

Chatham News + Record

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THE SHOOTING OF MARK ANTHONY DIAZ

Retired N.C. Highway Patrol supervisor says trooper followed proper procedure during traffic stop

BY BEN RAPPAPORT
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — A retired N.C. Highway Patrol supervisor who analyzed the dashcam video for the News + Record of a traffic stop resulting in a Staley man's death has described the actions of Chatham County Trooper Rodney Cook during the incident as "text-book."

Footage from the May 30 seatbelt violation stop that ultimately ended in the shooting of 21-year-old Mark Anthony

Diaz was released by the North Carolina State Highway Patrol on Tuesday. The video shows Diaz stepping out of the car and brandishing a handgun before being shot by Cook.

Tim Bolduc, a 41-year law enforcement veteran, helped supervise Cook's training when Cook — who's based in Chatham County — was starting out as a trooper with the NCHP.

'He did everything correctly'

Cook's actions, Bolduc said, were in compliance with N.C.'s "deadly force" statutes and were justified, given that Diaz brandished a gun after being stopped for a seatbelt violation



N.C. Dept. of Public Safety

A screenshot of dashcam footage from North Carolina Highway Patrol of the traffic stop and fatal shooting of Mark Anthony Diaz by Trooper Rodney Cook on May 30.

that afternoon on Harmony Drive, near Solo Drive in Siler City.

"The deadly force statutes say if you're in fear of your life then you're licensed to use

your weapon," Bolduc said. "He complied, in my opinion, with the North Carolina general statutes and the training I've been taught."

The North Carolina deadly force statute — Article 20, Chapter 15A-401, Subsection d — says an officer is justified in using deadly force on another person for one of three reasons:

- To defend himself or a third person from what he reasonably believes to be the use or imminent use of deadly physical force
- To effect an arrest or prevent the escape from custody of a person who he reasonably believes is attempting to escape

See **SHOOTING**, page A3

'MY FOUR AND MORE'

Siler City mother's blog earns her a steady income

BY VICTORIA JOHNSON
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — From inside her Siler City home, blogger Amy Smith has accidentally achieved every entrepreneur's dream: build a thriving business around her passion.

The product? A lifestyle blog called "My Four and More." Housed at myfourandmore.com, Smith's blog offers seven different categories of content primarily for homemakers, parents and other kindred spirits seeking tips for the home, gift guides, travel recommendations, product reviews, and a whole lot of life advice — including finances, adoption, parenting and mental health.

"I didn't start it as a business," Smith, 40, told the News + Record. "I started it just as sharing my thoughts and then it kind of turned into a full-blown business."

Launched in late 2016, My Four and More originally began as a passion project and platform for Smith to share her own experiences navigating infertility, adoption and fostering, and lift up other women facing similar situations.

After discovering they couldn't have children, Smith and her husband, Josh (the assistant pastor



Submitted photo

Siler City resident Amy Smith manages two blogs: myfourandmore.com, a lifestyle blog, and homeremodeltips.com, centered on ideas for the home. Launched in late 2016, My Four and More originally began as a passion project and platform for Smith to share her own experiences navigating infertility, adoption and fostering, and lift up other women facing similar situations.

at Community Baptist Church in Siler City), eventually adopted three children — sons Ryan and Cameron, and daughter Camila — and even fostered other children

for a few years in Siler City before a bad experience prompted them to stop.

See **BLOG**, page A9



Courtesy of VinFast

VinFast's VF8, the smaller of the two SUVs it plans to manufacture at its facility in Chatham County.

VinFast speeds toward July start

EV manufacturer hopes to have public event in September

BY BILL HORNER III
News + Record Staff

VinFast, the Vietnamese automaker planning a \$4 billion electric vehicle manufacturing facility at Chatham's Triangle Innovation Point, hopes to begin moving dirt at its 1,977-acre site on or around July 1.

First, though, the company must acquire all that land.

"We're still waiting for them to finalize that," Chatham County Manager Dan LaMontagne said. "They're getting close."

Any delays, according to LaMontagne, could be attributed to determining exactly

See **VINFAST**, page A7

MARY JOHN LITTLE RESCH | 1939 - 2022

Resch, who owned Chatham papers with late husband, dies at 82

CN+R Staff Report

SILER CITY — Mary John Little Resch, the widow of Alan Resch, the former Chatham News and Chatham Record publisher, died Saturday after a brief battle with abdominal cancer.

She was 82. Funeral services are scheduled for 11 a.m. Saturday at First United Methodist Church in Siler City.

Mrs. Resch, a native of Edgecomb County, moved with her husband to Siler City

when he joined the family business in 1962; the newspapers had been in the family since 1939. For many decades, she wrote an immensely popular weekly cooking column, providing recipes and stories about the recipes for the newspaper's readers.

Mary John Little Resch

After Alan

See **RESCH**, page A3

'SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARES'

Churches host vigil, urge action against gun violence

BY BEN RAPPAPORT
News + Record Staff

CHAPEL HILL — More than two weeks after the tragic school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, two Chatham County churches hosted a prayer vigil gathering for the community last Thursday.

The "Swords into Plowshares" service, hosted by Chapel in the Pines and The Local Church and held at the former's sanctuary, was a powerful reminder of the need for healing in the wake

See **VIGIL**, page A13



Staff photo by Kim Hawks

Music Minister Sarah McCormack on viola and musicians Joanna Szeto and Leah Benn played piano and sang. They performed solo and led the congregation in singing throughout the vigil.

VIEWPOINTS

Check your programming defaults. (And while you're at it, your faults.)

Software upgrades are a nuisance. They're foisted on us through our tech devices at the most inopportune moments and force upon us changes that are, at least on occasion, unwanted — and sometimes ingratiatingly confusing and complex.

Essential? Yes. Upgrades are designed to de-bug and enhance the tools we use to make our lives easier, but if you've survived through enough of them, you've experienced the hassle they can also bring.

I'd been putting off one particular upgrade for some time on my email program of choice — Microsoft Outlook — in part because I'm stubborn. I've been using Outlook as my primary email program for more than 20 years. In comput-

er and software terms, that's about five lifetimes. The "new" Outlook, which Microsoft allows you to take for a test spin, didn't appeal to me visually. So I quickly switched back after giving it a couple of brief tries.

Depending on the programs you use on your computer or phone, and your operating system, you can sometimes postpone or even indefinitely delay upgrades. But Outlook tends to be buggy and the "old" program (which I used) lacked some cool tools the "new" Outlook, which was awful-looking, offered.

I like the functionality and the way Outlook email integrates other elements within the program but I'm in the minority here. Most people I know use Gmail; Google's email program incorporates all of that software behemoth's tools — many of which I use — and has about 1.5 billion users, nearly four times the number of Outlook aficionados like me.

Outlook is buggy (did I mention that?) and probably

more susceptible to viruses, but I'm loathe to sell my soul to Google by switching. Which doesn't make a lot of sense, given that, as an Apple fan, I've pretty much sold my soul to Apple. Except for Apple's mail program, which is, in fact, rotten.

So, not long ago, I made a commitment to the new Outlook — and, as these things tend to go, my leap of faith mostly paid off. Within a day or so I'd grown accustomed to the new look. And I made ample use of the new bells and whistles, one of which allows you to "pin" critical messages to the top of your inbox. I get about 500 email messages a day, so that's helpful when your response time lags.

But there was one thing I hated about the new Outlook: when hitting "reply" to a message, the reply email didn't automatically open up in a separate window.

That little inconvenience baffled me. Because I am an

inveterate multi-tasker and have a short attention span, I realized that many replies I intended to send ended up stuck in a "drafts" folder. I'd hit "reply," then in the middle of responding, jump to another task; if I clicked elsewhere in Outlook, then the unfinished "reply" would automatically end up as a draft and disappear — promptly forgotten. I discovered this little bug after chiding one too many people for not responding to messages I'd sent, only to find out (after they swore they'd not gotten a message) the replies were actually still drafts — and thus never sent.

I lived with this for a few months, habitually checking my drafts folders every day for stray replies. Then it finally dawned on me: this may not be a bug, but a *preference*.

So I went to Outlook, clicked on "Preferences," and looked hard. And there it was: a careful examination revealed a box — unchecked, unselect-

ed — with the option, "Open new messages and replies in a separate window."

I checked it, went to my email program, clicked on a message and hit "reply." Sure enough, it opened a new reply window.

Voila. As for the mystery of why this wasn't the new Outlook's "default" setting, I have no idea.

But what I'm really scratching my head about is why I waited so dang long to explore that question more fully. My right-brain tendencies — my own personal default settings — subvert logic and analytical thinking. When I slowed down to use my imagination and think about this "bug" intuitively, a solution came to me in about 17 seconds.

It makes me wonder what other unchecked boxes I have out there.

And it reminds me: sometimes the easiest "debug" is just taking a breath and asking yourself the right questions.

A sermon of tears

On June 9, at Chapel in the Pines Presbyterian Church, nine different readers stepped to the lectern and took turns reciting each of the 65 mass shootings in this country since November 2018. After each tragedy was named, the reader added, "Give to the departed eternal rest."

The congregation then responded, "Let light perpetual shine upon them."

I doubt I will ever forget this experience.

I knew it would be an emotional evening. I have three young children in a local elementary school and preschool, and the vigil was prompted by the school shooting in Uvalde, Texas.

Weeping occurs at the pain of loss and the injustice of death. Tears of grief, sadness and anger. I imagine we all weep, for to live is to suffer loss.

I had already cried several times in the previous weeks while watching news coverage, reading an eyewitness report of a doctor and researching the lives of the two teachers killed in the classroom, Eva Mireles and Irma Garcia.

But that evening as mass shootings were remembered, one after the other, I cried in a different kind of way. I wept.

When I was a child, about the age of the victims of the recent school shooting, I memorized Bible verses in Sunday School. The easiest one to remember was John 11:35 — "Jesus wept." Only two words!

As an adult, this Bible verse has moved from my head to my heart. Jesus wept at the death of his friend, Lazarus. Weeping occurs at the pain of loss and the injustice of death. Tears of grief, sadness and anger. I imagine we all weep, for to live is to suffer loss.

But such grief is generally reserved for private times, either alone or with our closest family and friends. At least, that is true for me. In public, I bite my lip and swallow the lump in my throat. I think there are occasions when this is justified. After all, it's hard for the service to move forward if the preacher is crying a puddle on the floor, right?

Or, do the tears preach for themselves? When Jesus wept, the onlookers did not respond with criticism. They didn't tell him to pull himself together! "See how he loved him!" (John 11:36.) Jesus spoke a lot of words, yet those tears gave voice to how he felt. We say a picture is worth a thousand words. Perhaps the same is true for weeping.

At the vigil, I sat near my colleagues and fellow worship planners, the Rev. Larry Neal of Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church and the Rev. Brent Levy of The Local Church. At the start of the litany of mass shootings, I tried to keep it together.

But looking at my dear friends, I saw their tears. Something shifted inside me. And I let the floodgates open.

Toward the end of the service, I offered a few words from the pulpit. I hope they were helpful.

What I know is that, when the service was over, a worshipper from another congregation approached me at the door. She reached out and held my hand between hers.

"Pastor, I saw your tears — that was the best sermon."

Andrew Taylor-Troutman is the pastor of Chapel in the Pines Presbyterian Church.



ANDREW TAYLOR-TROUTMAN
Hope Matters



Voices from the past can take many forms

Technology and I aren't the best of friends. It's not that I really despise it. I just don't understand most of it and am not very good at using what I do sort of understand.

There is some tech I don't understand, however, that I am grateful for, especially that which a cardiac surgeon used a few years back to give me a new lease on life. Bottom line here is I don't need to understand, just so long as the doc does.

However, a good deal of that attitude of mine, I confess, is because at times I'm a cynic about the whole business. For instance, when trying to make a call on my mobile phone, for which I pay a significant sum each month, I realize all over again that our little family lives in the Bermuda Triangle of communications service — that place where calls go to die. And, often, even if there is a connection, much of the conversation sounds like: "Hello crackle loof erk will you glabber and then frammin?"

Lest you think I've got it out only for phones, let me add I have trouble with most of the rest of the products of that world. For instance, I still cannot program a VCR — and here's the reality of that situation:

no one uses those anymore. We don't mainstream and livestream and any other stream and yes, I know, it's my fault and problem for being a dinosaur in the world of jets.

But here's my issue: we have on the bookcases of our den enough VHS tapes and DVDs to furnish a medium-sized video library. DVDs, I'm told, are themselves going the way of the buffalo but I've got some great ones — the complete catalog of "Hill Street Blues" and most of the "NYPD Blue" series, back when it was OK to support the police. There are also collections of Looney Tunes cartoons (the real ones), John Wayne movies and a truckload of history offerings. And I really don't want to give them up, just yet anyway.

For a time, I had a gizmo that would play both VHS and DVD but, alas, it went the way of all flesh and is now relegated to the electronics junkpile. Fortunately, my son in law, who *does* understand and do technology, has found for me a DVD player — which should be arriving any moment and which, he tells me, I can install myself. We'll see.

Another real concern about my video collection has come to light since I looked at the calendar the other day and saw June 19 marked as "Father's Day." It's been 30 years since I last spoke with my father, whom we all called "Pa" as a nod to his first grandchild, who coined that phrase when she spoke of, to and

about him.

On many a VHS cassette sitting on the shelf — unable to be viewed — are recordings of "Pa." To this day, I still remember much of the wisdom he shared with my two brothers and me — for instance, as I've shared before, "You can't have your cake and eat it, too" and "Keep it between the ditches."

My next mission is to send my son-in-law out on a search and rescue mission to find a VHS player or a combo product, even if he has to order it online (again something I don't know how to do) from Amazon. Even to this day, I'm surprised a river in Brazil sells so many products.

So, while I can remember what Pa said, I'm having trouble remembering *how* he said it. I'm pretty sure I'd recognize his voice if I could hear it again. It's just that I *can't*.

I'd like to. If you still have yours, don't wait until Father's Day Sunday to speak — and listen.

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.

What's on your mind?

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

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

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

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

VIEWPOINTS

How can we prepare for the coming job shifts?



MIKE WALDEN
You Decide

The focus in the labor market over the past year has been on the labor shortage. Not all workers who left their jobs during the COVID-19 recession have returned as the economy has improved. This situation has left many businesses short of help.

One of the reasons for the shortage is that many workers have moved on to other jobs that pay better. So, there's not only a labor shortage, but also a labor reallocation.

Economists agree the reallocation of workers will continue in the future, and likely at a faster pace. The reason is the fast development of new technology impacting how work tasks are accomplished.

The big questions are: how will this technology change the labor market, what kinds of jobs will expand and what kinds will shrink, and does North Carolina have the training programs ready to facili-

tate the shift in jobs? Technology has been changing the labor market for decades. The technology of tractors and harvesters took the place of thousands of farmers who moved to the city to work in factories a century ago. Later, new automation in factories pushed many workers to the service sector after World War II.

Today, technology is rapidly expanding. Any task that is done over and over, in the same way, can be accomplished by a machine. But the scope of what machines can do is growing. "Artificial intelligence" — which is based on replicating human decision-making — is allowing machines to do tasks never before contemplated, like driving, cleaning and reading data and charts.

Futurists expect the emerging technologies will replace many jobs in hospitality and leisure, manufacturing, sales and even personal services. At the same time, there will be growth in jobs in sectors like information technology, the sciences — particularly engineering, computers and life sciences — as well as

health care and financial and business services. In summary, there will be a greater need for workers who think and solve problems and less need for workers who perform repetitive and physical tasks.

I call this coming change in jobs the "great job shift," and I and many other economists think it will be a big feature of our economy in upcoming decades. Workers entering the labor force will obviously want to be aware of both increasing jobs and decreasing jobs. Perhaps more importantly, we want to make sure there are retraining programs ready for those existing workers who need to change occupations.

North Carolina has highly respected public universities and community colleges that are ready to help train new workers and retrain existing workers for future occupations. However, existing workers who are older and have families to support don't have two to four years to learn new skills.

Therefore, North Carolina also needs educational programs available to rapidly re-skill existing workers,

programs that take months to finish rather than years. The state also needs an expansion of apprenticeship programs, where an individual learns new skills on the job. Recently, North Carolina expanded funding for apprenticeships.

Sometimes workers who lose jobs can find new jobs in other regions of the state, but they don't have the funds to relocate. The state could consider establishing a "relocation fund" for workers who have found jobs in other regions but who have financial constraints on making the move.

Through its NCWorks Centers, North Carolina has served as a clearinghouse for businesses seeking workers and individuals needing jobs. The state may want to consider expanding the use of this information in two ways. One would be to actively suggest matches between businesses and workers. The second would be to use the information on the kinds of jobs workers lost and the types of jobs that need filling to inform educational institutions of skills in demand.

Unfortunately, sometimes job shifts occur on a large

scale, as when an entire company shuts down. Such large-scale closures can be devastating to local communities. North Carolina could think about establishing a "rapid work response unit" to assist displaced workers and communities when large business closures occur. The unit would have two responsibilities — making sure short-term assistance for necessities quickly reaches impacted households and helping put displaced workers on the path to re-skilling and re-employment.

Economies constantly change over time as new inventions and innovations occur. In most cases, these changes improve our lives, but there can be problems for some workers in changing from outdated jobs to new jobs. These changes will continue in the future, but probably at a faster pace. Do we have systems and programs in place so everyone benefits and no one is left behind? You decide.

Walden is a William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor Emeritus at North Carolina State University.

GUEST COLUMN | DENNIS W. STREETS

On gun violence, hold elected officials accountable

Growing up in a rural part of Florida, my brothers and I were able to protect our chickens with simply a single-shot .22 rifle. I guess we had better aim than those who say they need a weapon of war (the AR-15) to kill possums, raccoons, and other small animals.

I hear elected officials talk gibberish in trying to argue that the Second Amendment should guarantee the right to any style gun for any person. They deny the value of background checks and red flag laws. They think it's reasonable to have age-restrictions for the sale of cigarettes and alcohol or the rental of a car — but not for the purchase of weapons of war so powerful their victims can only be identified through DNA testing.

As important as funding for mental health services is, many of these same politicians have cut funding for such health care. They also ignore the fact that persons around the world also experience mental illness, but we in the United States are largely unique in our gun violence.

According to a recent article in the Journal of the American Medical Association, we in the United States join Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, and Guatemala in accounting for more than half of the world's deaths from firearms.

In 2020 alone, more than 45,000 Americans died from firearms — a 43% increase from 2010.

There have already been at least 246 mass shootings in the U.S. this year, including 27 in schools. For those excited about records, we are on track to break last year's most violent year when we had 682 mass shootings.

Where is the common sense? Where is the common decency? Why can't we be a civil society?

The courageous Ukrainian soldiers need weapons of war to defend their children and communities — not a person who kills our school children, those attending faith services, or elderly going grocery shopping.

I have to believe we are better than this — I pray we are — as recent polls suggest. Americans are showing overwhelming support for common sense gun laws. Isn't it about time our elected officials show some leadership? Otherwise — to be crude — they will continue to have blood on their hands: the blood of the children of Columbine, Sandy Hook, Parkland, Uvalde and so many others. And if we don't hold them accountable for their inaction, we too will have blood on our hands.

Dennis W. Streets is the retired executive director of the Chatham County Council on Aging.

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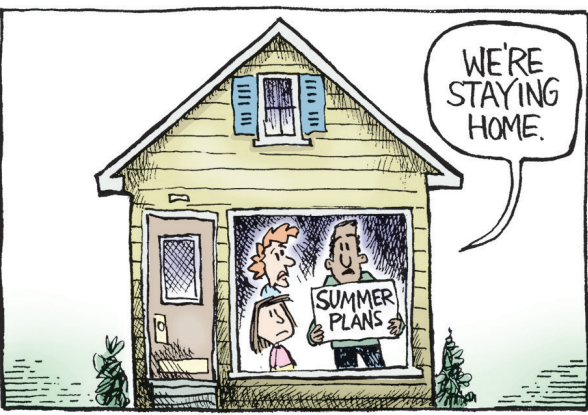
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LETTERS

Emotionally charged Uvalde coverage differs from reality

TO THE EDITOR:

The lead article for the June 2-8 edition of the News + Record ("Residents gather to mourn Uvalde victims, demand change") does not fall on deaf ears with me. I have three grandchildren, with a fourth on the way. I certainly would not want to see three or four sets of empty shoes either.

But more needs to be said than just the contents of the article. It was clearly written to touch emotions ("act on their anger"), etc., but clear thought needs to be given, less we be stampeded like dumb animals into giving up our right to self-defense.

To quote Jason Riley from The Wall Street Journal: "Most gun-related deaths — 54% in 2020 — are suicides. Mass shooting casualties are less than 1% of all gun deaths, and there have been 13 mass school shootings since 1966. These data points are cold comfort to those mourning the shooting victims in Uvalde, but they ought to inform any public policy response under consideration."

To quote further, "... proponents of additional gun laws ignore that shootings continue to plague places such as Chicago, which already has some of the country's most severe gun restrictions. How passing more gun regulations, or taking guns away from the law-abiding, will deter criminals is a question they can't answer."

Ask any "man on the street," and the emotionally charged saturation coverage given to mass shootings would have him convinced quite differently from reality.

Perhaps we should be having 54 times the vigils for the suicides? It certainly seems that there is more behind the vigils and reporting than just concern for the victims and families.

Let us be thinking (AND caring) humans. Not fear-driven cattle.

James Andrews

Siler City

Editor's note: Riley cited a study from Criminologists for Scientific American, which defines a "mass school shooting" as an event which results in at least four deaths. A study by the Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Homeland Defense and Security lists more than 2,000 school shootings since 1970, and more than 950 since the Sandy Hook Elementary School in December 2012.

If you're feeling the heat, then vote

TO THE EDITOR:

Feeling the heat? Most Americans (70%) feel that climate change affects their local community and that our government is doing too little. We must act now to avoid losing our planet as we know it.

In the past, the earth experienced fluctuations in temperature and climate. However, we are witnessing the first time that human activity is responsible for marked global warming over the past 175 years (since the Industrial Revolution) through burning fossil fuels for our energy needs resulting in heat-trapping atmospheric emissions. This accumulative "free" pollution is a market failure of using fossil fuel energy with carbon dioxide (CO2) remaining in the atmosphere for 300 to 1,000 years. Keeping "business as usual," we risk tripling our CO2 in 75 years — raising temperatures even higher with irreversible chain reaction feedback loops, such as melting polar ice (trading white "Albedo"

reflectivity for dark ocean solar heat absorption), deforestation (flipping forests from helpful carbon sinks to harmful sources), melting permafrost (containing twice the atmosphere's CO2 potentially adding another 150 billion tons) and warming atmosphere (increased heat-trapping water vapor altering jet stream and extreme weather patterns).

Exercise your political will! Please vote for a livable world! Our children and grandchildren's lives depend on it!

Minta Phillips

Julian

Thankful for another birthday, another year

TO THE EDITOR:

As I woke, my first thought was to put that loudmouth rooster in a crock pot and have him for lunch. My second thought was about that day being my birthday and that loudmouth rooster being a fitting meal for a birthday celebration.

Then my thoughts took a nose-dive into reality. The date of my birth and the current date flooded my mind and I quickly subtracted one from the other with the answer being in the 80s.

My years began with a much larger number of family members, most of whom have been with God for a while now. During my years, I have met a wide circle of friends and acquaintances with an extremely vast range of personalities, most of whom have been with God for a while now.

Thinking of how fast my years have passed and how lucky I am, I take time to thank God. Thank you, God, for all my years and for this beautiful day. And if you don't mind, please bless that loudmouth rooster who woke me to another day.

Carol Gene Good

Conover

VIEWPOINTS

We should do more for entrepreneurs

When it comes to fostering new businesses, North Carolina is doing better than average — but not as well as we could be.

That's a fair reading of the latest Indicators of Entrepreneurship report from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. Its composite index ranked North Carolina 15th in the nation last year in entrepreneurial activity. Among our neighboring states, only Georgia fared better.

Examining the measures that make up the index, however, reveals more of a mixed bag. North Carolina is below average in the share of residents who started new businesses and the share of those who did so by choice rather than by necessity (after suddenly losing one's job, for example). On the other hand, we're above average in

the share of new businesses that survived their first year and the number of jobs they created.

Making our economy hospitable to entrepreneurs is a cause in which we all have more than a rooting interest. While you often hear the claim that small businesses create most net new jobs, that's not quite right. It is young businesses, not necessarily small ones, that play a disproportionate role in driving investment, innovation, and employment gains in healthy economies.

Of course, the vast majority of those young companies began small. Predicting which firms will stay that way and which will enjoy explosive growth is an art many economic actors aspire to master. More power to them. As a journalist and policy wonk, however, I've never shared their aspiration. I just want to make sure our state is a preferred location for entrepreneurs, lenders, and investors to make the attempt.

So do leaders of the General Assembly. Over the past

decade, state lawmakers have enacted a series of tax and regulatory reforms designed to promote entrepreneurship in North Carolina by reducing its costs, increasing its returns, and removing any uncertainties caused by government.

Progressives argue vociferously that tax and regulatory policies have little effect on business decisions. They're mistaken about that — and their arguments have failed to persuade even Democratic officials such as Gov. Roy Cooper, who concedes that government-imposed costs shape economic outcomes. The real partisan divide is about scope and structure. Cooper and his allies believe in awarding tax breaks selectively, to companies already well-established and large enough to merit their attention, while GOP leaders in the legislature believe it's wiser to cast a broader net that includes firms of all ages and sizes.

Regarding the relationship between taxes and business formation, the latest evidence I've seen was published earlier

this month in the journal *Small Business Economics*. Examining business start-up rates along state borders — a common research design that serves to control for non-policy influences on economic growth — the authors found that jurisdictions with higher tax rates tended to have lower rates of entrepreneurship. Property taxes had the biggest effect, but other taxes depressed business starts, as well.

"Fledgling firms with low sales and income would not pay taxes on personal or corporate income or on sales, but they would still have to pay property tax," the authors wrote. "Hence, the property tax should have the greatest salience for entrepreneurs."

This latest paper follows earlier research that produced similar conclusions. A 2013 study in the *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Public Policy*, for example, found that state tax cuts promoted more business starts. Other studies show that lower regulatory burdens correlate with higher rates

of self-employment, income growth, and sustained business growth.

As for government services, North Carolina policymakers shouldn't be distracted by the trendy or exotic. Empirical evidence demonstrates that bread-and-butter functions — well-maintained highways, effective schools, robust protections for intellectual property, and fair, efficient courts for adjudicating disputes — foster the creation and growth of businesses. Many other services, including some programs specifically to nurture entrepreneurship, don't seem to have a measurable effect.

North Carolina is a popular place to start a business. Among southern states, however, Florida, Georgia, and Texas are even more popular. Will we let that stand?

John Hood is a John Locke Foundation board member. His latest books, Mountain Folk and Forest Folk, combine epic fantasy with early American history (FolkloreCycle.com).



JOHN HOOD
John Locke Foundation

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Examining the measures that make up the index, however, reveals more of a mixed bag. North Carolina is below average in the share of residents who started new businesses and the share of those who did so by choice rather than by necessity (after suddenly losing one's job, for example). On the other hand, we're above average in

College reunions take us back in time

Preparing for this month's 60th reunion of my Davidson College class, I thought about a talk I gave in 1997 to my father's class's 65th reunion.

When those men first arrived at college in the fall of 1928, they brought everything they needed in a suitcase or small trunk. The Great Depression began the next year, but these men came from the South, which was just about as poor before the stock market crash of 1929 as afterwards.

There were automobiles in 1928, but they were not so reliable as now. Not every family owned one. Even if they did, the idea that mother and father could leave the farm or the family business for two or three days to transport a child to college would not have occurred to many families.

In 1928, most people traveled distances by train — as they had done since the middle of the 19th century, when the construction and operation of a passenger train system first made long distance travel convenient. By 1928, trains were safe, reasonably comfortable, and much enjoyed and appreciated.

So, when I asked them who rode the train to college that late summer day in 1928, almost every hand shot up.

Along with their upraised hands, I could see memories pushing out from their faces and their suddenly clear, bright eyes.

I could tell. Each of them remembered every detail of that break-away-from-home trip.

I wanted to stop my speech and listen to each story — to every recollection of packing the trunks and what was in them, how they got to the train stations in their hometowns, who brought them there, how they said good-bye, what they wore, where they changed trains, whom they met, what they talked about, what they ate, how much money they had in their pockets, how they got from the depot to the college ... and on and on.

Then something struck me — something about the connectiveness of time when we let it sweep us backwards:

That late summer train ride in 1928 was closer in time to the end of the Civil War in 1865 than 1997 was to 1928.

Sometime during 1928, when these men were freshmen, another college class could have marked its 65th reunion. It would have been the class of 1863. Perhaps a few of them survived the Civil War and the hard times that followed. Perhaps some of that few made their way back to campus — and remembered back in time to the day in the fall of 1859 when they came by wagon or by the newly available railroads to enter college.

There is something else about my father's class that could connect us back to the middle of the 19th century. Those freshmen of 1928 would have been more comfortable going to college in the 1860s than if they had been suddenly thrust forward to the college life of today.

What was in one of their trunks in 1928 was very much like the contents of a young person riding the train to college in the 1860s — and so much different from all the possessions brought to college by today's students.

I looked out across the faces of the men 65 years out of college. All were more than 85 years old. Memories rose with their uplifted hands and brought back every detail of that train ride to college and were too quickly gone — all gone.

Most of their classmates had already finished their time on this earth, including their friend, my father, whose illness, early onset Alzheimer's, took away forever my chance to hear the story of his train ride from home to college — and all the other things he would have told me if only he could have been there with them celebrating their 65th reunion.

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

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



D.G. MARTIN
One on One



GUEST COLUMN | BOB PHILLIPS, COMMON CAUSE

It's time to end gerrymandering for good in N.C. by passing the Fair Maps Act

Squeezed between the spring's primary vote and the upcoming fall election, North Carolina lawmakers have returned to Raleigh for the 2022 legislative session.

One of the best things legislators could do to strengthen our state this year would be to end the decades-long cycle of gerrymandering by passing the Fair Maps Act (House Bill 437).

A quick primer: North Carolina's congressional and legislative voting maps are intended to be redrawn once a decade to account for population shifts shown by the latest U.S. census. That's called redistricting. But time and again, politicians in the legislature have abused the redistricting process. They've manipulated districts to unfairly favor their own party, depriving voters of a choice and voice in our elections. That's gerrymandering.

Over the years, North Carolina has seen both Republican and Democratic legislators commit gerrymandering. We the people have suffered as politicians impose district boundaries that split neighborhoods, silence voters and especially hurt communities of color. It's a sad fact that North Carolina has earned the misfortune of being known as the most gerrymandered state in America.

Fortunately, we've made important progress in the effort to stop gerrymandering.

Earlier this year, we at Common Cause and our fellow plaintiffs won a historic legal victory as the N.C. Supreme Court struck down the legislature's

extreme gerrymanders. For the first time ever, our state's highest court ruled that partisan gerrymandering violates the North Carolina Constitution. As a result of that landmark case, North Carolinians will be voting in much fairer districts this election. And the decision sets a crucial precedent for future rounds of redistricting.

But there's still more work to do.

Now we must enact lasting reform. We need to permanently take redistricting power out of the hands of partisan politicians and entrust it with an impartial citizens' commission to draw fair voting maps moving forward, with robust community input and complete transparency — totally free from gerrymandering. That's what the Fair Maps Act would accomplish.

Creating a citizens' redistricting commission is common sense, and it's had bipartisan support. Both President Ronald Reagan and President Barack Obama championed the idea when they were in office.

Of the 170 current members of the N.C. General Assembly, nearly 100 have at some point sponsored or voted for bills that would have established a non-partisan redistricting process. Even the legislature's two top Republican leaders — House Speaker Tim Moore and Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger — each sponsored legislation similar to the Fair Maps Act when their party was in the minority 12 years ago, although they now appear to be against that reform.

So why hasn't reform yet passed? The answer is self-serving political interests undermining the people's will.

When a party is out of power and on the receiving end of gerrymandering, they can see clearly that change is needed. But when they're in control of the legislature and doing the map-cheating themselves, politicians suddenly seem unable to resist the temptation of gerrymandering and they oppose the same sensible cures they once clamored for.

So long as politicians are crafting the districts from which they're elected, they'll likely continue to test the limits of how much gerrymandering they can get away with — no matter how much it harms the people of our state.

We at Common Cause have been working to stop gerrymandering for decades because our state's voting districts don't belong to politicians, they belong to the people. And we'll continue this fight until North Carolina finally has a redistricting process that puts people above politics.

Lawmakers of both parties must reject gerrymandering, respect our Constitution and recognize that North Carolinians deserve a better, nonpartisan way to draw our districts. It's time to pass the Fair Maps Act.

Bob Phillips is executive director of Common Cause NC, a nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to upholding the core values of American democracy.

Chatham County's incentives package for VinFast is valued at \$400 million. Here's how it might be paid out.

BY BILL HORNER III
News + Record Staff

Big industries are lured to a site and a location, in part, by big incentives packages — financial incentives paid out by state and municipal governments to companies over a specified period of time. Incentives are typically conditional and tied to a company's investment (based on value of total capital investment) in a project and the jobs it creates, among other things.

The total value of the projected incentives offered to VinFast has been pegged at around \$1.2 billion. That includes a state incentives package worth between \$766 and \$854 million over 32 years and still currently being finalized at the state level and in the N.C. General Assembly. Of that amount, about \$450 million will be spent on infrastructure — including roads, water and sewer — at and near the site at Triangle Innovation Point near Moncure.

Chatham County will add \$400 million in incentives, based on parameters such as the number of jobs created, benefits offered employees, wage level compared to county and state averages, number of Chatham residents hired and environmental impact.

The county's 3,700-word incentives agreement is currently in draft form. When finalized — county officials say that



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

VinFast announced its intention to create a \$4 billion electric vehicle manufacturing facility in Chatham County at this March 29 gathering in Raleigh.

could happen soon — it'll be the subject of a public hearing and then be subject to a vote by county commissioners.

VinFast could get up to \$316.1 million in reimbursement from the state if hiring goals are met, based on the state's Transformative Job Development and Investment Grant program; local and state officials have emphasized how critical the JDIG program was in helping to lure VinFast to North Carolina.

In Chatham, VinFast's incentives agreement, as written

now, calls for BIG (Business Investment Grant) and LABIG (Land Acquisition Business Investment Grant) payments. They're tied to certain conditions: investment of at least \$4 billion in real property, buildings, machinery and equipment, plus the creation of at least 7,500 jobs (FTEs, or full-time equivalents) at an average wage "exceeding or equal to that of the median average wage for Chatham County."

VinFast must "create and maintain" a certain employ-

ment level — starting with at least 1,997 jobs by the end of 2024, then maintaining at least 6,000 jobs by 2027 and beyond, and paying an "aggregate average wage" of at least \$46,000. The anticipated BIG payments — calculated based on "incremental taxes," or ad valorem (or property) taxes based on valuation of VinFast's investment — can be reduced on a pro rata share based on the actual number of jobs created by the end of each calendar year. BIG payments are grants based on a percentage of incremental

taxes owed; those payments decrease, based on the county's current incentives proposal, from 90% of that calculated property taxes in years 1-4 to 50% in years 16-20.

The incentives agreement also provides LABIG payments — payments in lieu of providing land to VinFast — also based on calculated incremental taxes. They'll be valued at 5% in years 1-4 and increase to 45% by years 16-20 — meaning essentially, that if it meets all the requirements in the county's policy, VinFast will get grant payments equivalent to 95% of its ad valorem tax bill for a 20-year period beginning in 2024.

"While 5% does not sound like a lot, it adds up to real money going into county coffers when it's a multibillion-dollar project," said Karen Howard, the chairperson of county commission board.

"VinFast has committed to a level of investment and job creation aligning with Chatham County's vision of what is truly transformational. Not only will this investment create well-paying jobs directly, but it will also attract additional industries and investments to our community including manufacturers, retail, and other businesses. Therefore, Chatham County residents will experience the lasting benefits of improved access to jobs, goods and services, and desired amenities."

VINFAST

Continued from page A1

which parcels at the TIP site VinFast intends to utilize.

"They're adding two small parcels to the overall tract," he said. "And they just need a little bit

more room, and they're trying to line those up. I think if they don't get those properties finalized, they'll just redesign the layout."

And when the land acquisition is completed and the incentives plans are finalized (see sidebar story), LaMontagne an-

anticipates things will move rapidly.

"The way I see this going is that we're at the initial stages of getting some of these details lined up, and then once those are all completed, it's going to be 'pedal to the floor,'" he said. "As they continue to re-

mind us, 'fast' is in their name."

When VinFast gets ready, he said, things move very quickly.

"And that was evident in the selection as well," LaMontagne said, referring to the breakneck process culminating in Chatham's TIP site being selected back in late March — which resulted in local and state staff cramming "about four months worth of work" into three weeks.

"And so they're very fast — once they decide, they just move," he said. "And I love that, but it's also intense."

LaMontagne said most of VinFast's activity now is centered on working with state government agencies on issues like permitting and erosion control. The company has engaged in introductory meetings with an array of departments in preparation for groundbreaking and will, in short order, begin more regular meetings on the local level as construction looms — particularly in regard to water and sewer infrastructure.

VinFast hopes to have an official groundbreaking event for the public on Sept. 22.

Michael Smith, the president of the Chatham County Economic Development Corporation, said his office has maintained a close relationship with VinFast and state leadership in the 80 or so days since the announcement, which was the largest economic project to date in state history.

"We've certainly been a part of a number of discussions in different ways," he said. "And we're certainly continuing to maintain a close relationship with state leadership as it relates to where the project is, and we're ready to go."

The county's partners at the state level — including the N.C. Dept. of Commerce and the N.C. Dept. of Environmental Quality, and "a large group of different stakeholders" — have been "outstanding," according to Smith.

"Things are moving exactly as we would want them to," he said.

Supply chain issues have impacted construction projects

everywhere, but Smith said VinFast was "well aware" of those challenges and has been mitigating potential issues and taking steps to meet its production targets — including having VinFast's premium SUV models rolling off the assembly line by the summer of 2024.

"That's the plan," Smith said. "That's why everybody's moving as fast as they are."

Meanwhile, activity at the county's other megasite, the Chatham Advanced Manufacturing (CAM) site in Siler City, continues. Neither Smith nor LaMontagne would speculate on the timing of any announcement, but anticipation on all fronts is high.

"I'm just hoping really soon," LaMontagne said. "We're getting a lot of activity. Of course, I think the announcement of VinFast is just showing everybody that this region of the state — and particularly Chatham County, with two megasites — is primed for this type of development. So we're seeing a lot of attention."

At a recent joint meeting of his commissioners and Pittsboro's town board, he remarked that Chatham already has, in VinFast, the largest economic development project the state of North Carolina has ever seen.

"We can break our old record," LaMontagne said. "Wouldn't that be wonderful? I mean, we're getting a lot of big, big companies, and a lot of really good companies [looking at the CAM site]. So I'm hoping that something will happen really soon."

Smith is mostly mum on specifics about discussions regarding the CAM site and the possibility of other automotive-related companies coming here, other than to say: "We're certainly continuing to have discussions with other large projects that are in the industry."

"We have a lot of interest, a lot of strong activity, the CAM site," he said, adding that "that's where all of our time has been spent" in the last month or so.

"At this stage, we continue to talk to various, several very large operations. And we're grateful that Tim [Booras, the

CAM site's co-owner] is such a great partner on that."

So many large industrial sites in the southeast have been acquired by large manufacturers in the last few years, he said, making any site within proximity to Greensboro and the Triangle "premium."

Meanwhile, the EDC office is considering bringing a project consultant to help with the VinFast project — something he said would be "another huge positive for the project and for our office."

Smith's workload has been such that one of Chatham's county commissioners recently inquired whether he'd caught up on sleep lately.

"I just said, 'I'll sleep in another year, when all this is behind us,'" he said.

That's if there's time even then: a recent report in Triangle Business Journal said the arrival of VinFast and the Toyota battery plant coming to the Greensboro-Randolph Megasite — North Carolina's lone automotive projects — might just be the first in a string of automotive-related projects coming to the Tar Heel state. TBJ quoted Christopher Chung, CEO of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, as saying that automotive is now a "leading sector of activity for us."

As of earlier this month, Chung's office had a pipeline of more than 250 potential projects — including 42 in the automotive sector — that would create 80,000 new jobs.

That doesn't include the 7,500 positions VinFast plans to fill at its plant, where production is expected to start in July 2024 with 150,000 vehicles per year. According to the Dept. of Commerce, vehicles to be produced at the site include the VinFast VF 9, a seven-passenger all-electric SUV, and the VinFast VF 8, a five-passenger, all-electric mid-size SUV. Ultimately, VinFast hopes to produce between 200,000 and 250,000 vehicles per year at the site.

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



Describe your give-back program:

The Galloway Ridge Chatham County Charitable Fund was established in 2006 to serve the citizens of Chatham County. Galloway Ridge residents help their Chatham County neighbors in need through the GRCCCF. Chatham County not-for-profits, schools, and governmental agency projects apply for community grants. We aim to fund projects in various locations within this large, rural county. In 2021 the committee granted 19 awards totaling \$100,000.

As a community in Chatham County, it's essential to support and help those surrounding us improve the quality of life for our neighbors.

What have been some results of your program?

As a community in Chatham County, it's essential to support and help those surrounding us improve the quality of life for our neighbors.

"With the help of the GRCCCF, 163 youth were provided with afterschool homework help to improve their academic standing." — Hispanic Liaison

"Thanks to the GRCCCF, we were able to assist six students who were in emergency situations with assistance. The students were then able to persist on their educational pathways." — Central Carolina Community College Foundation

"Thanks to the GRCCCF, we were able to hire a bilingual aide to assist in our preschool." — The Learning Trail

What's unique about your program?

Any non-profit (501(c)(3)) that serves in Chatham County is illegible to apply for funding. The funding is available for any particular type of service. We can help support human services, environmental causes, the arts, and more with this flexibility!

Residents of Galloway Ridge lead the fund. As a community, we donate annually through a funding drive and select recipients through our Chatham County Community Fund Committee. The residents of Galloway Ridge also enjoy giving back through volunteerism as well. We have participated in Habitat for Humanity builds and host members of the Boys and Girls Club for activities.

It has introduced us to several amazing organizations and brought awareness to our community's unique challenges.

How can our readers support you and your program?

Anyone can donate to the fund. However, we encourage readers to share this opportunity with any organizations that fit. The application window opens in the fall each year.

For more info: Connect through gallowayridge.com or call 919.328.2657

GIVE BACK: BUSINESSES GIVING BACK TO CHATHAM

Chatham News + Record

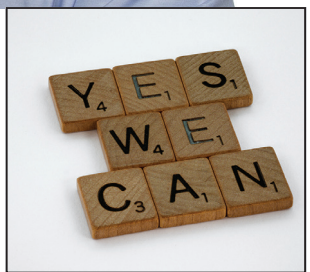


Join the Chatham County Council on Aging, Chatham Health Alliance and Vaya Health for a

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Western Chatham Senior Center
112 Village Lake Road, Siler City

Come out for free food, demonstrations from Chatham County Cooperative Extension and schedule your COVID-19 vaccination appointments!



BLOG

Continued from page A1

“We would get questions after questions,” she said. “I just felt like I was kind of repeating myself quite a bit, and I realized how many people out there are kind of in our same shoes of not being able to have children and trying to seek out options and different stuff. So when I started the blog, it was kind of a way to be able to compound all of our experiences.”

Such experiences, Smith added, also included severe depression.

“So the combination of that, with the adoption, there were just so many conversations we were having that I was able to put it all kind of in writing to where I can say, ‘Hey, you could also go read it on there,’” she said. “And it just gave a way to be able to kind of direct people — not that I don’t talk to them still, but you know, to be able to be a little bit more exposed with helping people.”

At first, her blog’s readership primarily consisted of friends and family. Over time, though, Smith and her readers began sharing her posts on social media, which drew more and more readers. Eventually, a combination of social media sharing and quality content led her posts to achieve top Google rankings, which in turn brought even more readers.

But readers weren’t the only ones catching on. Companies, including Best Buy and Jabra, began noticing her blog, too.

“It kind of turned into companies reaching out to me and asking me if I would sponsor their content — you know, different products or travel, different places, wanting us to feature them for travel features,” Smith said. “And so it kind of turned into more of just like a full-blown lifestyle blog where I do a little bit of everything on it.”

Based on traffic data from the last three months, My Four and More sees 21,600 unique views a month on average, plus about 212,400 monthly reads, meaning each visitor reads about 10 articles throughout a month on average. Her social media following spans thousands, too: On Facebook, “My Four and More” has over 2,500 followers. There are nearly 34,000 on Twitter, about 5,200 on Pinterest, and 14,000 on Instagram.

“Of course, some of those are, you know, Facebook, Twitter — it may be the same person following me on all four social media,” she said, adding with a laugh, “but hopefully they’re seeing it on one of them at least.”

Most, if not all, traffic her blog receives is organic, meaning most find her site on their own via search engines. When it comes to driving more traffic via complicated Search Engine Optimization techniques and social media strategies based on each platform’s algorithm, she said she’s still a novice.

“I don’t know how people are finding me,” Smith said. “I don’t know how — you know, I don’t know all of that. I’m not very good with the back end. I did set up my new website completely, I was able to do it completely by myself, but there’s still kinks in it that I’m working out ... I’m learning every day and I hope to continue to learn more and more to be even more successful, but something is working. I don’t know exactly what it is.”

As a result, blogging is no longer just Smith’s hobby; it’s become a full-time job, but one she absolutely loves, espe-



Screenshot

A screenshot of the home page of Amy Smith’s blog, My Four and More.

cially since she’s her own boss.

“It may be that I work at 8 in the morning, or it may be that I work at midnight,” she said, smiling. “I mean, it just depends on what we have going on, but it makes it flexible to where I can still be completely involved with my kids, and if we have anything going on at the church, or if my daughter has basketball camp this week — being able to just leave at any point and do what I need to do, and then I can get my work done later in the day.”

It’s a lot of work: she aims to research, write, and publish three to five posts a day. Sometimes, she’ll also review and publish sponsored posts for an editorial fee — something, she added, which has skyrocketed within the past three weeks especially, though she’s not quite sure why. Last Thursday, for instance, she’d already received over five such posts before 9 a.m. that morning.

Things have been so successful, in fact, that she recently launched a second blog, homere-modeltips.com, focused on ideas for the home. Besides publishing three to five posts on My Four and More, she’s begun writing at least three posts a day to build up readership for Home Remodel Tips.

“I was getting a lot more emails regarding home-type posts, like remodeling or decor, stuff like that,” she said. “And my blog, I do a lot of that on there with the myfourandmore.com, but it was getting to where there’s so many posts for that, that I thought, ‘Why not start a new one that’s more specific just to the home?’ So I started one.”

Yet, despite all the work she puts into it, Smith doesn’t see My Four and More as a one-woman show; rather, she sees it — appropriately — as a family endeavor. Josh helps with some of the writing, and when she’s set to publish travel features, most destinations will provide tickets and lodging for her entire family.

“So I look at it as even though I’m doing the writing and I’m doing the emails and all that, it’s kind of our family’s thing because if they didn’t want to have any pictures or if I couldn’t share their stories or whatever, it would kind of take away from the blog,” she said, laughing. “So, I look at it as kind of a combined effort.”

For her, such blog-inspired family trips count as one of the most rewarding parts of it all — though, she added, having the flexibility to work from home is “probably number one.” Thanks to My Four and

More’s success, Disney, Legoland, SeaWorld and Carowinds have all paid her family’s way to their attractions in exchange for travel features and reviews.

“It’s just a way for us to be able to really bond as a family while still being able to share our fun with everybody else,” she said.

Beyond family fun and flexibility, My Four and More also provides her a meaningful way to make a difference in people’s lives.

“My husband’s the speaker of our family,” Smith said. “I am not the speaker. I get nervous when I try to talk to people unless if it’s just one-on-one to chat type of deal, but [My Four and More] kind of gives me a way to feel like I have a purpose for going through some of the stuff that we’ve gone through, with the depression and then with the infertility. It kind of makes it worth it to have gone through that stuff and be able to share my experience to hopefully help somebody else.”

The most rewarding reader messages she’s received, for instance, come from families struggling to have children but had hesitated to adopt or foster children until they read her posts about her journeys with both. In another instance, a company contacted her about promoting a product on her website, which they’d only found because the company representative had been struggling with depression.

“It wound up turning into probably 20 emails back and forth, not even about the product anymore,” she said. “It was just about, ‘This is what I’m going through. I see you went through this, I really appreciate your insight on this. Do you have any other tips?’ It was just neat to see the difference that I had been able to help this person directly because of the blog. That’s probably the biggest response that I feel like was the most rewarding to me.”

And for those thinking about following in her footsteps, Smith’s got a small piece of advice: Just write from the heart.

“You have to find your passion because I honestly feel like the success from my blog came from me speaking from my heart, content that was personal and not to push the business side of it. If it’s going to happen, it’s going to happen,” she said. “I think that’s the biggest key — just writing what you’re passionate about and focusing on that before anything else.”

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



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FOR THE LOVE OF FOOTBALL

Northwood grad Josh Proctor takes next step as IMG Academy's newest tight ends coach

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
 News + Record Staff



Submitted photo

Cardinal Gibbons' special teams coordinator Josh Proctor (center), raises a fist, signifying fourth down, on the sideline of a Crusaders game during his three-year stint with the program from 2019-21. Proctor was hired to be the tight ends coach at IMG Academy in May.

BRADENTON, Florida — For most of his life, Josh Proctor has called the gridiron home.

No matter the state, city or town he's lived in, football has given the the 2005 Northwood High School graduate much-needed consistency, providing him with a constant sense of both security and structure.

Now, as a coach, Proctor uses football to do the same for his student-athletes, giving them a place where they can not only have fun playing the sport he loves, but do so while learning life lessons, building relationships and, most importantly, staying out of trouble.

After all the game's done for him, he says it's the least he can do.

"Football absolutely saved my life as far as keeping me out

of trouble, out of jail and from doing things that I shouldn't be doing," Proctor said. "I feel like I've got so much to pay back the sport of football, so I try to be the coach that I needed when I was that age."

Over the last 15 years, Proctor has coached up and down the East Coast, taking a variety of positions at high schools and colleges in West Virginia, Florida and North Carolina — including his alma mater,

where he was the varsity running backs coach and assistant wrestling coach for the 2011-12

season. But in late May, Proctor announced that, after a three-

year stint at Cardinal Gibbons High School in Raleigh — most notably as the Crusaders' special teams coordinator, part of a larger seven-year career at CGHS — he was taking on arguably his most exciting coaching role yet: he's now the tight ends coach at the illustrious IMG Academy in Bradenton.

"It's another opportunity to learn," Proctor said. "I've coached just about every position on the offensive side and I've been a special teams coordinator for the past seven years, but it's still an opportunity to learn because it's a chance to coach different types of athletes. ... I'm excited to learn different offenses and defenses that we didn't run at Cardinal Gibbons. It's all just so exciting and I can't wait to see where it leads."

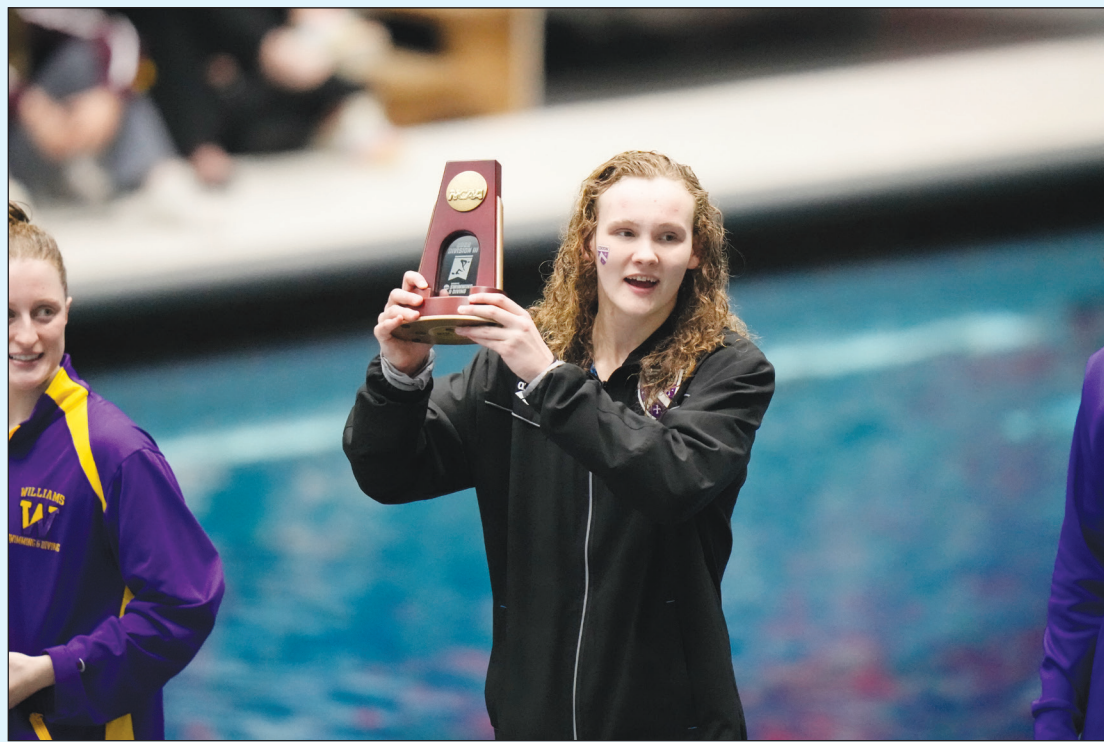
For PROCTOR, the opportunity

See PROCTOR, page B3

A DROUGHT NO MORE

Fadely caps off freshman year with national title as Kenyon snaps Emory's 10-year streak

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
 News + Record Staff



Submitted photo by A.J. Mast

Kenyon swimmer Jennah Fadely hoists a trophy at the NCAA Division III Swimming & Diving National Championships. Fadely took 1st place in two relay races and 3rd place in two individual breaststroke races.

GAMBIER, Ohio — Before she got to Kenyon College, Jenah Fadely hated change.

In fact, it frightened her. But once the Jordan-Matthews swimming legend made the 470-mile move from Siler City to Gambier, Ohio, last summer, she quickly learned how to embrace it, converting that fear into confidence that she'd use to become a freshman phenom for the Ladies and — perhaps most notably — a 2022 national champion.

"Normally, I'm really afraid of change, but this time, I'm grateful for a lot of change because I really saw myself grow from it," Fadely said not long after the conclusion of her first season as a member of Kenyon's swimming team. "I'm very happy with the outcome, and I'm excited to see what the future holds."

Fadely was part of the Kenyon squad that competed at the NCAA Division III Swimming & Diving National Championships March 16-19 in Indianapolis, racing in three individual and two relay events. She took first place in both of the relays,

including the women's 200-yard medley relay, where she and teammates Olivia Smith, Crile Hart and Emmie Mirus set an NCAA record in the pro-

cess with a time of 1:39.59. She also took third place in both the women's 100-yard breaststroke (1:00.75) and 200-yard breaststroke (2:14.57) at

nationals. And by the end of the fourth day, when all of the scores were tallied, Kenyon's women's team was officially

declared the Division III national champions for the first time since 2009, edging out 10-time defending champion Emory University by 7 points in a thrilling championship duel — Kenyon's 446 points to Emory's 439.

"We're just holding each other up and pushing each other to new heights," Fadely said, explaining how crucial teamwork is to Kenyon's success. "I'm not sure if we knew we were going to win, but we just kind of went out there and went for it. We kept going like we had all year and we kept up our spirits and our energy from day one to our last day of nationals."

When Fadely committed to Kenyon, she knew the type of program she was getting herself into: one rich with prestige, history and plenty of championship pedigree.

That's why, when asked whether she was surprised the Ladies had won the title in March, her answer was simple: A little, but not really.

Winning is just the Kenyon way.

See FADELY, page B2

I've always rooted for the Warriors. You should too.

Maybe this isn't a widely shared take, but I've never disliked the Golden State Warriors.



VICTOR HENSLEY
 Sports Editor

I never got tired of them when they made five straight NBA Finals appearances from 2015-19, winning three titles in the process.

I felt no animosity toward them when Kevin Durant, arguably the best player in the world in 2017, left the Oklahoma City Thunder to join the 73-win Warriors, who knocked him out of the postsason the year before, in a controversial move.

Throughout all of the victories, the championships and the parades, I never once got angry at them. In fact, I've pulled for them every step of the way.

It's interesting because, as so many sports fans do, I typically dislike teams that experience consistent success and shove it in our faces.

When I was at the lunch table in high school, there wasn't enough time in the day for me to express my disdain for the Tom Brady-led New England Patriots or the LeBron James and Dwyane Wade-led Miami Heat as much as I wanted to. That's partly because the attention they garnered was, at times, unbearable, but also because they were just so daggone good.

Now that I'm an adult, I can admit that.

But the Warriors, despite them being arguably the best NBA dynasty of my lifetime, have always gotten a pass in my mind.

And after they took down the Boston Celtics in Game 5 of this season's NBA Finals on Monday night, I think I've finally figured out why: sports are simply better when Golden State is winning.

When they're on, there may not be a more exciting team in all of professional sports.

Hate 'em or love 'em, the Warriors are absolutely must-watch TV.

Steph Curry, the greatest shooter in

NBA history, is currently having one of the best Finals performances of his career — and, quite possibly, all-time.

Curry, a name engrained in the fabric of North Carolina basketball history, has constantly gotten the short end of the stick when it comes to credit for the Warriors' success.

When they win, people love to credit teammates like Durant, Klay Thompson, Draymond Green, or even — after winning Finals MVP in 2015 — Andre Iguodala. But when they lose, people often chalk it up to Curry not showing up on the big stage.

Aside from Game 5, when Curry scored just 16 points on 32% shooting (0-for-9 from three-point range in his first-ever playoff game without a triple), he's been magnificent throughout these Finals.

Curry's been the leading scorer on his team in four out of five games, including a 43-point, 10-rebound performance in a must-win Game 4 in

See WARRIORS, page B2



Photo courtesy of Golden State Warriors

Warriors guard Steph Curry pumps up the crowd at the Chase Center during Game 5 of the NBA Finals on Monday. The Warriors pulled out the win, 104-94, to take a 3-2 series lead over the Celtics.

FADELY

Continued from page B1

Championship pedigree

The James A. Steen Aquatic Center, located on Kenyon's southwest campus, holds 985,000 gallons of water, 25 swimming lanes and, most importantly, 56 — soon to be 58 — national championship banners.

The banners, spaced out evenly, stretch from one end of the main room to the other, spanning the length of both pools and representing Kenyon's illustrious swimming history.

Dating back to 1980, Kenyon has won a total of 58 NCAA Division III swimming and diving national championships, including 34 men's titles, 27 women's titles.

Over the last 42 seasons — excluding 2020 and 2021, which didn't declare a champion during the COVID-19 pandemic — Kenyon has accounted for nearly 73% of all D-III swimming and diving titles, a run that's practically unrivaled in college athletics.

In total, Kenyon's 61 team titles, including 58 in swimming/diving and three in women's tennis, ranks it 4th all-time among NCAA schools (all sports, all divisions), just behind Stanford (120 titles), UCLA (116) and USC (107). It's the only non-Division I school in the top 10.

Gambier may have a total population of just a little over 2,300 people, and Kenyon's enrollment is just under 1,700, but it undoubtedly packs a major punch in the pool.

When Fadely arrived in Gambier last summer, it didn't take her long to realize Kenyon was special. And much, much different from what she was used to.

At Jordan-Matthews High School, where she swam from 2017-2021, Fadely was the team's premier student-athlete, consistently improving each season until she found herself at the top of the mountain in 2021 — taking home the first state championship in program history in the women's 100-yard breaststroke with a record-setting time of 1:02.11 at the NCHSAA 1A/2A Swimming & Diving State Championships in Cary.

Fadely's teams at J-M typically consisted of a



Submitted photo by A.J. Mast

Kenyon swimmer Jennah Fadely slices through the water in one of her 5 races during the NCAA Division III Swimming & Diving National Championships in Indianapolis in March.

dozen or so swimmers, many with little to no experience when they started out. Home meets took place at the fairly intimate Randolph-Asheboro YMCA in Asheboro, with most of the "fans" in attendance being other swimmers from teams the Jets are competing against.

But at Kenyon, it's a completely different atmosphere. And at first, it was overwhelming, Fadely said.

"This was the biggest team I've ever swam on, so I was worried about getting along with everyone, fitting in," she admitted. "But when I came up to the (youth swim) camp last year, I met one of my best friends, Maggie (Foight), she swims at Kenyon, and she'll be a senior this year. She introduced me to everyone and told me about how the team works. She made me feel really good about coming here. ... I don't think I would've been able to do it without her."

The Ladies' swimming and diving team had a roster of 38 student-athletes this season, many of which not only supported Fadely throughout her freshman campaign, but pushed her to become even better than she was during her title-winning senior season at J-M.

As important as the act of training is for Fadely and her teammates — with the team often practicing as early as 5 a.m. so it can fit in two training

sessions on most days — she cites the squad's closeness, and its energy, as the prime reason for the Ladies' overwhelming success.

"It's really emphasized here that our success comes together, that we're one team, we support each other and we don't stop cheering for each other until the race is done," Fadely said. "We're always encouraged to be the loudest team on the deck and that's one of my favorite things because we are very loud and we scream all of the time. ... I really just enjoy cheering everyone on and watching my friends cheer for everyone and have that energy, it gets me pumped up for my races."

Fadely said she gives her coaching staff, including Head Coach Jess Book and Senior Assistant Coach Fernando Rodriguez, all the credit for cultivating a welcoming, team-focused environment that makes her feel like she's a part of a family.

And this season, it all came together for the Ladies — talent, chemistry, energy — to form the program's first title in 13 years, strapping Fadely with her second championship in as many years.

Celebrating in Indy

On the final day of the Division III national championships, Fadely recalls the moment Kenyon hoisted the trophy on stage once the

Ladies were declared the champs.

"There was a lot of screaming, a lot of screaming," Fadely said, chuckling.

Kenyon entered the final day with just 4 1/2 points separating the top three spots alongside Emory and Denison University. But as the day progressed, the Ladies earned massive wins from the likes of Mirus (first place, 100-yard freestyle) and Hart (first place, 200-yard backstroke) — along with Fadely's third-place finish in the 200-yard backstroke — to secure the title.

"It was toward the end of the meet when my friend Emmie (Mirus) won her 100 freestyle and that's when I knew for sure that we had it," Fadely said. "We won by 7 points, which is kind of close, but we were still freaking out. It was a long 10 minutes of us sitting in a room, freaking out and crying and screaming and cheering."

Once the meet was

over, Kenyon went back to its hotel room where the student-athletes spent more time excitedly reminiscing over the previous four days — reliving every moment — before packing for their trip back home the next day.

The lack of sleep was surely worth it.

"A lot of my success I can really contribute to our team culture and my teammates and coaches because they've really helped me grow as a person," Fadely said. "I don't think I really could have done that if God hadn't put them in my life."

The grind doesn't stop

Nearly three months after the Ladies' takeover of Indianapolis, Fadely can still be found hanging out at the Steen Aquatic Center's pool.

While she continues to spend time working on her own technique, her reasoning for staying in Gambier through June is to help out at her second straight youth swim

camp, hosted by Kenyon.

Assisting her coaches and teammates with these camps not only allows her to provide instruction to children or teenagers interested in swimming, thus growing the sport, but also gives her a canvas to create lessons and critiques that she can use for herself in her own training.

"I just really love it, I like being able to work with the kids and help them improve on their strokes," Fadely said, "because, at the same time, it also made me aware of how my body works in the water because I was looking at things and seeing things and was able to point them out."

Once she finishes up with camp in late June, Fadely will be heading home to Siler City to spend time with her family and, of course, swim. Because the grind never stops — at least not when you're a national champion, eyeing a 2023 repeat.

After Fadely took home the individual state title during her senior season at J-M, she said that, despite all of the progress she'd made, she still felt a bit unsatisfied, refusing to get complacent before heading off to college.

Now, after two individual relay national titles and a team championship to top it off, her satisfaction level is rising.

But she still isn't there. "I don't think I've ever been happier than when I've been here at Kenyon, if I'm being completely honest," Fadely said, "but I do think I have more room to grow. ... All around, I've just been really satisfied with this first year. And I think I can improve again next year and I'm excited to keep pushing my limits to see how far I can go."

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

WARRIORS

Continued from page B1

Boston. He's had to deal with a spotty Thompson and a nearly nonexistent Green, yet the Warriors still have a 3-2 lead heading into a potential series-clincher on Thursday.

In short, this post-season has shown why Curry is not only one of the greatest basketball players to walk this earth, but why he's also one of the most exhilarating to watch.

However, as special as he's been, Curry doesn't deserve all of the shine.

Warriors Head Coach Steve Kerr — who, as crazy as it sounds, has never lost a playoff series before the Finals in eight seasons as an NBA head coach — has always found a way to get the best out of his role players. And this season's no different.

In Game 5, some of the most electrifying plays came from Andrew Wiggins — who was once thought of as a bust after being drafted No. 1 overall in 2014, but is finally hitting his stride with the Warriors as a legitimate threat — and Jordan Poole, who combined for 40 points, a third-quarter buzzer-beating heave and a game-sealing post-

er dunk in the win.

Like some sort of coaching magician, Kerr has had no trouble getting players like Wiggins, Poole, Iguodala, Kevon Looney, David West and plenty of others to play well above their potential in big-time moments over the last eight seasons.

And every single time, unless you're a fan of the Warriors' opponent, it's just so fun to watch.

After a fairly boring postseason, with so many games and series consisting of blowout-after-blowout, these Finals have been incredibly refreshing.

That's why I'm cross-

ing my fingers for the Celtics to come out firing in Game 6 on Thursday, taking care of business on their home floor to keep their season alive and force a Game 7 that will decide the 2022 NBA champion.

Because getting to see Golden State play one last time, with the Chase Center rockin' at full force in a winner-take-all barnburner, will be a treat unlike any other.

Let's make it happen, Boston. Don't let me down.

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



Animal Resources

Low Cost Spay / Neuter - Only \$20

Qualified applicants may purchase vouchers to use at participating pet clinics. Submit applications to:

Sheriff's Office Animal Resource Center

725 Renaissance Drive, Pittsboro, NC 27312
 Phone: 919-542-7203 [facebook.com/chathamsoar](https://www.facebook.com/chathamsoar)

Hours: Mon.-Fri. 11am-5pm and Saturday 10am-4pm, Closed Sun.

For a printable application, visit: www.chathamsheriff.com




Chatham COA Events & Announcements

June 20th through June 24th


Monday, June 20

- [COA Office Closed](#) in Recognition of Juneteenth

Tuesday, June 21

- [Body Conditioning w/Jackie](#) at 8:00 AM (at Chatham Community Church at Chatham Mills) 
- [Strong and Fit w/Olivia](#) at 9:00 AM (at WCSC) 


Wednesday, June 22

- [Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Exercise Program w/Olivia](#) at 9:00 AM (at Bray Park Pool, Siler City) 
- [Chair Yoga w/Liz](#) at 9:00 AM (at Chatham Grove Community Center and on Zoom)  

Thursday, June 23

- [Body Conditioning w/Jackie](#) at 8:00 AM (at Forest Hall at Chatham Mills) 
- [Strong and Fit w/Olivia](#) at 9:00 AM (at WCSC) 
- [Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program w/Olivia](#) at 2:00 PM (Aerobic Room, WCSC) 

Friday, June 24

- [Body Conditioning w/Jackie](#) at 8:00 AM (at Forest Hall at Chatham Mills) 
- [Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Exercise Program w/Jackie](#) at 9:30 AM (at Pittsboro Swimming Association) 
- [Friday Night Dance](#) at 7:00 PM (at WCSC) 

For more information or to register for these and other programs, visit our website: chathamcouncilonaging.org/activities/calendars/

-  **In-person - Pre-registration Required**
-  **Programming Hosted On Zoom**
-  **Fee Required for Participation**

The Chatham COA is Here for You!

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

Eastern Chatham Senior Center (ECSC)	Western Chatham Senior Center (WCSC)
365 NC-87 N Pittsboro, NC 27312 919-542-4512	112 Village Lake Road Siler City, NC 27344 919-742-3975

Prepping for hurricanes is just part of this department's year-round work

Newton: 'Preparedness is everyone's responsibility, not just government'

Hurricane season, which officially began June 1, could be a busy one. NOAA (the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) is predicting an above-average year for storms. Storm prep is one of the jobs that Chatham County's Emergency Management department handles, so this week we spoke with Steve Newton, who's served as its director since 2017.

Newton is also the vice chairperson of the N.C. Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee and serves on the N.C. Domestic Preparedness Readiness Region 6 Emergency Management Subcommittee. He's also been a member of the Harris Nuclear Plant Taskforce for 14 years.

He holds a master's degree in Emergency Management from Jacksonville State University and has participated in 22 federally declared disasters, including hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, fires, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, building collapse and dam failures.

Let's start with preparations for hurricane season, which began June 1. The NOAA forecast for 2022 calls for another above-average year in terms of storm activity, with between six and 10 storms reaching hurricane strength. What special preparations are you and your staff making for the season, which officially stretches through Nov. 30?

It only takes one storm making its way to Chatham County to be a disaster, so we approach most hurricane seasons the same. We meet with our community partners, confirm our emergency plans, check our generators, facilities and sheltering supplies, and start closely



Staff photo by Kim Hawks

Residents of Jeremiah Drive were flooded by water from Jordan Lake for more than 70 days after two N.C. hurricanes in September 2019.

monitoring tropical weather. We also met with the National Weather Service Raleigh, National Hurricane Center, N.C. Dept. of Transportation, broadcast media, and Emergency Managers on June 2 to review current climate conditions, new severe weather reporting tools and formats, and improvements to predicting inland flooding.

How do you advise the rest of us prepare for the potentiality of a hurricane impacting here?

Everyone should take steps now, before the next storm develops, to prepare themselves, their family, pets, and businesses, for a storm resulting in extended power outages, blocked roads, or damage requiring an insurance claim. Make a plan and share it with family members. Build an Emergency Kit for you, your family, and your pets. Stay informed through local media, trusted sources like the National Weather Service, and by registering for weather alerts. Check on your neighbors before

and after a severe weather event or other emergency. Visit readychatham.org or readync.gov for more information on preparing for disasters and to register for weather alerts.

We've experienced our fair share of flooding in Chatham County the last few years, so your department has had lots of practice responding. What particularly have you learned through that to help you respond when the waters rise?

The most important lesson is to stay out of flood water.

In North Carolina, the most lives are lost after hurricanes from inland freshwater flooding. Most of these tend to be from people driving their vehicles into high water or cars being swept away by rapidly rising rivers and streams. Six inches of fast-moving flood water will knock over an adult. Twelve inches of rushing water will carry away most cars.

The COVID pandemic is now more than two years with us. How much of your work and your department's work these days is impacted by COVID, or includes COVID-related tasks?

This February we finally reached the stage where we no longer needed to provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other supplies on a daily or weekly basis. Chatham County Emergency Management still receives occasional requests from our community partners for a small amount of PPE if their normal shipment is delayed and they are dealing with COVID-19 cases. The risks associated with the ongoing pandemic continue to guide our plans and strategies, especially when considering how to safely shelter evacuees in a congregate setting like a school or

community center.

Much of your work involves training and planning and collaborating with a variety of partners, including state and federal government and private industry. Can you share a few major projects that you've been focusing on?

We are always engaged in a wide range of projects and partnerships. One area of focus over the last few weeks has been with the NC Department of Transportation, fire departments, and EMS, as NCDOT starts planning for future traffic and development in southeastern Chatham County (Moncure).

At the same time, we supported a series of training exercises with the US Army on Jordan Lake along with the Chatham County Sheriff's Office and local swift water rescue teams. We've also continued to meet with local stakeholders to develop and pursue strategies to prevent and respond to opioid overdoses in the community. We've also started to prepare for our next series of FEMA-evaluated nuclear plant exercises.

Our largest project at this moment is the construction of the new Emergency Operations and 9-1-1 Center, which we hope to move into next March, a month before our next nuclear plant exercise.

What else do people in Chatham County need to know about the work you do?

Preparedness is everyone's responsibility, not just government. Our whole community must take on the shared responsibility of keeping our community resilient. This includes individuals, businesses, churches, schools, media, government, and others.

THE CN+R Q&A | JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION

Chatham's 'Juneteenth' observance features CORE, WEBB Squared events

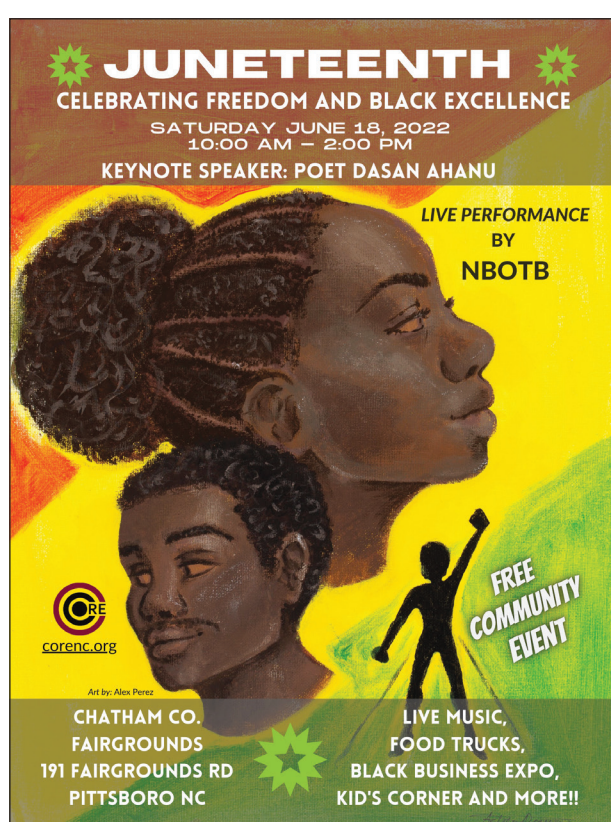
Two local organizations — CORE (Chatham Organizing for Racial Equity) and WEBB Squared — are working together to plan two events in observance and celebration of Juneteenth, which commemorates the emancipation of enslaved people in the U.S. The events take place at the Chatham County Agricultural & Industrial Fair Association in Pittsboro this weekend (Saturday and Sunday, June 18 and 19).

CORE Executive Director Karinda Roebuck and its Reconciliation Director, Michelle Wright, and Stephanie Terry — CORE's organizing director and the executive director of WEBB Squared — share details about the what's planned.

The "Juneteenth" observance in Chatham County will include special events this Saturday and Sunday, but let's start with an explanation of what Juneteenth is and why it's observed ...

WRIGHT: In 2021, Juneteenth became a nationally recognized holiday, but this day has been a celebration of Black culture and a space to honor Black resilience for many years. Five years ago, we chose to expand our recognition of this day into a community event. CORE pays tribute to the significance of June 19, 1865, when the remaining enslaved families and communities in Galveston, Texas, received news of their freedom from Union soldiers — finally making their freedom undeniable a full two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed. On that day, these newly liberated people put on their finest clothes and celebrated with food and fellowship. We could never imagine the feeling of being freed, but we work hard to honor this very important day.

ROEBUCK: As an organization, CORE is dedicated to ensuring that Chatham's Juneteenth is a community-led event where the vision and



planning is led by the Black community. It is an opportunity to remember where we have come from, celebrate where we are, and continue to fight for where we want to be. This day serves as an important reminder that we must be united in the fight for justice and equity, committed to reaching each and every community. CORE believes that liberation is In Our Hands, and we are committed to #BuildingStrongerCommunities.

On Saturday, CORE will host "Celebrating Freedom & Black Excellence" at the Chatham County Fairgrounds, starting at 10 a.m. and ending at 2 p.m. What's on tap for that celebration, and what's your objective for the day?

WRIGHT: This year our celebration has grown to include a variety of events and activities. We have an amazing keynote speaker, Dasan Ahanu, a renowned poet and activist. There will be a host of Black business vendors for the community to engage with, nonprofit tables to share information on local resources, and food!

We're very excited to have performances that

include local talent from our churches and dance studio, as well as the participation of Ben L. Smith High School out of Greensboro. The school's drumline and dance team is an amazing new guest. And last but not least, we'll have "New Band on the Block," a band out of the Raleigh area providing us with some of our favorite songs. CORE is also excited to host a kids' area where children can play games, hear storytelling, and leave with books.

Our goal for Juneteenth is to bring together Chatham and surrounding communities to celebrate Black Freedom and Black Excellence. We want this to be an event that offers a beacon of love and community — in a society where being unloved and disregarded can feel more common than empathy and kindness, we hope to offer a space where the fullness of the Black community is seen, heard, and honored.

What's the significance of having Juneteenth at the fairgrounds in Pittsboro?

ROEBUCK: Chatham Fairgrounds is officially called the Chatham

County Agricultural & Industrial Fair Association and was the home of the Chatham County Colored Agricultural Fair, which started in the 1950s. Today, it remains a Black-founded and operated organization. The history of this organization is a beautiful example of what community organizing looks like addressing issues important to the community — providing a safe place for African-American farmers and their families to gather. The fair has evolved to what it is today, remaining a Black-operated organization that hosts the annual Chatham County Fair, an event for all to safely gather and enjoy some friendly competition for the biggest pumpkin and watermelon.

Then on Sunday, WEBB Squared will celebrate Juneteenth with an entrepreneurial-related event. First, remind us of what WEBB Squared is all about...

TERRY: Wealth through Entrepreneurship for Black Business is a statewide nonprofit incubator for Black entrepreneurs living and building their businesses in rural counties in North Carolina.

Business data from the research-based company McKinsey & Company has projected that the Black-White wealth gap in the United States will cost the economy \$1 trillion annually by 2028. Studies also indicate that Black businesses achieving revenue parity with White companies can become critical components in closing the racial wealth gap.

While incubator-accelerators focus on Black Entrepreneurs in urban cities, there are few to none working to support Black Entrepreneurs in predominantly rural counties in North Carolina.

WEBB Squared is here to help these entrepreneurs succeed and create profitable Black businesses that will benefit rural

communities and their economies.

What will take place at the WEBB Squared event?

TERRY: To support our work, we started a social enterprise called WEBB Boutique and Thrift, an online thrift store that sells gently used books, jewelry, unique clothing accessories, and curated books with topics that range around our mission. On Juneteenth, we are having a grand opening pop-up of our boutique where people can come in person to shop with us, meet some of our entrepreneurs, and learn more about our work. In addition, we will have complimentary cold drinks while you shop.

Can you update us about how the entrepreneurs you're working with are coming along?

TERRY: WEBB Squared is in its pilot year. Measurable impacts to date include the following:

- We enrolled 19 Black entrepreneurs across five rural counties in North Carolina
- We helped to raise \$3,000 in micro-investment fundraising for one of our entrepreneurs
- Helped to write grants for two entrepreneurs for over \$10,000
- 12 entrepreneurs are writing their business plans
- 15 entrepreneurs completed three months of mindset training
- 16 entrepreneurs are meeting weekly with business coaches
- 16 entrepreneurs are actively working their businesses

What else would you like people to know?

TERRY: CORE has been moving and shaking this past year. We have begun efforts to build a broad-based community organizing organization.

What does that mean? Well, we are seeking to become an organization that hosts community organizing efforts. We want to provide the training for community members

to become community organizers so that we can begin campaigns to address some of our community's issues collectively. To learn more about community organizing, join us at one of our "What is Community Organizing?" information sessions or you can even host us to come talk to your group about community organizing.

We continue to organize parents with children in Chatham County Schools and clergy-persons in Chatham. In fact, as a member of the Bahai Faith, The Bahais of Chatham County are hosting for faith leaders "A Conference to Build Vibrant Communities: A Spiritually-Based Gathering Putting Faith Into Action to Create Unity in Chatham County" at 10 a.m. on Saturday, June 25 at Chapel in the Pines. We are also expanding our educational opportunities to faith-based institutions with our new workshop, Race Equity in Faith, launching this summer. Additionally, we are pleased to be launching our Reconciliation Project this Fall in which we expand our work on healing racial trauma in our communities and will continue with the Chatham Social Justice Exchange, People of Color Caucus, and White Anti-Racism Caucus.

Karinda Roebuck is a midwife by practice and a racial justice advocate by trade. She's co-authoring a race equity and power analysis intended for systemic change. Michelle Wright is a licensed clinical mental health counselor or associate, health education professional, farmer, and community advocate. And Stephanie Terry is a community organizer, trainer and entrepreneur who led a campaign to address the achievement gap by getting an equity assessment report with recommendations adopted and incorporated into the district by the Carrboro school board.

FOLLOW-UP: THE MOCK 'SLAVE AUCTION'

Poston says school system has 'an opportunity, a calling' to make students better citizens

Community-wide event planned for August to share how system supports families

CN+R Staff Report

In early March, an 8th grader at a J.S. Waters School in Goldston was subjected to a mock "slave auction" after class. The incident angered and frustrated much of the Chatham County community and led to a series of community meetings to address that and other discriminatory behaviors within Chatham County Schools.

Chris Poston

Work in response to what happened at J.S. Waters continues within CCS and the community. Last week, for the latest edition of The Chatcast, the podcast of the News + Record and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Carolina, hosts Bill Horner III and Daniel Simmons spoke with Chris Poston, the executive director for excellence and opportunity for Chatham County Schools, about what's happened in the months since the slave auction incident. The conversation has been edited for length and clarity; the full interview can be found on all podcast platforms by searching for "The Chatcast."

Poston is a Chatham County native and a part of the CCS system since 1996, working as an elementary school teacher, assistant principal and principal. He was named the 2015 Wells Fargo Region V Principal of the Year and was selected as Chatham County Schools Principal of the Year in 2015 and 2017.

Did this event surprise you? Or is it something you've seen before?

We know that there are systems and barriers in our society. We also know there are places as a community where we need to become better. So no, I wasn't totally surprised. We want our kids to feel safe at school, be good citizens and be responsible and respectful. Through what has happened, we see we have an opportunity, and a calling to support our students and make them better citizens.

Walk us through some of the more significant policy changes that have been implemented since this incident ...

CCS Superintendent Dr. Anthony Jackson's leadership has been stellar. And we're thankful that he's leading our community and our schools. We've always had a bullying and harassment policy, as a school district, and Dr. Jackson made sure that policy is clear to our communities, principals and students.

This incident gave us an opportunity to really focus on our equity commitment. When we say equity, we talk about making sure we reduce the predictability of who succeeds in our district. So regardless of your zip code or your level of poverty, our district's commitment is to make sure every student is successful — interrupting those barriers that prevent students from being successful. We also talk about cultivating unique gifts for every student.

We also made sure that there is support. Dr. Jackson approved with the school board a family engagement position we hope to hire soon and also additional excellence and opportunity with me and our team. It's a vision to support this equity commitment in our district.

The education system is responsible for teaching thousands of students. What do you think is important about the behaviors students display when they're in the classroom?

Language is important; language matters. We have to make sure we are teaching kids and adults about stereotypes and persistent, historical context so they can understand why words are inappropriate or hurtful.

We have made a commitment to make sure we do some consistent training and have a measure of training for our principals and teachers. We also want to support students — making sure they have a voice in how our school is run, and how they can give input. So we ask ourselves, are there things that we're missing? Are there some



Courtesy of Daniel Simmons

Chris Poston (center) was a guest on the most recent episode of The Chatcast. From left: Daniel Simmons of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Carolina and Chatcast co-host; Nancy Wykle, public information office for Chatham County Schools; Poston; Bill Horner III, publisher and editor of the Chatham News + Record and Chatcast co-host; and podcast producer JC Harper, the band director at Jordan-Matthews High School.

things that we need to address?

What have you seen with the way that students have reacted to this event that's given you optimism and hope?

I do think I'm just having crucial and honest conversations. I feel like this event did give us a moment to pause and really lean in and listen to students to think about how we can allow them to help make the change. We have a lot of focus groups around our district.

Our students have given us feedback about ways they want to get involved in their schools, not just the traditional ways like student council. We want to also make sure that we partner with different organizations in the communities where we can have the opportunity to make sure we're connecting with families and connecting with students. Because this is a community effort. This commitment that the school district has is beyond the walls of the school. It connects to families that connect to community organizations. This is an effort that we're committed to, but we'll need everyone's support.

How do you see reaching the parents and effecting change when it comes to diversity, equity and inclusion?

We want our families to feel connected to our school system; we want parents to feel welcome. In the doors of our schools, we want them to feel as though they can reach out to their child's teacher, their child's principal, that they're a part of the community and that their voice matters in our schools.

In addition to like traditional ways like P.T.A., many of our schools do community and school events.

We have an event planned in August, at the Mosaic in Pittsboro, where we're inviting all families to learn about all the programs we offer in Chatham County Schools and also programs in our community that support families and students.

Can you talk about some of those conversations that have been held, and what's come out of them that is usable in the school system?

We have a partnership with Renaissance and Dr. Karen Barbee. They have therapists many of our schools use and that's been a really powerful

partnership. We also have talked about a student advisory committee or a board — student leaders who think about how they can advocate for change in our community. We want to make sure that not only are we listening to students, but we're giving them the tools to really advocate for change.

What progress have you seen, within the faculty of Chatham County Schools? What conversations have taken place between faculty members, students and yourself?

We have welcomed conversation, for families, staff members and students. We shared a guidebook with teachers on how to respond to biases and stereotypes, and how to have those crucial conversations about race. And we gave our teachers an opportunity to have a discussion using the book. They said it was powerful to see feedback in the comments. It empowers teachers with tools, to better facilitate and handle conversations that are not appropriate.

We also had equity focus groups around our district in April. We had more than 120 teachers sign up and attend all

across our district. So just a small group of teachers coming together, responding to the pain and trauma that some of our teachers felt, that had happened in our community and also giving them a voice. It was a really powerful time, we're going to take those suggestions, and integrate them into the strategic planning process that we're undergoing now.

What about new disciplinary guidelines?

There's been an update to disciplinary consequences for students involved racist, homophobic or xenophobic incidents. This includes comments as well as actions.

Effective March 23, confirmed use of a racial, homophobic or xenophobic epithets, or bullying or harassment that was racial, homophobic or xenophobic and occurred at school or on school grounds, will have the following consequences for students in grades K-5:

- 1st offense will result in a 3-day suspension and required participation in restorative circles upon return

- 2nd offense will result in a 5-day suspension, administrative school reassignment and required participation in restorative circles upon return

- 3rd offense will result in a 10-day suspension, recommendation for long-term suspension and required participation in restorative circles upon return

Disciplinary consequences for students in grades 6-12 who commit confirmed acts of bullying or harassment that include racist, homophobic or xenophobic speech will receive:

- 1st offense: 10-day suspension/required participation in restorative circles upon return

- 2nd offense: 10-day suspension/administrative school reassignment/required participation in restorative circles upon return

- 3rd offense: 10-day suspension/recommendation for long-term suspension/required participation in restorative circles upon return

And what about restorative practices?

All administrators, social workers, counselors, behavior specialist and psychologist were trained prior to 2020. School social workers and behavior specialist received additional training so they could help train school staff. School staff was being trained during the 2019-2020 school year. We will be providing training for new student service staff and administrators in the fall and moving forward with our training model for schools.

What's the overall feeling at J.S. Waters and around Goldston? Do you feel like what you're doing so far is working?

Absolutely. We have a commitment to our students. Our guidance counselors and our school social workers are already planning and putting things in place for next year, to make sure we are ready. We are doing training with our principals this summer. We are also doing a book study with them also on a book called "Courageous Conversations About Race." We are making sure we are equipping everyone to do this work.

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GRADUATION 2022

THE CLASS OF 2022

Chatham County's high school seniors celebrate the achievement of graduation

Jordan-Matthews, Northwood and Chatham Central hold grad ceremonies

BY BEN RAPPAPORT
News + Record Staff

Hundreds of Chatham high school students walked across the graduation stage this weekend to receive their diplomas. It was a culminating celebration for a class that's had to overcome a roller-coaster high school experience — virtual learning, in-class with masks and any of the other myriad ways the pandemic upended the typical educational experience.

Regardless, these students persevered and have finally made it to the end of the long winding road. In the next chapter, they'll go on to the workforce, gap years and uni-

versities leaving behind a legacy for the next generation of students in Chatham County.

At the Jordan-Matthews High School graduation in Siler City, graduating seniors shared words of wisdom for future graduates. They said self-care and preserving mental health amid the chaotic times of high school was the most important thing to keep in mind.

"My mental health was a big obstacle," graduate Chloe Pace said. "Do your work, but take it easy and just go one day at a time."

Pace will be attending to Fayetteville Technical Community College in the fall to become a mortician.

While each student has different next steps, for one final time last weekend, they were together celebrating the journey they took together to get to this step. J-M graduate Evelin Muñoz Tebalan will be going to UNC-Chapel Hill next fall.

"I think this is a rare class where we all had a common thing to overcome — the pandemic," Muñoz Tebalan said. "It felt like our whole experience was rushed, but I'm glad we get this experience of graduation together."

Beyond J-M, the News + Record captured snapshots of the graduation ceremonies across Chatham County Schools.



Staff photos by Tanner Bubeck

A blue tassel is decorated with a gold 22 on the capo of one of the Jordan-Matthews graduating seniors on Saturday at the Jordan-Matthews High School gymnasium in Siler City.



Distinguished Alumni Cierra McEachem delivers and inspirational speech to the class of 2022 on Friday at Northwood High School in Pittsboro.



Blue graduation caps line the heads of the Jordan-Matthews High School graduating seniors as they await their diplomas on Saturday at the Jordan-Matthews High School gymnasium in Siler City.



The Jordan-Matthews High School graduating class of 2022 applaud each other as they receive their diplomas on Saturday at the Jordan-Matthews High School gymnasium in Siler City.



Northwood High School seniors walk across the football field to their seats before their graduation ceremony on Friday at Northwood High School in Pittsboro.



Seniors of the Northwood High School graduating class of 2022 throw their caps up in the air in celebration after officially being declared graduates on Friday at Northwood High School in Pittsboro.



Chatham Central High School Senior Ella Gaines gives her expression of gratitude speech to her graduating class on Friday at the Dennis A. Wicker Civic Center in Sanford.



Seniors of the Chatham Central High School graduating class of 2022 make their way on stage to their seats before graduation on Friday at the Dennis A. Wicker Civic Center in Sanford.



The student speakers of the Chatham Central High School class of 2022 are escorted to their seats before their graduation on Friday at the Dennis A. Wicker Civic Center in Sanford.

GRADUATION 2022



Staff photos by Tanner Bubeck

Graduating senior Kaylee Maness sings a solo to the Chatham Central High School Class of 2022 on Friday at the Dennis A. Wicker Civic Center in Sanford.



Chatham Central High School students look through the commencement ceremony pamphlets during graduation on Friday at the Dennis A. Wicker Civic Center in Sanford.



The Chatham Central High School class of 2022 listen as senior Nicholas Jourdan gives his address before being presented their diplomas on Friday at the Dennis A. Wicker Civic Center in Sanford.



Chatham Central High School Senior Nicholas Jourdan gives his senior address, titled 'Challenge', to his graduating class on Friday at the Dennis A. Wicker Civic Center in Sanford.



Northwood senior Jeremy Fernandez kicks off the introduction of the class of 2022 graduation ceremony on Friday at Northwood High School in Pittsboro.



Jordan-Matthews senior Wilson Ramos Meza stands in front of the graduating class of 2022 and delivers his senior address on Saturday at the Jordan-Matthews High School gymnasium in Siler City.



Jordan-Matthews High School seniors walk to their seats before their graduation ceremony on Saturday at the Jordan-Matthews High School gymnasium in Siler City.



Northwood senior Kennedy Poston reads her final reflection speech to her fellow classmates during graduation on Friday at Northwood High School in Pittsboro.



The Jordan-Matthews High School graduating class of 2022 listen to their fellow classmates give speeches on Saturday at the Jordan-Matthews High School gymnasium in Siler City.



Seniors of the Northwood High School graduating class of 2022 listen as a poem is read to them by senior Amelia Spell on Friday at Northwood High School in Pittsboro.



The Northwood class of 2022 line up behind their seats before their graduation ceremony on Friday at the Northwood High School football field in Pittsboro.

POLICE REPORTS

FROM CHATHAM COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

On June 1, Robert Raymond Case, 60, of 216 Coral Avenue, Goldston, was arrested by Staff Sergeant Scott Meulendyke for obstruction of justice. He was issued a written promise to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on June 6.

On June 1, Edward Keith Gurley, 62, of 216 Coral Avenue, Goldston, was arrested by Corporal Brandal Harrington for three counts of failure to appear. He was issued a \$300 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on June 15.

On June 1, Malik Dante Crayton, 26, of 1327 Russell Chapel Church Road, Pittsboro, was arrested by Corporal Brandal Harrington for two counts of failure to appear. He was issued a \$2,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Wake County District Court on June 29.

On June 1, Charles Raymond Hart Jr., 53, of 8238 Pittsboro

Goldston Road, Goldston, was arrested by Deputy Moises Carvajal for Domestic Violence Protective Order violation. He was placed on a 48-hour Domestic Violence hold and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on June 28.

On June 1, Michael Shane Martin, 49, of 135 Tupelo Circle, Salisbury, was arrested by Staff Sergeant Scott Meulendyke for Domestic Violence Protective Order violation. He was placed on a 48-hour Domestic Violence hold and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on June 8.

On June 6, Jason Daniel Oliver, 43, of 1985 Pittsboro Goldston Road, Pittsboro, was arrested by Deputy Devin Smith for probation violation. He was issued a \$5,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Wake County District Court in Raleigh on June 29.

On June 8, Claudia Marcela Martinez, 43, of 1206 S. 2nd Avenue, Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Vincent Iorio for malicious conduct by a pris-

oner. She was issued a \$2,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on June 28.

On June 9, Zoie Dasha Mason, 23, of 52 Airport Road, Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Reggie Griffin for speeding. She was issued a written promise to appear in Randolph County District Court in Ashboro on June 27.

On June 10, Ramel Antwane Godfrey, 31, of 360 Plaza Drive, Apt. E, Chapel Hill, was arrested by Deputy Zackary Gross for larceny by an employee, possession of stolen goods/property and obtaining property under false pretenses/swindle/confidence game. He was issued a written promise to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on June 28. On June 10, Mr. Godfrey was also arrested by Deputy Zackary Gross for possession with intent to sell/deliver marijuana, possession of marijuana up to ½ ounce, possession of drug paraphernalia, carrying a concealed gun and driving with license revoked. He was issued a written

promise to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on June 28.

On June 10, Joshua Whiteley, 24, of 2200 McLaurin Road, Pittsboro, was arrested by Deputy John Beach for child abuse. He was issued a written promise to appear in Chatham County District Court on June 15.

On June 10, Madison Dunn, 18, of 5248 Old US 421 S., Bear Creek, was arrested by Deputy Brooke Roberts for simple assault. She was issued a written promise to appear in Chatham County District Court on June 29.

On June 10, Elyjah Edward Coe, 20, of 99 Chatham Drive, Chapel Hill was arrested by Deputy Rami Amer for second degree trespassing and communicating threats. He was issued a written promise to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on July 6.

On June 11, James Brian Schoonover, 61, of 2949 Siler City Glendon Road, Siler City, was arrested by Cpl. Brandal Harrington for failure to appear. He was issued a \$400

secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on June 14.

On June 11, Christopher James Smith, 44, of 3064 Rosser Road, Sanford, was arrested by Deputy Chris Scales for burglary/breaking and entering and destruction/damage/vandalism of property. He was issued a secured \$2,500 bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on June 29.

On June 12, Brandon David Hart, 51, of 20012 Grier, Chapel Hill, was arrested by Deputy Matthew Mitchell for three counts of misdemeanor larceny. He was issued a written promise to appear in Wake County District Court in Raleigh on Aug. 4.

On June 12, David Brian Kidd, 40, of 27 Lane Street, Bennett, was arrested by Cpl. Brandal Harrington for Domestic Violence Protective Order violation. He was placed of a 48-hour Domestic Violence hold and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on June 28.

Pittsboro, county commissioners convene for first joint meeting since pandemic

BY TAYLOR HEEDEN
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — Chatham County and Pittsboro commissioners met jointly last Thursday to talk about Chatham's future, having discussions about the relocation and centralization of county services, the Pittsboro Town Hall project, water and sewer, Parks and Recreation and economic development.

This is the first joint meeting the two entities had held since before the pandemic, according to several commissioners present at the event.

Relocation of County Services and new Pittsboro town hall

Thursday's first agenda item was the county's plan to relocate its services hub to Renaissance Drive in Pittsboro — a move which, according to County Manager Dan LaMontagne, would help consolidate county services into one central location and provide additional space for county offices.

"We are getting very tight on space there," LaMontagne said.

This property is around 250 acres by the landfill and the Chatham County Detention Center. County services' current location at the south end of the traffic circle in downtown Pittsboro is four acres.

LaMontagne said the county's 2022-23 budget has allocated funds for various surveys and studies on the property to evaluate its financial feasibility.

"If county services are going to be in one central place, we want to see how that could be an asset to you as you're building and moving into your new spaces and whether there are opportunities to collaborate in that space," Chatham County Commissioner Chairperson Karen Howard said.

Referencing Pittsboro's new project to build a larger town hall, Howard suggested that Pittsboro use the old county facilities after services are relocated as a temporary town hall while the new one is being developed.

Pittsboro Town Manager Chris Kennedy, though, said the board put new town hall's construction "on ice" for now.

"The board met as a group several months ago and said the project is unaffordable right now," Kennedy said.

The proposed town hall project would cost Pittsboro \$26 million, meaning the town would have to take out multi-million loans or receive grants to finance the project.

Kennedy said he'd been in conversations with the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture for the



Staff photo by Taylor Heeden

Pittsboro and Chatham County Commissioners met in joint session last Thursday to discuss the future of Chatham and improvements to Pittsboro's infrastructure.

last year to try to receive federal funding for the project, but the back-and-forth conversations with the USDA had not gone the way he anticipated.

"We've been chasing down bank letters, trying to prove to USDA that we cannot find equal lending terms in the private market," Kennedy said. "We're really kind of at the point of telling the USDA to either approve the project or don't."

Instead of using the property near the traffic circle as a temporary town hall, Pittsboro Commissioner John Bonitz suggested using public land for affordable housing and commercial development.

"So many of our properties in town belong to a nonprofit, which is the government," Bonitz said. "We could have public-private partnerships where the land is retained in public ownership, but is leveraged with special agreements for development to occur ... for nice things like affordable housing that we so desperately need."

Howard supported Bonitz's idea, but said commissioners need to consider all options as to how to best utilize the property.

"It could make for a beautiful housing unit," she said. "I guess what you guys should be thinking is: is affordable housing at the circle the highest and best use for that space, or is there somewhere for affordable housing?"

Water and wastewater

Pittsboro gave a presentation to the county commissioners regarding their intent to partner with Sanford to merge both water infrastructures.

"We're in the infancy stages in many ways of the actual agreement of it (the merger with Sanford)," Kennedy said. "Both parties could pull out

of [it if] we don't find it advantageous, but we don't believe that to be the case — we don't believe we would've gotten this far if this was a marriage we couldn't make work."

Pittsboro announced their intent to merge with Sanford on May 23, and Sanford will decide if they agree to the merger during its June 21 meeting.

Sanford and Pittsboro staff met to discuss the framework for merging the systems, and Kennedy said the two municipalities would use models from other cities, such as Raleigh, Zebulon and others.

"One of the biggest fears is the unknown of how merging actually works," he said. "We feel very confident that we're going to provide a very good document, an instrument that allows this to happen."

Kennedy also told commissioners that the fast track granular activated carbon (GAC) project at the Pittsboro Water Treatment plant is "moving along well" and should go live within the next 30 to 45 days. The GAC project would allow the facility to effectively treat water for the removal of PFAS.

Parks & Recreation

Commissioners also discussed collaboration possibilities between each entity's Parks & Recreation departments.

According to Kennedy, Pittsboro plans to expand its Park & Recreation programming and staff. Next year's town budget has allotted funds for two new department, as well as several new parks and facilities, including a sports complex planned to be along Moncure-Pittsboro Road.

"We're looking at being between 40 and 50 acres, depending on how that develops," he said.

County Commissioner Franklin Gomez Flores sug-

gested creating a countywide intramural sports league, where participants would travel to different parts of the county to engage in competitive sports, such as soccer or basketball.

"The idea would be more so to have the northeast park of the county have their own teams, along with Pittsboro, Siler City and the rural areas in the county," Gomez Flores said. "They could create a team or two per sport and then travel amongst each other to the different areas of the county."

Gomez Flores also said the league would allow for people to visit areas of the county they otherwise may not have, which would also encourage out-of-towners to support businesses in the towns they visit.

"This would not only stimulate the local economy," he said, "but it would also help to bring more unity into the county, as well as get residents to understand different perspectives."

LaMontagne expressed support for Gomez Flores' idea, saying it would not only reap economic benefits, but it could be a fun thing for residents to do.

"I would like to partner because it's nice to have a county league and a city league," LaMontagne said. "It's nice to have competition, and the more people that you have, the more often you have tournaments."

Economic Development

The two boards also discussed several economic development opportunities, including the possibility of a new hotel at Powell Place — a Holiday Express.

Kennedy revealed on Thursday that the town is in conversations with the hotel chain, but first needed to clarify whether the chain has necessary utility capacity for the

project before moving forward.

Kennedy also said he wants to ensure the town can support the county in future development endeavors, be that for hotels such as the Holiday Express, or other opportunities that may arise.

"Certainly, we are a contributor to the EDC and want to promote some of those things beyond just Commissioner (Kyle) Shipp's role on that board," Kennedy said.

Howard said she sees a lot of opportunity for the two boards to collaborate on economic development, particularly within Chatham Park.

"I think that intergovernmental piece is critical that we kind of know what your game plan is, what your vision for major investment in Pittsboro looks like and how we support that," she said.

Howard said it would also be a good idea to work with community colleges, the Chatham Chamber of Commerce and other groups to encourage economic development within Pittsboro and the county as a whole.

Bonitz supported this idea, adding that this could also encourage the development of smaller, local businesses. With more larger businesses coming, such as Vinfast, he said he believes it is more important for the county and town to continue supporting local businesses.

"I feel like we have landed our mammoth, we've landed our whale, and there will be other whales that follow that," he said. "So I am very eager to do everything I can to support small business development, small business incubation, support and retention of existing small businesses."

Reporter Taylor Heeden can be reached at theeden@chathamnr.com and on Twitter at @HeedenTaylor.

‘COMPASS ROSE’

After 41 years of service, J-M librarian leaves a legacy of guidance and inspiration

BY BEN RAPPAPORT
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — For 41 years one woman has occupied the desk in the middle of the Jordan-Matthews High School library. It’s been a space for students to have their college essays read, contemplate difficult life decisions and feel safe in the often chaotic times of high school.

Now, the woman behind the desk — a bedrock of the J-M community — is retiring. Rose Pate celebrated her final year at J-M on Wednesday night with a special retirement ceremony in the school’s auditorium. The ceremony featured more than 50 current students, staff and alumni dating as far back as the class of 2006.

The auditorium seemed a fitting place for Pate’s retirement ceremony as the founder and president of JMArts, the nonprofit organization to enhance arts education at J-M. When Pate founded JMArts in 2011, the school barely had enough funding to put students on stage in a costume. She wrote and produced three one-act musicals, working with J-M chorus teacher Matt Fry. The final one was “Twi-School Musical,” a mashup of the Disney hit “High School Musical” and the Twilight books, which they performed because the school couldn’t afford rights to perform a Broadway show.

Since then, J-M has performed nine Broadway musicals, including “Into the Woods,” “The Little Mermaid” and “Oklahoma!” The theatre program is set to perform its 10th, “Shrek the Musical,” next spring.



Staff photo by Ben Rappaport
Retiring Jordan-Matthews High School Librarian Rose Pate hugs a former student after her retirement ceremony in the school’s auditorium last Wednesday. Her husband, Chip, looks on.

Pate’s leadership in the arts extends beyond theater. She’s also been instrumental — pun intended — in supporting the band, chorus and visual arts programs.

“There are so many opportunities for students at J-M that simply would not exist without Rose Pate,” J-M marketing teacher Rachel Daniel said during the ceremony. “Everything Ms. Pate has done for JMArts is truly incredible.”

Last Wednesday’s ceremony was filled with heartfelt tributes and songs from past and current students. It featured snippets about the legacy Pate is leaving at J-M and glimpses at the talent she helped foster on the very stage where the goodbyes were said. By the end of the night, there were few dry eyes left in the room.

“I’m overwhelmed with joy,” Pate said afterward. “I just wept with happiness the

entire time because all of my former students, colleagues and friends made this really meaningful.”

Pate said it was fulfilling to see students of past and present and witness their growth on one special night.

“She is the perfect symbol of what J-M stands for,” said senior and emcee of the ceremony Wilson Ramos Meza. “Her love for the arts has inspired me, and I think I speak for everyone when I say Ms. Pate is cherished.”

Throughout the night, there were stories of Pate going the extra mile for her students and the arts program. Once, Alyssa Gaines, a J-M student from the class of 2018, sent Pate a text on a whim because she was performing in a college junior recital in South Carolina.

“My school is about four hours away from here,” Gaines said. “But it didn’t matter. She

and [husband] Chip made the drive to come see my recital, and it just meant so much to me.”

Gaines performed a song from that recital, “Nothing Is Too Wonderful to Be True” from the show “Dirty Rotten Scoundrels,” during the ceremony.

Another performance was from Heath Smith, a J-M alumnus from the class of 2014. He played a piano rendition of “Music of the Night,” from “Phantom of the Opera.” The meaning of the song for Smith, however, extends deeper than a visceral ballad about choosing between passion and romance. Smith didn’t see the movie until after he graduated high school, but when he finally did watch it, his first message was to Pate.

“I said, ‘Ms. Pate, this is the best thing I’ve ever heard,’” Smith said.

He then forgot about that message until a few weeks later when there was a knock at his door.

“There was a wrapped up gift from Chip and Rose,” he said, “and it was a copy of the musical score to the show.”

Smith said he went on to learn every piece of music in that book. He added getting to perform “Phantom of the Opera” was special for him because it symbolized the type of impact Pate had.

“Tonight was incredible because we celebrated a woman who has so much of an impact on so many lives,” Smith said after the ceremony. “Knowing her has been a jewel in my life. It was so special to be able to perform something that Ms. Pate spawned my love for.

Every time I play it, I think of her.”

Following Pate’s retirement, that desk in the library will be taken over by J-M alumna and teacher Jessica Kimrey — something she said only feels natural. When Kimrey was a freshman at J-M, her parents told her if she ever felt lost that she should come to that desk in the library and find Rose Pate.

“From that moment on, Rose Pate has been my compass rose,” Kimrey said. “When I was upset and needed someone to talk to, the office in the library was my go-to destination. When I wanted to celebrate or needed an essay read, Ms. Pate’s office was the first stop.”

Kimrey said Pate was the person who encouraged her to reach for her dreams. She said Pate asked the right questions to counsel her, and many others, through tough life decisions.

“That library has felt like home since I was 14 years old,” Kimrey said. “It felt like home because of Rose Pate. It’s my goal, I hope, that I can continue that legacy just a little bit as I transition in trying to fill very big shoes that are being left behind.”

Following the conclusion of the school year, Pate said she will remain involved as president of JMArts. But first, she and her husband Chip are taking some much-deserved time off with a trip to New York City to see more shows on Broadway.

Reporter Ben Rappaport can be reached at brappaport@chathamnr.com or on Twitter @b_rappaport.

NEWS BRIEF

Siler City seeking applications for at-large commissioner

The Siler City Board of Commissioners are accepting letters of interest from the public to serve as

a member of the Siler City Board of Commissioners representing the at-large district seat that was held by Thomas “Chip” Price, who was elected mayor.

Interested parties must be registered and eligible to vote in the city limits (all

the highlighted areas on the map) in order to be considered.

Letters of interest and any supporting information about qualifications and experience should be submitted no later than 2 p.m. on Friday, July 8.

Submit letters to Town Clerk Jenifer

Johnson at jjohnson@silercity.org or by mail at P.O. Box 769, Siler City, N.C. 27344.

For questions, please contact Johnson at 919-742-4731 or jjohnson@silercity.org.

—CN+R staff reports

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With a servant's heart, Tillman retires from Council on Aging

BY JIMMY LEWIS
Chatham County Council on Aging

SILER CITY — In reality, Faye Tillman will never be located at the bottom of the ocean floor. Nor will she mow down a runner attempting to steal second on a baseball diamond or communicate the defensive signals.

But her Chatham County Council on Aging colleagues, past and present, had different ideas on a Wednesday afternoon at Western Chatham Senior Center.

"She's like an octopus," Western Center Activities & Wellness Specialist Olivia Hayden said. "She can do eight things at one time."

Although lacking eight appendages on a day where Tillman was recognized for her 18 years of service to the Council — her last day as manager of the Western Center before retirement was Friday — she drew praise for one attribute that rose above all the others.

Steadiness. Stability. Dependable.

It was Dennis Streets, the COA's former executive director, who likened Tillman to some of Major League Baseball's greatest catchers. With a baseball in hand as he spoke, Streets had no problem citing



Courtesy of the Chatham Council on Aging

Congregate clients and staff pose for a group photo with former Western Chatham Senior Center manager Faye Tillman, who retired last week. Tillman was a COA employee for 18 years.

the likes of Sandy Koufax and a litany of pitchers that could paint both sides of the plate and leave batters in stitches on their way back to the dugout.

But it was at the "2" position in the baseball scorebook — that of catcher — where names were harder to come by for Streets. The likes of Yogi Berra, Johnny Bench, Mike Piazza, and Yadier Molina were never uttered.

That was fine. And rather intentional. Tillman never sought the limelight. But when it came time to make a key organizational hire for the COA, Streets knew he could rely on Tillman to provide and help drill down to the key attributes a successful candidate had to have.

Many faces have come and gone through both centers in Pittsboro and Siler City during Tillman's tenure with the council. But her presence proved unflappable and never budged, beginning as a part-time employee before eventual-

ly assuming the key leadership role at the Western Center.

"The closer it gets, the more-teary eyed I get," Tillman said.

It's that desire to serve the seniors of Chatham County that made the closing days of her career bittersweet even as she prepares to spend some extended quality time with her husband, Jerry.

However, one would be advised not to try to keep Tillman in a single place for too long. An attempt to hold a conversation about her career last week was quickly interrupted by a legitimate request.

There was a client in the library that needed to talk with her for a minute. Time was of the essence, but every step taken by Tillman on this day was bathed in purpose and an institutional knowledge of her surroundings.

The steady advocate for western Chatham's seniors knows how to brighten a day with a

simple word or smile. Or, she can speak on behalf of that one senior that needs just a little extra help with the electric or phone bill for a given month.

"The more I did with the seniors, the more I loved them," Tillman said. "They make it a rewarding job. It's the best job I've ever had. Because I'm helping somebody; I'm making somebody's day if I can make one of them smile or laugh."

Tillman, who cited the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic as the biggest challenge of her career, has seen a high rate of return among seniors who try out COA facilities on a trial basis.

"I think we've attracted more seniors that have come because they find out it's a good place to come and visit," Tillman said. "By doing some of the improvements to the building (ramps), it's made it acceptable for some who were on a walker. The rocking chairs are encouraging to them. They can sit

outside and chat to each other and some of the programs we do, they love. We've made it a good place for them to sit and socialize instead of being homebound."

The time has come for Tillman to step into retirement and entrust the care of Western Center clients to a new generation. She departs, still with a watchful eye.

"If I know they're going to be taken care of, I'll be happy," Tillman said. "Because remember — everybody's going to be a senior if they live long enough."

Tillman did have one parting assurance for the COA's clients. With retirements come turnover and newer, often younger faces to assume the vacated roles. But that doesn't mean the lines of communication have been severed.

"If they don't treat you right, you call me," Tillman assured. "Because I will come back!"

Siler City's Public Works, Utilities department to split

BY TAYLOR HEEDEN
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — As Siler City continues to grow, new Town Manager Hank Raper says expansion of town services will become a necessary step to ensure residents are satisfied with the work of town departments.

One first step: expanding and separating Siler City's Public Works and Utilities department into two separate entities.

"We want to draw businesses here, we want to draw residents here, we want our community to look good," Raper said. "We need to start making plans for the future and look at Siler City as to what we expect it to be with the growth rather than what it's been."

Raper proposed this split at the town's most recent commissioners meeting last Monday, and commissioners unanimously approved the split. Since that meeting, Raper has made job postings for both departments.

His reasoning: as it stands, Raper said most of the work the current department does is with water and sewage, but there are still maintenance calls for road repairs, trash pickup and more.

"As a town, that (water and sewage) is top of the list when it comes to essential services that we have provided," he said. "The challenge is when you have a limited staff with limited resources, it means to get that right, other things get neglected — not because we want to, but because there's not enough time, not enough staff, not enough money to address those other issues."

The split will allow for Public Works and Utilities Director Chris McCorquodale to address more issues regarding Siler City's water and sewer infrastructure, including a recent moratorium the state placed on the town's sewer plant. The moratorium should not impact current customers, according to McCorquodale, but new sewer customers will be unable to connect to the town's system.

"Violations cited by the state include, exceeding

limits on nitrogen, ammonia, BOD (Biological Oxygen Demand), and toxicity," McCorquodale said. "We have been working to address these issues at the sewer plant by updating aging equipment, like the blower motors, backwash pumps, changing our feed system around to help with settling of sludge. We are also in the process of starting a plant upgrade that will address the majority of these issues. We currently do not know how long this will take to be lifted. We have had a conversation with the state and are having another meeting with them very soon."

Siler City's Utilities Department will be headed by McCorquodale and will address issues strictly involving water and sewage, such as the moratorium. The Public Works department will be led by a new hire and will address issues including building maintenance and road repairs.

Raper said dividing Public Works and Utilities better prepares the town for an influx of new residents that could come with job expansion from the \$4 billion VinFast manufacturing facility and potential new tenants for Siler City's Chatham Advanced Manufacturing (CAM) site.

"As we have grown, it is becoming more of a challenge to make sure that we're providing the level of service that the

customers expect," he said. "So breaking the department out will allow us to have another director to focus on the Public Works component."

Additionally, the split will allow for current employees to find "specializations" and move up the ranks. Raper said a change in the department's working model will help not only encourage employees to work towards higher positions, but it will also help to retain employees who may seek work elsewhere.

"Departments are getting smaller as far as the levels, but more specialized," he said, "It's not just about getting that job and staying with an agency and working your way up over a 30-year career — it's much more transient than that. So it's just something we have to recognize and adapt to."

Siler City is bound to see a significant increase in population due to economic development, according to Raper. With VinFast coming to Moncure, Toyota bringing jobs to neighboring Randolph County and the possibility of the CAM site becoming a hub for another big manufacturer, Raper said Siler City could soon see unprecedented growth, which will bring more money into the town.

"The new money that may come in to address new residents is going to need to go towards adding services for those new

residents — it doesn't give you extra money to fix the preexisting challenges," he said. "I want to make sure that we're identifying all the existing challenges that we have, and are working towards dedicating revenue to solving those problems so that we don't fall into that trap, so I think this will be a tool in

helping us do that." Raper said he has already received applications to fill the position for the Public Works Director and hopes to fill that position by the end of the month. Once someone is hired to be the head of the Public Works, the split will officially begin.

"It's moving us in the direction of providing

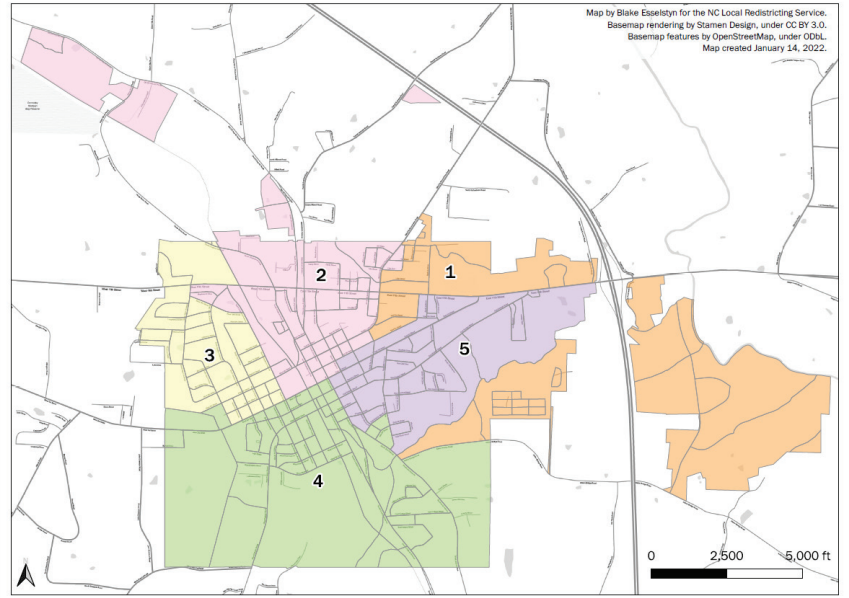
higher quality service," Raper said. "Not just what we can get to with limited staff, but also saying we have people whose job is to make sure these specific services are provided."

Reporter Taylor Heeden can be reached at theeden@chathamnr.com or on Twitter at @HeedenTaylor.

Siler City Board of Commissioners Are Accepting Letters of Interest for the At-Large Commissioner Vacancy

The Town of Siler City Board of Commissioners are accepting letters of interest from the public to serve as a member of the Siler City Board of Commissioners representing the At-Large District. Interested parties must be registered and eligible to vote in the city limits (all the highlighted areas on the map below) in order to be considered.

Town of Siler City Commissioner Districts



Letters of interest and any supporting information about qualifications and experience should be submitted no later than 2:00pm on Friday, July 8, 2022.

SUBMIT LETTERS TO:
Jenifer Johnson
Town Clerk
Town of Siler City
PO Box 769
Siler City, NC 27344
jjohnson@silercity.org

For questions, please contact Jenifer Johnson at 919-742-4731 or jjohnson@silercity.org.



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THE CN+R REVIEW | NEIL MORRIS

'Lightyear' is fun and funny, but a pale Pixar prequel

Three one-sentence title cards at the outset of Pixar Animation's "Lightyear" reveal that young Andy from "Toy Story" watched that made him yearn for a Buzz Lightyear action figure. It is a helpful clarification about "Lightyear's" place in the "Toy Story" universe, one

that would have been far more effective if built into the actual animated portion of the film (for instance, an epilogue showing Andy and his parents leaving the theater as he breathlessly begs for a Buzz Lightyear toy). As presented, the perfunctory context feels like a slapped-on explanation prompted by one too many questions posed during the post-production process.

Such is the quandary with "Lightyear," an otherwise entertaining, even charming bit of animated fun that would be more than satisfying in a cinematic vacuum. As a "Toy Story" spinoff, however, it is a middling addition to the Pixar oeuvre.

In a galaxy far, far away, Space Rangers Buzz Lightyear (voiced by Chris Evans this go around) and Alisha Hawthorne (Uzo Aduba) led an exploratory expedition onto an uninhabited planet. When conditions turn hostile and their spaceship is damaged, Buzz, Alisha, and the rest of their hibernating Star Command members are unable to leave the remote planet. Their only means of escape is to manufacture the rocket fuel to achieve hyperspeed. Buzz is the most qualified pilot to test the fuel. The problem is that due to gravitational time-slippage, a test run that feels like mere hours to Buzz actually lasts over four years to his marooned crewmates.

A culmination of numerous failed runs plus one final successful flight lands Buzz 60-plus years in the future, when all his contemporaries (including Alisha) have lived lives and passed on. The now-colonists have evolved into a functioning self-contained society, with a ruling sect that seems settled on remaining where they are. Still literally living in the past, Buzz has other aims that place him at odds with the new authorities.

LIGHTYEAR
GRADE: B -
DIRECTOR: Angus MacLane
STARRING THE VOICES OF: Chris Evans, Keke Palmer, Peter Sohn, James Brolin, Taika Waititi, Dale Soules and Uzo Aduba
MPPA RATING: PG
RUNNING TIME: 1 hr. 40 min.

Helmed by "Finding Dory" director Angus MacLane, "Lightyear" boasts the superb animation you would expect from a Pixar production. From Buzz's interstellar jaunts to his clashes with Emperor Zurg (James Brolin) and his army of robot baddies, the film earns its action bona fides. The highlight of "Lightyear," however, is Sox, a robot therapy cat Alisha gifts to Buzz. Voiced by Peter Sohn, Sox and his repartee with Buzz is the film's witty heart and the amusing centerpiece for both adult and kid viewers.

Only Sox cracks the code for hyper-speed fuel, just one of numerous plot holes in an ultimately slapdash plot — since Sox is just a computer, why couldn't the colonists just program another computer, or robotic pet, to formulate the fuel during any of Buzz's many absences? The ultimate reveal behind Zurg's identity also presents a mystifying puzzler.

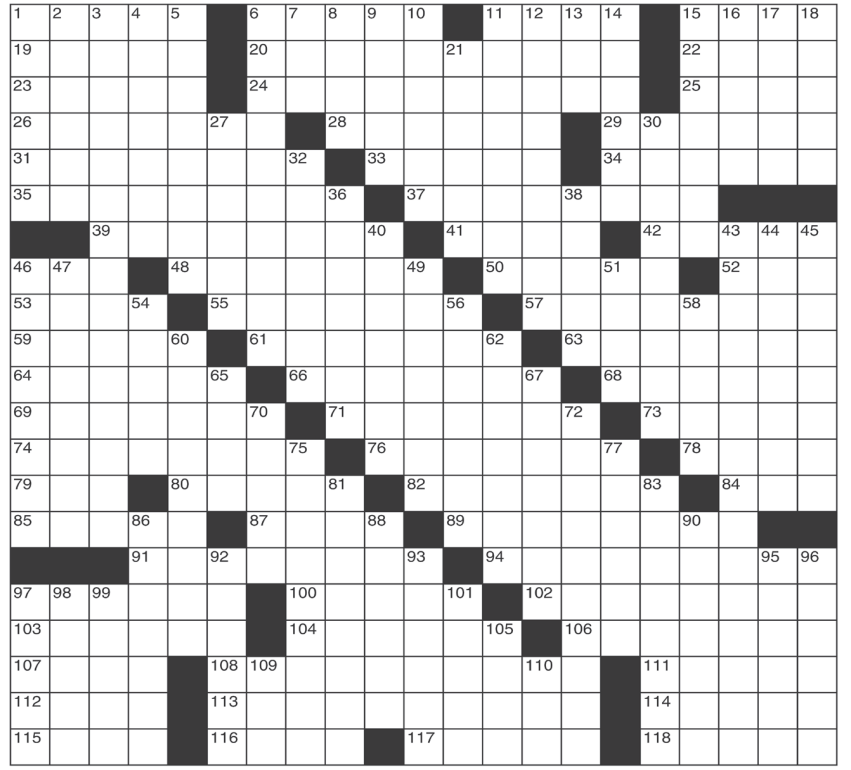
Moreover, the latter half of "Lightyear" comprises Buzz teaming with Izzy Hawthorne (Keke Palmer), Alisha's granddaughter, and a couple of ranger cadet misfits (Taika Waititi and Dale Soules) to stop Zurg and find a way home. They convey standard-issue lessons about the value of friendship and teamwork that are well-suited and worthwhile for "Lightyear's" target audience.

But they are also pat and superficial, a far cry from the existential underpinning of Pixar movies like "Finding Nemo," "WALL-E," "Up," "Ratatouille," "Coco," "Soul," and, heck, especially the "Toy Story" tetralogy.

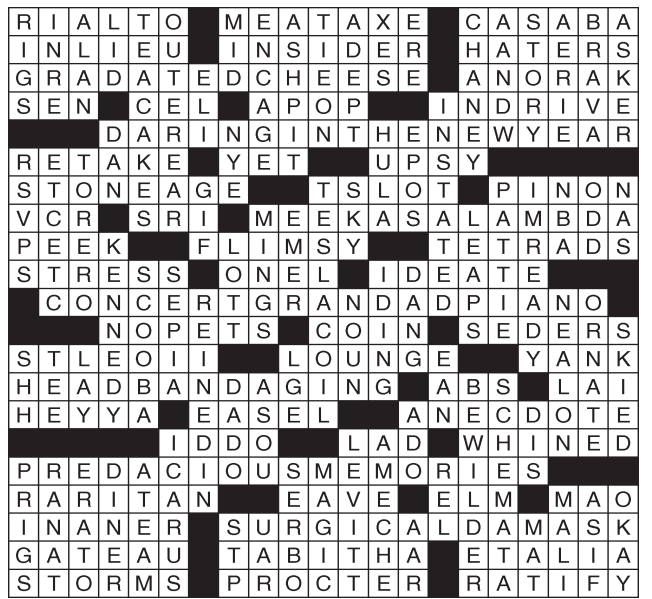
"Lightyear" is a fun and funny diversion, well worth consuming but not as much contemplating.

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo

- UNTHEMED #5: STEEP STAIRWAY
- ACROSS**
- 1 Offer hush money to
 - 6 Strip of gear, as a ship
 - 11 Weight unit for a druggist
 - 15 "I am at your — and call"
 - 19 "Elementary" actor Quinn
 - 20 Sonata, often
 - 22 Many a cruise stopover
 - 23 Unconcealed
 - 24 Customized for
 - 25 Lee of Marvel Comics
 - 26 Like a swine
 - 28 Also-rans
 - 29 Like a diluted drink
 - 31 Parceled out
 - 33 "Haven't — before?"
 - 34 Shout of discovery
 - 35 Having two hues
 - 37 "It could go either way"
 - 39 Rival of Delta or United
 - 41 Urgent
 - 42 Fire residue
 - 46 Taxpayer's ID
 - 48 Dedications
 - 50 Fender guitar, for short
 - 52 Ltd. cousin
 - 53 Pot toppers
 - 55 Edits for publication
 - 57 Conflict
 - 59 Sad paper notices
 - 61 Say a different way
 - 63 Michael who co-hosted "Live" with Kelly Ripa
 - 64 Gets broader
 - 66 "No outlet" street
 - 68 Always, in music scores
 - 69 Keyboard instrument
 - 71 One of three womb-sharers
 - 73 Florida's Key —
 - 74 Charges for not paying on time
 - 76 Decongestant brand
 - 78 Legal claim on property
 - 79 Broke a fast
 - 80 Filmflam
 - 82 Non-PC person?
 - 84 Suffix with Taiwan
 - 85 Bothersome types
 - 87 Boring type
 - 89 Relax after working hard
 - 91 Red-tinged jewelry alloy
 - 94 Removes hair from notices
 - 97 Second-to-last king of Egypt
 - 100 Greeting sent online
 - 102 Emily Dickinson's "Much Madness is — Sense"
 - 103 Tropical rabbit lookalike
 - 104 Shrink back
 - 106 Brings about
 - 107 Finger-paint
 - 108 The Northwest's "City of Trees"
 - 111 Like many allergy sprays
 - 112 Robbie Knieval's father
 - 113 Remark from the sharp-eared
 - 114 1950s-'70s baseballer
 - 115 Actress Russo
 - 116 Deck crew officer, in brief
 - 117 Puts in order
 - 118 City on the Ruhr
 - 16 Lauder of fragrances
 - 17 Lois' partner
 - 18 Its capital is Nairobi
 - 21 Aspiring doc's major
 - 27 Person stashing stuff
 - 30 In the buff
 - 32 Cracked, as a cryptogram
 - 36 Info group to be input
 - 38 "Dagnabbit!"
 - 40 Bee-luring fluids
 - 43 Chief female officers in sacred rites
 - 44 Gets bigger
 - 45 First division of a 13-Down
 - 46 Sparse start of some rounds of applause
 - 47 Utter with a hissing sound
 - 49 Arena relative
 - 51 Crafts' counterparts
 - 54 Apple's Jobs
 - 56 Pop in a blended family
 - 58 Egypt's Nasser
 - 60 Detects like a dog
 - 62 Intertwined
 - 65 Crystal ball gazer, e.g.
 - 67 Neutralized, as a bomb
 - 70 "The Cloister and the Hearth" novelist
 - 72 Planes' first fliers, often
 - 75 Operations
 - 77 Infer (from)
 - 81 Like a district bishop's jurisdiction
 - 83 Faith
 - 86 Difficulty
 - 88 Finisher just under the winner
 - 90 Beach footwear
 - 92 Overalls for hitting the slopes
 - 93 Sci-fi automotons
 - 95 Grand home
 - 96 Purloined
 - 97 Soundboard control knob
 - 98 Mojave plant
 - 99 Northern French city
 - 101 Inflicted upon
 - 105 Actor Bert
 - 109 "Well well!"
 - 110 Fedora, e.g.
- DOWN**
- 1 African tree with a very thick trunk
 - 2 Italian municipality west of Turin
 - 3 Perfect choices to fill positions
 - 4 Stereotypical setting for a brawl
 - 5 Having a right (to)
 - 6 In prison, informally
 - 7 Vardalos of "Connie and Carla"
 - 8 Toddler bed attachment
 - 9 Like a truck ascending a steep hill, gear-wise
 - 10 Silly, like a honking bird
 - 11 The two dots in "naive" or "bronté"
 - 12 Fly-catching warblers
 - 13 Shakespeare work part
 - 14 Limited a cat
 - 15 Small restaurants



Solution for the puzzle in last week's edition.



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Pictured: Cathy Baker



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

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally
 Unlisted clue hint: MEDITERRANEAN —

- | | | | |
|---------------|-----------|------------|----------|
| Airport | Gambling | Peninsula | The Rock |
| Borders Spain | Harbor | Royal Navy | Tourism |
| British | Limestone | Shipping | WWII |
| Finance | Low taxes | Territory | |

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

6			1				4
		3			2	5	
	7		9	8			2
	2	8			1	6	
		4	3				5 1
9				7			3
2				9	3		7
		9	8			4	
	1				6		3

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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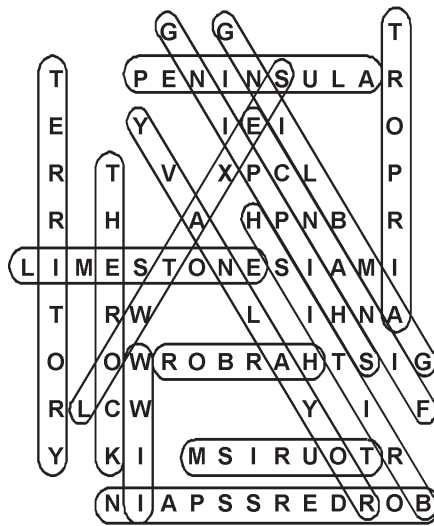
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Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

6	9	2	1	3	5	7	4	8
8	4	3	7	6	2	5	1	9
1	7	5	9	8	4	3	6	2
3	2	8	5	4	1	6	9	7
7	6	4	3	2	9	8	5	1
9	5	1	6	7	8	2	3	4
2	8	6	4	9	3	1	7	5
5	3	9	8	1	7	4	2	6
4	1	7	2	5	6	9	8	3

It sparks joy

Well, it's not huge, sprayed hair, or cod pieces, or swallowing live goldfish. So as far as trends go, it ain't too bad. Organization.

DEBBIE MATTHEWS
The Curious Cook

In my old house, we had lived there for more than 30 years. After three decades of, well, I won't say hoarding but ... the easiest way to organize that place would have been to light a match and start over.

Unfortunately, insurance companies tend to frown upon arson. (Their word, not mine; I'd call it extreme house cleaning).

When I moved into my new place, my plan was to keep it tidy, to treat it the way a boat is treated. In a boat there is finite space, so there must be a finite number of objects that all have a spot where they live. When not in use that is where the object resides.

Then my friends Stace and Val began visiting to help get me moved in. Basically, they were my parents before they had kids and those kids made them old and tired.

Stace is a consummate handyman. I think he was born with a cordless drill in one hand, and a level in the other. He assembled, hung, and created numerous crazy things that I kept coming up with for my new home. I hang my clothes, store my books, and see into my pantry because of Stace.

And Val is my mother in that she is a neat freak. While Stace measured, hammered, and drilled, Val positioned furniture both in an aesthetic and



Courtesy of Debbie Matthews

The Curious Cook's pantry.

symmetrical way, and helped me set up my kitchen.

In my apartment is a pantry — it's actually the first pantry I've ever had in any place I've ever called my own.

So, a lot of stuff went into the pantry. It was out of sight, but kind of haphazard.

That's when Val began talking about a friend of hers who had gone "all in" on the home organization trend. After the binge watching, bread making, and Zoom meetings during the COVID-19 lockdowns, people started looking around their homes and many of them decided they needed a system. Home organization became a thing.

There a few reasons why it became a craze. People were spending lots of time in their homes and its clutter and chaos was noticed and wore on them. There was more time to tackle projects that had been on to do lists. And a third rea-

son had to do with our mental health.

In a world gone berserk, where no one knew what the next horrible twist would bring, getting our homes under control was the only control we had in our own worlds.

And a clean, organized home can confer a sense of calming serenity.

But back to my kitchen. Everything was put away in pantry and fridge, but there was no rhyme or reason.

I decided that the next time Stace and Val visited, Val would be impressed, and more importantly, it would be easy to keep tidy.

There was one huge hitch in my organizing giddy up: those organization kits and products are really expensive. Like \$20 or \$30 for one clear plastic bin for the fridge.

My only option was to get creative.

For my refrigerator, I found



Courtesy of Debbie Matthews

The fridge of the Curious Cook.

two plastic bins at a discount store for \$10. For the bottom shelf I wanted something to keep my ridiculous amounts of jams and jellies together, yet separate and easy to see. So instead of buying expensive clear plastic bins, I bought inexpensive flatware drawer inserts. I did it without measuring, just on a wing and a prayer. I got lucky.

(So maybe do a little measuring, Gentle Reader.)

When I went to purchase for my pantry, I was again appalled at the prices, so I took my time.

I decided to go for mainly glass jars of various sizes. I like the look, and you can see through the glass into what's inside.

My smaller jars? I just bought two cases of canning jars.

For my larger jars I scoured every discount store, sale, and thrift store. I splurged on

labels, which in hindsight was a waste of money.

The shelves were racks, which I dislike. They're not stable. So, I bought heavy plastic cutting mats and laid them on the shelves. Everything is more secure and they're easy to remove to clean.

I then organized areas on the shelves. I have baking supplies and pasta on one shelf and both sadly and characteristically one entire shelf is taken up with snack items. I picked up a wire basket for the items that don't work in jars.

My way was not only hundreds of dollars cheaper than regulation organization supplies, but I also love the way it looks.

How much?

The photos I took for this column were not the first photos I've taken of my pantry.

Thanks for your time.

Contact me at dm@bullcity.mom.



Adam Phillips, Miranda Parker, Mary Maloney, Gary Phillips, Jay Parker, Don Basnight, Ken Tunnell, Terri Turner, Crystal Fisher



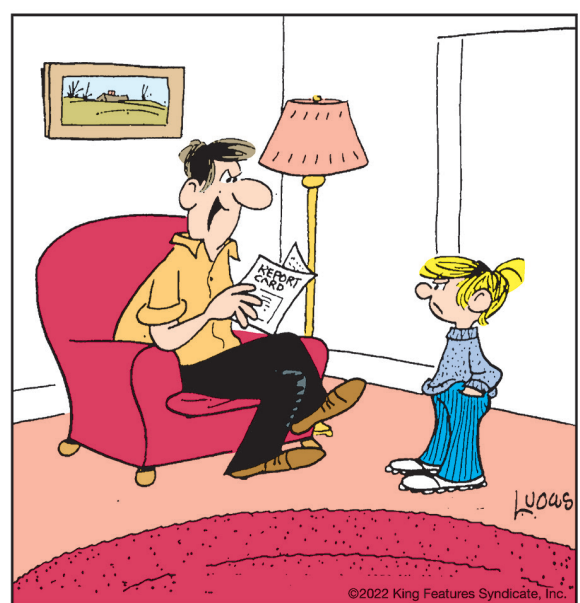
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LAFF-A-DAY



"I'm proud of you, son — it took a lot of guts to show anyone this."

Chatham County installs two EV charging stations

From Chatham County Government

PITTSBORO — Chatham County has installed two electric vehicle (EV) charging stations with the aid of a grant from the state and the Volkswagen Settlement Fund.

Chatham County was awarded two grants in 2021 to install an EV charging station in Siler City at the Smithfield's Chicken 'N Bar-B-Q restaurant and in Pittsboro at the Chatham County Agriculture & Conference Center.

These grants are administered by the N.C. Dept. of Environmental Quality and funded by the North Carolina portion of the Volkswagen Settlement Fund.



Courtesy of Chatham County Government

The electric vehicle charging stations at Chatham County Agriculture & Conference Center in Pittsboro.

and ChargePoint, an electric vehicle charging station manufacturer, to design and build the two stations. Installing these two stations aligns with the county's Comprehensive Plan goal to encourage adoption of electric vehicles and reduce carbon emissions in the county.

The county worked closely with Duke Energy

and ChargePoint, an electric vehicle charging station manufacturer, to design and build the two stations. Installing these two stations aligns with the county's Comprehensive Plan goal to encourage adoption of electric vehicles and reduce carbon emissions in the county.

age adoption of electric vehicles and reduce carbon emissions in the county. The two stations charge EVs at different rates and are designed for different purposes.

“The direct current (DC) fast charger at Smithfield’s is designed to quickly charge a vehicle and will be mostly used for drivers charging with a destination farther away,” said Kevin Lindley, Chatham County Environmental Quality Director. “The location near the junction of Hwy. 421 and Hwy. 64 is ideal for a charging station like this. The Level 2 station at the Agriculture & Conference Center will more often be used as a destination charger since it charges more slowly. This will be ideal for people who want to drive their EV to an event at the Center but might not have enough range to make it all the way there and back without charging.”

EV owners who want to use these two stations will need to create an account with the ChargePoint network. There is a charge to use the stations, which was set by the county to recover the cost of electricity used to charge the vehicles.

For more information, contact Lindley at 919-545-7875 or email at kevin.lindley@chatham-countync.gov.

What pet owners should know about Chatham County animal law

BY BRIANNA DIAZ
Chatham Animal Rescue and Education

The Chatham County Board of Commissioners approved new animal resource ordinances for the care of domestic and farm animals in 2017. Among other things, these ordinances regulate four areas of responsible animal care: food and water, required vaccines, containment (tethering), and shelter.

Food and water

Animals should be given access to adequate food and water at least every 24 hours.

For example, clean, fresh water must be given continuously or at suitable intervals in a clean, sanitized container. Food made specifically for pets, as opposed to human food, provides the nutrients needed based on the animal's species and age. These pet foods are made to meet the differing nutrition needs of



Submitted photo

An example of adequate shelter for a pet with access to food and water, according to CARE's Diaz.

energetic puppies and kittens, which are distinct from the needs of older dogs and cats.

Required vaccines

The only vaccine that is required by law in Chatham

County is a rabies vaccine. The first rabies shot is good for one year, and then it is required every three years.

Containment

Pet owners should keep

their animals on their property at all times and make sure their enclosure is escape-proof. This reduces the risk of injury to both domestic and farm animals as well as people in the surrounding area.

If an animal is kept outside, it should be tethered properly. For example, a rope, metal chain, or coated cable can be used to secure an animal, such as a dog. A tether needs to be at least 15 feet in length and give the animal enough room to move around and access shade, food, and water.

Shelter

Weather conditions should be taken into account when an animal is kept outdoors.

Adequate shelter should protect an animal from extreme temperatures, and give the animal enough room to be comfortable and move around in easily. Shelter should have at least three solid sides and a solid floor

elevated above the ground. The roof of the shelter should give them protection from scorching sunlight.

Additionally, the Chatham County ordinances also state that a dog should not be left in a vehicle unattended, as this could lead to injury or death due to extreme heat, poor ventilation, or other conditions.

By following these basic guidelines, Chatham County residents can ensure their pets have what they need to thrive and also ensure that animal owners are in compliance with Chatham County animal law. The Chatham County Sheriff's Animal Resource Center can assist residents in need of certain supplies for their pets — whether it is a dog house, water and food bowls, or food.

For more detailed information about Chatham County's animal resource ordinances and services, please visit chathamsoar.com or call (919) 542-7203.

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