subject to RMDs. If you're still working past 72, though, you may be able to avoid taking RMDs from your current employer's 401(k) or similar plan, though you'll still have to take them from your traditional IRA.

Changes to the RMD rules don't happen too often. By being aware of how these new, lower RMDs can benefit you, and becoming familiar with all aspects of RMDs, you may be able to strengthen your overall retirement income situation.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

A redistricting and 2022 election timeline

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

The 2022 filing period was fraught — and complicated — from the beginning. The messy process continues, with a bill that would delay the primary election again, this time to June 7, currently at Gov. Roy Cooper's desk for review. Here's a look at the main election updates, starting with the legislature's November passage of new state political maps.

Nov. 4: The Republican-led state legislature passed three new political maps — for U.S. Congress, N.C. House and N.C. Senate — along party lines. All of the new maps would give Republicans a sizable advantage in future elections even if the two parties roughly split the statewide vote 50-50, outside political analysis shows, with the new Congressional map expected to give Republicans a 10-4 or 11-3 advantage in 2022. Those who sued have alleged the maps use unlawful partisan gerrymandering and dilute the voting power of Black residents in many districts.

A lawsuit was issued against the maps the day the maps passed, with more expected.

Dec. 6: Filing for the March 2022 primary was set to start at noon and end Dec. 17.

Shortly before filing was set to begin, an order to temporarily block filing for the U.S. House, N.C. Senate and N.C. house races was filed, and reversed later that evening. But on Dec. 8, the North Carolina Supreme Court halted filing for all races and delayed the primary election until May 17 due to pending gerrymandering lawsuits. The primary was originally scheduled for March 8.

Jan. 11: Three superior court judges declined to strike down the congressional and General Assembly districts enacted by the Republican-controlled legislature in November. Later that evening, the State Board of Elections said candidate filing for the 2022 primary and rescheduled municipal elections would resume at 8 a.m. on Feb. 24 and end at noon March 4, for a May 17 primary. (The municipal elections, originally set to take place in November 2021, were pushed back

due to the incorporation of delayed Census results.)

Jan. 14: The state's Supreme Court said it would hear lawyers' arguments in pending redistricting litigation in a virtual hearing the morning of Feb. 2. This date gives the state Supreme Court little time to rule and keep the already once-delayed May 17 primary on schedule, according to previous statements from the state BOE.

Jan. 19: The General Assembly passed a bill that would further delay the primary until June 7. The move was planned by Senate Republicans, the Raleigh News & Observer reported Jan. 17, and would give the Republican-majority state legislature more time to redraw the state's political district maps if the N.C. Supreme Court rules them unconstitutional. Many state Democrats, including Gov. Roy Cooper, criticized the bill, and on Wednesday, Democratic lawmakers voted against it. The bill went to the governor's desk; though Cooper criticized the bill, he hasn't explicitly said he will veto it.

Cooper has 10 days to act on the bill before it automatically passes into law, excluding Sundays, which would be Jan. 29. At the time of publication, Cooper hadn't yet acted on the bill. State Democrats criticized the Republicans' efforts to delay the primary, saying the move seems to pressure the Supreme Court into letting lawmakers redraw the map themselves if the maps are overturned, rather than the court hiring an outside expert to do it.

Feb. 2: The N.C. Supreme Court is set to hear the gerrymandering suit to decide whether the trial court's order stands, or if the maps must be redrawn. The trial court presiding over the Jan. 11 decision had a 2-1 Republican majority, and its ruling relied heavily on a 5-4 ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court in 2019, when that court's conservative majority reached a similar conclusion. The N.C. Supreme Court, which will hear the Feb. 2 appeal, has a 4-3 Democratic majority.

For the most updated information regarding Cooper's action on the bill, read our coverage online at chathamnewsrecord.com.

Small, women-owned Chatham business creates college care packages with purpose

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — A new women-owned subscription box service for college students launched out of Chatham last fall, but the idea first started years ago.

Founded by Jaime Detzi and Jen Bowman, Detzi says the idea for the new service — Jasper — first came about when their kids were much younger. “Jen, I will first say, has always had this hankering or desire to better equip our kids with life skills,” Detzi said, adding that the original vision of that idea surrounded offering camps of programs.

Then about 18 months ago, the women revisited the idea more formally — landing on an education-focused subscription box, which later they decided would focus specifically on college students. But “it was just an idea,” Detzi said, one that required much more fine tuning and attention to business details.

By March 2021, the two-woman team had narrowed down its business plan; they made their website (jasperbox.com) live in September.

“We just started thinking about what could we do that would bring health, wellness, financial literacy, life hacks, and that type of things to the college world,” Detzi said, “and then, we made a subscription box for them.”

The name, Jasper, is inspired by the semiprecious stone known as a “supreme nurturer,” the Jasper website says. The stone is believed to sustain people during times of stress, encourage honesty, provide courage and aid quick thinking, among other things.

“While not everyone buys into the concept of rocks having metaphysical qualities (admittedly, we’re skeptics, too),” the website says, “it does sound like something we could all benefit from, right?”

After some tinkering, Detzi said they readjusted their marketing strategy to advertise and connect with families through college engagement programs, rather than sifting through Facebook groups and platforms.

By November, the team sent out its first round of subscription boxes. Four boxes are scheduled per year, with the next is set to be sent in February. There are two subscription op-



Submitted photo

Alyssa Detzi, Jasper co-founder Jaime Detzi's daughter, poses here with one of Jasper's college care packages.

tions: the “nugget box” for \$44.99 or the “big box” for \$74.99. Each box includes high-quality products like organizational tools, water bottles, healthy snacks and a “Jasper Journal,” that makes the connection between materials in the box and the life skill the item supports — ranging from things like studying to using a credit card.

Eventually, the team hopes to build out to 500 subscriptions, at least under its current staffing model.

For Detzi, who is the founder and director of local nonprofit Chatham Education Foundation, finding a way to make the boxes accessible to more students was an important part of developing a model. Detzi and Bowman wanted to create a business that makes a profit, but not by creating a product that only college students from higher-income families could benefit from.

After some brainstorming, they landed on a solution: Jasper’s Equity Program, which partners with individual colleges to provide boxes for low-income, or first-generation college students.

Partners can use Jasper as a fundraiser or by enrolling in the equity program. The idea is still being finalized, but essentially would allow universities to sell the boxes as a fundraiser and get 10% of sales back, or that percentage can go toward specific products or subscriptions for different student groups.

“Long term, my hope is that we will be partnered

with a larger foundation that would be able to send these boxes at some discount to first-gen students,” Detzi said, “But I see that as years down the road.”

Jasper is in the early stages of talking with four universities about partnerships, and is signing with N.C. State this month to be a part of the VIP plan — giving them access to 5,000 families through summer orientation, in addition to online publicity.

“Schools love the concept,” she said. “They’re all over this because the majority of care packages that they work with right now companies are literally all junk food.”

Moving forward, Detzi and Bowman hope to grow their subscription base and their relationships with colleges, but for now, they’re glad their long-held idea has finally launched.

“Jen and I want to be a small women-owned business that is succeeding right here in Chatham, that is enabling both of our girls to see that while we’ve spent a lot of time and energy raising our family that we are completely capable of turning something small into something big,” Detzi said. “That it’s not easy and that hard work pays off, and that we’re going to be able to help college students live more fulfilling lives when they’ve graduated from college.”

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

County seeks public input on how to spend \$14 million in COVID-funds

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — Ten months after President Joe Biden signed the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan (ARP) stimulus package, Chatham County Government is seeking public input on how to spend its anticipated \$14 million in COVID-relief funds.

The package designated \$350 billion to go toward state, local and Tribal governments in the U.S., of which Chatham municipalities and institutions were allotted more than \$30 million: \$1.28 million to Pittsboro, \$2.41 million to Siler City and \$18.8 million to Chatham County Schools, the News + Record previously reported.

“Chatham County staff is reviewing the presently available details concerning the American Rescue Plan funding allocation,” Kara Dudley, Chatham government’s public information officer, told the News + Record last May. “We have been told that additional formal guidance is forthcoming, which will help us structure a plan around this funding.”

Though the funds were announced in March and amounts estimated later that spring, distribution of funds took longer and some of it will continue to be distributed over the next two years. The aid received by the county, under the ARP’s state and local coronavirus fiscal recovery funds legislation, is also very flexible — presenting the challenge to local officials to best determine how to spend the one-time funds.

That’s partially why, starting Feb. 1, the county will gather public input from the community to learn how Chatham residents would like to see the money spent, the county announced in a release Monday.

From Feb. 1 to March 31, the county will provide multiple outlets for residents to share their thoughts regarding the ARP funds: an online survey, community discussions and with county commissioners.

In all, people will have eight opportunities to learn more about funds and share ideas with county staff, including meetings at different locations across the county at 6 p.m. on Feb. 1, 3, 10, and the 15; no sign-up or RSVP is required.

On May 10, the U.S. Dept. of Treasury released highly anticipated guidance regarding using the funds, as well as a new portal counties must complete to receive the recovery funds. That guidance maintained Chatham’s \$14.4 million allocation for a grand total of \$14,464,924.

According to the Treasury Department web page, the following applications are approved for ARP funds:

- Supporting public health expenditures
- Addressing negative economic impacts caused by the public health emergency, including economic harms to workers, households, small businesses, impacted industries and the public sector
- Replacing lost public sector revenue
- Providing premium pay for essential workers
- Investing in water, sewer and broadband infrastructure

“Within these overall categories, recipients have broad flexibility to decide how best to use this funding to meet the needs of their communities,” the website says.

In May, Dudley said the county was working with several organizations, including NACo, the N.C. County Commissioners Association and Triangle J Council of Governments “to ensure that we are well informed of developments as we await additional guidance.”

You can learn more about the county’s public engagement process at its website: www.chathamcountync.gov/ARPA

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

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Come See Us



-Eryn Baker
Sales Associate

Local Product Spotlight



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- Originally from Pennsylvania.
- Met his wife while living in Vicenza, Italy.

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Laughter is the outlet for Edwards-Boone

BY JIMMY LEWIS

Chatham County Council on Aging

(Editors Note: This is the first of a four-part February series in conjunction with "Chatham Loves Seniors," a month-long celebration designed to value Chatham County's older adults and to fight back against ageism.)

How did a bout with tendonitis help launch Neriah Edwards-Boone into a retirement filled with purpose?

By leveraging her own love of seniors ingrained at an early age, Edwards-Boone gradually transitioned from seeking an outlet to being an indispensable contributor to the Chatham County Council on Aging.

Following the passing of her husband, Edwards-Boone knew she had to find a way to give back to the Chatham community she has known all her life.

"Early on, I learned that children and older adults were some of my favorite people," Edwards-Boone said. "When I first retired, I was married and my husband was ill. So I spent the first five years of retirement caring for him. He died in 2016, and one of my goals following that was to find my niche in the community. I wasn't really sure where it was."

While the 74-year-old Edwards-Boone — a retired full-time elder in the United Methodist Church — planned to remain active in her church community, taking



Courtesy of the Council on Aging

Neriah Edwards-Boone

on the responsibilities of a smaller congregation wasn't in her plans.

"People kind of ask me, 'Don't you want to take a little church?'" she said. "And I just sort of laugh. There's no such thing as a small church, there's just small pay. Every church, no matter what size, it's full-time because you do basic pastoral ministry and administration for whatever church you have. And in retirement, I didn't want to be tied down like that. I wanted to be free to do whatever God was leading me to do."

Through leg tendonitis, the path of

Edwards-Boone was forged. After completing physical therapy for the condition, she was told about fitness classes at the Western Chatham Senior Center in Siler City. Edwards-Boone began participating, and in time, her tendonitis went away and hasn't returned.

One day, a planned speaker for the Western Center's congregate clients fell through at the last minute. Needing a replacement, Faye Tillman, the WCSC's activities director at the time, turned to Edwards-Boone as a potential substitute.

The word around the office was that Edwards-Boone, now an active member of the Council's Board of Directors, could do just about anything.

"When I went to (Tillman's) office, I asked her, 'What do you want me to do?'" Edwards-Boone said. "She just sort of laughed and said, 'Well, Doris (Western Center receptionist Johnson) said you could do anything!'"

Thus, Edwards-Boone, the daughter of a tenant farmer, began a storytelling ritual — a tradition that would become a monthly ritual at both centers in Pittsboro and Siler City when open.

The subjects were numerous, but the common theme was laughter.

"My goal was to provide some laughter, because laughing is good for us," Edwards-Boone said. "Actually, the wise men in Proverbs say that laughter is a good medicine. And so, it's good for us to laugh. I try to provide some

laughter and provide some inspiration. That's what I did in those stories."

Edwards-Boone is also active around the holidays; she has been putting together the Council's Thanksgiving program since 2018 and serves as mistress of ceremonies for the annual Holiday Variety show. She laments what she sees as a lack of conversation between individuals from different generations.

"We don't have as much honor and respect for older adults as I think we should have, and (as) some other countries in Africa do," Edwards-Boone said. "There's a real reverence and a real respect for age and the wisdom that comes with age. There's something to be said healthwise about keeping active, to keep your brain functioning and keep your body moving. Those are a couple things that help us to live longer. Older people have wisdom that they can pass on to younger generations, and I think that's worthwhile."

Giving a nod to her love of laughter, Edwards-Boone invoked the name of Betty White, the late comic who passed away just 17 days shy of her 100th birthday.

"They contributed right up until their death," Edwards-Boone said. "I laugh and joke, and I tell people I'm going to live to be 100. I know intellectually, that I'm not in control of that. But I'm going to keep working to do something to inspire others as long as God gives me the strength to do that."

Council on Aging extends in-person gathering pause through Feb. 18

From the Chatham County Council on Aging

PITTSBORO — Following consultation with local health officials, the Chatham County Council on Aging will extend the suspension of all in-person activities at the Western Center in Siler City through at least Friday, Feb. 18. At that time, Council leaders will update the plan.

The suspension covers all in-person activities, including

congregate meals, activities and fitness classes. Some fitness and activity offerings remain available via transition to a virtual format during the pause.

The Council's home-delivered meal service (Meals on Wheels) continues on days that Chatham County Schools are in session, and any congregate attendees disrupted by the pause may contact the Council to receive frozen or shelf-stable meals delivered to their home,

or picked up at either the Eastern Center in Pittsboro or the Western Center.

"As much as we would like to reopen our Western Center to people who are fully vaccinated, we are staying the current course to continue our efforts to keep seniors safe and help curb the spread of the Omicron variant," COA Executive Director Dennis Streets said.

The Omicron variant remains prevalent in Chatham

County and within North Carolina as it is easily transmissible even among fully vaccinated persons. Factors that increase the risk of transmission include indoor settings, close proximity to others and inconsistent mask wearing.

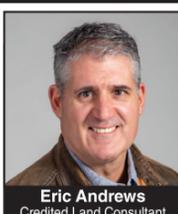
In Chatham County, cases are at record highs and roughly one in four of COVID-19 tests are returning positive. Across the state, more than one of every three tests is coming

back positive. Hospitalizations continue to rise across the state as well.

Streets, in his final week as director before retiring Feb. 1, added: "As much as I hoped to see our participants one more time, we truly believe this temporary pause is in the best interest of all."

For more information on the Council on Aging, call 919-542-4512 or 919-742-3975 or visit the Council's website at www.chathamcoa.org.

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- 000 Jim Gilliland Road (18.598 Acres)
- 1431 NC 42 Hwy (23.26 Acres)
- 8457 Pike Road (22.43 Acres)
- 3097 N NC 87 (2.845 Acres)
- 0 Caviness Town Road (7.41 Acres)
- 0 Pleasant Hill Church Road (90.788 Acres)
- 69 Hazelwood (.62 Acres)
- 59 Colonial Trail (.476 Acres)
- 0 Diane Street (9.21 Acres)
- 3095 N NC 87 (2.269 Acres)
- 2453 Marthas Chapel Road (2.052 Acres)
- 419 Hickory Pond Road (3.208 Acres)
- 435 Hickory Pond Road (2.72 Acres)
- 275 George Brooks Drive (184 Acres)
- 0 NC 42 Highway (10.89 Acres)
- 0 Jim Gilliland Road (64.882 Acres)
- 218 Pete Thomas Road (109.11 Acres)
- 0 Roselle Road (46.2 Acres)
- 323 Patterson Drive (5.46 Acres)
- 106 Caley Wilson Road (2.185 Acres)
- 0 Pete Roberson (61.21 Acres)
- 180 Thompson Street (.30 Acres)
- 1562 Hadley Mill Road (15.489 Acres)
- 0 Stone Street (50.72 Acres)
- 1604 Bonlee School Road (110.49 Acres)
- 720 Hamlets Chapel Road (.69 Acres)
- 1447 Old US1 (.870 Acres)
- 0 Chicken Bridge Road (10.051 Acres)
- 00 Manns Chapel Road (49.41 Acres)
- 2328 Andrews Store Road (24.385 Acres)

LAND (Representing Buyers) 7 Units

- 00 Quakenbush Road (46.2 Acres)
- 27 Mt. View Church Road (4.04 Acres)
- 0 Hawkins Avenue (9.7 Acres)
- 0 NC 42 Highway (10.89 Acres)
- 38 Wade Bright Road (46.204 Acres)

COMMERCIAL (Representing Sellers) 3 Units

- 0 Roselle Road (46.204 Acres)
- 720 Hamlets Chapel Road (.69 Acres)
- 219 East Street (Pittsboro)
- 45 West Street (Pittsboro)
- 175 East Salisbury Street (Pittsboro)

COMMERCIAL (Representing Buyers) 3 Units

- 58 Buffalo Lake Road (Sanford)
- 45 West Street (Pittsboro)
- 175 East Salisbury Street (Pittsboro)

RESIDENTIAL (Representing Sellers) 19 Units

- 22 Sycamore Lake Road (Siler City)
- 1624 Hadley Mill Road (Pittsboro)
- 11 Crosswinds Estates Drive (Pittsboro)
- 168 Culberson Drive (Siler City)
- 570 Abeyance Road (Moncure)
- 2221 Brisbayne Circle (Raleigh)
- 219 East Street (Pittsboro)
- 427 Fenton Place (Charlotte)
- 52 Gentle Winds Drive (Pittsboro)
- 1475 Hoyt Scott Road (Bear Creek)
- 550 Calle Lane (Bear Creek)
- 3871 S. Plank Road (Sanford)
- 117 Foxwood (Sanford)
- 76 Millbrook Drive (Pittsboro)
- 5144 Rives Chapel Road (Siler City)
- 200 Valley View Lane (Pittsboro)
- 1822 Chandellay Drive (Durham)
- 5631 Swanns Station Road (Sanford)
- 4283 NC Highway 902 (Pittsboro)

RESIDENTIAL (Representing Buyers) 8 Units

- 1812C New Garden Road (Greensboro)
- 73 Dairymont Drive (Pittsboro)
- 40 Pinehurst Lane (Siler City)
- 168 Culberson Drive (Siler City)
- 427 Fenton Place (Charlotte)
- 4513 Bumphus Road (Chapel Hill)
- 107 Hawks Spiral Way (Pittsboro)
- 85 Herndon Creek Way (Chapel Hill)

PROPERTIES CURRENTLY UNDER CONTRACT

LAND (Representing Sellers) 6 Units

- 13120 Strickland Road (16.25 Acres)
- 0 Pearleman Teague Road (23.1 Acres)
- 45 The Whites Way (5.61 Acres)
- 00 Roberts Chapel Road (123.870)
- 0 Hamlets Chapel Road (42.805 Acres)
- 18 Pearleman Teague Road (2 Acres)

LAND (Representing Buyers) 2 Units

- 0 Pearleman Teague Road (23.1 Acres)
- 45 The Whites Way (5.61 Acres)

Residential (Representing Sellers) 3 Units

- 729 Hope Hills Drive (Siler City)
- 1429 Van Thomas Road (Pittsboro)
- 1136 Sanford Road (Pittsboro)

Residential (Representing Buyers) 2 Units

- 6490 Snow Camp Road (Snow Camp)
- 729 Hope Hills Drive (Siler City)

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www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKxBsSutQU



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OBITUARIES

GENE KLEIN HARRIS SR.



Gene Klein Harris Sr., 64, of Goldston, went to his heavenly home on Friday, January 21, 2022, surrounded by his family at his home.

Mr. Harris was born in Lee County on May 13, 1957, the son of Edward Milton Harris Jr. and Evelyn Esther Klein. Gene was a member of the Goldston United Methodist Church, and sang in the Church Choir. After graduating High School, Gene received his Bachelor's Degree from Guilford College in 1979. He served

as a fireman for 44 years with the Goldston Volunteer Fire Department, later being elected as Chief. Gene spent his working years as Magistrate Judge, serving for 32 years, from 1982-2014 before retiring. He was also an owner/operator of a long distance trucking company from 1979 to 1982, with his CB handle "Coyote." Gene was an Eagle Scout, and was very active with the Boys Scouts. He loved his family, especially his grandchildren who called him "HiPa."

He is survived by his wife of 31 years, Linda Moses Harris; son, Gene Klein Harris Jr. and wife Karla; daughter, Morgan Klein Walters and husband Josh; grandchildren, Ava Klein, Claybourn and Harris Walters, and Ryleigh and Caroline Harris; brother, E. M. Harris III and wife Pam Harris; sister, Camille Cunnup and husband Tim; and five nieces, Jenny, Allison, Brittany, Katlyn and Hannah.

Mr. Harris will lie in repose from 12 to 5 p.m. on Wednesday and Thursday, January 26 and 27, 2022, at Smith & Buckner Funeral Home, 230 N. Second Ave., Siler City. The family will receive friends on Thursday, January 27, 2022, from 5 to 7 p.m. at Smith & Buckner Funeral Home. The funeral service will be held at 2 p.m. on Friday, January 28, 2022, at St. Luke United Methodist Church, 2916 Wicker Street, Sanford, with Rev. Lucas Nelson and Rev. David King officiating. Burial will be at the Goldston Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Goldston Volunteer Fire Department, or the Goldston United Methodist Church Choir Fund.

Smith & Buckner Funeral Home is assisting the Harris family.

Online condolences may be made at www.pughfuneral-home.com.

DAVID EVERETTE CLARK



David Everette Clark, age 73, of Goldston, N.C., died Friday, January 21, 2022, following a brief illness.

David was born in Lee County on March 26, 1948, to the late Everette and Nathel Clark. He was also preceded in death by his wife of 29 years, Deborah S. Clark and his son, Michael Clark.

David is survived by his daughter, Loretta Keily and husband Greg; stepdaughters, Lisa Sanders Long and husband Randy, Lori Ann Jasper and husband Matt, Kelli Sanders Martin and husband Jason; sister, Carolyn Teague and husband Reid; brother, Ronald and wife Dawn; grandchildren, Jessica Haithcox and husband Rickey, Kendall Seagroves and significant other Jarvis, Mike Clark and wife Cheyenne, Damien Clark; step-grandchildren, Allison Pate, Kelsey Eddins, Jessie Eddins, Anna Jasper Sipe and husband Jacob, Paige Jasper, Ryan Long, Trevor Long; great-grandchildren, Hunter, Kaylee, Kannan, Kevah, Everette and Anlee; one great-great granddaughter Aminah; several nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be held Tuesday, February 1, 2022, at 11 a.m. at Donaldson Funeral Home & Crematory Griffin Chapel with Pastor Jimmy Talton officiating.

Condolences may be made at www.donaldsonfunerals.com

Donaldson Funeral Home & Crematory is honored to serve the Clark family.

RITCHIE WAYNE 'BUCK' BUCKNER SR.

Ritchie Wayne "Buck" Buckner Sr., 77, of Siler City, passed away on Sunday, January 23, 2022, surrounded by his family at his home.

Mr. Buckner was born in Chatham County on July 16, 1944, the son of Herbert Buckner Jr. and Martha Ethel Moon. Buck was a faithful member of Rocky River Baptist Church. He was a lover of bluegrass music among other things. Buck was excellent with woodworking, and became a self-employed builder over the years. Ritchie was a licensed boat captain and affectionately known as Captain Buck. He loved his family, especially his grandchildren. He was always outside, tinkering, and fishing. Buck was a jokester, always had a smile on his face, and was willing to lend a hand wherever it was needed. In addition to his parents, he is preceded in death by his grandson, Ritchie Wayne "Trace" Buckner III.

He is survived by his wife of 32 years, Beverly Early Buckner; children, Shane Buckner and wife Cheryl of Denver, N.C., Ritchie "Ritch" Buckner Jr. and wife Tammy of Chapel Hill, Heidi Matthews and husband Neil of Siler City; step-children, Mark Tinnin of Pinehurst, and Andrew Tinnin of Snow Camp; grandchildren, Ruby and Olivia Buckner, Anna Claire Buckner, Chase, Chandler and Caroline Matthews; step-grandchildren, Hunter, Houston, Anniston and Alexis Tinnin; and brother, Jan Buckner and wife Paula of Minnesota.

A graveside service will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, January 29, 2022, at Rocky River Baptist Church Cemetery, 4436 Siler City-Snow Camp Road, Siler City, with Rev. Jim Wall and Rev. Greg Burris officiating. The family will also hold a Celebration of Life for Buck at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Trace Buckner Memorial Scholarship, <https://give.unc.edu/donate?p=tbuc>, or to Rocky River Baptist Church, <https://onrealm.org/rockyriverbaptist/-/form/give/now>

Smith & Buckner Funeral Home is assisting the Buckner family.

Online condolences may be made at www.pughfuneral-home.com.

MARGARET HEATH JOHNSON



Margaret Heath Johnson, 73, of Bear Creek passed away on Saturday, January 22, 2022.

A resident of Chatham County, she was the wife of the late Robert "Atlas" Johnson and the daughter of the late John Robert Heath and the late Louise Perdue Heath. In addition to her husband and parents, she was preceded in death by her sisters, Runelle Partin, Annie "Duck" Tripp, Susie "Kat" Elixson and Ruby Phillips; and brothers, Charles Heath

and William "Goo" Heath.

Survivors include her son, James Roy Wheeler Jr. and his wife Cindy of Graham; two grandchildren, Lindsey (husband Garrett) Parks of Pittsboro, and Thomas Wheeler of Greensboro, two great-grandchildren, Carter and Avery Parks; two sisters, Elizabeth "Mutt" Phillips and Annette (husband Ray) Binkley; one brother, John "Hobo" (wife Mary Frances) F. Heath; and many nieces and nephews.

A private family viewing will be held at 11 a.m. at Donaldson Funeral Home, 396 West St., Pittsboro, on Thursday, January 27, 2022.

A graveside service will be held at 2 p.m. at Bynum Methodist Church Cemetery, Pittsboro, on Thursday, January 27, 2022, with Rev. Ray Gooch, officiating.

The family would like to offer a special thanks to The Laurels of Chatham, her caregivers.

Condolences may be offered at www.donaldsonfunerals.com.

ARCHIE DURHAM



Archie Durham, a lifelong North Carolinian and longtime resident of Greensboro, passed away peacefully on January 19, 2022, at 78 years of age after an extended illness.

Archie is survived by his wife, Barbara Dezern Durham; his daughters, Amanda Durham and Alison Durham Harrison and her husband Bradley and their daughters, Savannah and Charlotte. He is also survived by his siblings, Clarice Durham Jones and her husband Roy,

Doni Durham Webster, Ida Durham Pharr and her husband Jimmy, and Franklin Durham and his partner Sue, as well as extended family.

Archie was born in Pittsboro, N.C., on May 11, 1943, to Vernon Durham and Eula Cooper Durham. He graduated from Pittsboro High School in 1961 and spent the next 50 years as a mainstay in the Carolina beach music scene, and was inducted into the Beach Music Hall of Fame on two different occasions. He loved performing, including as a founding member of the Castaways, Black and Blue, the Four Winds, the Originals, and the Holiday band. He was also a member of bands such as the Jokers, the Sabres, and the Tornados.

In later years, Archie expanded his talents, including as a Roy Orbison impersonator at the Barn Dinner Theater and in multiple shows with the Community Theater of Greensboro. He also sang for several years in the gospel group Glory Road. He also checked off a big "bucket list" item by recording three original songs in Nashville.

Archie was a devoted husband, father, and churchgoer. He enjoyed all types of music and instilled his love of it in both of his daughters. A talented musician, he gave freely of his talents, singing at dozens of parties, weddings, and funerals, but most enjoyed the many years he spent as a soloist and member of the choir at Mt Pisgah UMC. He adored his family and was never happier than when gathered around a table with them. He was especially proud of his granddaughters and was overjoyed to be their "Poppa." A kind man who never met a stranger, he will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

A celebration of his life will be held at a later date and details will be posted in the "Remembering Archie Durham" Facebook group at <http://facebook.com/groups/rememberingarchiedurham>.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Arkansas Children's Hospital, One Children's Way, Little Rock, Arkansas 72202.

DAVID WAYNE KELLY

David Wayne Kelly, 63, of Sanford, died Monday, January 17, 2022, at Central Carolina Hospital.

A memorial service was held on Thursday, January 20, 2022, at 4 p.m. at Juniper Springs Baptist Church with Pastor Eddie Thomas and Pastor Scott Yow officiating. A private family burial will be held at a later date.

David was born November 7, 1958, son of the late Oscar Wayne and Rebecca Jo Sharpe Kelly. He was preceded in death by his parents. He was farmer for many years with his family at Kelly Farms.

Surviving is his wife, Tamara W. Kelly of the home; daughters, Hayley K. Loman of Mebane, Kaitlyn Rebecca Jo Kelly of Chapel Hill, Britney A. Ellis of Sanford, and Kerri L. Eikost of Danville, Virginia; son, Joshua W. Kelly of Sanford; brother, Daniel "Buffalo" Kelly of Broadway, and eight grandchildren.

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

LARRY MARSHALL MCAULEY

Larry Marshall (Woot-Woot) McAuley, 54, of Sanford, passed away on January 12, 2022, at FirstHealth Regional Hospital.

Funeral service was held at 1 p.m. Thursday, January 20, 2022, at Christian Faith Ministries.

FEDERICO FERNANDEZ LOREDO

Federico Fernandez Lored, 50, of Sanford passed away on Friday, January 14, 2022, at Central Carolina Hospital.

The funeral mass was held at 12 p.m. on Saturday, January 22, 2022, at St. Stephens Catholic Church with burial following in the church cemetery.

DEBRA (DOUGLAS) PEARSON

Debra Douglas Pearson, 70, of Lillington passed away on Friday, January 21, 2022, at Central Harnett Hospital.

Professional services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home, Sanford.

BARBARA ANN (ALSTON) BRIM

Barbara Ann Brim, 72, of Raleigh, passed away Tuesday, January 18, 2022, at WakeMed Hospital.

Professional services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home, Pittsboro.

LIBBY T. BOGGS

Libby T. Boggs, 89, of Sanford, died Saturday, January 22, 2022, at her home.

Graveside funeral service was conducted at 2 p.m. Wednesday, January 26, 2022, at Juniper Springs Baptist Church Cemetery with Rev. J. Scott Finicum officiating.

She was born in Lee County on August 14, 1932, daughter of the late John Berryman Thomas Sr. and Melva Cox Thomas. She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband of 68 years, Billy Banks Boggs, son, Billy Banks Boggs Jr., sister, Treva Thomas, and brothers, Walter Thomas and John B. Thomas Jr.

Libby retired from Central Carolina Community College after 32 years of service.

Surviving is her daughter, Marilyn Hunter of Raleigh; son, Carl W. Boggs of Sanford; a brother, Clyde Thomas of Sanford; six grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, the family request memorial donations be made to Broadway United Methodist Church or C.A.R.A. (Carolina Animal Rescue and Adoption) in Sanford.

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

NANCY LYNN HALL GODFREY

Nancy Lynn Hall Godfrey, 90, of Sanford, passed away on Saturday, January 22, 2022, at Central Carolina Hospital.

A graveside service was held on Wednesday, January 26, 2022, at 1 p.m. at Center United Methodist Church Cemetery with Pastor Jarrod Davis officiating.

She was born in Lee County on February 3, 1931, to the late John Berryman and Lucy Rosetta High Hall. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Roy Lee Godfrey Sr.; grandson, Randy Godfrey; brother, Bobby Blue Hall and sisters, Ruby Hall Cooper, John Anna Eades and Harriett Lucas.

Survivors include her daughter, Patricia Godfrey Underwood of Sanford; sons, Roy Lee Godfrey Jr. of Lemon Springs, Michael Gray Godfrey of Boone and Glenn Richard Godfrey of Lemon Springs; nine grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren.

Since Mrs. Godfrey received and enjoyed her flowers while living, the family requests that donations be made to a charity of one's choice.

Condolences may be made at www.bridgescameronfuneral-home.com.

DAVID SANDERS

David Sanders, 51, of Sanford, passed away on Sunday, January 16, 2022, at his residence.

The funeral service was held at 2 p.m. Tuesday, January 25, 2022, at Knotts Funeral Home in Sanford, with burial following.

WILMA CHAYNELL MELVILLE

Wilma Chaynell Melville, 65, passed away Sunday, January 16, 2022, at UNC Hospital in Chapel Hill.

The funeral service was held at 2 p.m. Sunday, January 23, 2022, at Mitchell Chapel AME Zion Church, with burial following in the church cemetery.

JOSEPH KENNEDY SCURLOCK

Joseph Kennedy Scurlock, 61, of Pittsboro, passed away Thursday, January 13, 2022, at his residence.

Funeral service was held at 2 p.m. Saturday, January 22, 2022, at Knotts Funeral Home with burial following at Pittsboro Community Cemetery.

See **OBITUARIES**, page A11

CHARNETTA MAE WILLIAMS

Ms. Charnetta Mae Williams, 93, of Sanford passed away on Friday, January 21, 2022, at Central Carolina Hospital.

Professional services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home.

MARLENE EVADNEY MCINTYRE

Marlene Evadney McIntyre, 57, of Sanford passed away on Tuesday, January 18, 2022, at UNC Hospitals in Chapel Hill.

Professional services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home.

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OBITUARIES

Continued from page A10

GEORGIANN DONNA STROMPF

11/25/1930 - 01/15/2022

It is with great sadness, that the children of Georgiann Donna (Waters) Strompf are mourning the passing of “Misty” on January 15th, 2022 at the age of 91. Misty was born in Ridgewood, Queens, N.Y. was the daughter of George and Mary (Abstein) Waters. She is survived by her sister Lucille and husband Salvator Granfort, her four children, Gary and wife Pamela, Richard and wife Ellen, David and wife Philomena and Amy and husband Wally Armstrong, seven grandchildren, Kevin, Joseph, Rachael, Alex, Max, Samantha and Christina, eight great-grandchildren, Donté, Nicholas, Rozlyn, Olivia, Ayden, Dexter, Tessa and Milo, and many nieces and nephews.

Misty graduated from Bishop McDonnell Memorial High School in Brooklyn, N.Y., and began her retail career at Macy’s, Herald Square. It was at Macy’s that she met her future husband, Philip Richard Strompf, who passed away on October 31, 2019. Before having a family, Georgiann started working for AT&T as a Telephone Operator. After Philip returned from Japan, where he was stationed during the Korean War, they started their family. As the children got older, Misty took a job as a bookkeeper for a firm in Wantagh, N.Y.

In addition to her being a loving wife, working mother, caregiver, family historian, she was also a published poet, a voracious reader, and accomplished cook specializing in many Hungarian dishes. Misty’s love of her family was indicative of her caring, loving nature.

After they both retired, they moved to Little River, S.C. They spent their time reading, playing golf and dining out. As they aged, it became necessary to move in with their daughter Amy and son-in-law Wally in Siler City, N.C., and remained there, until they passed.

If you would like to make a donation in Misty’s memory, please donate to one of her favorite charities: The American Diabetes Association, St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital, Wounded Warriors, The North Carolina Food Bank, The Arbor Day Foundation or the Shelter for Battered Woman.

Smith & Buckner Funeral Home is assisting the Strompf family.

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

JERRY CARSON MARSH

Jerry Carson Marsh, 70, of Burlington, passed away Wednesday, January 19, 2022, at his residence.

Professional services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home, Pittsboro.

CAROLYN VERONICA (LEE) BRADLEY

Ms. Carolyn Veronica Lee Bradley, 77, of Newark, N.J., passed away Thursday, January

6, 2022, at the University Hospital in New Jersey.

Professional services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home in Pittsboro.

MAVIS CECILIA KING

Mavis Cecilia King, 60, of Covington, Georgia, passed away on Saturday, January 22, 2022, at Piedmont Newton Hospital in Covington.

Professional services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home, Sanford.

PITTSBORO COMMISSIONERS

Board discusses funding for partnership with Sanford

BY TAYLOR HEEDEN
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — The town’s board of commissioners met Monday evening and addressed the funding of its water partnership with the city of Sanford, which resulted in the delay of a vote to finalize an agreement between the town and Chatham Park Investors.

The Sanford partnership would allow for Pittsboro — along with Chatham County, Fuquay-Varina and Holly Springs — to utilize Sanford’s water facilities to provide drinking water for their own communities. Each of the entities would contribute money toward Sanford’s water capacity expansion project, which would increase its treatment plant’s capacity from 12 million gallons per day to 30 million gallons per day.

Town Manager Chris Kennedy said he has communicated with the prospective partners to decide the best course of action to move the project forward.

“Obviously, our water quality issues are much discussed here in Pittsboro, (but) probably the lesser known evil in that is our water capacity issues,” Kennedy said. “We are seeking to partner with the City of Sanford to assist with both of those.”

Pittsboro currently draws its water from the Haw River, which has repeatedly tested positive for potential human carcinogens, such as PFAS, PFOS and 1,4-Dioxane, following discharges of such slugs from an unknown source in Greensboro.

“The City of Sanford has provided that to us about the quality of theirs being better than the town of Pittsboro’s, certainly their capacity levels are better than Pittsboro’s,” Kennedy said.

The project expansion is estimated to cost \$11.25 million among the partners, with Pittsboro expected to pay around \$1.878 million for its share of the expansion, Kennedy said. The expansion would give Pittsboro three million gallons a day of

In order to pay the \$1.878 million to complete the project, Kennedy and town staff have arranged an agreement with Chatham Park Investors calling for the investors to reimburse the town the total amount of \$1.878 million to ensure they can make use of the expanded capacity.

additional capacity.

Kennedy said this agreement will allow for a more steady and dependable source of water for future residents as Pittsboro continues to grow.

“It is part of my commitment to you to continue to bring projects similar to this so we can bring generational capacities both on the water and sewer side to this board for decision points,” he told commissioners. “The town needs to identify its utility sources as we continue to grow, not only for our residents in the immediate future but for our far distant future as well.”

In order to pay the \$1.878 million to complete the project, Kennedy and town staff have arranged an agreement with Chatham Park Investors calling for the investors to reimburse the town the total amount of \$1.878 million to ensure they can make use of the expanded capacity.

Some commissioners were concerned with making a vote Monday evening on the last-minute agenda item. Commissioner John Bonitz said he wanted a chance to read over the agreement between Chatham Park investors and the town more thoroughly before voting.

“To be clear, I am completely convinced that we need this capacity for water, and we need it not only for the water itself, but for the kind of de facto inter-basin transfer that it will bring us and some additional capacity we hope on our sewer force main,” he said. “There are a lot of good reasons for this, but I do want to take a close look at it and make sure that I understand it completely.”

Town Attorney Paul Messick addressed Bonitz’s concerns by saying this would not be an unfamiliar arrangement for the town of Pittsboro. He said it’s similar to the one the town has in place with Chatham Park

regarding sewage lines throughout the development.

“You’ve got to pay for it somewhere, and it’s either going to come from the fund balance that doesn’t have it, or you are going to have to make some other arrangements,” he said. “This is not debt in the sense that a local government commissioner would be interested in — the Chatham Park part of this is revenue; it’s income for the town.”

Commissioner Jay Farrell said he was ready to approve the agreement, adding that he was worried that postponing the vote could result in further delays in the project.

“I don’t know what two more weeks is going to make on us,” he said. “We’ve been fortunate enough to have Chatham Park to come in here and make this amount of money.”

Commissioner Pamela Baldwin acknowledged the desire of some board members to look over the contract’s specific terms, but ultimately said she was ready to move forward with the agreement.

“This is the only viable option we have in reference to obtaining that additional sewage, so basically we need to go forward with it,” she said.

Commissioner Kyle Shipp voiced his concerns about the board being on the same page, saying all commissioners should have more time to read over the terms fully so everyone can be in agreement.

“I think it is a necessary solution to where we are at,” Shipp said, “but I think it would be good to have that additional time to review after we got it.”

The board tabled the matter and will revisit in on Feb. 14.

Reporter Taylor Heeden can be reached at theeden@chathamnr.com

CHATHAM CHAT | MARK HALL

At CCCC, students eager to improve long-term options with learning

Hall, the college’s Chatham provost, says school prepares community for opportunities to come

As Chatham County provost, Mark Hall serves as Central Carolina Community



Mark Hall

College’s executive administrator in Chatham. A North Carolina native, Hall’s life and career path have taken him all over the state: he’s lived

in Charlotte, Wilmington, Cary, Boone, Raleigh, Sanford, and now Pittsboro. He has a degree in psychology from Appalachian State University and graduate degrees from N.C. State (Master of Arts in English and American Literature; Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Research and Policy Analysis). His career at CCCC began as a part-time adjunct instructor, and his work as a full-time instructor led to a promotion as lead humanities instructor and then to Chatham County Provost — where, among many other duties, he supervises faculty and staff and helps foster partnerships with community organizations, secondary education schools, and county and municipal officials. Hall serves in various positions with a number of civic organizations, including Chatham Hospital, the Chatham Chamber of Commerce, the Siler City Rotary Club and the Chatham Soccer League; he also represents CCCC as part of the Chatham Health Alliance. Hall and his wife have three children, all of whom attend Chatham County schools.

... we think those community members who are taking classes now will be prepared for opportunities coming to our area.

MARK HALL, Central Carolina Community College

It’s a new semester at CCCC. How are things going at the Chatham Campus, particularly as the Omicron variant of COVID makes its mark on all of us?

While the college continues to practice recommended precautions regarding COVID and its variants, students started the semester on time and many started in person. The semester began well, and the students, instructors, and support staff are working together to ensure a successful spring.

Enrollment is down at universities nationally. What’s the enrollment picture for CCCC right now?

The college continues to expand across its service area of Chatham, Lee, and Harnett counties is down about 1% from spring 2021. In Chatham, that decrease means about 20 students aren’t in classes this spring. Considering the low unemployment in Chatham, the college is doing well serving the students who want to develop new skills and to improve their long-term options. In particular, we think those community members who are taking classes now will be prepared for opportunities coming to our area.

Looking back to this time last year, as we approached the one-year mark with COVID, what’s changed for you and for your teammates at CCCC in the past year that you may not have expected or anticipated a year ago?

We are two years into this pandemic, and many changes have occurred at the college and in our communities. Like many organizations, our teams meet much more online than ever and some employees now have partial remote-work schedules.

While pre-pandemic I would not have expected some of these changes, I am not surprised by how the college’s teams of staff and instructors have continued working together to serve the students, each other, and the communities. One observation that does surprise me, though, is how many students want to learn in person despite national discussions that say students like learning in virtual environments. Most of our in-person classes fill early, and we have had to open additional sections to accommodate this demand.

Everywhere you go in Chatham County, businesses have “HELP WANTED” and “HIRING” signs out. And we’ve reported a lot about activity and inquiries in Chatham’s two megasites; there’s a lot of anticipation about new companies and job announcements, which means the employment picture in Chatham is about to get even more interesting. Where does CCCC fit into providing a link between the many

people out there wanting higher, better-paying jobs and employers who are demanding a skilled workforce?

As community colleges have always done, CCCC continues to provide learning opportunities to its community members that will prepare them for current and coming jobs and careers.

Our president (Dr. Lisa Chapman), vice president of workforce development (Margaret Robertson), and our teams have great partnerships with local and regional Economic Development teams as well as relationships with employers in the region.

These relationships allow us to development community members for family-sustaining careers with local employers. When additional employers come to this county and to the region, our college is prepared, and is always preparing, to be the institution that develops people and connects them to employers. This role in our communities is what has impacted workforce and community development across N.C. since community colleges were first established many decades ago.

Anything on the horizon in terms of new facilities in Chatham for CCCC?

The college is currently in discussion about a possible technical education building on the campus in Pittsboro that would serve as a regional skill-trades development center for CCCC and for its partners. In

particular, CCCC is investing in the development of builders, electricians, plumbers, truck drivers, and advance manufacturing. While the real estate market might fluctuate, the need for these services will not for several decades to come, especially in our region. People with abilities in these areas will be prepared to have life-long employment in this area.

You were recognized with the Board Leadership Award by the Chatham Chamber of Commerce at its annual meeting not long ago. What did that award mean to you, and why is it important to you to support the Chamber and its work in Chatham County?

I appreciate the trust that the outgoing Chamber board chair, Indira Everett, placed in me over her two years in that position as we worked together to serve the Chamber and its members. She led the Chamber team well, and the board of directors really developed as a focus team committed to serving the small and large businesses in Chatham. The team has its first strategic plan and is set to accomplish much in the coming years.

Representing the College in the Chamber gives me the opportunity to learn from other community leaders and from local employers what the community needs are and what they will be, so that the College can continue doing what it does best: fostering individual, community, and economic development through transformative lifelong learning.

UKRAINE: WHY AMERICANS SHOULD CARE

For we Ukrainians, it's hard to ignore the looming danger from Russia

BY MAIA MIKHALUK
Exclusive to the News + Record

Editor's note: News + Record Publisher Bill Horner III and his wife, Lee Ann, made four trips to Ukraine between 2016 and 2019 through a Christian ministry called International Partnerships-Ukraine, which is based in Boone. Prior to the COVID pandemic, they and other members of their church worked with native Ukrainian students and professionals, helping to teach English, lead workshops and develop relationships with ministry teams in Odessa, Lviv and Kyiv. Maia Mikhaluk and her husband, Nic, direct the work of IP-Ukraine and its team of full-time faith leaders from their home in Kyiv. Maia wrote this story, at Bill's invitation, to address the potential Russian invasion of Ukraine. The Mikhaluks make annual trips to N.C. and have been guests in the home of the Horners on several occasions.

Since coming to power two decades ago, Russian President Vladimir Putin has worked systematically to reverse what he views as the humiliating breakup of the Soviet Union 30 years ago. He's massed troops along Ukraine's border and is demanding that Ukraine be permanently barred from exercising its sovereign right to join the Western alliance, and that other NATO actions, such as stationing troops in former Soviet bloc countries, be curtailed. Foreign governments, including the U.S., are working to respond.

Ukraine is a country in Eastern Europe where the physical geographic center of Europe actually is. It's 2022 and peace in Europe is about to be destroyed.

I am Ukrainian and today, like most Ukrainians, I am preparing emergency backpacks and marking on our Google maps the bomb shelters closest to my home and office.

I can't sleep at night worrying about my eight-months pregnant daughter, who might have to deliver her first child somewhere in the snowy field while running away from bombs because our neighboring country, Russia, is threatening us with a massive invasion — having surrounded us on south, east and north with a 125,000+ army.

The tension grows every day as we anxiously watch Russia-USA negotiations on Ukraine, as we hear of embassies evacuating their people from Kyiv, as every day there



Photo by Maia Mikhaluk

Residents in the Crimea region of Ukraine have suffered for years from Russia's annexation.



Courtesy of Maia Mikhaluk

The author (right) shown during of her 50 aid delivery trips to the Crimean region of Ukraine.



Photo by Maia Mikhaluk

Nic Mikhaluk, the author's husband, comforts an elderly resident during a delivery of food and assistance to the Crimea region.

are reports of schools, shopping centers, airports being evacuated because of false warnings of the buildings being mined. We all say that we made our emergency plans and we are determined to live our lives as normal as possible, but it's hard to ignore the looming danger.

The threat is not new to us, but the scale of possible invasion this time is much bigger. Russia started its military aggression against Ukraine in March of 2014 when it annexed (stole) the Crimean Peninsula — the southern territory of Ukraine. The rest of the world expressed concerns, but other than that, there were no consequences to Russia, which only emboldened President Vladimir Putin to attack Ukraine in the East as well. The last eight years the fight in the Eastern Ukraine continues; it has taken 15,000 lives of Ukrainian soldiers and civilians, and destroyed the region — houses, industry, infrastructure.

My husband Nic and I are originally from that part of Ukraine, and we made over 50 trips together with other



Photo by Maia Mikhaluk

Fighting in Crimea has taken the lives of 15,000 soldiers and citizens and severely damaged the infrastructure in the region.

volunteers to bring food and medications to civilians in the Eastern Ukraine who are stranded in the war zone. It was heartbreaking to see the ruin of so many lives, and now we realize the same is coming to where we live — into the capital of the country at the center of Europe. The consequences to Russia for unlawful actions breaking all the international laws were almost zero, so now Putin is ready to go further, threatening to destroy Ukraine.

Why should Americans care? One of the easiest ways to answer that question is to suggest you watch a new Netflix movie: "Munich — The Edge of War." The parallels will be hard to miss as history is repeating itself in front of your eyes. Evil, ambitious, power-hungry men like Hitler and Putin will keep on their evil deeds as long as the world will allow. In the beginning of the movie, British Prime



Photo by Maia Mikhaluk

Nic Mikhaluk, the author's husband, comforts an elderly resident of Crimea during a delivery of food and assistance to the region.

Minister Neville Chamberlain addresses the nation in his radio speech: "How horrible and fantastic it is that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas masks here because of a quarrel in a faraway country

between people of whom we know nothing."

Maybe that's how you feel about Ukraine. But keep in mind that this is not just some

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A DIPLOMAT'S PERSPECTIVE

Russia's encroachment in Ukraine means U.S. must do the right thing

BY BOB PEARSON
Exclusive to the News + Record

Editor's note: the News + Record asked retired diplomat and Chatham resident Bob Pearson, who served under 11 Secretaries of State and six presidents, for his perspective on the crisis in Ukraine. Here's what he shared.

No one can deny the stark reality that the Russians might invade the independent country of Ukraine. The irony is that the independence of Ukraine was in fact fully supported by Russia's own decision in 1991 to recognize Ukraine as a separate state.

Now Putin wants that decision reversed. Putin is an arch Russian nationalist whose long term goal is to re-establish Russian domination not only of Ukraine but of the other independent countries and NATO members of eastern Europe, ranging from the Baltic states through Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Russia

That is (Putin's) real aim — to destroy the Western alliance and separate Europe from the U.S.

BOB PEARSON, retired ambassador; diplomat

has a principle running back hundreds of years — that it must control its neighbors whatever their own wishes because Russian security comes first, last and always.

The deep divisions in the United States that undermine our self-confidence and the European uncertainty about how to deal with Russia and concern over U.S. resolve have given Putin his opening. He knows the U.S. doesn't want to go to war over Ukraine. He also knows that if he can succeed in retaking Ukraine or forcing Ukraine to switch its loyalty from the West to Moscow that he can begin to undermine NATO itself by playing on fears Moscow will generate about NATO's commitments.

That is his real aim — to destroy the Western alliance and separate Europe from the U.S. What happens with Ukraine is also the first step in his long-

term strategy to intimidate the West into accepting Russian political and territorial designs for Europe.

That means this is a "Munich" moment for the U.S. and Europe, as Maia Mikhaluk has written on this page. It could not have come at a more difficult time for us, but we have no choice. Letting Russia undermine NATO would be a strategic failure of the first order for the United States. And, yes, we still have China to face and deal with.

With a lifetime of diplomatic challenges in my own career, and seven years serving at NATO headquarters, I know that this challenge could be handled short of war if Russia agrees. There are a number of ways to improve the sense of security for all parties if there is the time and commitment to do so. We don't have to give in to Russian demands, and we have ways of addressing the Russian demands about NATO enlargement beyond its current boundaries.

Appeasement talk about how we went too far east after the Soviet Union collapsed is not helping us. I served at NATO or on Secretary of State James Baker's staff during the Soviet Union collapse, the reunification of Germany, and the first wave of expansion of

NATO. Europe "whole and free" was our goal, and we achieved it. It was a remarkable victory for freedom and democracy.

The U.S. made no promises to Moscow about moving east, though that was clearly what the Russians would have liked. They've now created their own myth of political history to make up for their failure to maintain an empire based on dictatorship and force. There are going to be tough times ahead for Americans. I truly hope we don't miss the chance to do the right thing.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: W. Robert Pearson was an innovative diplomat, leader and crisis manager at the top levels of the U.S. government. He was U.S. ambassador to Turkey and completed a 30-year career in 2006 with the Department of State as director general of the Foreign Service. He is a frequent writer and speaker on diplomacy, foreign policy, Turkey, NGOs and development, and served under six presidents (four Republican and two Democratic) and 11 secretaries of state. He lives in Ferrington Village with his wife, Maggie, who also worked as a diplomat and served as a senior foreign service public diplomacy officer from 2000 to 2006 period.



BOB PEARSON

4th annual Sing and Play student musical competition set for February

From JMArts

SILER CITY — Sing and Play '22, the 4th annual musical competition for students from elementary through high school, returns after a one-year pandemic hiatus with auditions and its popular showcase concert set for next month at Jordan-Matthews High School in Siler City.

Instrumental and vocal acts will compete for a \$50 prize awarded for the best performance in each of three age categories — elementary, middle school and high school. Acts may be individuals or ensembles of up to four people, with all performers being full-time students in a North Carolina public, private or home school.

Auditions will be held by appointment at Jordan-Matthews from 3:45 to 5:45 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 8, when a panel of judges will select four to six acts in each age category to perform in the competition. Each act selected during auditions must pay a \$10 registration fee to enter the competition. Individuals and ensembles wanting to audition must register online by Tuesday, Feb. 1.

The Sing and Play Showcase competition concert take place at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 24, in the Jordan-Matthews Auditorium. Immediately after the performances, winners will be selected by audience vote. General admission is \$5 per person and includes one vote in each category.

An overview of the competition — including rules and a link to the registration form — is available online at jmartarts.org.



Photo courtesy of Chip Pate

Luz Borraro of Chatham Charter School took top prize at Sing and Play '20 with her instrumental and vocal performance of 'The Chain.'



Photo courtesy of Chip Pate

Winners of Sing and Play '20 celebrate with master of ceremonies Lindley Andrew. Selected as winners by audience vote were, from left, Luz Borraro of Chatham Charter School, Ari Carrillo Ibarra of Chatham Middle School and Oliver Vang of Moncure School, pictured with Andrew. The competition was not held last year because of the pandemic.



org/s/JMArtsSingAnd-PlayRules2022.pdf.

Sing and Play is a fundraiser for JMArts, the Jordan-Matthews Arts Foundation, a nonprofit created to provide what student artists need to excel.

Money raised by the competition will be used by JMArts for educational projects, including its annual New York Arts Adventure. Scheduled over spring break, the educational trip to New York City gives a group of upperclass musicians, actors and visual artists an opportunity to explore one of the world's great cities, experience the



Photo courtesy of Chip Pate

Chatham Middle School performer Ari Carrillo Ibarra won the middle school division at Sing and Play '20 with her rendition of 'Take Me to Church.'

very best in the arts and gain new perspectives and experiences that will influence their lives and work. Several world-class actors, musicians and critics will meet with JM

artists during the five-day adventure.

More information about JMArts and other events scheduled for this season is available at jmartarts.org.



Photo courtesy of Chip Pate

Oliver Vang of Moncure School performed 'Into the Unknown,' which earned him the elementary division title at Sing and Play '20.



Photos by Maia Mikhaluk

The nation of Ukraine — formerly a part of the Soviet Union — has a long history of conflict with Russia, which has inflicted incredible suffering on Ukraine's people.

UKRAINE

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local conflict; it's not only Ukraine that Putin wants to take over. I don't want to sound too dramatic, but if you really try to understand what goes on not just on the surface, but the deep underwater currents, you will see the crisis is a struggle over the future world order.

Putin claims that Ukraine should be in its sphere of influence; they want the right to veto Ukraine joining NATO or any western alliance. These demands violate the right of an independent country to define its own foreign policy. If Russia is allowed to start establishing its spheres of influence, it will show to China that they can do the same in the South China Sea. This might open a Pandora's box.

And it's not only about territory and power, it's about ideas and values. In 1917 U.S. President Woodrow Wilson talked about "making the world safe for

democracy." In 2022, Putin is determined to make the world safe for autocracy.

Why should Americans care about what is happening in Ukraine? Because it's not only future of my children that might be getting determined here, but also the future of yours. Will we allow Putin and Xi to reshape the world?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Maia Mikhaluk works in Ukraine in a Christian ministry that is focused on planting churches. Together with her husband, Nic, she has been leading a volunteer group that is delivering humanitarian aid to the war zone in Eastern Ukraine. She is also a professional photographer, and since Ukraine's Revolution of Dignity in 2013 and the start of Russian aggression in 2014, she has been sharing with the world what is happening in her country through her photo reports in various international media. She can be reached at mmikhaluk@yahoo.com.



Photo by Maia Mikhaluk

Many children who live in Crimea have known nothing but suffering, thanks to Russia's annexation of the region. Now Russia is threatening the entire nation of Ukraine.

GIVE BACK | MOUNTAIRE FARMS



‘One of our primary motivations is the joy in giving back and changing lives for the better’

Describe your give-back program

Mountaire Cares is a program that best describes who Mountaire Farms is as a company. The towns, counties and states where we live and work are an integral part of who we are, and Mountaire Farms is committed to being good neighbors. Through volunteer efforts, Mountaire strives to make a difference in our communities. Our charitable giving helps reinforce all the work local nonprofit organizations and charitable groups do, and through community leadership, our team works hard to give back.

From the Little League to the Siler City Fire Department, Mountaire Farms has a long history of helping our communities thrive. One of our primary motivations is the joy in giving back and changing lives for the better — it’s the reason we do what we do.

Our signature give-back program every year is our Thanksgiving for Thousands event where we pack 5,000 boxes with a complete meal for a

family of four. It includes a Mountaire roaster chicken, corn, green beans, stuffing, gravy and cranberry sauce. It even includes a dessert — brownies. We pack it with love and partner with local churches and non-profits who deliver them to families in need.

We also work with local food banks to supply chicken on a monthly basis to many local groups.

What motivated you to give back and spurred you into action?

Food is a basic need, and as a food production company, we’re in a unique position to help. As a privately-owned company, Mountaire Farms is dedicated to giving back.

Our Mountaire Cares program was created to funnel that help directly to the people who need it the most, whether that’s chicken for a local fundraiser, financial help, or volunteers to help get something done.

As the largest private employer in Chatham County, we want to build strong partnerships with organizations that already exist and make a difference in the community. By establishing a working relationship with dozens

of organizations in the surrounding community, Mountaire Farms works with organizations and nonprofits who know exactly who and how - to help in the community.

Any memorable experiences to share?

The partnerships that we built during COVID have continued to be important to us as we’ve moved through the various stages of this pandemic. When the vaccine became available, we worked with local pharmacies to come on site and vaccinate our workforce. We’re grateful to so many groups who have helped us fight this virus every step of the way.

Our truckload sales really made a difference for so many people in our community who needed food. Our first sale happened in our employee parking lot and so many people showed up we caused a traffic backup in town. We then moved to St. Julia’s Catholic Church because that location offered a much better solution to route traffic. But soon, even those sales had traffic backed up all the way to Highway 64. But throughout, everyone was just so happy to be

able to find chicken and buy it at an affordable price — mostly at \$1 a pound. We had great cooperation from the Chatham County Sheriff’s Department and all the non-profits we partnered with.

How can our readers support you and your program?

We’re always looking for talented people to join our team, and Mountaire offers a variety of jobs from engineering to IT to health care. So, if you want to support our company, come join our family today. You’ll be glad you did!

How can our readers get involved?

We’re expanding our Thanksgiving for Thousands program in Siler City to Easter this year and we’re always looking for community partners who know where the need is. We pack a complete meal for a family of four in every box and give them away to local groups. If you know of a church or a non-profit that wants to receive meal boxes for families in need, reach out to our Community Relations team at sduncan@mountaire.com.

WINTER

Continued from page A1

ice and freezing temperatures, which may portend a “busy season for us,” according to Steve Newton, Chatham’s emergency management director.

Charged with protecting Chatham residents and visitors, Newton’s department works to mitigate and respond to any potentially “impactful weather” — be that hurricanes in the summer or ice storms in the winter.

“If it’s a dusting of snow, we’re not terribly concerned, you know; we’re monitoring, but we’re not terribly concerned about it, because it doesn’t affect traffic and people’s ability to get home,” he said. “Does it affect their ability to access food and resources? And most importantly, does it affect their power? We really don’t see that until a very heavy accumulation of snow, but more importantly, ice.”

According to Newton, the most dangerous situations brought about by winter weather usually begin to arise once the county accumulates over a tenth of an inch of ice, approaching a quarter, plus several inches of snow.

“[That’s when] we start to get into more power outages, trees down, things like that,” he said.

When ice storms knock out the power, Newton and his department often see people struggle to keep warm, stay safe and ironically, avoid fires.

“If (people) have lost power at home, if they don’t have a good plan for how are they going to stay warm — whether they retreat to a certain room and just try to keep that one room warm — we will see people pull in charcoal grills,” Newton said, “and then we have carbon monoxide poisoning, especially as you get several days into it.”

Bad ice storms might also knock down power lines, transformers and trees near or onto homes, which could then catch fire once the power turns back on. And of course, the county has to deal with slick roads and black ice — conditions which can both strand travelers and impede medical emergencies.

“We see more on the interstates where we’ll have large numbers of people that the cars come stranded, and then they may have to effect rescues on the highway,” Newton said. “... We try to find four-wheel drive vehicles, we’ll leverage National Guard and Humvees and LMTVs [Light Medium Tactical Vehicles] ... the large military transport vehicles

just perform better in those conditions.”

In other extreme weather conditions, people may seek shelter for warmth and electricity, especially households with members dependent on medical equipment like oxygen concentrators. But COVID, of course, has made that a bit more difficult.

“In the course of the last two years, we also have to weigh in: what is the lesser of two evils?” Newton said. “You know, our traditional route would be we’d open up a shelter or warming center at a facility that has a generator, and everybody can be safe there. But with COVID being ongoing, it still may not be the safest option to bring those people together.”

So, how do they prepare for such situations? First things first — gather information, and then disseminate it to county departments, public safety agencies, community partners and the public days before the storm even arrives.

Usually, Newton said, his department will receive notice three to five days in advance that a storm may be coming. From there, staff begin to monitor the forecast and participate in weather briefings with the U.S. National Weather Service in Raleigh as well as preparedness briefings with N.C. Emergency Management’s central branch office.

Then they’ll distribute that information. Besides a long list of community partners, Chatham Emergency Management maintains a joint Facebook page with the county’s 911 emergency communications department (username: @Chatham911).

“Some good portion of our effort days into an event like (an ice storm) is pushing out information of the do’s and don’ts as best we can,” Newton said. “Ideally, we push that out several days prior before people lose their ability to charge their phones, things like that.”

A lot of that information is in Spanish, too — something, Newton added, that the department has been working to improve. About 13.6% of Chatham’s population is Hispanic, according to the 2020 U.S. Census.

A few days ahead of both winter storms, Chatham Emergency Management’s Facebook page published graphics with general safety and forecast information in English and Spanish, the latter of which comes primarily from the state’s emergency management department.

During and after storms, however, it’s a little different.

“We still are challenged

with, you know, if I have new unique information that I’m pushing out right now, I don’t have a reliable thing in place that allows me to immediately translate (it) where I would feel comfortable with it,” he said. “We’re not going to use Google Translate just to push something out and it be wrong.”

In such situations, organizations like Siler City’s Hispanic Liaison will often pick up and translate such alerts; other times, county translators will turn the news around and department staff will send out the translated alerts some time after they released the information in English.

“(Another) challenge for us is making sure that it reaches that community,” Newton said. “... most of the stuff on really all of our Facebook pages tend to be in English, and so, they’re probably not followed by somebody with limited English proficiency or (who) just feels more comfortable speaking Spanish.”

‘Have it in place’

About a day or two before a storm’s expected to arrive, department staff begin moving trailers of equipment into place, including fixed or portable generators, light towers or other sheltering tools.

“Ideally, we’ll have it in place, whether we even think that we’ll use it or not,” Newton said. “We just try to preposition it, so we’re not having to struggle with it during the actual storm itself.”

Should the need arise, Chatham Emergency Management and the American Red Cross have identified a list of buildings across Chatham County which can act as shelter in severe weather.

“Whether it’s our senior centers or a school, in general, we would announce that day which facility and what time it would open,” Newton said. “But usually, before the storm, we have some idea of which facilities we think we’re going to use, and so that’s where we’ll stage equipment.”

During and after the initial storm, the department will continue to share “actionable” information about road conditions and other hazards via Facebook and sometimes their alert system called “ALERT Chatham,” which people can sign up for at <https://bit.ly/35aF30u>.

“Then we’ll ride it out until impact,” Newton said, “and ... once impact happens, we do whatever we need to do to try to get back to normal.”

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

5 tips to stay safe during severe winter weather

BY VICTORIA JOHNSON
News + Record Staff

Whether it’s power outages, freezing temperatures or icy roads, winter storms can put people in dangerous situations — and that’s why it’s always best to be prepared.

Ahead of last week’s second snowy forecast, we asked Chatham County’s emergency management director, Steve Newton, about how people can best keep themselves and their families safe during bad winter storms. Here’s what he recommended:

Create a family communications plan.

Bad winter storms can make roads unsafe for driving, strand travelers and — in extreme cases — knock out power, internet and telephone service for prolonged periods of time. Families might not be together when such weather hits, so it’s a good idea to have an emergency communications plan prepared just in case.

“Know how to communicate with each other,” Newton said, “(and) have a plan that, you know, ‘If I can’t get home, this is where I’ll be. This is where I’ll be safe.’”

Prepare an emergency supplies kit.

Severe winter storms can strand people in their homes or other buildings for days or even weeks, so make sure you maintain an emergency supplies kit.

“What do you need to survive on your own for at least 72 hours, if not more?” Newton said. “During winter weather, that may include having rock salt, sand and snow shovels ... heating fuel, kerosene, something.”

The National Weather Service advised that people include these items in their emergency home kits:

- a flashlight and extra batteries
- a battery-powered weather radio and portable radio to receive urgent information
- water and extra food that doesn’t require cooking or refrigeration, such as dried fruits or nuts
- extra prescription medicine
- first-aid supplies
- heating fuel, plus an emergency heat source like a fireplace or wood stove
- fire extinguisher and a smoke alarm

Have a plan for staying warm if the power goes out — and make sure it doesn’t do you more harm than good.

Bad winter storms can knock out your power for days, especially if they bring large amounts of snow and ice. So, Newton recommended, prepare a plan for keeping warm if your power goes out.

In this situation, he added, a lot of people use kerosene heaters,

which don’t require electricity, charcoal grills or electric generators — each of which carries its own risks if not properly used.

“Make sure you’re using the charcoal grills and even generators well outside the house, not in the garage,” Newton said. “The fumes that they put off are deadly. For prolonged power outages, almost invariably, we see some cases of that, or somebody has carbon monoxide poisoning from either a generator, more likely a charcoal grill, placed too close to the house.”

If you lose heat, you and your family can gather into one or several rooms while closing off those you’re not using to conserve warmth, according to the National Weather Service. Other methods to conserve heat include stuffing towels or rags under door cracks and covering your windows with curtains or blinds.

You should also drink non-caffeinated, non-alcoholic drinks to avoid dehydration and eat to provide your body with the necessary energy to produce its own heat. Dressing in warm, lightweight layers always helps, too.

Plan for your pets and animals.

Most animals like the cold just about as much as you do.

Once you hear a storm’s approaching, be sure to stock up on your pet’s food and medicine just in case roads become too slick for driving. Make sure your pet or animal has ID, too, such as a collar with a name tag, in case he or she gets lost in the storm or snow. During the storm, Newton said, you should ideally bring your pets and animals inside.

“If you’re cold out there,” he said, “they’re cold out there.”

Stay informed.

Knowledge and know-how saves lives. Be sure to follow the latest updates about nearby winter storms and weather as well as road conditions.

Chatham County’s emergency management department maintains a joint Facebook page with 911 emergency communications (username: @Chatham911). Besides publishing forecasts and safety tips a few days ahead of an expected storm, staff also share information about local weather impacts, including road conditions, during and after the storm.

“Really the most important thing is just (following) local, reputable sources, and so not necessarily a friend or a family member, but the National Weather Service, local news,” Newton said. “The national news typically doesn’t have the resolution that you need to see, you know, what is the threat to you and your neighborhood? Whereas, your local news will. Just make sure that you’re getting definitive information through them.”

Siler City's Beal turns 100, honored by Gov. Cooper

BY JIMMY LEWIS
Chatham County Council
on Aging

SILER CITY — Spend any amount of time around Irma Beal, and it becomes apparent that she is no ordinary lady.

As Beal moves around her Siler City home with the independence and grace of a person several decades younger, she has a simple, yet compelling story to tell.

"It seems like I'm always busy, but I never get anything done!" she said.

For Beal, work — as in the full-time, 9-to-5 routine — was non-negotiable for over six decades. The last surviving child of 10, she doesn't have a "secret" as to how she celebrated her 100th birthday on Dec. 31, 2021. As a certain professional football coach is apt to say, Beal was just doing her job.

"I've always worked from when I got out of high school up until I was 80 years old," Beal said at her home last week.

Beal's longevity has also caught the attention of Gov. Roy Cooper, who sent the Chatham County native a letter and centennial birthday commendation. The Chatham County Council on Aging held a celebration event for Beal on Dec. 29, 2021, at the Western Chatham Senior Center.

Centennial birthday recognitions from Cooper's office require a request, which was something COA Executive Director Dennis Streets gladly provided.

"When it was brought to my attention that Ms. Beal was soon to celebrate her 100th birthday, I wanted to be sure we could do our part to join the festivities of this wonderful milestone," Streets said. "I was so happy to inform the



Courtesy of the Council on Aging

Irma Beal

governor's office of her birthday and have the governor and his wife send a letter and certificate to honor her as a centenarian."

Although born in Chatham County, Beal moved to New Jersey in the mid-1940s and spent over five decades there, working full-time as a secretary of a trucking company. She returned in 2000 once her sister entered assisted living. Before visiting her sister daily, Beal would stop by the Western Center for lunch and enjoy a congregate hot meal.

From time to time, Beal remains an active driver, taking trips to the grocery store.

Social connections remain key. Beal keeps up with old friends,

including her best friend from New Jersey. They talk twice daily via telephone, and more locally, she exchanges check-in calls with her 87-year-old neighbor.

"I call her every morning to see if she's OK," Beal said. "I call her every night before she goes to bed. She'll call me if she doesn't hear from me, but we've been doing that all the time."

Although Beal can't pinpoint a secret to reaching centenarian status, her mother lived to the age of 94. One piece of advice from mother to daughter still rings true regarding those prized connections.

"I remember her telling me that as long as I see somebody else living, I want to live," Beal said.

NEWS BRIEFS

Carolina Brewery announces Chapel Hill Toffee Stout release date

Award-winning Carolina Brewery will release their popular winter beer, Chapel Hill Toffee Stout, at its brew pub locations in Pittsboro and Chapel Hill on Feb. 9.

This beer, "a perfect, delectable stout," celebrates Carolina Brewery's 27th year in business and salutes the brewery's ongoing partnership with Chapel Hill Toffee. In addition to offering the beer for upcoming Valentine's Day toasts, a portion of proceeds from Chapel Hill Toffee Stout will support Dina's Dynasty Ovarian Cancer Fund.

Carolina Brewery CEO Robert Poitras and Chapel Hill Toffee principals Christy and Mark Graves are all University of North Carolina alumni. Each one of these UNC entrepreneurs had similar plans to pursue small business careers in Chapel Hill and each couldn't be happier to share in such a unique partnership.

"I had the idea a few years ago to do a collaboration with our dark stout beer and their toffee as they pair perfectly together," Poitras said. "I've been a long-time fan of their toffee."

"We have, of course, had mutual respect for each other's businesses as local community members for many years," said Christy Graves and her husband Mark Graves, "but we owe our business connection to the fun trend of sweet stout beers!"

Dina's Dynasty Ovarian Cancer Fund was established in memory of Dina Bray, Christy's mom and Mark's mother-in-law. This fund aims to support UNC Lineberger in developing a reliable screening method for ovarian cancer and providing outstanding care for ovarian cancer patients. When partnering with Chapel Hill Toffee, Carolina Brewery agreed to direct a portion of their proceeds to Dina's Dynasty to create a one-of-a-kind seasonal stout beer using the flavors of Chapel Hill Toffee.

According to Carolina Brewery's press release, the Chapel Hill Toffee Stout is great for desserts, cold winter nights and even snowball fights.

"It's what you love about Chapel Hill Toffee, but in a glass," the announcement read. "Notes of dark and milk chocolate melt from this beer in harmony with delectable caramel sweetness."

Chapel Hill Toffee Stout has an ABV of 6% and an IBU of 20. It will be on draft starting early February at roughly 100 restaurants and bars statewide; the winter beer will be

available for some to-go sales through growlers and crowlers at Carolina Brewery's brew pubs and select Lowes Foods Beardens.

CORA receives \$12,000 from Bayer Fund

PITTSBORO — CORA has received a \$12,000 donation from the nonprofit Bayer Fund in unrestricted funds, which the organization plans to use to feed vulnerable residents facing food insecurity across Chatham County.

According to CORA's press release, research shows that access to nutritious food is the key to a healthy community, where children do well in school, families thrive, and seniors don't face the stress of choosing between food and other necessities.

"Throughout the years, the grants given through Bayer Fund have helped strengthen our communities across the United States," said Al Mitchell, president of Bayer Fund. "We're proud to be able to provide support to develop programs that help combat challenges such as food insecurity, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education and support services to patients and families managing an illness or disease."

Bayer Fund, a philanthropic arm of Bayer in the U.S., seeks to strengthen the communities where Bayer customers and employees live and work by providing funding for food and nutrition, education and community development projects.

CORA serves a diverse community; families, students and the elderly — many of whom thought they would never have to seek food assistance. CORA is committed to addressing hunger and food insecurity at the local level, while establishing new partnerships across Chatham County to ensure that everyone has access to healthy food.

Last year, CORA distributed 1.2 million meals to more than 11,000 individuals.

"Nearly 10% of the residents in Chatham County live in poverty and face food insecurity. Thanks in part to support from Bayer Fund, CORA will continue to provide nutritious food for community members in need," said CORA's executive director, Melissa Driver Beard. "CORA is thankful for support and partnership from Bayer Fund as we work together to create a community without hunger."

—CN+R staff reports

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SILER CITY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioners discuss vaccine incentives, meet Immigrant Advisory Committee

BY TAYLOR HEEDEN
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — Siler City Commissioners discussed the possibility of having a vaccine incentive program for town employees on Jan. 18.

Town Manager Roy Lynch told commissioners that he, along with Nancy Darden, the town's HR director and finance director, had been discussing the possibility of proposing an incentive pay program for Siler City town employees to receive COVID-19 vaccines. The proposed incentive would be funded from the approximately \$2.41 million Siler City received from the American Rescue Plan passed in 2021.

"Many of the local governments have already put these into play within their organizations," Lynch told the board, "and it has helped their rates as a percentage go up."

According to Lynch, 42% of Siler City town employees have received their COVID-19 vaccine by the board meeting on Jan. 18. This number is significantly lower than the county government's employee vaccination rate, which was

closer to 80%.

"We are currently at a much lower rate than many of the municipalities and counties around us," Lynch said. "There are probably many [municipalities] that are at least in the mid-60s to lower 80s, and some jumped from the 40s to the 70s just based on the incentive pay."

The Omicron surge is another motivator for an incentive. Lynch said since the new variant's emergence, town staff have seen an unprecedented amount of COVID-related absences, resulting in staffing issues.

"Since the beginning of January, we have had 21 COVID-related cases with people not necessarily testing positive, but with COVID issues such as exposure," Lynch said. "We are trying to stay on top of it with our COVID-19 protocols."

Under Siler City's current COVID-19 protocols, employees must contact the HR director if they find out they have had a possible exposure to COVID-19 or a positive COVID-19 test. If a fully vaccinated employee is exposed to COVID, they can return to work as long as they

do not become symptomatic, which follows CDC guidance. Unvaccinated employees with a COVID exposure have to quarantine, which can result in increased absences among staff.

"I think this is one of those issues we are always going to have to deal with," Lynch said. "We want to try to take steps now to at least give people an incentive to be vaccinated and let them take it. It would still be their choice, but it has helped in other areas to increase their rates."

Lynch said the incentive pay program would most likely consist of a one-time bonus paycheck after employees complete their COVID-19 vaccinations. Employees who have already received their vaccines would also qualify for the incentive bonus, he said.

Lynch also said there would be a deadline for when employees would have to be vaccinated to receive the bonus, but those details have not been finalized yet.

"There would be a time window in place for people to get inoculated because there's still a month of waiting if you do

the two shots," he said. "We'll have to incorporate that into whatever our timeline is going to look like."

Lynch told the News + Record that Darden, the H.R. director, is still looking at various options for the incentive program. Town staff hope to propose an incentive pay for vaccinated employees during one of the upcoming meetings in February.

"(We're) still gathering information, and we don't have any idea of what it looks like or what our insurance premiums are going to be and if they're going to be tied to any of the vaccination issues that have taken place over the last year," Lynch said.

Other business

Commissioners met with members of the Immigrant Advisory Committee during their regular session meeting on Jan. 18. Siler City commissioners unanimously approved the creation of the committee on June 21 to identify the needs of the immigrant community in Siler City and address them. The board formally appointed the members of the committee

during the its Nov. 15 meeting.

"We've asked the Immigrant Advisory Committee to come to the board meeting to introduce themselves so that the board would know who they are and the committee could meet each of the board members," Lynch said.

Members of the committee were virtually present through the meeting Zoom call. President Hannia Benitez introduced her colleagues and thanked commissioners for installing the immigrant advisory board.

"We all wanted to give you a face to a name you guys have seen," Benitez said. "We are very honored to be able to come before you guys tonight to say a quick thank you for the trust you guys have vested in us to form this initial committee."

To learn more about the members of the committee, you can read the News + Record's breakdown from last week online at: <https://bit.ly/3KIELOQ>.

Reporter Taylor Heeden can be reached at theeden@chathamnr.com.

HONORS

SHERMAN COLLEGE FALL 2021 DEAN'S LIST

Jose Garcia Loyola of Snow Camp has been named to Sherman College of Chiropractic's Dean's List for grades earned during the fall 2021 academic quarter. Dean's List students have achieved a grade point average of at least 3.5 for the quarter. Sherman College is locat-

SOUTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE UNIVERSITY 2021 PRESIDENT LIST

Sarah Fry of Pittsboro has been named to Southern New Hampshire University's Fall 2021 President's List. President's List students have earned a minimum grade point average of 3.7 for the

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

The following area students were named to the Fall 2021 term at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa with an academic record of 4.0 for the President's List or 3.5 or above for the Dean's List:

- Benjamin Rogers of Pittsboro
- Marisa Carver of Pittsboro
- James Brewer of Siler City

BELMONT UNIVERSITY

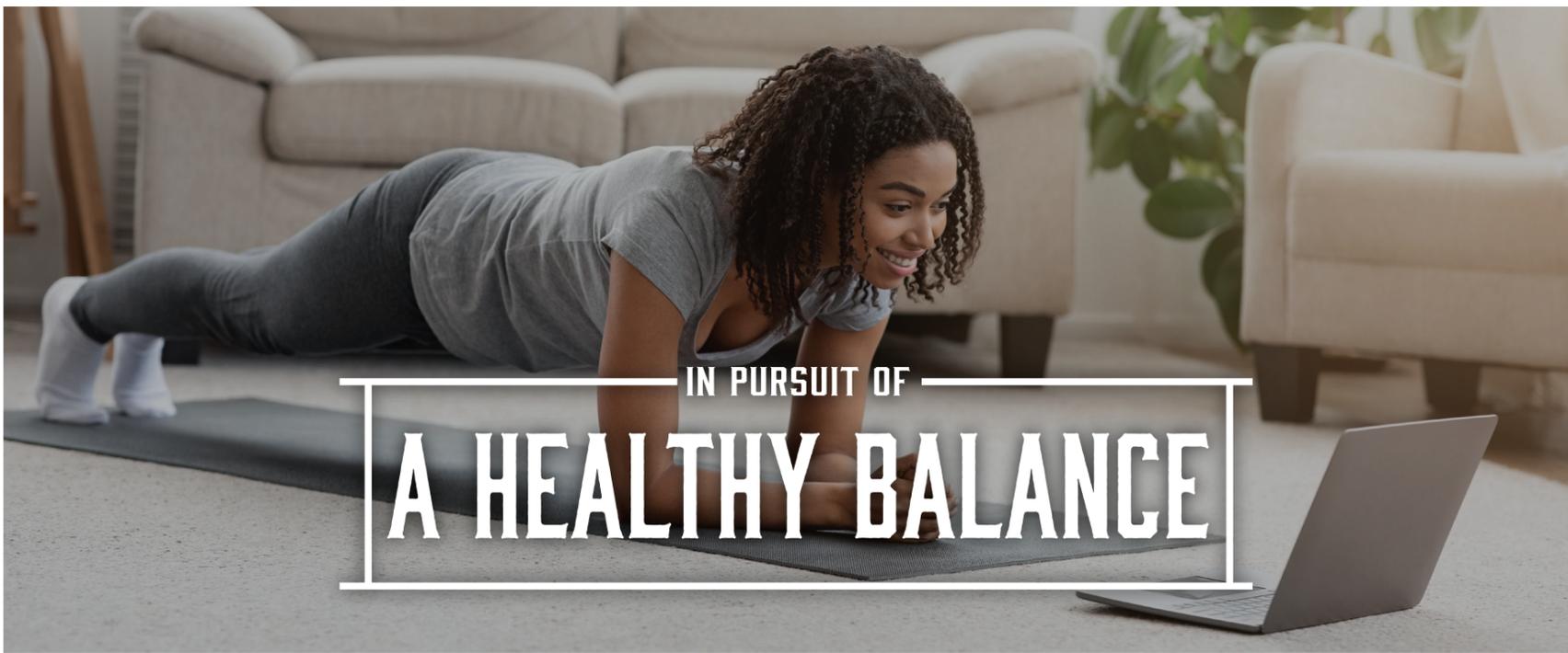
Laura Balan of Pittsboro has been named to the Fall 2021 Dean's List at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee.



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Looking for Healthy and Balanced Living? Find it at Chatham Park in Pittsboro, NC.

More than just a new home development, Chatham Park is a 7,068-acre, one-of-a-kind, live, work, play and learn community that offers all of the conveniences to pursue a balanced approach to life. Here are a few:

Work and Family

Thoughtfully designed floorplans include features such as dedicated home offices and open-living floor plans. Fiber Internet from CenturyLink (now Lumen Technologies) is available to each home within Vineyards at Chatham Park.

Eating and Exercise

Enjoy delicious, healthy dishes from several restaurants in Penguin Place and MOSAIC. The Root Cellar, Marco's Pizza, Mi Cancun and Jersey Mike's Subs are open now.

More than 2,000 acres will be dedicated to parks and open space in addition to over 30 miles of scenic

walking, biking and multimodal trails. Chatham Park dedicated the 10-acre Knight Farm Community Park to the town of Pittsboro in 2021. Construction has started on Paddles, a swim and pickleball amenity opening this spring in Vineyards. And plans are underway for a YMCA.

Art and Science

Chatham Park will transform utilitarian elements into art pieces to create aesthetically pleasing and useable community spaces. Infrastructure elements such as roadways, bridges and stair towers are designed to become art symbols within the Pittsboro community. Street furnishings like bike racks and signage will also be transformed.

Chatham Park provides access to high quality medical care for Pittsboro and surrounding communities. From local primary care and healthcare specialists

to medical facilities such as UNC Health Urgent Care and UNC Rheumatology, there are many state-of-the-art options for your physical health.

A commitment to environmental, economic, and social sustainability has been made by promoting a clean, greener lifestyle. The Chatham Park solar farm spans more than 46 acres, and this 5-megawatt installation generates enough electricity to power approximately 750 homes. There's also a water treatment plant on site - one of only two in the United States.

"Our goal in creating Chatham Park was to make it one of the most forward-thinking communities in the country", said Executive Vice President Vanessa Jenkins of Preston Development Company. "We are proud of the combination of sustainable living, art and science installations, office, and medical facilities as well as entertainment and outdoor activities."

Chatham Park is the perfect place to pursue balanced living for your family.



DISCOVER CHATHAM PARK AT CHATHAMPARK.COM

NORTH MOORE 53, JORDAN-MATTHEWS 48

'It just hurts': Jets fail to fend off Mustangs' fiery 2nd-half comeback



CN+R staff photo by Lee Moody

Jordan-Matthews senior Jacob Carter (12) drives to the hoop during the Jets' 53-48 defeat to the North Moore Mustangs last Wednesday. J-M fell to 2-10 on the season with the loss.

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — Sitting amongst the crowd last Wednesday night was like standing on the brink of a slowly cracking dam.

You knew it was going to burst. It was just a matter of when.

With each blow of the whistle — regardless of the call's correctness or the team it favored — the decibel levels increased.

The same goes for no-calls, big plays, moderate-sized plays and even cheerleading routines.

When something happened, the crowd reacted. And they were loud.

Once the final buzzer

sounded and the North Moore Mustangs (5-5) knocked off the Jordan-Matthews Jets (2-10), 53-48, to complete a 12-point comeback, the Mustangs' visiting crowd erupted loud enough to shatter even the densest of glasses (and strongest of eardrums), while waving goodbye to the stunned, outraged home crowd.

The two groups — the fans, not the players — had been battling throughout the night, hurling boos at one another's cheerleaders, clapping loudly at even the smallest positives — as if they were doing it directly in their opponents' faces — and chanting, screaming and sometimes mocking each other.

Everything about the contest felt like an old-school rivalry

game.

The hatred oozing out of the stands, the physicality at every turn, the never-quit attitude stemming from both benches. All of these pieces meshed together in perfect harmony to create the atmosphere of what appeared to be a storied feud between two schools located just 23 miles from one another.

"I don't know what it is, man," Rodney Wiley, the Jets' head coach, said after the loss. "No matter who we play, we're almost like Duke and Carolina, man, everybody always brings their best game against us. It was a good atmosphere for the fans."

But this isn't a rivalry with annual installments, one

See **JETS**, page B2

A STAR IN THE MAKING

Georgia, Michigan among 7 schools interested in Northwood freshman Gus Ritchey

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — There's an athlete out of Northwood who's drawing interest from top programs across the nation, receiving offers from schools in seven different states — located in just about every corner of the country — including two programs that are fresh off of College Football Playoff appearances this season.

The best part?

He's still a freshman. And, if you don't already, you should know his name.

Gus Ritchey, 16, is entering the second semester of his freshman year at Northwood.

On the field, he's a 6-foot-3, 225-pound defensive end/tight end combo for the Chargers. He's a magnificent run-stopper, an effective blocker and a young staple of a Northwood program looking to bounce back.

In less than a month, Ritchey has gone from just a standout freshman to a legitimate Division I prospect, receiving offers from some of college football's hardest hitters.

On Jan. 2, Ritchey announced via his Twitter account that he'd received an offer from the Oregon Ducks, accompanied by photos of their stadium, uniforms and players: "After a great conversation with coach @KennyDillingham I'm blessed to receive an offer from the University of Oregon."

That was the first of seven offers in a 20-day span.

Since then, he's gotten offers from the Miami (Ohio) RedHawks, Colorado State Rams, Virginia Tech Hokies, Washington Huskies,



Submitted photo

Northwood freshman Gus Ritchey holds up his award from the NextGen All America Camp, The Show, last year.

Michigan Wolverines — CFP semi-finalists — and even the Georgia Bulldogs, the defending CFP national champions.

"It was actually two nights before (the national title game) and I wasn't really expecting that one (from Georgia)," Ritchey told the News + Record over the weekend, minutes after getting off the phone with the RedHawks, who had just

extended him his latest offer. "I was shocked. I was like, 'What is going on?' This team's literally about to play in the bowl game."

While these offers appear to be coming out of the blue, they primarily stem from his participation in the FBU Freshman All-American Bowl in Naples, Florida, on

See **RITCHEY**, page B4



From Delta State sports information

Lusia 'Lucy' Harris, shown in 1977 during her time at Delta State and wearing her Team USA basketball medals.

It's time to talk about The Queen of Basketball

I'm ashamed to admit this.

After more than 24 years of life — and nearly a decade in sportswriting — I just, last week, learned about one of basketball's most iconic figures: Lusia "Lucy" Harris, otherwise known as The Queen of Basketball.



VICTOR HENSLEY
Sports Editor

She was a three-time collegiate national champion, an Olympian with a silver medal, a Hall of Famer and, perhaps most notably of all, the first and only woman to ever be drafted into the NBA.

And, sadly, I learned about her through her death.

On Jan. 18, Delta State University, Harris' alma mater, announced her unexpected passing. She was 66.

"We are deeply saddened to share the news that our angel, matriarch, sister, mother, grandmother, Olympic medalist, The Queen of Basketball, Lusia Harris has passed away unexpectedly today in Mississippi," her family said in a statement. "The recent months brought Ms. Harris great joy, including the news of the upcoming wedding of her youngest son and the outpouring of recognition received by a recent documentary that brought world-

See **QUEEN**, page B2

Even as an NFL hater, this weekend was a lot of fun

I've always had a not-so-secret hatred for the NFL.



MAX BAKER
CN+R Intern

Growing up, my team was the St. Louis Rams, but year after year, they'd disappoint. I never witnessed a winning season. Then, owner Stan Kroenke took my hometown team to California; I still despise him for it.

I've never agreed with how the NFL ignored concussions or the way they seemed to collude to kick Colin Kaepernick out of the league. Something about the way the league is run still feels wrong. However, I still watch all of the games as a sports

fanatic and general fan of the game.

I also obviously love fantasy football. And this weekend may have been the greatest two days of professional football that I've ever seen. All four games ended on a scoring play and even the storylines were incredible.

On Saturday, the Bengals continued their historic season. After a winless playoff drought that lasted longer than my lifetime, they've now won two playoff games and knocked off the No. 1 seeded Tennessee Titans on the road. Hours later, Aaron Rodgers, one of the sport's most controversial figures this season, and his Green Bay Packers were upset by the San Francisco 49ers in a wild and snowy 13-10 finish in Green Bay.

Somehow, Sunday's games were

even wilder. As someone rooting harder for the Rams to lose than I sometimes cheer for my own teams to win, the Tom Brady comeback was epic. After trailing 27-3 in the second half, he magically came back to tie the game before Matthew Stafford quieted all the noise with a beautiful throw to Cooper Kupp to get the Rams in field-goal range. It was heartbreaking, but I had to respect the Rams' short memory and ability to squeak out a win.

I could probably write a column solely about Sunday night's game. The Bills and Chiefs, the league's two most prolific offenses, battled into overtime for a spot in the AFC Championship. After the Bills scored with 13 seconds remaining — already the third score

in the final two minutes — it appeared Patrick Mahomes' magic had run out. But in two plays, he got the Chiefs into field-goal range, sending the game into overtime.

Then, everybody knew the coin toss would determine the winner. And it did. It's probably one of the dumber rules in all of sports. The Bills offense never got a chance to see the football.

The Chiefs won the toss and scored a touchdown to win. Fans on social media were outraged that such a good game could end so anticlimactically. I quietly smiled.

At least some people are joining me in their hatred for the NFL.

Max Baker can be reached at max@chathamnr.com and @maxbaker_15.

CHATHAM COUNTY ATHLETICS RUNDOWN

This week's schedule and last week's results

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
News + Record Staff

Last week, we told you that we had a jam-packed week of sports for you. Well ... we (unintentionally) lied. Winter weather, including two (!) snow episodes, got in the way of last week's slate, forcing the cancelation of all but six sporting events. This week, however, is when we bounce back, complete with some swimming, some wrestling and a whole lot of basketball. Here's this week's schedule and last week's results.

THIS WEEK

Wednesday, January 26

Basketball: Chatham Charter vs. Southern Alamance (women at 6 p.m., men at 7:30 p.m.)
Basketball: Jordan-Matthews vs. Providence Grove (women at 6 p.m., men at 7:30 p.m.)
Basketball: Northwood vs. Western Alamance (women at 6 p.m., men at 7:30 p.m.)
Basketball: Seaforth at Cum-

mings (women at 6 p.m., men at 7:30 p.m.)

Thursday, January 27

Swimming: Jordan-Matthews, Seaforth at Mid-Carolina 1A/2A conference meet, 5 p.m.

Friday, January 28

Track: Northwood at MONDO Elite JDL (in Winston-Salem), 4 p.m.

Basketball: Chatham Charter vs. Clover Garden (women at 6 p.m., men at 7:30 p.m.)

Basketball: Jordan-Matthews at Graham (women at 6 p.m., men at 7:30 p.m.)

Basketball: Northwood vs. Person (women at 6 p.m., men at 7:30 p.m.)

Basketball: Seaforth vs. Chatham Central (women at 6 p.m., men at 7:30 p.m.)

Swimming: Northwood at Central 3A conference meet (at Duke), 6 p.m.

Basketball: Woods Charter men vs. River Mill, 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, January 29

Basketball: Chatham Charter men at Southern Alamance

(Tony Perrou Classic), 3:30 p.m.

Basketball: Jordan-Matthews vs. Chatham Central (women at 6 p.m., men at 7:30 p.m.)

Basketball: Northwood men vs. Seaforth, 7 p.m.

LAST WEEK

Monday, January 17

No events took place due to winter weather.

Tuesday, January 18

No events took place due to winter weather.

Wednesday, January 19

Basketball: The Chatham Charter men thrashed the Triangle Math & Science Tigers, 69-34, to improve to 17-1 on the season. Leading the Knights on the evening were freshman Beau Harvey (21 points, 7 rebounds, 5 assists, 5 steals), junior Aamir Mapp (15 points, 3 rebounds, 5 assists, 1 steal), junior Adam Harvey (13 points, 10 rebounds, 3 assists, 5 steals, 1 block) and freshman Brennen Oldham (11 points, 5 rebounds, 1 assist, 2 steals, 1 block).

Basketball: The Jordan-Matthews women crushed the North Moore Mustangs, 50-21, to improve to 5-8 on the season. Leading the Jets on the night were senior Eillia Wright (19 points, 6 rebounds, 5 assists, 3 steals) and senior Tatyn Siler (17 points, 8 rebounds, 1 block). See game recap in this week's edition.

Basketball: The Jordan-Matthews men fell in a heart-breaker to the North Moore Mustangs, 53-48, to fall to 2-10 on the season. The Mustangs made a fierce second-half comeback, storming back from a 12-point deficit to win the game late. See game recap in this week's edition.

Basketball: The Seaforth women lost to the Durham School of the Arts Bulldogs, 61-54, in overtime to fall below .500 (6-7) on the season. Leading the Hawks on the night were freshman Gabby White (18 points, 6 rebounds, 5 assists, 4 steals, 1 block), freshman Peyton Collins (17 points, 3 rebounds, 5 assists, 8 steals, 1 block) and freshman Sydney

Ballard (12 points, 3 rebounds, 4 steals, 1 block).

Basketball: The Seaforth men handily beat the Durham School of the Arts Bulldogs, 74-49, to improve to 5-5 on the season. Leading the Hawks in the win were sophomore Jarin Stevenson (19 points, 6 rebounds, 2 assists, 1 steal, 1 block) and sophomore Tyshawn Davenport (12 points, 1 rebound, 1 assist, 1 steal).

Thursday, January 20

Wrestling: The Chatham Central Bears defeated the Jordan-Matthews Jets, 24-12, gaining a 4-1 advantage in bouts wrestled.

Friday, January 21

No events took place due to winter weather.

Saturday, January 22

No events took place due to winter weather.

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

JETS

Continued from page B1

where the players know each other well and are engaged in heated battles two or three times per year.

Quite the contrary. Truth be told, you'd have to go back to the first month of the Obama administration to find the last time the Jets and Mustangs faced off prior to this season: Feb. 23, 2009.

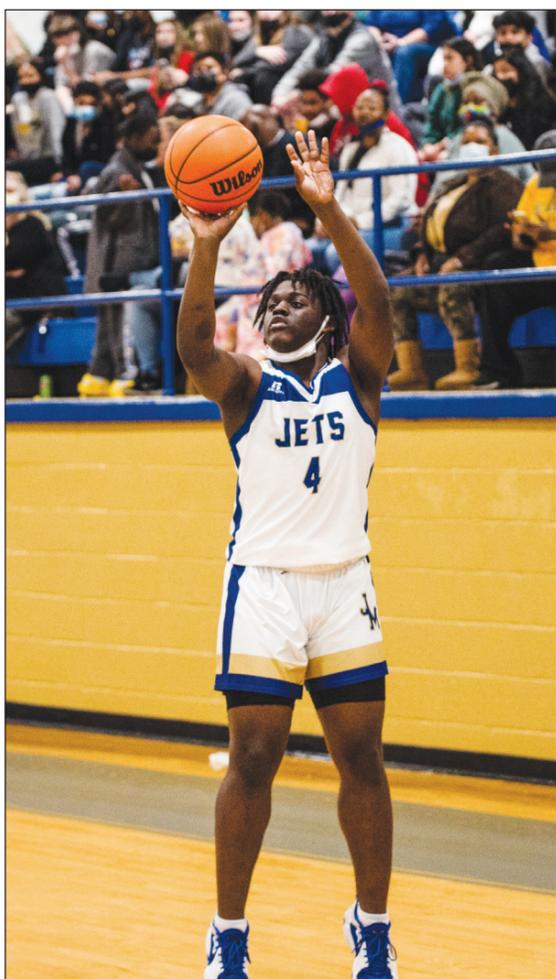
Now, 13 years later, J-M and North Moore are league foes once more in the Mid-Carolina 1A/2A conference. And they're making up for lost time.

Earlier this season, on Dec. 6, the Jets took the half-hour trip to Robbins and eked out a close victory, 54-52, in what was another down-to-the-wire barnburner.

Jets senior Rayshaun Alston downed two free throws with one second left on the clock to seal the win, fending off a fierce fourth-quarter comeback from the Mustangs to give the Jets their first victory of the year.

This time, however, there were no late-game heroics for the white-and-blue.

With 4:50 to play in the fourth quarter, Jets junior Dallas Richardson fought through contact and scored in the paint to give his team a 7-point advantage, 43-36, with



CHAMNR staff photo by Lee Moody

Jordan-Matthews senior Rayshaun Alston shoots a 3-pointer in the Jets' 53-48 loss to the North Moore Mustangs last Wednesday.

J-M having gone on a 9-2 run to start the final period after the Jets had a two-point lead, 34-32, at the end of the third.

From there, North Moore — namely senior Ashton Monroe and freshman Colby Penning-

ton — took over.

The Mustangs drained back-to-back 3-pointers, including one from Monroe, who then stole the ball on the other end, which led to a triple from freshman Colby Pennington on the ensuing

possession.

Suddenly, it was 43-42 and the Mustangs were right back on the Jets' heels.

"Our freshman, Colby, is an amazing, tremendous player that has a lot to learn," Crystal Leenheer, the Mustangs' head coach, said after the win. "And I have three senior captains out there and I think they have just figured out that it's on them ... they're talking to each other and they're feeding off each other."

Less than a minute later, Mustangs senior Javory Wall deflected a pass into the hands of senior Logan Ritter, who promptly scored on the other end to give North Moore its first lead of the game, 44-43, with 3:10 to play.

Pennington would score again not long after, followed by a steal and drawn foul by Monroe, who knocked down one of two free throws for a 47-43 advantage with a little over two minutes remaining.

The Jets didn't score again until the 1:14 mark — a nearly four-minute drought — when senior Colby Daniel hit an and-one jumper from the left elbow to put J-M within four points at 49-45. He missed the free throw, but an offensive rebound by sophomore Kelton Fuquay, followed by a foul and a made free throw, made it a one-possession game with 1:12

left.

But North Moore made three of its six free throws in the final minute to secure the 4-point win, completing the comeback it started in the team's first matchup with the Jets.

"In the first half, we weren't playing as a team, we were trying to do stuff on our own, so mainly at halftime, it was about working as a team to come back," Leenheer said. "And I think our defense kind of fueled that and we finally got it together on offense and worked the ball inside, where we had been saying it needed to go."

As bad as the blown fourth-quarter lead looked for J-M, the game's turning point actually came in the third period.

At the halftime break, the Jets held a 12-point lead, 28-16, and appeared to have all of the momentum, but it vanished in a woeful third quarter offensively where they shot just 22% (2-of-9) from the field, coughed up eight turnovers and only scored six points.

"Coming out of halftime, that's been a problem all year long," Wiley said. "We came out in the second half today and we turned the ball over three straight times and allowed them to get back in the game. ... When we have opportunities to get up on people and actually get some separation, we

choose not to."

For the Jets, who hadn't played since Jan. 7 due to exams and winter weather, this was their third straight game decided in the final minutes.

They're 1-2 in those games, including the three-overtime heart-breaker against Seaforth a couple of weeks ago, where they lost, 70-61.

"It's just disappointing because we play so hard," Wiley said, "and to get in a game like this and not come out with the win, it just hurts. It hurts."

With the loss, J-M falls to 2-10 on the season but is still well alive in the conference at 2-3. The Jets will travel to Burlington for a date with the unbeaten Cummings Cavaliers (9-0, 4-0 in conference), who they took a 77-54 beating from on Dec. 17.

That game is being played after the News + Record's Tuesday press deadline.

"I think we're a whole lot better than our record indicates, but that's what everybody looks at," Wiley said. "My hat goes off to the guys. To come out and play as hard as they did after the hard-fought game at Seaforth ... we're proud of them. We've just got to figure out a way to get a win."

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

QUEEN

Continued from page B1

wide attention to her story."

When I heard the news, I'll admit that I was taken aback.

A sea of questions entered my mind, including, but not limited to:

- A woman was drafted by an NBA team?
- When was she drafted?
- Were the rules different back then?
- Did she ever play a minute in the league? Or score a point? Or even sit on the bench during a game?

But perhaps my most burning question: Why hadn't I heard her name? I imagine there's a good chunk of people reading this that, like me, also hadn't heard of her until now.

So allow me to enlighten you. Harris was born in Minter City, Mississippi, in 1955.

By the time she reached high school, she was a 6-foot-3 phenom her teammates described as "long and tall, but

that's not all," Harris said in a 2021 documentary directed by Ben Proudfoot for The New York Times called "The Queen of Basketball."

She was described as being able to "do it all," blocking shots, getting rebounds and scoring points as she owned the paint no matter who she was playing against.

She went on to play for Delta State in Cleveland, Mississippi, which was a member of the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW), an organization founded in 1971 to govern women's college sports. At that time, the NCAA only governed men's sports.

While at Delta State, Harris averaged 25.9 points and 14.4 rebounds per game as she led the Lady Statesmen to three AIAW titles (back-to-back-to-back) and propelled her team to the forefront of the women's sports world.

"The Macs tried to double and triple team the Statesmen's 6-3 center Luisa Harris, but towering over her opponents, there was no stopping her..." wrote Mary A.

Blackwell, writer for The Daily News Leader (Virginia), of Harris after Delta State's first national title in 1975.

Before Harris was drafted, she made international history during the 1976 Summer Olympics in Montreal — the first to let women compete — becoming the first woman to score a basket in Olympic history in a contest against Japan, which the U.S. ultimately lost.

"Now that's a record that'll never be broken," she said with a smile in the NYT doc.

When she graduated from Delta State in 1977, she said she had planned to start a family after marrying her high school sweetheart, George Stewart, before getting the call that she'd been drafted by the New Orleans Jazz (now the Utah Jazz) with the 137th pick in the 7th round of the 1977 NBA Draft.

That selection made her the first woman to be drafted by an NBA team — Denise Long was selected by the San Francisco Warriors in 1969, but the league voided it — etching her name into

yet another portion of the history books.

But in a surprising move, she opted not to attend the Jazz's rookie camp, expressing uncertainty about her ability to play against male players, along with her speculation that the pick was just a publicity stunt by Jazz General Manager Lewis Schaffel.

"The NBA, I don't regret not going," Harris said in the documentary. "Not even a little bit."

With the WNBA having not existed until nearly two decades later, in 1996, her playing career essentially ended when she rejected the Jazz's offer.

"If I was a man, there would have been options for me to go further and play," she said in the documentary. "I certainly would have had money."

In 1992, Harris — alongside Tennessee native Nera White — became the first Black woman to be inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame for her accomplishments.

Her presenting speaker was Oscar Robertson, the player she grew up

idolizing as a child.

Over the course of her life, Harris earned the titles of pioneer, trailblazer and badass.

When I watched Proudfoot's documentary — and read numerous articles about Harris' story — I felt both inspired and joyful, but also a little disappointed.

It stinks that it took so long for me to learn Harris' name, awe at the storybook life she lived and

realize the impact she had on women's sports as a whole, but especially women's basketball.

And it got me thinking: sports are full of iconic women similar to Harris.

Let's not wait until it's too late to celebrate them.

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



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JORDAN-MATTHEWS 50, NORTH MOORE 21

Jets' full-court press fuels double-digit thrashing in rematch with Mustangs

Seniors combine for 36 points in victory

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — They say it's hard to beat a team twice in a single season.

Jordan-Matthews women's basketball is evidence that's not always true.

On Dec. 6, the Jets earned their first win of the season — and their first Mid-Carolina 1A/2A conference victory — in a nail-biter against the North Moore Mustangs.

By the end of the third quarter, J-M held on to a one-point lead, 40-39, heading to the deciding fourth period.

However, the Jets took flight in the contest's final frame, outscoring the Mustangs, 20-10, en route to an 11-point victory behind 22 points from senior Eillia Wright and 19 from senior Tatyn Siler.

After being hammered by 18-plus points in their first three games, the Jets emerged victorious as they fought and scrapped their way to a win that's since helped them gain their footing in the conference.

But last Thursday, when the Mustangs took their first trip to J-M in over a decade, the competitiveness of the first matchup seemed like ancient history.

Instead of sealing a narrow, late-game win, Jordan-Matthews (5-8, 3-2 in conference) pummeled North Moore (1-8, 0-4 in conference), 50-21, in a game that was truly never in doubt.

"We finally put four quarters together, that's something we've been talking about, just putting a full game together," Lamont Piggie, the Jets' first-year head coach, said after the win. "Just doing the little things: pressuring the ball, hustling for loose balls and carrying each quarter. ... They bought into it today and believed in themselves."



CN+R staff photo by Lee Moody

Jordan-Matthews senior Tatyn Siler (12) drives to the basket for a transition layup in the Jets' 50-21 win over the North Moore Mustangs last Wednesday. Siler had 17 points on the night.

From the jump, it was clear the rematch had a much different feel from the original.

Instead of the Mustangs clutching to a one-point lead, 13-12, after the first quarter — as was the case on Dec. 6 — the Jets dominated the opening period from start to finish.

In the first quarter alone, J-M outscored North Moore, 21-0, pitching a shutout in the game's first eight minutes.

The key to the Jets' hot start: their seemingly unstoppable press.

With each J-M bucket, the Jets did everything possible to make the Mustangs' journey to half court a strenuous one.

And most of the time, they succeeded.

North Moore turned the ball over 14 times in the first period — nearly half of their 32-turnover total — including eight before they even reached mid-court, a direct product of J-M's suffocating press.

"We've been (running the press) all year, but today ... we pretty much mastered it," Piggie said. "Getting to our spots, hustling, taking away the middle, denying the ball, just moving. It has to happen where all five girls come together and that's what happened today."



CN+R staff photo by Lee Moody

Jordan-Matthews senior Eillia Wright (10) fights through contact on her way to the hoop in the Jets' 50-21 win over the North Moore Mustangs last Wednesday. Wright has been described as the team's 'engine' by head coach Lamont Piggie. She had 19 points against the Mustangs.

Wright, who accounts for one-half of the Jets' impressive senior duo, thrived when it came to stifling her opponents in green.

Toward the start of the first period, Wright drained a 3-pointer, then immediately got back into position to guard the inbound pass. Once the ball was thrown in, she stepped in front, stole the pass and put the ball in the bucket with ease.

Then, just a few seconds later, she did it again, stealing the inbound pass and allowing one of her teammates to score.

In a matter of 15 seconds, the Jets' lead went from 1-0 to 8-0, all thanks to Wright's energy and heads-up playmaking.

"Like I've said, she's our engine, she gets it done for us," Piggie said. "She just kind of locked in. I looked at her face and there was a different

(Eillia) today, so I was really happy and satisfied with her. She came to play."

The Mustangs broke their scoreless streak within the first minute of the second quarter with a basket in the paint, but continued to struggle offensively throughout the period, adding just five total points in the half and allowing the Jets to take a 31-5 lead going into the locker room.

If Wright was the focal point for the Jets in the first period, then Siler was just that in the second.

Siler had a field day when it came to getting to the basket, scoring all four of her second-quarter field goals around the rim — including a couple in transition, one of her specialties.

She accounted for 8 of her team's 10 points in the second

frame. "She's getting better and she's starting to see everything — starting to see the offense — like we want her to see it and she's letting the game come to her," Piggie said. "We told them from the beginning that we want to press on defense and we want to get turnovers and run the floor. That's what happens when you run the floor, you get easy points, so she showed up big. She was huge for us."

When it was all said and done, Wright (19) and Siler (17) combined for 36 of the team's 50 points.

If you were looking for the team's leaders, there they are.

North Moore only mustered five points in the third quarter, two fewer than Wright (7 points) had alone. By the time the third-quarter buzzer sang, the Jets had a 46-10 advantage.

In the fourth, the Mustangs outscored the Jets, 11-4, but primarily due to late-game turnovers by the Jets' bench, which entered the game about midway through the period.

With the dominant win, J-M holds strong to fourth place in the conference with a 3-2 record.

They have dates with Graham (third place, Jan. 28), Chatham Central (first place, Jan. 29) and Seaforth (second place, Feb. 1) over the next week, lining up the perfect opportunity to catapult themselves up the standings — or solidify a fourth-place-or-worse finish.

Piggie seems to have faith that it'll be the former.

"We know what we can do now, we know what we're able to do, how we're able to play defense, what we can do offensively," Piggie said. "We just have to keep believing in ourselves and knowing that, 'Hey, this is what we're capable of.' We've been telling them all year that it's going to click. We're almost there."

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

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NCHSAA postpones first and second round of Dual Team Wrestling Playoffs

From North Carolina High School Athletic Association

CHAPEL HILL — The North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) Board of Directors has voted to postpone the first and second rounds of the 2022 Dual Team Wrestling Tournament due to multiple inclement weather situations across the state over the past several weeks.

The decision to postpone the first and second rounds will allow for schools and students to complete as much of the wrestling regular season as possible without exceeding weekly limitations for individuals or teams. Additionally, this decision will allow conferences to complete their conference tournaments and regular season matches for Dual Team seeding.

Subsequent to the decision to postpone the opening rounds, the Board of Directors voted to extend the reporting deadline for individual and dual team wrestling. Dual Team reporting deadline will now be 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 27th. The reporting deadline for individual wrestling is now 11:59 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 29th.

The bracketing for Dual Team Wrestling will take place on Friday, Jan. 28th, and first and second round matches will be wrestled at the highest seed on Monday, Jan. 31st. Third and fourth round matches have not been impacted by this decision and are still scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 2. Dual Team State Championships will be held on Saturday, Feb. 5., at the Greensboro Coliseum Fieldhouse following the championship and consolation finals of the Women's Wrestling Invitational.

RITCHEY

Continued from page B1

Dec. 20.

According to the event's website, the Bowl "has been around for over a decade and has served as a showcase for future NFL players like (Panthers running back) Christian McCaffrey, (Jaguars quarterback) Trevor Lawrence and (Rams running back) Sony Michel."

To summarize: it's sort of a big deal. And if you're one of 71 players invited, college recruiters take notice.

"I was at a camp about six months ago and ended up winning the MVP of the camp, so they invited me to the Freshman All-American Game, it's pretty cool," Ritchey said. "There, I made some connections and, ever since, it's been great all around."

Outside camps — like the NextGen All America Camps and even the upcoming Rivals Camp Series — are just one way Ritchey's made a name for himself before and after his freshman season with the Chargers.

He credits the rest to years of hard work with phenomenal mentors.

Getting to work

Chatham County is notorious for its lack of school-sanctioned middle school football.

None of the county's middle schools carry football, which often leads to high school teams where a majority of players have little to no organized football experience.

That's given rise to outside youth football programs like the Siler City Jets or Pittsboro's East Chatham Chargers — the program that Ritchey credits to helping develop his skills as a middle schooler and giving him somewhere to play football in the first place.

Ritchey was a member of the East Chatham Chargers as a pee-wee player in elementary school, then began playing in an Apex-based league during 5th and 6th grade before coming back to East Chatham to finish out his middle school career as a Charger.

"That's how I really started in football, meeting these guys down here in Chatham that gave me the knowledge and everything," Ritchey said. "It's been great."

One of Ritchey's mentors over the last couple of years has been Bill Renner, a former NFL kicker and longtime high school head coach, who has worked with plenty of players in the Triangle and beyond through his organization, Bill Renner Football.

Ritchey said he met Renner — who's also worked on Northwood's coaching staff — during



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Northwood freshman defensive end Gus Ritchey (20) tackles a Chapel Hill ballcarrier during the Chargers' 33-28 defeat to the Tigers on Sept. 3, 2021. Ritchey had 6 tackles in the loss.

a little league game when his team played against Renner's.

"After that, I was like, 'Man, this team's good. It's a great offense, so imagine if I played tight end or something (for them), oh my gosh,' so I started working with him," Ritchey said. "The player I was when I started working with him from the player I am now, it's just been amazing. He's an amazing guy and really knows what he's doing. ... He's been doing it for 30 years. It's been an honor to train with him."

Ritchey tries to go out and train with Renner "daily, or whenever I get the chance," he said, and when he does, he works with some of the quarterbacks Renner's also training, doing tight end drills and running routes to improve his footwork and catching ability.

Then, on his own, he'll "go up to a field" and work on defensive line drills, which he does on top of weight training.

"I work really, really hard," Ritchey said. "And I've been doing that for two and a half or three years, just trying to get to this point."

Making the decision

It'll be a while before Ritchey — who graduates in 2025 — makes his decision on where he'll spend his college career.

Having received offers from 50% of this season's College Football Playoff field in less than a month, it's likely that by the time he's a junior or senior, the number of offers will have skyrocketed.

While he's undoubtedly thought about what his decision might be, at this point, it's just too early to tell.

When it does come time to make his selection, a myriad of factors will be at play.

"The culture and the coaching staff, everything, even the little things, for me, are a big part (of my decision)," Ritchey said. "How do they treat me? Do they like me? Do they want me to be here? Can I get better at the school? How's their fan base? Stuff like that."

He's spent time on both sides of the ball as both a tight end and defensive

end, so he said he's happy to play whichever position he's being recruited for.

"It's whatever the school wants," he said. "I'm pretty good at both positions, we'll just see wherever the school wants me."

Growing up in Indiana, where he lived until he was 8 years old, Ritchey has always been partial to Notre Dame, another one of college football's storied programs.

It's safe to say that if the Fighting Irish made him an offer, it'd be tough to turn down.

"I've always loved Notre Dame," Ritchey said when asked about his potential dream school. "My family loves Notre Dame, it's just a great school overall."

Until then, he's already got plans to travel around the country for official visits later this spring for a couple of schools that have already reached out to him.

That includes making trips to Blacksburg (Virginia Tech), Ann Arbor (Michigan), Seattle (Washington) and Eugene (Oregon), where he'll get his first taste of life as a sought-after Division I recruit.

"(From here) it's just about the visits," Ritchey said. "Trying to make more connections and learning more."

Even with his recruitment picking up this early into his high school career, Ritchey's got plenty of football left to play in Pittsboro.

Three seasons, to be exact. And he's looking to make the most of it under Chris Kenan's new regime, who was hired to be the Chargers' next head coach just a couple of weeks ago.

"I actually have (already spoken with Kenan) and I love the dude, he's fantastic," Ritchey said. "Coach Kenan's offense is what we need. ... We lost a lot of confidence last year, but he's coming in as a great guy and is already getting the players comfortable with him, so I definitely think we'll bounce back and we could definitely go far."

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



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Rivalry on the mat

Jordan-Matthews and Chatham Central renewed their rivalry on the mat in a dual-team wrestling match last Thursday ahead of the Piedmont's winter weather. Bears scraped by with a 24-12 victory, including a 4-1 record in bouts wrestled. Here, Chatham Central's Jarrett Mashburn (in gray) grapples with J-M's Jaxon Globuschutz in the 220-lb. weight class. Mashburn came away with the win over Globuschutz via pin.



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Chatham Central's Nicholas Rinell (in gray) puts Jordan-Matthews' Tate Kidd in a half-nelson during the Bears' 24-12 win over the Jets last Thursday. Rinell won the bout over Kidd via pin.



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Chatham Central's Jarrett Mashburn (in gray) attempts a takedown of J-M's Jaxon Globuschutz in the 220-lb. bout last Thursday in the Bears' 24-12 win over the Jets. Mashburn came away with the win over Globuschutz via pin.



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Jordan-Matthews' Jaiden Gorham (blue) climbs over top of Chatham Central's Brady Phillips in a scrimmage bout after the dual-team match between the Jets and Bears was over last Thursday.



Chatham COA Events & Announcements

January 27th through February 2nd

Thursday, January 27th

- [Body Conditioning w/Jackie](#) at 8:00 AM
- [Take Off Pounds Sensibly](#) at 1:00 PM

Friday, January 28th

- [Body Conditioning w/Jackie](#) at 8:00 AM
- [Strong & Fit w/Olivia](#) at 9:00 AM
- [Strong & Fit w/Jackie](#) at 10:00 AM

Monday, January 31st

- [Strong & Fit w/Olivia](#) at 9:00 AM
- [Chair Yoga w/Liz](#) at 10:00 AM

Tuesday, February 1st

- [Body Conditioning w/Jackie](#) at 8:00 AM
- [Strong & Fit w/Jackie](#) at 10:00 AM

Wednesday, February 2nd

- [Body Conditioning w/Jackie](#) at 8:00 AM
- [Strong & Fit w/Olivia](#) at 9:00 AM
- [Chair Yoga w/Liz](#) at 10:00 AM

For more information or to register for these and other programs, visit our website: chathamcouncilonaging.org/activities/calendars/

The COA has temporarily suspended in-person activities and classes through Friday, January 28. All listed programs will be available virtually via the Zoom platform. Registration is available through the Council on Aging's website.

The Chatham COA is Here for You!

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

<p>Eastern Chatham Senior Center (ECSC) 365 NC-87 N Pittsboro, NC 27312 919-542-4512</p>	<p>Western Chatham Senior Center (WCSC) 112 Village Lake Road Siler City, NC 27344 919-742-3975</p>
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‘The Matrix 4’ gets a red-pill thumbs up and a blue-pill thumbs down

BY BUCK RYAN & LEI JIAO
Special to the News + Record

Journalism professor Buck Ryan in Kentucky and English lecturer Lei Jiao in Wuhan, China, are back with their fifth film review for the News + Record, channeling the great Luigi Pirandello, known for writing a story within a story within a story. This time Ryan & Jiao offer something new in their pursuit of cross-cultural understanding — a pro-and-con exchange: “If the Matrix can present two world views, so can we!”



Image courtesy of WarnerMedia in China

Warner Bros.’ ‘The Matrix: Resurrections’ made it to movie theaters in China, which is still blocking Sony-Disney’s ‘Spider-Man: No Way Home’ from the box office there. One of our intrepid film reviewers is a Matrix fan, but the other would rather eat White Rabbit candy than watch Neo follow the rabbit a fourth time.

“I’ll take the blue pill, Lei.”

“No, Buck, are you crazy?!”

“Remember, Lei, we don’t use that word in here, as the mild-mannered therapist tells our Matrix hero.”

“Sorry, Buck. I just mean the red pill is the only way to go.”

“Lei, it’s just this whole Matrix thing is too weird and complicated for me. It makes me have dreams that just aren’t dreams. I don’t see the appeal.”

“What?! It’s legen ... wait for it ... dary! As Neil Patrick Harris would say.”

“That’s funny, Lei. I see Harris made the cast for the first time — as the therapist. The third time may have been the charm for the legendary trilogy, but this fourth film, yikes!”

“It’s been a long road since the 1999 debut, Buck, long enough for the directors, the Wachowski brothers, to become sisters.”

“Yes, I noticed only Lana Wachowski directed ‘The Matrix: Resurrections,’ not her younger sister, Lilly, too.”

“You know, Buck, their parents died and the idea for ‘Resurrections’ came to Lana in a dream that brought her loved ones back to life. And that inspired Matrix 4, which revived Neo (Keanu Reeves) and his girlfriend Trinity (Carrie-Anne Moss), who died at the end of the trilogy.”

“I see. So there was a little controversy over whether Matrix 4 would be made at all?”

“Warner Bros. put a gun to the directors’ heads, or so the story goes.”

“Oh, Lei, so that explains the crazy opening scene with the lines, ‘They informed me that are gonna do it with or

without us’ and ‘They’ll kill our contract if we don’t cooperate.’”

“Yes, Buck, but remember we don’t use that word ‘crazy.’”

“Touché, Lei!”

“Let’s just say it was not sane for Hollywood to release the film like it did, handing the keys to intellectual-property ripoff artists. Warner Bros. lost a lot of almighty yuan.”

“What do you mean, Lei?”

“Warner Bros. released ‘Matrix 4’ on December 22 last year in the U.S., internationally and on the HBO Max streaming service. But it was not released simultaneously in China like the third one. Instead, ‘Matrix 4’ did not officially open here in China until January 14.”

“So you mean there were plenty of ‘unofficial’ viewings, eh?”

“Yes, Buck, I saw ‘The Matrix: Resurrections’ at a friend’s New Year’s party. She just flipped on the TV, found a live stream and, voilà, there came a high-quality version of the film for all to enjoy for free.”

“Oh gee. Did you really like it?”

“Honestly, I had my doubts — even before I watched it. The trilogy was perfect enough. Creating a deplorable sequel to a masterpiece is like using a dog’s tail as the substitute for mink, as the Chinese idiom goes.”

“Doggone.”

“What I admired about The Matrix trilogy were the philosophical references, especially about free will and consciousness. Even the computer programs and the viruses gained consciousness and human emotions in an effort to survive. Then again that human free will turned out not

to be free at all, just an illusion.”

“What about ‘The Matrix 4’?”

“It all boiled down to love. The film lost its original sharp edges, opening it up to ridicule.”

“But you still give it a thumbs up, right?”

“Yes, Buck. The sole reason for me to watch and somehow enjoy ‘The Matrix 4’ is the one and only Keanu Reeves. He’s an international treasure and should be protected at any cost. But I wouldn’t say it’s the best foreign film in China right now.”

“What would that be?”

“Probably ‘Chhichhore,’ a film from India released in 2019, no less.”

“What?”

“Yes, Buck, sometimes Bollywood trumps Hollywood in China. The title, which translates to ‘Immature,’ is a coming-of-age comedy and drama.”

“Why is it so popular in China, a lot more than Warner Bros.’ ‘Matrix’?”

“It resonates with a lot of the same social issues in India that are experienced in China, particularly for students who face similar high academic pressures. But it does it in a funny way — ‘The Matrix’ is no comedy.”

“You know something else that’s not so funny, Lei?”

“What’s that, Buck?”

“How China blocks some movies like ‘Spider-Man’ but allows others like ‘The Matrix.’ Do you think it’s because Reeves is part Chinese and he is sensitive to Chinese culture, dating back to his ‘Man of Tai Chi’ film in 2013?”

“Wait, Buck. Let me ask the Oracle. ‘Ha-huh, ha-huh, I see. OK, thanks.’”

“So, Lei, what’s the answer?”

“I have no idea, Buck.”

“What can you tell me?”

“Of the 42 films currently running in China’s theaters now, there are only six imported ones: Disney’s ‘Encanto’ and Warner Bros.’ ‘The Matrix 4’ from the U.S., ‘Chhichhore’ from India, ‘Barbie Princess Adventure’ from Mattel Northern Europe, ‘Ice 2’ from Russia and ‘The Stolen Caravaggio’ from Italy.”

“Somehow I guess the subject of our last film review, ‘The Battle at Lake Changjin,’ is still going patriotically strong.”

“Roger that, Buck.”

“Back to The Matrix, Lei. For the uninitiated who may want to binge-watch the series on Netflix during the next, God-forbid ice storm, what would you say it’s all about?”

“So basically it’s about in the future humans are enslaved by machines and there are a few ‘woke’ humans who are trying to find The One (Neo, portrayed by Reeves) to lead their fight for a free world ... But the truth is far more than that.”

“Which bring us to the blue pill/red pill thing. So for somebody who keeps hearing about that, but doesn’t want to endure The Matrix, how would you explain the difference?”

“Well, a red pill person like me seeks a radical new awareness of reality — the story behind the story — dislodging from space and time to see the world from a new dimension.”

“And a blue pill person like me?”

“Well, Buck, you prefer to dwell in an ignorant narcotic bliss.”

“Lol! Get me Luigi



Image courtesy of WarnerMedia in China

The Matrix poster translates like so: ‘Sci-fi classic on big screen again, the Matrix world is reborn’ (top), ‘The Matrix: Resurrections’ (middle), ‘1-14 (the Jan. 14 release date in China), a stunning fight’ (below).

Pirandello on the horn! Do you know Luigi?”

“Nope.”

“Pirandello lit up Italy and the world with his plays, novels, poems and short stories. He won the 1934 Nobel Prize in Literature for ‘his almost magical power to turn psychological analysis into good theatre.’”

“Oh, I see, Buck. Pirandello turned a switch on a glitch in the Matrix — you know, having something inexplicable and surreal happen in an otherwise normal situation.”

“Yes, like going to ask Alice when she’s 10 feet tall.”

“You crack me up, Buck. We’re talking about the deja vu black cat here in the Matrix, not the white rabbit. Pirandello’s art reminds me of ‘Inception’ or ‘breaking the fourth wall’ like the self-mockery in ‘Deadpool.’”

“Yep. Those films make it easier for me to ‘unplug’ than by watching The Matrix.”

“Now, Buck, you owe that verb to The Matrix, you know. Who can forget Neo unplugging his connection to the Matrix from the port in the back

of his neck.”

“Lei, there has to be some deeper meaning in all this.”

“Well, Buck, I’ll match your Pirandello with a scholar who believes that ‘The Matrix’ is actually a World War II film. The Zion camp in the last human city of the planet Earth alludes to Leninism, the Matrix to the capitalist world, and Agent Smith, the main antagonist, represents the fascists.”

“Oh, Lei, you’re making my head spin. Maybe that red pill is not such a bad idea.”

“When I give my lecture on one sci-fi episode of ‘Black Mirror’ dealing with virtual reality, I often ask my students the blue pill/red pill question.”

“How many are like me?”

“A precious few, Buck. I can’t keep them off their cell phones. But lots of them actually chose the red pill.”

“Well, then leave us precious few to our blue pills, Lei. We’ll watch ‘Encanto’ and sing ‘We Don’t Talk About Bruno’ while you party in the Matrix with the Architect.”

“Good idea, professor! That’s not crazy at all.”

About the authors: Buck Ryan, a University of Kentucky journalism professor, and Lei Jiao, an English lecturer at Wuhan University of Technology, Hubei Province, China, collaborate on articles to advance cross-cultural understanding. Ryan, who is doing a “participatory case study” of the News + Record, has been a visiting scholar at three universities in China, including Jiao’s WUT.

You can read their four previous film reviews here:

<https://www.chathamnewsrecord.com/stories/love-conquers-slings-and-arrows-aimed-at-new-version,6690>

<https://www.chathamnewsrecord.com/stories/rafa-meets-camus-so-you-think-its-just-a-kids-movie-eh,8702>

<https://www.chathamnewsrecord.com/stories/your-kids-will-flip-over-shang-chi-while-it-trips-over-a-china-divide,10663>

<https://www.chathamnewsrecord.com/stories/2-blockbusters-fight-a-box-office-war-across-a-us-china-political-divide,11950>

CHATHAM IS **BOLD!**



SNOW DAY

PICTURE THIS:

Chatham sees second snow in a week

It was a winter wonderland in Chatham County last weekend. For the second week in a row, Chatham residents saw snowfall, with accumulations between two and three inches. From snowball fights, the appearance of several snowmen and shredding down

the hills of Chatham on a sled, many residents found themselves enjoying the frosty Friday and snowy Saturday. Our photographers, as well as contributors on the News + Record Facebook page, sent in photos of their frozen fun. Here's a sampling ...



Staff photo by Kim Hawks

A resident cardinal appeared to give CN+R photographer Kim Hawks 'the eye,' as if to say, 'How about some seeds to chew on or maybe some unfrozen water in the birdbath?' In response, she reports that she heated up some water and added it to the birdbath, along with some sunflower and millet seeds.



Staff photo by Ed Lallo

Shadows and snow and light, and this red barn on Lamont Norwood Road, create a colorful juxtaposition.



Staff photo by Kim Hawks

Weekend snow coats a Lenton rose's nodding flowers near the home of CN+R photographer Kim Hawks.



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

While most snow merely blanketed the ground, some snowflakes, including these, decided to aim a little higher. Snow fell in Chatham County for the second time last week.



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Sassy the dog trudges through last weekend's snow outside of staff photographer Simon Barbre's Chatham County home.



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

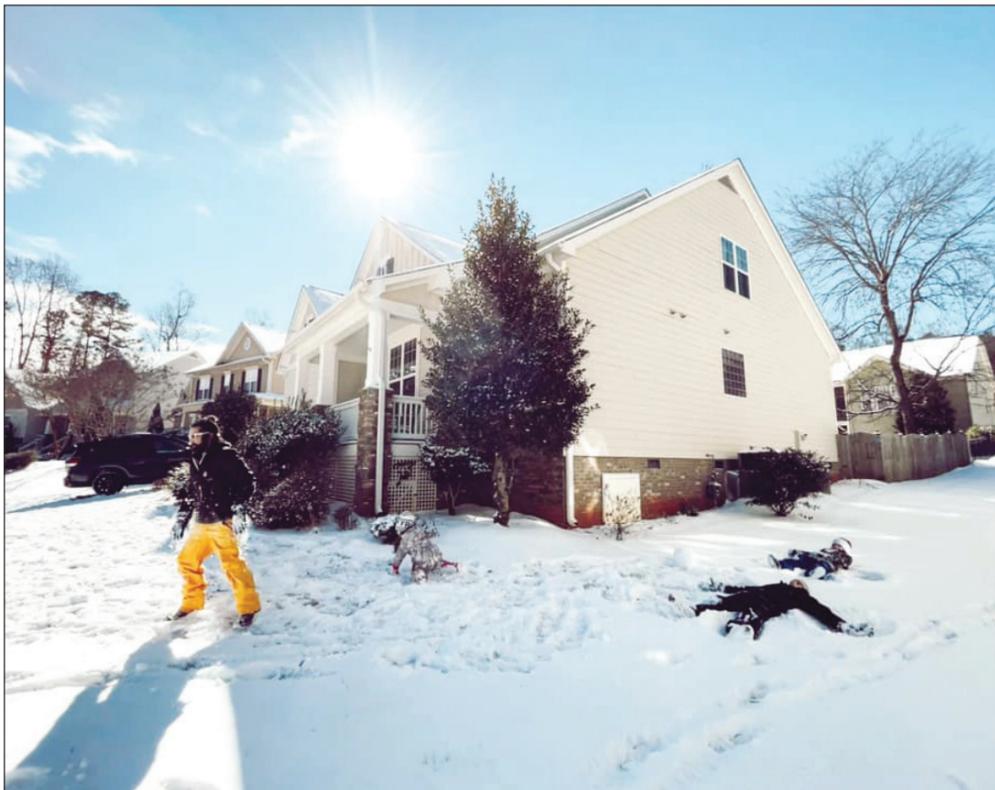
Leaves peek through a clump of snow from Chatham County's second winter storm last weekend.



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Lucky, staff photographer Simon Barbre's dog, wanders about last weekend's snow outside of Barbre's Chatham County home.

SNOW DAY



Pittsboro's Lea Ciceraro shared this photo from her home on Facebook.



Posted by Kasandra Mariano-Granger on Facebook

Kasandra Mariano-Granger's two sons, Linkon Granger (left) and Casto Granger, 5, pose in front of their snowman last weekend outside of their home in Pittsboro. 'We were able to celebrate (Linkon's) 12th birthday in the snow,' Mariano-Granger told the News + Record. 'His dreams came true.'



Posted on Facebook by Tammy Trotter

Tammy Trotter's husband and twins, plus two young family friends, prepare to make snow angels in their swimming trunks after snow fell for the second time in Chatham County last weekend.



Staff photo by Ed Lallo

The weekend's snow created a brief opportunity for sledding, as this youngster in Briar Chapel proved.



Staff photo by Ed Lallo

A tube provides a cushy trip down a snow-packed hill for these kids — and a supervising adult — in Briar Chapel.



Posted by Kasandra Mariano-Granger on Facebook.

Bohannan the dog wanders about the snow last weekend outside Kasandra Mariano-Granger's home in Pittsboro.



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Snow from last week's storm sticks to a leaf.



Staff photo by Ed Lallo

This sledder carved a fresh path down a hill in Briar Chapel before jumping off a curb — where he promptly wiped out.



Posted by Kasandra Mariano-Granger on Facebook.

Thirteen-year-old Willie Boynton (left), 12-year-old Owen Becker and 12-year-old Linkon Granger participate in a boys vs. girls snowball fight last weekend outside Kasandra Mariano-Granger's home in Pittsboro.



Staff photo by Ed Lallo

News + Record contributing photographer Ed Lallo got this action shot — of his wife, Adrienne, shoveling the driveway at the couple's home in Fearington Village.

POLICE REPORTS

CHATHAM COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

On Jan. 11, Richard Eugene Scurlock, 72, of 236 Elvie Snipes Scurlock Rd., Pittsboro, was arrested by Deputy Rami Amer for stolen property offenses. He was issued a \$2,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on Feb. 14.

On Jan. 11, Wesley Alan Martin, 33, of 126 Pat Murrow Rd., Bonlee, was arrested by Deputy Rami Amer for failure to appear on a charge of unsealed wine/liquor in passenger area. He was issued a \$1,500 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Brunswick County District Court in Bolivia on Jan. 18.

Martin was also arrested by Deputy Rami Amer for failure to appear for speeding, no operator's license, reckless driving to endanger, simple assault and communicating threats. He was issued a \$500 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on Jan. 19.

Martin was also arrested by Deputy Rami Amer for felony possession of cocaine and possession of drug paraphernalia. He was issued a \$5,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on Feb. 14.

On Jan. 11, Keith Eugene Bailey, 53, of 7856 Garrett Rd., Bear Creek, was arrested by Deputy John Beach

for failure to appear. He was issued a \$10,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Guilford County District Court in Greensboro on Jan. 12.

On Jan. 14, Jose Adrian Gutierrez, 25, of 40 Glovers Church Rd., Bear Creek, was arrested by Sgt. Chris Burger for pretrial release violation. He was issued a \$3,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on Feb. 16.

On Jan. 15, Caitlyn Rae Collins, 25, of 312 Randolph St., Bennett, was arrested by Cpl. Robert Hussey for failure to appear on a release order. She was issued a \$200 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District

Court in Pittsboro on Feb. 15.

On Jan. 16, Caitlyn Rae Collins, was also arrested by Cpl. Robert Hussey for possession of heroin, possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of a controlled substance on prison/jail premises. She was issued a \$10,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County Superior Court in Pittsboro on Feb. 14.

On Jan. 18, Wallace Marcell Dowdy, 50, of 1021 Glovers Grove Church Rd., Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Brandal Harrington for failure to appear. He was issued a \$200 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Orange County District Court in Hillsborough on Feb. 1.

Chatham commissioners honor two long-time county employees

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — Chatham commissioners adopted two resolutions honoring county employees at their Jan. 18 meeting: one regarding Finance Officer Hope Tally for her 20-plus years of service and another for the Council on Aging's Dennis Streets, ahead of his retirement as executive director.

"Chatham County doesn't let go of people easily, and we're hard to get away from," Chairperson Karen Howard said with a laugh, "so we hope this will not be the last we see of either one of you, and we promise we will be tapping you soon."

Tally, who held multiple positions in the county's finance office during her tenure, emotionally thanked the finance and management teams for all their work and support.

"I'm humbled by this and really appreciate it," she said.

At the end of this month, Streets will retire from the COA, relinquishing the post he's had since 2014 and ending a professional career advocating and providing for aging populations.

"I just want to say thank you, first of all, for this resolution and most of all for the support I've received since I came to the council as director back in May of 2014," Streets told the board. "I've been so blessed. I'm so thankful for your support."

The board also unanimously decided at its Jan. 14 budget retreat to proceed in making the COA a county department, at the request of the organization and in light of director Streets' impending retirement.

Commissioners said staff could move forward with transitioning COA to a county department, which means the current COA Board of Directors will become an advisory "friends" board that would remain a nonprofit and act as its fundraising arm. The county also moved from a minimum to a partial implementation to reduce pay compression for employees.

"There's a lot of work to be done, but I think it can happen in a pretty

seamless way," Streets told the board then.

Budget update

Budget Director Darell Butts presented the 2022 second-quarter budget update to the board — something brought up briefly at the board's retreat the week prior to plan for the county's formal budget development for the next fiscal year.

"It was mentioned at the retreat last week, but I did want to bring the second-quarter budget update to you today. This is a slide you've seen quite a few times now," he said regarding the presentation's background slide, "and probably will continue to see until we make significant changes to this report, but just a little bit of background: this is looking at revenue and expenditures for the first six months of the fiscal year, July 1 through Dec. 31."

The report is a high-level overview, rather than a line-by-line review, and it doesn't include interest revenue, transfers in-or-out or the appropriated fund balance.

The report only reflects three months of sales tax data due to lag between the state's collection and disbursement to counties, Butts said. The sales tax collection is at 39.1% of the budget, according to the report, which is slightly behind the 40.5% collection for the same time period last year.

About 38.6% of the county's \$154 million budget is reflected in the current expenditures; \$19.8 million of the budget are transfer-out funds not included in the report. Of the county's budgeted revenue, 56.5% is accounted for, according to the report (not including transfers in or the appropriated fund balance).

So far, the county has seen revenue growth in seven tax categories from the first six months in 2021, notably watershed protection (+59%) and revenue health (+47%).

Affordable housing

The Chatham County Affordable Housing Advisory Committee also presented its 2021 Annual Report, led by Susan Levy, the committee's chairperson. The group works to understand the county's affordable rental

housing strategy toolbox and help implement priorities, review affordable housing policies and provide feedback and input in developing additional strategies, among other things.

The committee's top goals are to increase the number and diversity of affordable rental options, ensure rental quality and to preserve legally binding and existing naturally occurring affordable housing.

In 2021, the group continued updates to the Housing Trust Fund Application and scoring guidelines, engaged education from affordable housing developers and researched critical housing issues and solutions. The committee supported Pittsboro in its housing incentive policy with Chatham Park and provided input on the county's new unified development ordinance (UDO).

Despite increases in affordable units last year in Chatham, Levy said the need continues to grow as Chatham County grows: approximately 2,325 affordable rental units are needed — with the gap between the number of low-income renter households and affordable units continuing to widen. For example, the presentation said, there was more than a 25% increase in low-income renter households from 2019 to 2021.

This year, the committee plans to update the Affordable Rental Housing Toolbox from 2017 and turn it into a strategic action plan, implement a process to invest Article 46 Sales

Tax revenue in short-and long-term housing goals and continue to engage with the UDO-drafting process.

A longer report on this presentation and the committee's 2021 work will be included in an upcoming edition of the News + Record.

Public hearings and legislative requests

The board also heard two legislative hearings, both of which were referred to the planning board.

The first concerned a request by the commissioners to consider amendments to the county's subdivision regulations. The amendments would modify the definitions for major and minor subdivisions and exempt subdivisions, and add an exemption for the division of property for public right-of-way dedication for road widenings.

The second hearing, also regarding a request by commissioners, was to consider amendments to the county's zoning ordinance — including updating a reference in the table of permitted uses to the Town of Sanford's water in addition to the county water system, which would only apply to Moncure's Triangle Innovation Point (TIP) advanced manufacturing park.

Finally, the board approved two requests.

The first was a legislative request from commissioners to update subdivision regulations concerning conservation and development. The second was a vote on a

request for subdivision First Plat review and approval of Pyewacket, located off Jones Ferry Road and consisting of 92 lots on 128.39 acres.

After some disagreement and back and forth between commissioners and Pyewacket's representative, Howard stressed the two parties were not adversaries, but fellow negotiators.

"We're different teams negotiating for an outcome," she said, "and where we land when we compromise is always better than where either one of us would go alone."

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



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We live in a time when anyone can get online and make their thoughts and opinions accessible to others. Journalists are committed to accuracy and generate news based on the issues and needs specific to their communities.

NATIONAL NEWSPAPER WEEK • OCTOBER 4-10

Chatham Charter School

Chatham Charter School is now accepting applications for openings in kindergarten and limited openings in first through eleventh grade for the 2022-2023 school year. Kindergarten applicants must be five years of age on or before August 31, 2022. The application period ends on January 28, 2022. Applications may be submitted online (www.chathamcharter.org) under the "Admissions" link, at the school (2200 Hamp Stone Road, Siler City) or by calling (919) 742-4550.

Chatham Charter School is a nonprofit, nondenominational public school providing quality education for children of all races, creeds, handicaps, and national origins.

La Escuela de Chatham Charter

La Escuela de Chatham Charter ahora está tomando aplicaciones para espacios del kinder y algunos espacios desde el primer grado hasta el grado once para el año escolar 2022-2023. Los niños que asistan al kinder deben tener cinco años de edad antes del 31 de agosto, 2022. El periodo de aplicación termina el 28 de enero, 2022. Puede completar una aplicación al Internet (www.chathamcharter.org) al enlace Admissions, a la escuela (2200 Hamp Stone Road, Siler City) o por una llamada (919.742.4550).

La Escuela de Chatham Charter es una escuela pública, multidominacional, y no lucrativa que provee una educación de la calidad para los niños de todas las razas, los credos, una condición de discapacidad, y los orígenes nacionales.

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\$12? Lemme try!

Years ago, I was in Costco, and met the then chief of police in my town. We started talking and I learned that both he and his wife are Puerto Rican. I may have mentioned one or twelve hundred times, but I lived in Puerto Rico when I was a child and without a doubt, the food from that gorgeous little green island is the best in the world. A lot of people have never had Puerto Rican food. The food is zesty and full of flavor. And unlike what some people do when trying to recreate it (I'm looking at you, Bobby Flay) it IS NOT SPICY HOT. There is citrus, garlic, onions, herbs, spices like achiote, but no hot peppers and chiles. The food is so flavorful it doesn't need mind-blowing heat to cover up the lack of taste. In certain respects, it's similar to Cuban food. It has many of the same notes, but unlike the pedestrian black beans of Havana, Puerto Ricans long ago discovered the best bean is the habichuela or pink bean (available in Latino grocers). Well, meeting that man in the line at Costco that day was one of the luckiest days of my life. The Lopez's — Becky and the Chief — kind of adopted me, and in turn, The Kid. They have fed us, cooked with us, taught us, and been there when no one else was. They have given over and over again with no expectation of anything. On one of the worst days of my life they were there and gave me everything they had to give. They have fed us so much and in so many ways, I wanted to begin to return the favor. Tonight, I had them for dinner. True to form, though, Becky and The Chief came bearing delicious Puerto Rican food, including arroz con gandules (rice and pigeon peas) and a glorious, slow cooked pork shoulder draped in a fragrant mixture of garlic, herbs, and citrus. We actually negotiated what she would bring and what they would let me supply. I was responsible for drinks, appetizers, and dessert. If you knew my ridiculously generous friends, you'd know that little concession was a huge win for team debbie. The Kid was tasked with dessert. We tossed around a few ideas. We wanted something that was yummy, unique and was relatively quick and easy to make. The bars we decided on had been first enjoyed at a restaurant dinner The Kid had attended for a friend. Everybody adored them, but they were \$12 per serving. My child, raised by me and trained at culinary school decided to beat the eatery at its own game and figure out how to recreate them. After some research and a couple of tweaks, this is the final recipe. They are so good and so rich and cost so much less than \$12 per serving. Atta Kid! Thanks for your time. Contact me at dm@bullcity.mom.

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo

ACROSS

1 Picked instrument

6 Type of small grocery store

12 Bloppy light source

20 Viva voce

21 Spoil, as "my parade"

22 Roast joke

23 Like baggy clothes

25 Winter wreath ornament

26 Gave away temporarily

27 Money, informally

29 Jagger of the Stones

30 "Raggedy" doll

31 Monty Python tune about a logger

37 Addams who created Morticia

40 Quick attack

41 Cover girl

42 Macpherson

43 "— gratia"

46 Outer: Prefix

47 "— the Night" (2007 Joaquin Phoenix film)

49 Had to admit a goof-up

50 "Behold!", to Caesar

53 Totally bummed out

55 Stuff in a sty

56 Avian hooters

58 Texas banner

61 Big twitch

63 Safari sight

65 Envoy's asset

66 "There — comparison"

67 Chinese black tea with a smoky flavor

72 Anita of jazz

75 Env. notice

76 Estrada of TV

77 Ones staring

81 Best Actress winner for "The Farmer's Daughter"

84 Grammy winner

87 "And how!"

88 German city on the Elbe

89 With 115-Down, "Piece of cake!"

91 Web page

93 Slacks

94 Extra charge

96 Pea-souper in England

98 Anticavity gp.

99 Supreme Norse god

101 "I love you," to Luisa

103 Jane in an 1847 novel

104 Go bankrupt, say

108 Del.-to-Vt. direction

110 Bakery treats

111 Snootiness

112 Noisy tigers

116 Cite famous people as friends

120 Method for calculating a quotient ... or what occurs eight times in this puzzle?

123 Accepted, as conditions

124 Made flush

125 Maggot, e.g.

126 Sailor's dining place

127 Shows as an "encore"

128 Clifflike

DOWN

1 Tennis need

2 Skin soother

3 Lunch hour

4 "Be right there"

5 Classic theater

6 Liverpool or Leeds native

7 Horse bit

8 Morse bit

9 Conundrum

10 Of yore

11 Trig measure

12 Slice (off)

13 Zoo attraction

14 Gondola city

15 Smart — (cocky sort)

16 Guitar riffs

17 Year, in Brazil

18 Roughly half of all adults

19 Beginning to mature?

24 Amusement

28 Frightful dino

31 Chilling Chaney

32 Strong desire

33 "Selena" actress, to her fans

34 Nonalcoholic beer brand

35 Georgia city near Atlanta

36 Ornamental street tree

37 Bivalve mollusks

38 Ask for moola

39 Brand of skin care and cosmetics

40 Turkey, e.g.

44 Pleasant odor

45 Do some yard maintenance

46 Poet's twilight

47 Major battle

48 Crude model of a despised person

51 Choke up

52 Give the OK

53 Strong desire

54 Big mil. alliance

57 Dull, dark bluish-gray

59 Decorative sewing case

60 Burlap bags

62 Most cunning

64 — uncertain terms

68 Pricy liver spread

69 Superhero creator Lee

70 Agcys., e.g.

71 "Nifty!"

72 Chum from way back

73 El — (treasure city)

74 Vying venues

78 Uplift

79 Whirlybird blade

80 Drawn-out battle

82 Six-pt. scores

83 Driver's 180

85 Year, to Caesar

86 Gamet, e.g.

90 Ladd of "Shane"

92 Shows lip-curling contempt

94 Holiday tree

95 "Orinoco Flow" vocalist

97 Texter's "I'm shocked!"

99 Carry to excess

100 Spanish explorer

101 Hernando

102 Former Disney exec

105 Sword types

106 Duck type

107 Mosaic maker

108 Autumn mo.

109 Manicurists file them

112 Divests (of)

113 Ireland, in

114 Be a drifter

115 See 89-Across

116 "Rambo" setting, briefly

117 Era or eon

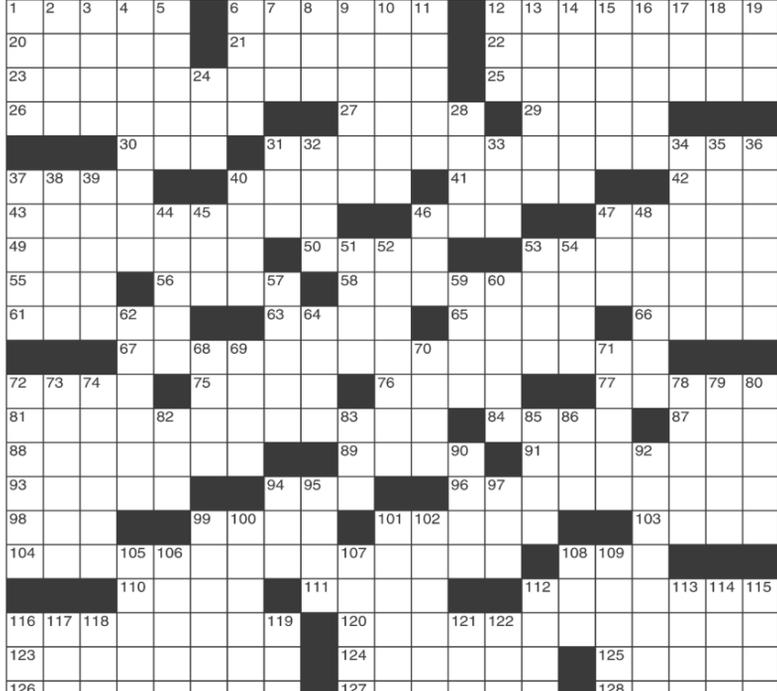
118 "— Doubtfire"

119 Fluffy lap dog, for short

121 Safari sight

122 Safari sight

LOVE OF SOLVING



Solution for the puzzle in last week's edition.

ROADGAMES BOWSTO UGGS
 INNERSOLE UNITED SIRI
 LICEINWONDERLAND INON
 ETERNE INAIR INAWE
 EARNEDSOMETHINGNEW
 CRUSTOOO PROOFS DRE
 OER FENCES UNI PTS D
 MAGECONSULTANT TORO
 ADENOID IAGO VICUNAS
 FOE HEATERDISTRICT
 EPEE DOC MAP ICKY
 RAVELINGABROAD NOT
 ALABAMA REEK GORILLA
 CLOP ADDEROFSSUCCESS
 CRUE USB FAMOUS NAH
 RIA AGOUTI ALI ORATE
 ASTERNSTANDARDTIME
 SOILS TRAIT NAVAHO
 STOW ALITTLEOFFTHETOP
 ETNA RENAIL RELEASEME
 ROSY CAGNEY REALSTEEL

Sopapilla Cheesecake Bars

Recipe courtesy of *The Kid*
(For an 8x8)
1 can crescent roll

dough	1 tablespoon Cinnamon
2 blocks cream cheese, room temp	1 stick butter, softened
1cup white sugar divided in half	1 tsp kosher salt
	1 tsp lemon zest
	2 tsp vanilla

Honey for drizzling

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees
- Heavily spray an 8x8 glass baking dish with cooking spray, and line to bottom with half of the can of crescent roll dough. Make sure to pinch together any seams.
- Whip half of the sugar, the cream cheese, vanilla, lemon zest and salt until very light and fluffy.
- Smooth the cream cheese filling onto the dough base, and top with the second half of the dough.
- Whip together the remaining sugar, butter, and cinnamon until fluffy.
- Dot the top of the cheesecake bars with the cinnamon sugar butter until mostly covered.
- Bake until golden brown, and the sugar on top has melted, about 30 minutes, if the sugar doesn't melt, brown and get crusty, put it under the broiler for a few minutes, but watch it every second so that it doesn't burn.
- Once out of the oven, drizzle heavily with honey, and allow to cool.
- Let fully cool before slicing
- Serve with whipped cream or a scoop of vanilla ice cream
- Serves 12-16.



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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

1			6		9		
		2			7		3
	6			2		5	1
	3		5				4
7	2			4		8	
		5			6		7
	1		8		4		2
		9		3		6	
8			7				1

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

- ♦ Moderate
- ♦♦ Challenging
- ♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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MAGIC MAZE ● GERMAN COMPOSERS

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

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally

Unlisted clue hint: JOHANN SEBASTIAN —

- | | | | |
|-----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Beethoven | Debussy | Mendelssohn | Strauss |
| Bingen | Handel | Schubert | Wagner |
| Brahms | Haydn | Schumann | Weill |
| Chopin | Liszt | Schutz | |

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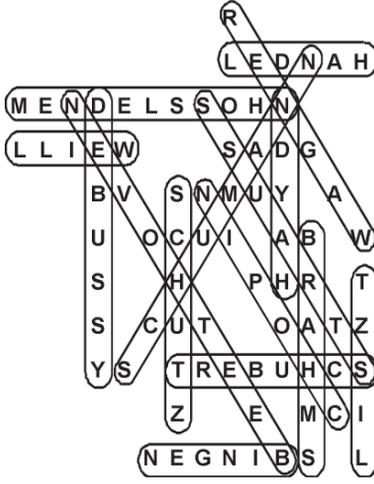
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GERMAN COMPOSERS



Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

1	4	3	6	5	8	9	2	7
5	8	2	9	1	7	4	3	6
9	6	7	4	2	3	5	8	1
6	3	8	5	7	1	2	9	4
7	2	1	3	4	9	8	6	5
4	9	5	2	8	6	1	7	3
3	1	6	8	9	4	7	5	2
2	7	9	1	3	5	6	4	8
8	5	4	7	6	2	3	1	9

Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas

Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



LAFF-A-DAY

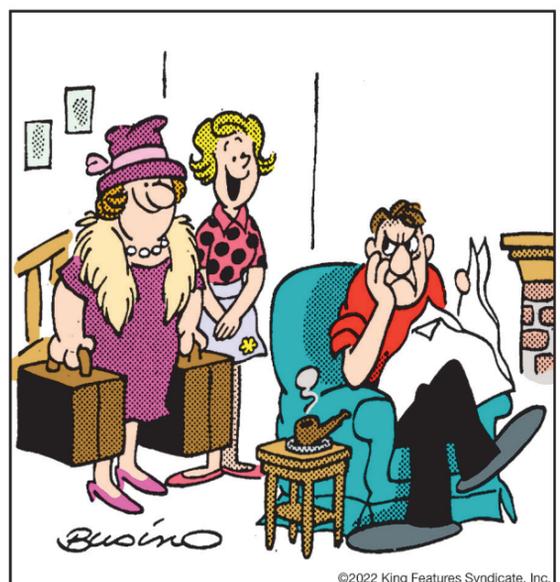


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CLASSIFIEDS

REAL ESTATE

LAND SALE, BONLEE-BENNETT ROAD, 3.410, \$15,000. Does not perk, Phone: 336-584-9115, Parcel: #0003912, J27,F3,10,17,4tp

LEARN ABOUT LAND - Chatham Land Experts - www.learn-aboutland.com - 919-362-6999. Jy2,tfnc

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FOR SALE

MOVING SALE (BYNUM), Saturday 1/29 from 8 to 11, 1079 Bynum Road, Pittsboro. Lots of lighthouse pictures/etc, pictures and pitchers, china, electric roaster, pottery, lead

ed glass, sewing machines/supplies, electric jigsaw, lots of other things you can't live without. J27,1tp

TV ANTENNA SALE - Come by MacPage Communications at 102 West Third Avenue, Siler City. 919-227-6698. D30,tfnc

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FOOD SERVICES STAFF - Pittsboro Christian Village is accepting applications for Server, Pantry Cook, and Cook. Apply in person 8:30 am to 4:00 pm Monday-Friday, at 1825 East St. in Pittsboro. O21,tfnc

HOMECARE SEEKING, Now hiring for immediate positions in Pittsboro/Siler City: Certified Nurse Aides - Competitive weekly pay, CNAs start at \$10.00/hr. & up for extra care cases - Total LifeCare, Call 919-776-0352 or visit 824 South Horner Blvd., Sanford for more info or to apply. A29,tfnc

LEGALS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21E737 All persons having claims against **ROBERT H. CHASE, JR.,** deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 6th day of April, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in

bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 6th day of January, 2022.

Anne Catherine Chase, Executrix
42 Beverly Dr
Durham, NC 27707
J6,J13,J20,J27,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21E713

All persons having claims against **MELVIN TOTTEN aka MELVIN LEE TOTTEN,** deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 6th day of April, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 6th day of January, 2022.

Sabrina Person, Administrator
401 East 4th Street
Siler City, NC 27344
J6,J13,J20,J27,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21E742

All persons having claims against **THOMAS BABER CALLAHAN,** deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 13th day of April, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 13th day of January, 2022.

RODGER W. HAMRICK, Executrix
2191 Bonlee Bennett Rd
Siler City, NC. 27344
J13,J20,J27,F3,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 22 E 10

All persons having claims against **MARJORIE STAMM REMICK,** deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 13th day of April, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 13th day of January, 2022.

LYNN WEBSTER, Executrix
467 Chatham Drive
Chapel Hill, NC 27516
J13,J20,J27,F3,4tp

Chapel Hill, NC 27516
J13,J20,J27,F3,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21 E 748

All persons having claims against **PATRICIA ANNE WILL,** deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 13th day of April, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 13th day of January, 2022.

Theodore J. Will, Administrator
CTA
38 Henrys Hill Lane
Pittsboro, NC 27312
J13,J20,J27,F3,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 22 E 16

All persons having claims against **CLIFFORD BRYCE HOLT AKA C. BRYCE HOLT,** deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 13th day of April, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 13th day of January, 2022.

George Michael Holt, Co-Executrix
1508 Old Coleridge Rd
Siler City, NC 27344
Bobby T. McDaniel, Co-Executrix
20 Shetland Rd
Rougemont, NC 27572
J13,J20,J27,F3,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY

Having qualified as Executor of the Estate of **GEORGE R. RAMSTAD,** late of Chatham County, the undersigned, Paul B. Ramstad, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said estate to exhibit them to Wayne R. Hadler, Attorney for the Estate of George R. Ramstad, Beemer, Hadler, Willett & Lin, P.A. 1829 E. Franklin Street, Suite 800-B, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514, on or before April 30, 2022, or be barred from their recovery. Debtors of the estate are asked to make immediate payment to the above-named Executor. This the 13th day of January, 2022.

CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

Line ad deadline
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Paul B. Ramstad, Executor of the Estate of George R. Ramstad
Wayne R. Hadler, Esq.
Beemer, Hadler, Willett & Lin, P.A.
1829 E. Franklin Street, Suite 800-B
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514
(919) 929-0391
J13,J20,J27,F3,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY

Having qualified as Executrix of the Estate of **HUGH C. FRIEL** a/k/a Hugh Charles Friel, late of Chatham County, the undersigned, Nancy Elizabeth Friel Hornik, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said estate to exhibit them to Jenna T. Hornik, Attorney for the Estate of Hugh C. Friel a/k/a Hugh Charles Friel, Beemer, Hadler, Willett & Lin, P.A. 1829 E. Franklin Street, Suite 800-B, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514, on or before April 30, 2022, or be barred from their recovery. Debtors of the estate are asked to make immediate payment to the above-named Executor. This the 13th day of January, 2022.

Nancy Elizabeth Friel Hornik, Executrix of the Estate of Hugh C. Friel a/k/a Hugh Charles Friel
Jenna T. Hornik, Esq.
Beemer, Hadler, Willett & Lin, P.A.
1829 E. Franklin Street, Suite 800-B
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514
(919) 929-0391
J13,J20,J27,F3,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY File No. 21 E 703

Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of **MARGARETTE ANN DANSBY,** late of Chapel Hill, Chatham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned at the offices of Davis Humbert Law, Attorneys for the Estate, 200 West Center Street, Mebane, NC 27302, on or before the 20th day of April, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to the said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned. This the 20th day of January, 2022.

Curtis Dansby, Administrator of the Estate of Margarette Ann Dansby
Davis Humbert Law, Attorneys for the Estate
200 West Center Street
Mebane, NC 27302
J20,J27,F3,F10,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 22 E 18

All persons having claims against **GENE AUTRY HEADEN,** deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 13th day of April, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 20th day of January, 2022.

Tammy Mauldin, Executrix
409 Major Lee Rd
Pittsboro, NC 27312
J20,J27,F3,F10,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY

Join the News + Record's Team

HELP WANTED

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The undersigned, having qualified as Executrix of the Estate of **STANLEY IVAN CHEREN**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate to exhibit them to the undersigned at the offices of Tillman, Whichard & Cagle, PLLC, 501 Eastowne Drive, Suite 130, Chapel Hill, NC 27514, on or before the 20th day of April, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the estate will please make immediate payment.

This 20th day of January, 2022.
BARBEL BESSEYRE, EXECUTRIX
 ESTATE OF STANLEY IVAN CHEREN
 Tillman, Whichard & Cagle, PLLC
 501 Eastowne Drive, Suite 130
 Chapel Hill, NC 27514
 J20,J27,F3,F10,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
 ALL PERSONS, firms and corporations having claims against **KIMBERLY WEHNER CAMPBELL**, deceased of Chatham County, N.C. are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 20th day of April, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery.

This the 20th day of January, 2022.
 Lonnie Allan Campbell, Administrator
 c/o The Walls Law Group
 5511 Capital Center Dr., Ste 180
 Raleigh, NC 27606.
 J20,J27,F3,F10,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF CHATHAM
 THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 6th day of January 2022, as Executor of the ESTATE OF **KHALID S. ISHAQ** aka **KHALID SULAIMAN ISHAQ**, Deceased, of Chatham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 27th day of April 2022, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This, the 27th day of January 2022.
DENA HANNA, EXECUTOR
 ESTATE OF **KHALID S. ISHAQ** aka **KHALID SULAIMAN ISHAQ**
 c/o Jennifer Dalman, Attorney
 Walker Lambe, PLLC
 Post Office Box 51549
 Durham, North Carolina 27717
 J27,F3,F10,F17,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 22 E 3
 All persons having claims against **DAVID P. SENKPIEL** deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 27th day of April, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.

This the 27th day of January, 2022.
 Lynn S. Craycroft, Executor
 7616 Reams Ct.
 Apex, N.C. 27523
 J27,F3,F10,F17,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 22 E 22
 All persons having claims against **JAMES WATSON**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 27th day of April, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.

This the 27th day of January, 2022.
CLYDE WATSON, Administrator
 565 Stockyard Rd.
 Staley, N.C. 27355
 J27,F3,F10,F17,4tp

PYRAMID NETWORK SERVICES, LLC.
 Pyramid Network Services, LLC proposes to build a 390-foot Self-Support Communications Tower at the approx. vicinity of 5408 Big Woods Road, Chapel Hill, Chatham County, North

Carolina 27517. Public comments regarding potential effects from this site on historic properties may be submitted within 30 days from the date of this publication to: Trileaf Corp, Benjamin Allen, b.allen@trileaf.com, phone: 678-653-8673, 1395 South Marietta Parkway, Building 400, Suite 209, Marietta, GA 30067.
 J27,1tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 22 E 8
 All persons having claims against **DANIEL JAMES RYAN**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 27th day of April, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.

This the 27th day of January, 2022.
 Jamie Lynne Cross, Administrator
 3312 Wickslow Rd., Apt. 2
 Wilmington, NC 28412
 J27,F3,F10,F17,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21 E 691
 All persons having claims against **BEVERLY FRANKS JOHNSON**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 27th day of April, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.

This the 27th day of January, 2022.
 Donna Johnson Decker, Executrix
 123 Russell Webster Rd.
 Siler City, NC 27344
 J27,F3,F10,F17,4tp

NOTICE OF UNCLAIMED PROPERTY

In compliance with NCGS §15-12, the Siler City Police Department hereby publishes its notice to the public on the unclaimed firearms listed below. The property has been in the possession of the Siler City Police Department and unclaimed for more than 180 days. After 30 days from the date of this notice, the following firearms will be disposed: Taurus 9 mm PT111; Hi-Point .45 ACP; Jennings J-22; Taurus Arms MP-25; Jennings J-22; Titan 25 Caliber Semi auto; Davis Industries P-32; Jimenez 380 JA380; Jimenez 380; Jimenez JA 380; Bauer 25 cal; Lorcin 25 Cal L25; Taurus 22 cal.; Smith & Wesson 38 cal.; NEF Co. 22 long rifle pistol R92; Taurus 94 22 cal. revolver; Taurus Brazil 38 revolver; Imperial Metal 7 22 cal. revolver, SW Special CTG 38; Ruger Bear Cat 22 revolver; High Standard Double 9 22 cal. revolver; Marlin 22 cal. rifle; Fabrinor Vitoria Firestorm 45 cal.; Glock 27 40 cal; Bryco Arms 9mm; Hi-Point C9 9 mm; SW M&P 45 cal.; SW H&R 733 Revolver; RG Industry 22 re-

volver RG14; RG 38 cal. Special All persons who may have or claim any interest therein are required to make and establish such claim or interest not later than 30 days from the date of the publication of such notice. Claims should be made to Property and Evidence Specialist, Jonathan Murray, or Major Jay Underwood at (919)742-5626.
 J27,1tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21 E 741
 All persons having claims against **ROBERT STEVENSON LACKEY, A/K/A ROBERT S. LACKEY**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit

the same to the undersigned on or before the 27th day of April, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.
 This the 27th day of January, 2022.
 Robert S. Lackey, Jr., a/d/a Steve Lackey, Executor
 410 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
 Chapel Hill, NC 27514
 J27,F3,F10,F17,4tp

the same to the undersigned on or before the 27th day of April, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.
 This the 27th day of January, 2022.
 Robert S. Lackey, Jr., a/d/a Steve Lackey, Executor
 410 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
 Chapel Hill, NC 27514
 J27,F3,F10,F17,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21 E 657
 All persons having claims against **GARY PETERSON AKA GARY GRUETNER PETERSON** deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are

notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 27th day of April, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.
 This the 27th day of January, 2022.

CHARLES E. NEWMAN, Executor
 707 East Colonial Drive
 Orlando, FL 32803
 c/o Kendall H. Page, Atty.
 210 N. Columbia Street
 Chapel Hill, NC 27514
 J27,F3,F10,F17,4tp

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Supported by the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services, with funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, opioid 57R Cures (Grant# H19Y1080257) and SFR-RX (Grant # 1U79SP022067).
 1. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2018). Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health.

Gallagher Names Pinehurst Medical Clinic a Best-in-Class Employer

For the News + Record

PINEHURST, N.C., January 25, 2022 – Pinehurst Medical Clinic (PMC) scored in the top quartile of midsize employers who participated

in Gallagher’s 2021 Benefits Strategy & Benchmarking Survey. PMC was recognized as an organization providing innovative solutions for creating organizational structures, workplace

policies and total rewards, which inclusively engages and motivates its employees.

“Being recognized as a Best-in-Class Employer is only possible with the work of a Best-Class-

Team,” said Brandon Enfinger, Pinehurst Medical Clinic CEO. “Pinehurst Medical Clinic employees live our mission to provide the highest quality of care to our patients and the communities we serve every day.”

As a Best-in-Class organization, PMC was assigned points based on their relative performance in:

- Planning horizons for the benefits and compensation strategies
- Extent of their well-being strategy
- Turnover rate for full-time equivalents (FTEs)
- Completion of a workforce engagement survey

• Use of an HR technology strategy and its level of sophistication

• Health plan premium increases or decreases at the most recent renewal

• Use of a communication strategy

“Pinehurst Medical Clinic takes a proactive and structured approach to planning, developing and implementing comprehensive benefits and HR programs,” said William F. Ziebell, CEO of Gallagher’s Benefits & HR Consulting Division “In doing so, Pinehurst Medical Clinic is able to develop a winning formula to attract, reward and retain the right talent and position the company

as a destination employer.”

Gallagher’s Best-in-Class Benchmarking Analysis profiles strategically significant attributes of top performing midsize (100-999 FTEs) and large employers (1,000 or more FTEs). Data from Gallagher’s 2021 Benefits Strategy & Benchmarking Survey was interpreted to identify participants that excel in optimizing employee and organizational well-being. To learn more about the report and the qualifying criteria, download the Best-in-Class Benchmarking Analysis: ajg.com/Best-in-Class-2021.



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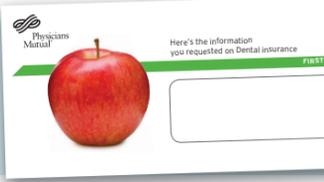
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