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The hoops recruits putting Chatham on the map, PAGE B1

Chatham News + Record

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'RAINBOWS AND SUNSHINE AND SASS' Siler City girl honored by town, Chatham after fight with childhood cancer

BY MAYDHA DEVARAJAN News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — Those who knew Kenzie Wrenn Scoggins knew her as unconditional, pure love.

At 4 years old, Kenzie was vibrant, cheeky and affectionate; she was known to reliably crack up at hearing a curse word just as easily as she would earnestly tell those around her that they looked beautiful on their worst days.

Almost a year ago today, Kenzie was diagnosed with an aggressive childhood brain tumor called diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma, or DIPG. DIPG spreads throughout a part of the brain stem called the pons, making it inoperable; most patients are given a survival range of eight to 11 months.

Kenzie died from the disease on Sept. 18, at the age of 5, following months of radiation therapy and treatments. On Saturday, Dec. 17, the towns

of Siler City, where Kenzie lived, and Pittsboro, as well as Chatham County, will mark what would have been Kenzie's 6th birthday with "Bushel & A Peck Day" — named after a song she would sing along with her mother, which has become emblematic of the love the child shared with those close to her.

In her absence, the Scogginses and Kenzie's loved ones are continuing to honor her memory and carry on her legacy.

'We were going to fight'

Between 200 to 400 children are diagnosed with DIPG every year in the United States. The rate of survival is low; there's just a 10% chance of surviving beyond two years and a 2% chance of surviving beyond five years following a patient's diagno-

sis. For Kenzie's mother, Meghan Scoggins, 32, hearing their doctor at UNC Children's Hospital give a prognosis containing the words "inoperable" and "no cure" to her daughter, who had not yet started kindergarten, is something she says she'll never forget.

See HONORED, page A6



Staff photo by Matt Ramey

Meghan and Dusty Scoggins pose with a framed photo of their 5-year-old daughter Kenzie, who died from an aggressive brain tumor called diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma in September.

'IN GOD'S HANDS' Despite threats, Merry Oaks community persists

NCDOT plans have church being taken to make room for VinFast roadway improvements

BY BEN RAPPAPORT News + Record Staff



VinFast, Wolfspeed projects hitting timelines

EDC's Smith says planning, *teamwork keep things 'moving* forward and on track'

BY BILL HORNER III

MERRY OAKS - On a recent Wednesday evening at Merry Oaks Baptist Church, a dozen church members gathered in the sanctuary to discuss the Old Testament story of King David.

Three men risked their lives in a march to Bethlehem to get water for their camp, Rev. Jim Brady describes from the pulpit. When the men returned, water in hand, they gave that water to David and he poured it out in front of them.

"David did not drink of it," Brady says. "He poured it out to the Lord."

The story, he said, is a reminder that no matter how discouraged or tired one may become, the love of a higher power is always watching over — and that God has a will for the future.

No matter what the future holds, Merry Oaks Baptist Church will listen to His will.

See COMMUNITY, page A11



Staff photo by Anna Connors

Six community members recalled generations of change in Merry Oaks through oral history interviews. Read about them inside, page A11.

News + Record Staff

In an age where landing even a \$50 million economic development project is considered a major win, Michael Smith sheepishly admits the numbers gener-



almost "cartoonish" in scope. It all got started last March with VinFast — at the time, with \$4 billion in investment and 7,500 new jobs, the biggest industrial announcement in N.C. history. The Vietnamese company is now more than a third finished with site preparation work on its

ated in Chatham County this year are

land at Triangle Innovation Point, near Moncure, the future home of its massive electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing plant set to roll out EVs in the summer of 2024. (Plant construction will begin in

early 2023.) Add in semiconductor maker Wolfspeed's \$5 billion, 1,700-job announcement for the Chatham-Siler City Advanced Manufacturing site in September, and FedEx's April shipping hub launch near the VinFast site, and Smith — president of Chatham's Economic Development Corporation, and the chief internal engineer of the county's industrial development efforts - acknowl-

See **PROJECT**, page A3

CHANGING A RIVER'S COURSE A new movement for the Haw?

A new group wants to give the Haw River its own legal rights protecting it from polluters

BY BARRY YEOMAN

The Assembly

As a child in the 1980s, Crystal Cavalier-Keck spent summer days inside her grandmother's classroom at Haw River Elementary School. At lunch, they would ride in her Oldsmobile down to the river, which bisected Main Street in the epony-

mous town in Alamance County. the matriarch would point out Nearby stood Granite Mill, a 19th-century brick complex which at its peak a few years earlier finished more corduroy than any other factory in the world.

"Water is part of everything," Cavalier-Keck's grandmother would tell her. "Take care of what God has given you." Then

the foul smell. "You can always look at the water," she warned. "But you can't get in it, because it's very poisonous.'

The Haw, which rolls through many of the Piedmont's historic manufacturing towns - including Pittsboro — and the Jordan Lake reservoir, faced a triple threat back then: toxic chem-

icals; harmful sediment from farms and construction sites: and nutrients from fertilizer and laundry detergent, which feed oxygen-depleting algae.

"Those pollution problems which the Haw is experiencing are, quite literally, carried forward into the Lake," a 1984 Legislative Research Commission report reads. "Unless remedied

and reversed," it warns, "the assured end result is the [lake's] algal choked death."

Almost four decades later, the Haw lures whitewater paddlers and the shuttered mills have become apartments with granite countertops and kayak storage. An annual festival draws crowds

See HAW, page A7

IN THE **KNOW**

Rep. Reives on leadership role, moving N.C. forward. PAGE A10

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

ON THE AGENDA

• Siler City's City Hall is currently under renovation. The Planning and **Community Development Department** is now located on the first floor and can be accessed through the front door to City Hall (door facing North Second Avenue). Public parking is available in the town parking lot located along the 100 block of East 3rd Street (parking lot is located between North 2nd Avenue and North Chatham Avenue). Mt. Vernon Masonic Lodge #143 will hold its Stated Communication on Tuesday, December 20, with a meal at 6:30 p.m., and the meeting at 7:30. All Master Masons are welcome. 185 Bonlee/Bennett Rd., Bonlee.

 Chatham Community Library presents a virtual film screening of "Defiant Lives." In recognition of Universal Human Rights Month in December, Chatham Community Library will host a virtual film screening of Defiant Lives (2017). This program is free and available to the public. WHAT: Virtual Film Screening: Defiant Lives; WHEN: Thursday, December 8 – Thursday, December 15 -- WHERE: Virtual Program (see registration details below) -- WHO: Defiant Lives is a triumphant film that traces the origins of the world-wide disability rights movement. It tells the stories of the individuals who bravely put their lives on the line to create a better world where everyone is valued and can participate. Featuring interviews and rarely seen archival footage, the film reveals how these activists fought to live outside of institutions, challenged the stigmas and negative image of disability portraved by the media, demanded access to public transportation, and battled to reframe disability rights as a social responsibility relevant to us all.

 The Teen Advisory Board (TAB) of the Chatham Community Library is excited to announce its first-ever Teen Writing Contest. Local teens, ages 12-18, are invited to submit a work of fiction, non-fiction, or poetry (max 3000 words) in response to one of the TAB-crafted writing prompts. Submissions will be accepted to December 18, 2022. Participants should email their submission to Kathleen Pierce, Youth Services Library Assistant and TAB advisor. TAB members will judge the submissions. First, second, and third place winners will be awarded gift cards to McIntyre's Books in Pittsboro. Prizes for the Teen Writing Contest are sponsored by the Friends of the Chatham Community Library. For more information, visit the Chatham County Public Libraries website, or contact Youth Services at youth.services@ chathamlibraries.org.

 The Chatham Soil and Water **Conservation District** announces its 2022-2023 conservation poster, essay, and public speaking contests. The theme for this year is "Water ... The Cycle of Life." All contests are open to public, private, charter, and nome school students. The poster contest is open to students in grades 3, 4, and 5. Essay and public speaking contests are open to grades 6, 7, 8, and 9-12. Entries are judged by grade level, with the exception of grades 9-12. Grades 9-12 will be judged together for each contest. - Poster and essay contest entries are due to the Chatham Soil and Water Conservation District office located at 1192 US 64 W Business, Pittsboro, NC, 27312 by February 28, 2023. Those who wish to compete in the public speaking contest will need to contact Education Coordinator, Brandy Oldham, by January 16, 2023. -- For complete details, rules, study materials, and N.C. curriculum standards correlation information, individuals may contact Ms. Oldham at 919-545-8440 or brandy. oldham@chathamcountync.gov. Information also can be found by visiting the Chatham Soil and Water Conservation District Conservation Contests web page under the Education Programs link, www.chathamcountync. gov/swcd. • Voices Chapel Hill Choir ... We're hosting concerts in Moeser Auditorium at UNC's Hill Hall on December 16 at 7:30 and December 17 at 3 pm. Tickets are \$20 for adults, children 12 and under are free. Tickets are available on our website (voiceschapelhill.org) and

will also be sold at the door. Voices' December concert, Winter Joy, features our full company performing Kirk Mechem's Seven Joys of Christmas - a setting of lesser-known carols from different countries in order to paint different aspects of joy for the Christmastide; Winter (from the forgottens) by Dan Locklair - a four-movement choral cycle, based on texts by 19th and early 20th century American poets, filled with vivid imagery expressing the magic and mystery that are a part of winter; and an invigorating and powerful gospel setting of Mary's prayerful expression of joy - Robert Ray's Gospel Magnificat, complete with rhythm section. ... The chamber ensemble, Cantari, will present a set of a cappella pieces including Salamone Rossi's "Elohim hashivenu," Robert Applebaum's Maoz tsur," a setting of the first principal of Kwanzaa (Unity) by Zanaida Robles; Nathaniel Dett's "Ave Maria," and a Nigerian Christmas song entitled "Keresimesi q'dun de o" arranged by Wendall Whalum, with several other selections. · CORA will hold their 11th annu-

al Empty Bowls Event on Sunday, March 19, at Galloway Ridge. Tickets will go on sale in February. They are now requesting in-kind donations of pottery for this event. Please include business cards or brochures with your pottery to be displayed at the event. They ask that all pottery be donated to CORA by January 20, and if you need it to be picked up, get in touch with Rebecca at rebecca@corafoodpantry. org or 919-491-5896.

 St. Bartholomew's Episcopal **Church** provides a healthy meal at no cost to those who come to us hungry at noon on Thursdays. We provide a place of hospitality and fellowship for everyone. All are welcome, regardless of race, sex, age, national origin, religious preference, handicap, or income. The Chatham Historical Museum is open Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. We will be following the governor's directives. Adult and kid friendly; no admission fee. Our permanent exhibits cover all aspects of Chatham's unique history. The museum is located in the historic Chatham County Courthouse in the Circle. More info at https://chathamhistory.org.

• Second Bloom hours are 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. at 630 East St., Pittsboro. Credit cards are accepted. All proceeds provide support for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and promote community education in collaboration with Chatham County. The Chatham Arts Council has put together a relief effort specifically for artists and arts-workers called CAARE: Chatham Artist and Arts-Worker Relief Effort. For more information on CAARE, or to donate, visit ChathamArtsCouncil.org. • Foster and/or adoptive information:

Give children a safe place to grow. Interested in becoming a Foster and/ or Adoptive parent? Call 919-642-6956 to learn more.

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

CORRECTION

The story "A CCS Nutritional Services employee is serving up inspiration" (Dec. 6-13 edition) incorrectly stated Kristie Allred had been a substitute teacher for Chatham County Schools; she was actually a substitute in CCS' Nutritional Services department. The story also incorrectly indicated CCS' Exceptional Children program had been in contact with Chatham Hospital in Siler City; the program has been in contact with Chatham County Schools about employing future EC students, but not the hospital. The online version of the story has been updated to reflect this information. The News + Record regrets the errors.

CENTRAL PIEDMONT COMMUNITY ACTION, INC. Notice of Intent to Apply for Community **Services Block Grant Funds**

Central Piedmont Community Action, Inc. (CPCA) intends to apply for federal Community Services Block Grant funds in the amount of \$1,133,910. Community Services Block Grant is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Economic Opportunity. CPCA plans to use the funds to provide comprehensive case management services to 150 low-income families in Chatham, Durham, Orange, and Randolph counties towards the goal of poverty eradication and self-sufficiency attainment. Services include guidance and counseling, employment support, educational support, urgent assistance, and assistance with other needs.

The CPCA Board will meet on January 10, 2023, at 4pm via Zoom to approve submission of the 2023-2024 **Community Services Block Grant Anti-Poverty Application.** For meeting link, please contact Natasha Elliott at jacksonn@cpcanc.org

CPCA is an equal opportunity employer.

How did you LAND here?



HAS ERIC SOLD A PROPERTY NEAR YOU LATELY? 66 PROPERTIES SOLD IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS! LAND (Representing Sellers) 20 units

1447 Old US 1 (.870 Acres) 00 Manns Chapel Road (49.41 Acres) 2328 Andrews Store Road (24.385 Acres) 0 Pearleman Teague (23.1 Acres)

00 Roberts Chapel Road (123.87 Acres) 45 The Whites Way (5.61 Acres) 271 Talon Drive (11.97 Acres) 1835 Lewter Shop Road (3.24 Acres) 0000 Jim Gilliland Road (57.284 Acres) 18 Pearleman Teague Road (2 Acres) 4831 Old Graham Road (2.774 Acres) 1571 Lydia Perry Road (3.007 Acres) 208 Stonewall Road (3.810 Acres) 1456 Hadley Mill Boad (28 353 Acres) 1475 Lewter Shop Road (4.445 Acres) 00 Moons Chapel Road (86.599 Acres) 0 Alston Chapel Road (10.23 Acres) 0 Pearleman Teague (23.1 Acres) 0 US 64 Hwy W (11.396 Acres) 0 George Brooks Lane (10 Acres)

LAND (Representing Buyers) 4 Units 0 Pearleman Teague (23.1 Acres)

COMMERCIAL (Representing Buyers) 1 Unit 210 N. Chatham Avenue (Siler City)

RESIDENTIAL (Representing Sellers) 22 Units

130 Estes Drive (Chapel Hill) 1136 Sanford Road (Pittsboro) 729 Hope Hills Drive (Siler City) 1429 Van Thomas Road (Pittsboro) 1315 Hovt Scott Road (Bear Creek) 7 45 Mert McManus Road (Bear Creek) 2349 S. Main Street (Goldston) 206 Olympia Street (Siler City) 8798 Sylvan Road (Liberty) 488 NC 87 N (Pittsboro) 76 Fox Chapel Lane (Pittsboro) 354 A Mountain View (Pittsboro) 138 Oakwood Lane (Pittsboro) 218 A Poplar Street (Chapel Hill) 58 Lily McCoy Lane (Pittsboro) 1637 Briar Chapel Parkway (Chapel Hill) 9849 Twisted Oak Trail (Snow Camp) 5470 US 15 501 Hwy (Pittsboro) 5472 US 15 501 Hwy (Pittsboro) 390 New Salem Church Road (Pittsboro) 211/298 C D Thomas Road (Siler City)

 Motorcycle Association — The Motorcycle Association for Chatham, Western Wake, Lee, Orange and Alamance counties meets in Pittsboro and is open to all riders. For information, call 919-392-3939 or visit www.chathamCBA.com.

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

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

SCOUT NEWS

• Boy Scout Troop 93 in Pittsboro meets 7 p.m. Wednesdays at the Harold Boone Scout Park on Hwy 64W, just past CCCC. Open to boys, ages 11-17. Visit www.bstroop93.org for more information.

• Pack 924 of Siler City First U.M.C. meets from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. on Tuesdays for boys, grades 1 through 5. Come join the Cub Scouts.

• Pack 900 in Bear Creek meets at 7 p.m. Tuesdays at Meroney's U.M.C., following the school calendar. See http:// pack900.com for more information.

00 Roberts Chapel Road (123.87 Acres) 45 The Whites Way (5.61 Acres) 0 US 64 Hwy W (11.396 Acres)

COMMERCIAL (Representing Sellers) 5 Units

1 Village Lake Drive (Siler City) 2 Village Lake Drive (Siler City) 3 Village Lake Drive (Siler Citv) 4 Village Lake Drive (Siler City) 7 Village Lake Drive (Siler City)

5975 Pleasant Hill Church Road (Siler City)

RESIDENTIAL (Representing Buyers) 8 Units

107 Hawks Spiral Way (Pittsboro) 85 Herndon Creek Way (Chapel Hill) 729 Hope Hills Drive (Siler City) 6490 Snow Camp Road (Snow Camp) 94 Pine Cone Loop (Pittsboro) 903 Woodland Drive (Siler City) 34 Carriage Court (Pittsboro) 650 Half Dollar Road (Chapel Hill)

PROPERTIES CURRENTLY UNDER CONTRACT

LAND (Representing Sellers) 6 Units 0 Hamlets Chapel Road (42.805 Acres) 10681 E US 64 Hwy (3.97 Acres) 0 Olives Chapel Road (75.43 Acres) 12190 E US 64 Hwy (15.158 Acres) 0 Callicutt Road (60.376 Acres)

Residential (Representing Sellers) 1 Unit 2955 Dewitt Smith Road (Pittsboro)

Visit & Subscribe to Eric's YouTube channel for a variety of fun & informational videos



What is the Realtors Land Institute of the Carolinas? https://www.youtube.com/c/ericandrewsrealtor



CAROLINA PROPERTIES

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BILL HORNER III, Editor/Publisher bhorner3@chathamnr.com 919-774-2728

NEWSROOM

Taylor Heeden, Reporter/Web Editor theeden@chathamnr.com Ben Rappaport, Reporter/Social Media Editor brappaport@chathamnr.com Maydha Devarajan, Reporter mdevarajan@chathamnr.com Jeremy Vernon, Sports Editor jeremy@chathamnr.com Peyton Sickles & Simon Barbre Staff Photographers

NEWSROOM INQUIRIES, PRESS Releases and Website Questions news@chathamnr.com

ADVERTISING

JASON JUSTICE jjustice@chathamnr.com

Advertising Specialist advertising@chathamnr.com

OFFICE

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

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CHATHAM SCHOOL BOARD BOE keeps Leonard as chairperson, approves reports on budgeting needs, Chatham Park school site

BY BILL HORNER III News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — Gary Leonard and Del Turner, who won re-election to their respective seats in November's general election, were unanimously re-elected as Chatham Board of Education chairperson and vice chairperson during the board's organizational meeting Monday at George Moses Horton Middle School's multipurpose room.

Leonard and Turner — who were opposed in the general election by Tim Moore and Jessica Winger — and Jane Allen Wilson, who sought re-election unopposed, were sworn in at the start of the meeting, which featured a compelling presentation from an American history teacher and her students, as well as unanimous votes on a preliminary budgeting proposal for 2023-24 and a site location for a potential elementary school within Chatham Park.

Amy King — a graduate of Chatham Central High School who's come back to teach there — and some of her history class students led a 15-minute presentation entitled "Impacts of D-Day and WWII: Global, Regional, Local."

King, who in 2020 was named as one of 50 Grosvenor Teacher Fellows by National Geographic and Lindblad Expeditions, traveled to six European countries in June of this year. She called the trip, which included stops in northern Europe and tours of Normandy beaches and key World War II sites, "a career-changing professional development" opportunity.

She and seven student presenters — Rachel Batten, Travis Crissman, Lesly de la Sancha Arroyo, Kelsey Hussey, Olivia Jones, Matthew Smith and Hallie Webster — walked through a 32-slide presentation detailing research they'd done on the June 6, 1944, Allied landing at Omaha Beach on the French coast that helped turned the tide in World War II and the battle against Nazi Germany.

The presentation also focused on Bear Creek native W. Carl Scott, who survived D-Day and returned home from the war after service as a truck driver and mechanic — winning 14 service medals, including the Bronze Star and Silver Star, before his honorable discharge at the war's end in July 1945. Crissman and Webster are

great-grandchildren of Scott's, who died in 2006.

The News + Record's Ben Rappaport will provide a complete look at King's trip and her class's work in the newspaper's Dec. 22-28 edition.

Board members, administrators and audience members gave King and her students a rousing ovation when the presentation was completed, with board member David Hamm describing it as "the cherry on the biggest cake you can make."

"All I can just say is 'Wow," he said. "I am beyond impressed."

In other business, the board:

• recognized Dr. Brad Walston of Northwood High School, Chatham's Wells Fargo Principal of the Year. Walston, who's been principal at Northwood for four years, will now compete at the regional level; if he prevails there, he'll go on to the state competition.

Walston called Northwood "the place to be," saying he looked forward to going to work every day and being a part of Chatham County Schools.

"I'm fortunate to be able to come to work here, where I'm supported and trusted to take care of your children each day," he said.

• recognized Sherry Thurman and Mary Lantz with Exceptional Children's Awards for November. Thurman is an extended content standards teacher at Bonlee School and Lantz is an EC (Exceptional Children) resource teacher at Perry Harrison Elementary.

• recognized Gail McKay, an EC teacher at Chatham Middle School, as CCS's Excellence and Opportunity Champion for December.

• heard comments from parent Emily Martine, who said she was "thrilled" with the way the district was meeting the needs of students. She asked, though, for CCS to consider posting full time-stamped videos of all board meetings online to help constituents better understand how the board operates. She said doing so prior to the November school board election would have made it "much easier for voters to make informed decisions."

Martine expressed support for the board and CCS administration and criticized comments made by Moms For Liberty members and supporters — some of whom, she said, had equated Chatham schools staff who had affirmed LGBTQ+ students with being "pedophiles and groomers."

"I and many other parents support our educators, and we trust their professional training and judgment," she said. "Thank you, and keep up the good work."

 heard from a group of other parents of Chatham Middle School students expressing concern about CCS communication and transparency, particularly related to an incident at Chatham Middle School last Wednesday involving rumors of violence planned at the school. Hannia Benitez, who described herself as a community leader in Chatham and Lee counties — she's deputy director for the Hispanic Liaison's Lee County office — and fellow parents Lydia Miller and Marcia Grimes said "vague" messaging from CCS about the incident created confusion and concern among parents. They said automated communication system messages related to the rumored incident differed from what their children heard on campus and made clear the need for a discussion of strategies and preventative measures to prevent confusion.

The incident in question involved an alleged discussion among some students and social media chatter about potential violence or a shooting at the school. Nancy Wykle, the public information officer for CCS, said the Chatham County Sheriff's Office had deemed the threat not credible, but would not provide additional details, citing privacy issues.

• unanimously accepted a "heads up" report given by Chief Finance Officer Tony Messer that will be used in working with county commissioners on CCS's budget for fiscal year 2023-24. Commissioners will hear the report during a planning retreat on Jan. 10.

Messer and CCS Superintendent Dr. Anthony Jackson proposed a Local Current Expense increase on the county level of \$4,995,200, bringing county school funding to just over \$44 million next fiscal year. Messer said the "potential ask" of the commissioners includes increased funding — partly related to state wage and raise mandates for educators — for employee supplements (\$1,640,000), compensation and benefit increases (\$1,700,000), operational cost increases (\$220,000), post-COVID program sustainability costs (\$920,000), and charter school transfers (\$515,200). He pointed out that 70% of the increase is for employees — to support them and students.

Hamm applauded Messer for his work and leadership, saying the numbers were "very sell-able" to commissioners.

• unanimously approved reserving a 31.2-acre site within Chatham Park as the probable home of a future 750-student elementary school.

Situated on 124.18 acres, that land, located near Chatham Park's offices in the development's Northern Village between Suttles Road and Grant Drive, is being donated to the county by Chatham Park's investors. It's designed to serve students living in new homes to be constructed within the planned community and will be built within the next 10 years.

Chris Blice, assistant superintendent for operations for CCS, said the site "scored very, very highly" during a formal site review.

Hamm noted it was the first "free" land the county had been given for schools and expressed appreciation to Chatham Park for taking the initiative to provide the property to the county.

• unanimously approved new Pre-K program fees, increasing tuition from \$615/month to \$750/month and raising the deposit required from \$300 to \$750.

Carrie Little, CCS's executive director of federal programs and school improve ment, said the county's Pre-K program fees had not increased since 2018.

• unanimously approved a board policy to reflect two changes in the school calendar. The first reflects a state change defining a school "month" as 20 days of instruction; the second makes Veterans Day a holiday for all public school personnel and students enrolled in CCS and marks November as Veterans History Awareness Month.

PROJECT

Continued from page A1

edges something truly unprecedented here: more than \$9 billion in investment and 9,000 new jobs coming to rural, potential-laden Chatham, all announced within the span of a few months.

Cartoonish? Given the gargantuan scale, maybe. But talk to Smith these days — if you can catch him in between

VinFast- and Wolfspeed-related

meetings or conference calls

with corporate, state and local

officials, or talking with other

industrial prospects — and he

eventually shifts the focus to a

much more modest, decidedly

less cartoonish number: 2,000.

That's the combined acreage

still available in Chatham: 1,400

site, 300 acres in a business park

additional acres at the CAM

adjacent to the CAM site, and

another 300 acres at TIP West,

Which is to say: even after

nomic development projects in

state history, Chatham County

still has more megasite proper-

ty available than any county in

So describing the develop-

"ramping up" doesn't begin to

acreage for other large manu-

facturing tenants, the afore-

mentioned projects already

of so-called "halo" jobs

committed to the county will

mostly likely lead to thousands

additional positions created by

other companies and indus-

tries coming here to support

Mike Walden, a retired econo-

mist from N.C. State who often

business events, has been quot-

ed as saying that the multiplier effect is one for one: roughly

one additional job in supplier,

parts and service firms for ev-

facility — turning those 9,000

hard to fathom in a county of

jobs into something that's a bit

just more than 70,000 residents.

And Smith says Chatham's

even better positioned because

elec

its two new industries

ery job in a new manufacturing

VinFast and Wolfspeed. Dr.

speaks at Chatham County

address the scope of the reality.

ment picture in Chatham as

In addition to the available

landing the two largest eco-

next to VinFast's location.

Why?

the state.

'Halo' jobs



taft nhoto by Phillin Teasley

"We're hitting these milestones as we need to in order to make the time frame for the client," he said.

Chatham County Manager Dan LaMontagne, who's involved in those meetings, agreed.

"We are very pleased with the progress they are making," he said of VinFast. "Land clearing has been under way for some time now. Water and wastewater design and easement acquisition is progressing. State permitting for air quality is expected this month and then we expect to get construction plans for review." nect VinFast and Wolfspeed to nearby small businesses.

"Somebody who's operating a restaurant in downtown Pittsboro doesn't have time to figure out who they need to speak to at VinFast," he said. "That needs to be our job, and we need to figure out how to connect them ..."

Then there's also helping with workforce housing and all that entails, making sure these thousands of new employees have homes to move into, and schools for their children to attend. Having two "monster projects" like that within one county makes those considerations important ones. Smith cited help from and partnership with Chatham's neighbors in Lee County and Randolph County — both of which have also landed major economic development projects in the last couple of years, and both of which are involved in various ways in the VinFast and Wolfspeed work. "I see that as a huge positive," he said, "because obviously these companies and suppliers and employees don't see, or know or care, about city or county boundaries. Nor should they. That's our challenge, not theirs. But all that's exciting." And, no doubt, gratifying for Smith.

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Electric vehicle manufacturer VinFast is more than a third finished with site preparation work on its 1,700-acre tract at Triangle Innovation Point near Moncure.

tric vehicles and semiconductors — are among the fastest-growing fields in the U.S.

"Actually, what we've seen at the CAM site in the last six months is companies that are both related to EVs and semiconductors — which is exactly what you would want," he told the News + Record. "You know, it's amazing. I was at a national conference a few weeks ago listening to all these national speakers saying the two big industry segments right now that everybody who's an economic developer in America wants — is something electric vehicle-related, or something semiconductor-related. And the fact that we won these two ... it's amazing.'

VinFast's progress

Smith said VinFast is utilizing and employing "top" partners for its Chatham facility, including people and teams which have been involved in other automotive sector projects across the U.S. And even as VinFast prepares to go public — it'll be listed on the NASDAQ exchange as "VFS" — next year to help fund its work, all signs still point to the July 2024 start date for its EVs to roll off the assembly line.

Production at the 1,700acre TIP site in Chatham will include the company's five-seat VF-8 SUV (starting at \$41,000) and its seven-seat VF-9 SUV (starting at \$56,000).

About 25 people, including Smith, are involved in regular bi-weekly meetings — at 2 p.m. every other Tuesday, directed by the state's Division of Environmental Quality — that he says "are intended to keep the project moving forward and on track."

"These virtual meetings are structured to make sure the multiple groups involved are aware of the schedule and expectations," he said.

Attendees include automotive project consultants hired by VinFast, multiple county departments, plus officials from Dominion Energy, water and sewer consultants Freese & Nichols, various engineering and environmental consultants, state officials and even representatives from the Moncure Fire Department.

"We're constantly talking and looking at that July 2024 timeline, and working backward and looking at all these different phases of what needs to happen," Smith said.

He added that the planning and communication process is working so well that it's being used as a selling point both in Chatham and at the state level — because in these tightly-scripted virtual meetings, everyone involved is seeing the same documents, the same checklists, receiving the same formal recaps sent after meetings, and having total accountability.

"There's just zero room for somebody to say, 'Well, I didn't know I was supposed to be doing this,' or 'I didn't know so-and-so was not going to be doing that," he said.

With several VinFast executives having moved to the state — three in Wake County and another in Charlotte — everyone who needs to be "in the room," even though it's virtual, is there, according to Smith. It's part of the reason the permitting process for VinFast and for Wolfspeed, so far — is moving so quickly. It's a similar story for Wolfspeed, LaMontagne said; the company, in fact, has already submitted its construction plans.

"We meet regularly with all parties to stay on track with both projects and believe both are on their expected schedules," he said.

When it all 'lit up'

As Christmas approaches, Smith thinks back to a year ago — when things with VinFast, which had earlier in the year visited Chatham County, "lit up" the week between Christmas and New Year's Day.

"You know, we didn't have a holiday last year," he said of himself and his team at the EDC and others involved in a series of late-year calls and site visits. "And then, going through February, March ... it was crazy."

Smith spoke about the work done then, and being done now, by a team of local and state officials and the ground they've covered during 2022 — and new team approaches being continually developed as the VinFast and Wolfspeed projects move forward.

When asked what he'd like to see checked off as "completed" this time next year, he responded by saying at the top of his list would both projects being "exactly where they respectively want to be," and the county continuing to be responsive.

But also at the top of Smith's list is working to "connect these two big battleships with our small businesses."

Already, the EDC is working on putting together a consortium of regional Chambers of Commerce, through CCCC's Small Business Center, to con-

Getting well-earned 'grief'

He shared a story of a friend and professional colleague in the N.C. Economic Development Association calling him out — in jest — at a recent conference, saying he was going to have to ask a former officer (that being Smith, a former president) to "no longer be affiliated" with the group. Chatham did, after all, land the two largest projects in state history, and it's a history not yet fully written.

"Because of all the stuff we've got going on, they've had fun giving me a lot of grief," Smith said. "But you know, they're happy for me and for us. These wins are our wins, but one of the talking points we've used is that Chatham County is within an hour of 22 other counties, which is more than one-fifth of the state. And so, this win for Chatham County is a win for lots of other counties as well."

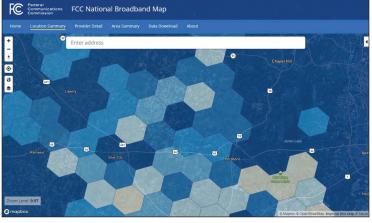
VIEWPOINTS

GUEST COLUMN | BURNEY WARING Poor internet or no internet? Now's the time to act.

About 16% of Chatham County residents said they did not have quality internet service, according to the Chatham County Community Assessment, and the internet was one of the two top issues in that survey. Primarily the internet service provider companies (Spectrum, CenturyLink, T-Mobile, etc.) decide who gets internet. Grants and other government programs can influence their decisions.

Federal Communications Commission has just issued the National Broadband Map. This map contains 110 million locations. All internet providers submitted the highest level of internet service available at each of the map locations that they service. It has been a massive effort. The FCC created the map because the Federal Government will allocate grants in the largest amount ever toward improving internet availability, the \$43 billion Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program.

The bad news is that if the new map has incorrect information about your address, and



Courtesy of the FCC

The FCC's national broadband map showing coverage in Siler City.

you have no internet or poor internet, you could miss out.

If you have poor internet or have no internet available at your residence, you should look up your address on the FCC map: broadbandmap.fcc.gov

The FCC is already in the process of allocating funds based on the initial version of the map, and they have given us only until Jan. 13 to correct information in the map before the allocations of the massive

BEAD program in summer 2023.

The FCC says that it will base all new grants on its new map. So, if your house is not on the map or in the wrong location, or your provider wants a big fee to run a wire to your house to get their advertised service, or other bad info, you can challenge your information through the FCC map website. You can also use it to challenge the availability of

mobile phone service.

Most challenges and complaints need documentation. Documentation about specific provider service needs things like the dates you called, who you spoke with, emails, screen shots, etc. The documentation has to be after June 2022 (the date the internet companies turned in their information). The FCC says it will be flexible in the sort of documentation it will accept. If you did not keep great documentation, it would be worth your effort to try again with your provider and collect everything. As you might expect, you have to state under penalty of perjury that your information is correct.

The FCC will aggregate all the challenge data and probably the areas with the most complaints will get the most attention, so it would be best to tell your neighborhood about this process.

Ironically, the FCC does not have any process for challenging or complaining about your lack of internet in this process other than using their map on the internet. The Chatham

Public Libraries have internet and computers available for those without them. The FCC map will work on a mobile phone, but it may be difficult to upload documentation that way. If you get stuck and need help with this process, you can email help@innovatechatham. org, and we will try to help.

If internet issues of all kinds in Chatham are of interest to you, we will be having two public events in January to provide information about getting, affording and learning to use the internet, as well as getting public input to Chatham's Digital Inclusion Plan intended to help Chatham residents:

• Jan. 12, 5 p.m., at 79°West, 367 Freedom Pkwy., Suite 130, Pittsboro

• Jan. 19, 5 p.m., at N.C. Arts Incubator, 223 N. Chatham Ave., Siler City

Burney Waring is the president of Innovate Chatham, a nonprofit dedicated to helping Chatham County residents flourish through technology. He can be reached at warings@gmail.com

Mother Nature's creatures full of valuable lessons



BOB WACHS Movin' Around

Years ago, a colleague wrote a sermon he entitled "Turtle on a Fencepost."

The thought behind that title and message was that since turtles don't fly or jump then someone had to have placed the creature in that position. While there wasn't likely any good reason for Mr. Turtle to be in such a state or that

any good would come from it, there was an application for us humans.

It was that if or when we find ourselves in an unfamiliar or uncomfortable place in life it could be that God has placed us or allowed us to be so placed. And while we have more options for changing the location than the turtle did, it could be there was something good or helpful to come out of the whole thing.

Through the years, I've found myself in some situations that could be called "turtle on a fencepost" — no doubt, dear reader, so have you. I say all that to say that, like Yogi Berra said, you can learn a lot just by watching. That thought crossed my mind the other day as I sat at the desk in my study, gazing out the window. That end of the house is 10 or 15 yards from the pasture fence that runs by our house. At that particular point, there is a metal gate, a few posts fairly close together and some cross braces. As I sat fighting through writer's block and sipping my fourth cup of Joe, I noticed one of the many gray squirrels who call our place home scampering along the top of the fence. I'd seen this before, maybe even with the same little furry critter (although I'm not sure since they don't wear name tags). On he came, in high gear, maybe looking for one more acorn or trying to avoid the dog who years ago would have given chase, but today has decided patience — or laziness — is a virtue and now doesn't even bother to give them a look. The metal gate didn't slow him down as he zoomed across the top before hopping to the adjoining wooden post. He then scampered along the four feet or so of brace before hopping the short space to the next post and its brace. At that point, I thought, his luck gave out because from then on for some distance it was only woven wire, not wide enough at the top for squirrel footies. Seeing he was intent on continuing his journey, I wondered how he would handle this unexpected obstacle. For only a split second did he hesitate before jumping down and continuing his expedition on the ground. Pretty smart little fellow, I thought, and then - like the turtle on a fence post — a thought crossed my mind: we humans are like that squirrel. We set off on journeys through life, which itself is a journey. Sometimes our footing changes, maybe from wood to metal and then back again to familiar steps. But even then, if the surface is roughly the same width we can make it. But sometimes things change; we run across small challenges or spaces. Some we can jump over and keep on going as life smooths out. But then, sooner or later, we come to a place where there's no footing and where it's too far or long or deep or wide or whatever to jump over. So, the question becomes: "What do we do then?" At that point, I think, we have two choices: do nothing and quit or find another way to keep on keeping on. Mr. Squirrel did not favor the former; instead he opted for the latter and did what he could, namely, he jumped down and hit the ground running.



What is a Rhombicuboctahedron?



ANDREW TAYLOR-TROUTMAN Hope Matters

to see if you can select the correct definition among the following choic-1. A rhombicuboctahedron is a popular Tik Tok challenge that involves slipping ice cubes down the back of

I know that my gentle readers await

the answer with more anticipation

than your typical 5-year-old counts

down to Santa's arrival! Test yourself

an unsuspecting driver's shirt while that person is idling at a stop sign "Yo, I rhombi-cubed you!"

2. The shape of the hairstyle of the latest Disney villain.

3. Known as Rhom for short, the newest AI technology that can make coffee and let the dog out to do her business while simultaneously writing a newspaper column so that a local pastor can stay in bed.

4. A yoga position with accompanying "Rh-Om" chant that has been scientifically proven to lower cholesterol levels and combat halitosis.

5. A medicinal resin derived from species of tree native to the Horn of Africa that, while medically proven to decrease inflammation of joints, has the unfortunate side effect of causing bad breath.

6. The contorted look of disgust and dismay on the face of UNC basketball coach Hubert Davis when his pre-season, nationally top-ranked team loses its fourth consecutive game and falls out of the Top 25.

7. The shape of the typical Moravian Star — that 26-point illuminated object that your neighbor hangs from his porch this time of year. While symbolic of the Star of Bethlehem described in the Gospel of Matthew, the Moravian Star originated in the 1830s as a geometry lesson in a German school.

8. A rhombicuboctahedron is a technical term for the fallacy that confuses Moravians with Mennonites and therefore mistakenly believes that modern Moravian women wear homemade dresses and white bonnets.

9. A word sung by choirs to loosen their lips and warm up their voices before launching into all the verses of "The Twelve Days of Christmas."

10. The design of the soon-to-be released iPhone with six square screens so that users can watch Tik Tok, Disney movies and college basketball while checking Facebook, Googling "rhombicuboctahedron" and reading the Chatham News + Record editorial section. Good luck fitting that into your pocket!

What is a rhombicuboctahedron? You can always look up the correct answer on the internet. However readers might wish to consult a real-life Moravian or perhaps a newspaper columnist who grew up in that Protestant denomination. But please leave Hubert Davis alone. Lord knows, he has enough on his mind

After 10 years and hundreds of millions in spending, why can't Johnny read?



CAMPBELL N.C. Spin

Legislative leaders are baffled. We all should be. After pouring more than \$200 million additional dollars into helping our children read at grade level, they (and we) want to know when we are going to see results.

Just before Thanksgiving, we learned that the 2021 test results showed only 47 percent of 3rdgrade students were proficient in grade-level reading. End-of-grade tests further demonstrated that 53 percent of students in grades 3 through 8 were "not proficient" in grade-level reading.

Who is to blame? Is it the children, teachers, parents, educators, legislators or the public? The answer is YES. We all have a role to play in helping our children to read, but we are obviously failing. Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger sounded the alarm in 2012, correctly assessing that in the first three grades students learn to read. After that, they read to learn. If they can't read, they can't learn. Berger led the "Read to Achieve" initiative

a decade ago, and since that time, North Carolina has implemented several new or revised initiatives when results didn't improve.

Our latest reading program comes from Mississippi. We've always thanked God for Mississippi since they traditionally kept North Caroli na out of being last place among the states in educational achievement. But the Magnolia State implemented a program named LETRS, an acronym standing for "Language essentials for teachers of reading and spelling." Desperate for anything

See SPENDING, page A5

VIEWPOINTS

Copies of the **Constitution should** have been given to students

TO THE EDITOR:

Help me to understand why the Constitution of the U.S. was not allowed to be distributed to the 8th-grade students in Chatham County Schools without parental consent.

I understand policy #5210. I agree with it. It would be interesting to know exactly how many parents did not want their students to receive the pocket Constitution — was it two, 10 or many more? The Constitution has stood the test of time for several centuries. Should we question it, as it

is freedom for all people. It appears to me that perhaps the group that opposed the distribution of the Constitution may not have been against the constitution, but rather against the person or group that offered it to the school. I respect the school board's decision, but I am certainly not in agreement with it. **Ed Spence**

Siler City

Time to enter a new era TO THE EDITOR:

Now that the mid-term elections are finally over and we near the end of 2022, I see a brighter future despite the challenges that still exist.

Here are a few reasons for

LETTERS

feeling positive: Nearly all who participated in the recent elections whether they won or lost saw the election process as fair. The exceptions, such as Kari Lake of Arizona, are few and stand out like a sore thumb. I respect and thank those who graciously accepted the results and reinforced our democratic principles.

The younger generation was a deciding factor in the Georgia senate contest and other critical elections across the country. They stood up for character. It's not too late for those of us who are older to listen to our children and grandchildren.

We see people around the world — including Iran and

China — paying the price in striving for freedom and justice. I am touched in hearing about Russian nationals joining the heroic efforts of Ukrainians in their fight against the brutality of what they describe as "Putin's war."

Our two U.S. Senators — Tillis and Burr — were among the 12 Republican members who joined all Democratic senators in passing the Respect for Marriage Act, designed to protect same-sex and interracial marriages.

I am heartened by people who do the right thing at their own peril. Liz Cheney is an excellent example of someone who put our nation first. Appropriately, she received the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award.

As we enter a new year, hopefully, we will enter a new era as well - one that facilitates voting as a civic duty rather than seeking to restrict it; one that values integrity among our public officials; one that holds people accountable for undermining our Democracy regardless of their status; one that sees the United States as a leader in promoting and supporting democratic principles across our country and around the world; and one that finds us working to be more unified in loving and peaceful acts of kindness and dignity.

Happy holidays to all. **Dennis W. Streets** Pittsboro

'I just want to keep on voting after I die'



D.G. MARTIN One on One

From 1977 until 1985 and from 1993 through 2001, Wilson County was the de facto capital of North Carolina. At least it was when then Gov. Jim Hunt and his close advisor, Betty McCain, were home from Raleigh. McCain, who died Nov. 23, served

as Hunt's trusted political partner and friend throughout Hunt's career. Among her assignments were serving as secretary of the Department of Cul tural Resources and first female chair of the state Democratic Party. She also worked tirelessly on Hunt's successful efforts to change the state's constitution to permit governors to serve two consecutive terms.

Reports of her death recognized her affection for her late husband, Dr. John McCain, and their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. These reports also contained long lists of her accomplishments and service: undergraduate degree from UNC-Chapel Hill, followed by a master's in music from Columbia University Teachers College followed by positions at UNC-CH's campus Y and seven decades of service to the university system.

She served on the board of governors of the UNC System, as a member of the UNC-CH board of visitors, chair of the UNC General Alumni Association, and the Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center board of visitors. UNC-CH awarded her an honorary de gree, the GAA Distinguished Service Medal and the William Richardson Davie Award. Notwithstanding her many accomplishments and great service to North Carolina, many will most remember her for her warm and steady support for friends and colleagues, her energetic, entertaining, and effective speeches, and for her unmatched and disarming sense of humor as demonstrated by the following stories from

folks who knew her.

According to Robert Anthony, former curator of the North Carolina Collection, when McCain was speaking to a group of nationally prominent decorative arts experts meeting in New Bern, McCain greeted them in her polished mock country girl manner explaining that she was from Faison in Duplin County, a town so small that the school, she told them, had to use the same car for drivers' training and for sex education.

For many years, she told this group, people in Duplin made a living growing tobacco. But, she explained, 'when the government cracked down on cigarette smoking and thus put the tobacco farmers out of business, some people switched to growing hogs. If we could just get the hogs to start smoking cigarettes, we might be able to get a product we could sell to the Yankees as smoked ham."

When Michael Hill, historian, and research supervisor at Cultural Resources, bragged about visiting all of North Carolina's 100 counties, she put her hand softly on his arm and said, "Honey, I've been to every precinct.

Patrick Wooten, deputy commissioner of the state's Industrial Commission remembered, "At a political gathering down in Wilson, when the topic of weight gain from politicians eating so much barbecue came up, Betty Ray said, 'My daughter, Eloise, bought me one of those stationary bicycles and told me that I had to ride it, and that she was going to come over to check the odometer every week.' When I

Our workforce is still too small



Foundation

John Locke

Most economic forecasters expect us to enter a recession sometime in 2023. I sure hope they're wrong.

Even a mild recession would throw tens of thousands of North Carolinians out of work. And the ranks of displaced workers

would rise into the hundreds of thousands if we suffered a downtown as serious as the Great Recession, when North Carolina's headline unemployment rate (U-3) topped out at 11.4% in April 2009, or the COVID-induced Great Suppression, when the rate hit 14.2% in April 2020.

Even if the economy manages to stay in positive territory next year, though, its growth will still be hampered by a persistent problem: too many working-aged North Carolinians on the sidelines.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the state's U-3 rate was 3.8% in October. That reflects about 194,000 North Carolinians who were unemployed but actively looking for work, and represents a notable increase from the 171,000 who were jobless in May. Still, by historical standards, unemployment is fairly low.

What's also low by historical standards, and more worrisome, is labor-force participation. In October 2019, 61.6% of working-aged North Carolinians were either employed or looking for a job. During the COVID crisis, the rate fell to as low as 58.2%. It subsequently recovered a bit but has stayed around 60.5% since the summer.

This seemingly small decline translates into about 93,000 extra North Carolinians out of the workforce. Some retail establishments already operating on thin margins, consumers won't be willing to bear the higher prices required to offset higher wages. So businesses are automating their operations, cutting back on locations and hours, or both.

In the end, higher wages are only sustainable in the context of higher levels of output per worker. Investing in equipment, hardware and software (i.e. automation) is one way to boost productivity. Another is to invest in technical education and job training Policymakers have been talking for years about the "mismatch" between what young and not-so-young workers know how to do and what prospective employers need them to do. Community colleges and other providers can close part of that gap. But I'm increasingly convinced that employers and employees will have to close the rest of the gap themselves — and that state policymak ers should empower them to do that.

Let's modify or junk occupational licensing laws that prefer formal instruction over on-the-job training. And let's expand North Carolina's education-savings account program so that many more families can use state dollars to purchase career and technical education directly from the public or private providers of their choice.

For another tranche of missing workers, those with drug addictions, my own experience as a grantmaker and reading of the academic literature have convinced me that faith-based institutions offer the best opportunity to achieve lasting results. These provid ers can and should be fully integrated into the continuum of care in North Carolina — though not if it means compromising the very characteristics, religious faith and practice, that make them distinctive and effective.

JOHN HOOD

asked her II she had done that she said, 'No, honey, I pay the preacher's little boy to come over and ride it."

McCain was an unapologetic Democrat. Willis Whichard, former supreme court justice and biographer of Governor David Swain, shared this story: Betty used to say that someone once told her mother that she would vote for the devil if he was on the Democratic ticket. Her mother frowned and responded emphatically, "Not in the primary!'

are disabled, either officially (from serious bouts with COVID or other illnesses or injuries) or unofficially (drug and alcohol abuse shot up during the pandemic). Others initially responded to COVID by retiring early or accepting unemployment-insurance benefits to stay home and have not yet been induced to reenter the workforce.

Can employers simply offer to pay them more? That's certainly a viable strategy in some sectors — but for others, it's a nonstarter. For restaurants and

in the long run, even a return to pre COVID norms will not be sufficient to meet the needs of North Carolina households and businesses. As recently as October 2012, labor-force participation was at 63.1%. When I got my first full-time job in North Carolina in 1989, it was 69%.

Yes, elderly residents make up a much larger share of the population than they did then. But many of them would work at least part-time if the Social Security system didn't discourage it. That needs to change, too, and soon.

SPENDING

Continued from page A4

that would work, our state subscribed. Forgive me, but a closer examination of their reading proficiency scores shows they aren't dramatically better than ours. Their "science of reading training" requires our 44,000 elementary teachers to undergo 160 hours of training.

It's time to call baloney on reading training being a "science." It's a discipline, but science requires experimentation. We don't need to experiment. We know the fundamentals, like blocking and tackling in football. When I was coming along in the 1950s, we knew what needed to be done. It worked then and will now if we stick to the fundamentals. Perhaps some of you can

remember the "Fun with Dick and Jane" reading series.

In each of the 12 books in the series we were introduced to new words, new people and increasingly complex and longer sentences. Each child read out loud every day, even in classes of 20 or more children. We had a teacher, sometimes a teaching aid or "student" teacher. Others volunteered to assist. How many times did we hear "sound it out" when we encountered a new word? We know phonics works!

There were 10 to 20 new vocabulary words each week, and I still remember the flash cards. Mother drilled us to make sure we knew and could pass every Friday's spelling test. If a student didn't do well, he or she received remedial help during recess or after school. Talk about incentive to learn!

Teachers communicated regularly with the parents of a child who was struggling, and it was expected that parents spend time listening to their child read to them. They don't get a pass, even in single-parent homes. Somehow parents can find time to hear children read. Without all of today's testing we knew which children were progressing well and which weren't. The importance of reading needs constant emphasis.

So, let's discontinue all the cutesy-sounding initiatives du jour and get back to basics the same education basics our constitution guarantees each child. It's just basic instruction, repetition and time spent with each student. If we don't have enough money to put a teaching assistant or mentor in every K-3 classroom let's allocate the roughly \$1.9 billion in remaining ARPA (American Recovery Rescue Plan) funds to do so. And if that's still not enough, we can use some of the \$6 billion in reserves from our state treasury. We saved it for a rainy day, and if this isn't a rainy crisis our priorities are out of kilter.

The final step may be the hardest. Let's acknowledge that learning to read is just as important as a child's psyche in early years and stop automatically promoting children who can't read at grade level. Their psyches will be more damaged knowing they aren't keeping up with their peers. We know children who were held back in first or second grade, got the basic foundation they needed to graduate college and became accomplished adults. Let's toughen up and hold back any child who isn't reading at grade level.

Education is the single most important function of state government, amounting to 58 cents of every tax dollar our state spends. Let's put our efforts where our money is and start treating reading like the priority it is. We should never again get a report card like the recent NAEP (National Assessment of Education Progress) results that show that our state scores were the lowest they have been since the 1990s.

Are you reading this? If so, let's get to work.

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

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BILL HORNER III, Publisher & Editor TAYLOR HEEDEN, Reporter/Web Editor BEN RAPPAPORT, Reporter/Social Media Editor MAYDHA DEVARAJAN, Reporter JEREMY VERNON, Sports Editor PEYTON SICKLES & SIMON BARBRE, Staff Photographers

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.

LIFE

Continued from page A4

Oftentimes, I think, I miss out on the best strategies of and in life by doing the same thing and expecting different results. That, it's been said, is the definition of insanity.

Maybe I — and you and us all - might be better off jumping down and just start running. Beats sitting on a fence post.

HONORED

Continued from page A1

A few months prior, Meghan said she noticed her otherwise playful and outgoing child experiencing some unusual health issues — wobbliness, shifty eyes, headaches. She saw a pediatrician who she said dismissed her concerns at the time, and had made plans to take Kenzie to an ophthalmologist.

They never made it to that appointment.

Just 45 minutes after dropping Kenzie off at her daycare on Dec. 8, 2021, and asking staff to keep an eye on her, Meghan received a text from one of the preschool teachers. Something wasn't right, she was told. Meghan picked up Kenzie and quickly made her way to the emergency room at UNC Hospitals, where they were met by Dusty, Kenzie's father. An MRI eventually confirmed the worst.

In that moment, Meghan said her whole world stopped.

"I remember crying so hard I couldn't even stand up," she recalled.

"Your options are to do radiation and go home [or] to do radiation and to pick a trial," Meghan said doctors told her. "But there is currently no cure. And this is probably going to take your daughter."

The first three days after Kenzie's diagnosis, Meghan said she didn't eat or drink, and barely slept. In a search for answers and support, she started finding others in the DIPG community, connecting with parents and the ChadTough Defeat DIPG Foundation, a nonprofit that the Scogginses eventually became family partners with.

Finding that network of organizations and families of other DIPG patients was incredibly meaningful for the Scogginses. Shortly after Kenzie's 5th birthday, Meghan created a Facebook page to share updates about her daughter's journey and progress. The page – "Kenzie's Bushel & a Peck" — now has more than 5,000 followers, and a quick scroll through it reveals messages of support and faith from people across the world. "By the end of this journey, we have people from California to Canada, Mexico, people in Ireland and Scotland, in Africa, who know about my child, and who have prayed for her, sent good vibes, sent mail," Meghan said.



Staff photo by Matt Ramey

Dusty and Meghan Scoggins sit at a bench in Boling Lane Park in Siler City, where they would often bring their 5-year-old daughter Kenzie before her passing in September. Kenzie was diagnosed with an aggressive brain tumor called diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG) almost a year ago today.

Meghan said. "The best that we could for as long as we could, just to give her as much of a life and as much of a chance as she could."

'Rainbows and sunshine and sass'

Kenzie loved most things that preschoolers tend to love: all things Disney, giving other people makeovers, having tea parties, fart jokes. In March, the whole family was able to travel to Orlando to visit theme parks through the Make-A-Wish Foundation, an experience Meghan and Dusty say they're eternally grateful to have shared with Kenzie.

She enjoyed painting other people's nails and doing hair; her dad would often oblige her with both, lying on the ground on his stomach so she could sit up on his back to brush and style his hair. Meghan called Kenzie their "tie-dye hippie chick." At her funeral, attendees were encouraged to wear blue, her favorite color, and other bright hues. her tumor eventually grew to the point where it would no longer be effective or safe for her to continue receiving treatment. Shortly afterward, Meghan and Dusty brought Kenzie back to North Carolina, where she would remain on hospice care until her passing in September.

When it came time for Kenzie to leave Stanford to go home, it was an emotional departure. Everyone cried, including Kenzie, Meghan said. But that's just how people medical staff, teachers, family and even strangers — tended to respond to her.

Christy Welch, her teacher at Write Beginnings Christian Preschool in Siler City, described Kenzie as a "livewire," with a sweet nature and tenacious spirit all in one.

"[She] definitely would make you feel like a million bucks whenever you came in and you were you were rushed from your morning travels, and she would say to you that you looked beautiful and that your hair was beautiful," Welch laughed. "And you're like, 'Well, I don't know what you're looking at." After her diagnosis, Kenzie only went to her preschool three times. But her fellow classmates and teachers missed her dearly, Welch noted, with the preschool being like a family. 'She's definitely left that thumbprint upon all of us and changed us all," she said.



The DIPG community is a tight-knit one.

"We all say that it's a group you don't want to be in, but you're so thankful to have it," Meghan said. "Because it is needed, sadly."

For DIPG patients, radiation therapy is the main form of treatment; patients often see a reduction in the size of the tumor and in the pressure applied on the brain stem. However, responses to the treatment are brief in almost all cases, the tumor begins to grow back after six to 12 months, according to the DIPG Resource Network. Given the limited options for DIPG patients, patients may explore clinical trials in hopes of prolonging life.

After considering their options, Meghan and Dusty made the decision to enroll Kenzie in a CAR-T cell trial in California at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford. The phase one clinical trial takes a patient's T cells a type of white blood cell and a major component of the immune system — and engineers them to target an antigen called GD2 that is expressed on gliomas with the H3K27M mutation.

"We decided that we were going to fight," "Kenzle was rainbows and sunshine and sass," Meghan said.

That sass and mischevious nature shone through in a number of ways. Sometimes, Kenzie would play tricks on her nurses and doctors at Stanford, rolling her eyes in the back of her head and falling over, scaring "the bejesus" out of everyone, Meghan said.

Dr. Jasia Mahdi is a child neurologist and neuro-oncologist who cared for Kenzie during her time at Stanford. For the several weeks Kenzie was in California receiving treatment in the early summer of 2022, Dr. Mahdi spent every day with her.

"I distinctly remember the day [she came in for her consent visit] because she just kind of walks in the room and brightens the whole place up," Dr. Mahdi said. "She was like a ball of energy and was very excited, and very warm. And you could tell how loving and effusive of a spirit she had, so within a couple of minutes she grabbed my hand and we were wandering around the clinic together.'

Quickly, staff came to realize that Kenzie found curse words hilarious, and sometimes they'd let a curse word slip just to get her to laugh, Dr. Mahdi recalls. She'd giggle with her whole body, her belly shaking up and down with laughter.

By the time Kenzie had arrived at Stanford, her tumor had significantly grown, so she was treated on a compassionate basis. While she responded well initially to the therapy,

DIPG research

In just one conversation, it's overwhelmingly evident the kind of love Meghan has for her child. She is both fiercely passionate about increasing awareness of DIPG and federal funding for childhood cancer, and incredibly transparent and vulnerable about the most traumatic event of her life, laughing and crying over memories of her little girl.

Now, Meghan sees it as part of her duty to continue to raise awareness of DIPG, posting frequently on Kenzie's Facebook page about her experiences of grief and sharing fundraisers for families experiencing DIPG and foundations like NoahBRAVE, Chad-Tough and Tough2gether Against DIPG.

"It is my real life, my everyday life that I have to live with," she said. "And so that's why I do it, so that one day, another mother won't have to bury their child. Another father, another grandmother, or grandfather, aunt, uncle, cousin, won't have to be where we are. Because, now, my daughter only got five years, Kenzie Scoggins, 5, paints her father Dusty's nails. Kenzie died from an aggressive brain tumor earlier on Sept. 18. She loved doing makeovers and painting nails.

and look at how many people she's touched."

Dr. Mahdi notes that though DIPG research has seen significant development over the past decade — driven by pioneers like Stanford Medicine's Dr. Michelle Monje — there is still much work to be done to fine tune treatments and to better understand the tumor and its microenvironment.

In 2021, cancer research received around \$7,362,000,000 in funding from the National Institutes of Health, while pediatric cancer research received around \$664,000,000. To Meghan, the current federal funding dollars aren't enough.

Similarly, naming DIPG for what it is has been important to Meghan. Shortly after Kenzie's passing, Meghan pushed to have Kenzie's death certificate corrected from listing the cause as "malignant neoplasm brain" to "malignant diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma."

She says she doesn't like to refer to DIPG as a "rare" form of cancer because, the way she sees it, too many children have died for it to be rare. Brain tumors are the most common cause of cancer-related death in children under 15, according to the DIPG Resource Network, with DIPG being the most common brain stem tumor in children. "DIPG murdered my

"And if you're a murderer, you are going to be held accountable, and I needed DIPG to be held accountable, because that is what took her."

Kenzie's legacy

Technically, Kara Knight is Kenzie's cousin, but to the little girl, she was her "Aunt Kara." They shared a close relationship; Knight and Dusty grew up together, much like siblings. Knight has a son similar in age to Kenzie, and when Kenzie moved to at-home hospice, Knight stayed with Meghan and Dusty and helped to care for her.

As Kenzie's 6th birthday approaches, Knight said it's been especially challenging for the family.

To Kenzie, family was everything, whether it was making Valentine's cards for her relatives or crying on FaceTime when she was in California because she just wanted to be home with them in Siler City. Many of her loved ones gathered the day after Thanksgiving by her gravesite to decorate a Christmas tree with ornaments stuck with messages for Kenzie and photos of her.

One of the ways Knight hopes to now honor her niece's legacy is through sharing stories and memories of her. When she learned that Siler City, Pittsboro and the county will be honoring Kenzie through a Bushel & a Peck Day, Knight was deeply touched.

"It means the world because a lot of bad things happen in this world, and you lose a lot of faith," Knight said. "And when something so horrible happens — and this has been the worst thing that's ever happened to me, and I'm sure most of our family, it's been terrible — so you lose a lot of faith and it's hard to see the positives.

"And so when these little things happen, they're [actually] big things having someone interested and listening to your stories. And I talk about Kenzie all the time, and I keep waiting for someone to be like, 'Alright, enough,'" she said with a laugh.

Kenzie loved arts and crafts, and even once told her teacher that she wanted to be a painter when she grew up. The Scogginses tell Kenzie's cousins now that when they see a tie-dye sky full of pinks and blues and purples, Kenzie is painting the sky. The day that her family gathered to decorate her Christmas tree, the sky was rich with color and a heart-shaped cloud hung overhead.

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HAW

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to its banks for guided walks, canoe rides, live music, and a puppet parade. In a tangible sense, the waterway has come back to life.

"We have a really healthy ecosystem in a lot of sections," said Emily Sutton, who leads anti-pollution efforts as the riverkeeper for the non-profit Haw River Assembly.

But the Haw's trajectory has been a zigzag of progress and setback. Alongside its resurrection, new threats have emerged. Industrial chemicals like perand polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and 1,4-Dioxane have contaminated drinking water supplies. The region's growth has sparked forest clearing and large-scale development. A proposed natural gas pipeline could cross numerous streams in the watershed.

Meanwhile, the legislature's warning about Jordan Lake proved prescient: the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) says Jordan Lake has been nutrient-saturated and oxygen-starved for nearly 40 years.

The Haw and its watershed have been the subject of legal maneuvers, regulations, political battles, investigations, enforcement actions and settlements. Progress has been, at best, incremental.

Cavalier-Keck, a citizen of the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation, wondered what more could be done to place the river's interests first. She launched an organizing effort based on a strategy she learned from other Indigenous leaders: a movement to grant the Haw its own independent, inalienable legal rights to "abundant, pure, clean, unpolluted water."

Cavalier-Keck and her allies want state legislators to pass a law allowing any North Carolinian to sue a polluter or a government agency on the river's behalf. She acknowledges it's a longshot. While the American legal tradition grants rights to corporations, it has traditionally not done so for rivers.

"Western law treats nature as property," said Thomas Linzey, senior legal counsel for the Center for Democratic and Environmental Rights, a non-profit that promotes a right-of-nature legal strategy. "Property is a bundle of rights, and part of that bundle of rights is the authority to destroy the property."

Bucking that precedent would be daunting in any legislature, and particularly in North Carolina, where the Republican majority has often resisted environmental policies that they which it says will help meet a growing residential and commercial demand for fracked natural gas.

When the caravan reached the Missouri River in South Dakota, the conversation turned to rights-of-nature organizing. Under an open tent that morning, Mari Margil, the Center for Democratic and Environmental Rights' executive director, explained that the U.S. legal system is designed to facilitate the orderly exploitation of nature. "Rather than protecting us from pipelines," she said, "environmental laws legalize and authorize pipelines."

The idea of reshaping the very architecture of the law by conferring rights on ecosystems has bounced around the American legal community for decades. In 1972, U.S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas wrote that just as corporations have legal personalities, so should "valleys, alpine meadows, rivers, lakes, estuaries, beaches, ridges, groves of trees, swampland, or even air that feels the destructive pressures of modern technology and modern life." But his opinion was a dissent from the majority.

It wasn't until 2006 that Tamaqua, Pennsylvania passed the nation's first rights-of-nature ordinance. A Republican-trending borough of 7,000 residents, Tamaqua was fighting the disposal of sewage sludge — about which the health impacts were unknown — in old coal pits. (The ordinance's preamble noted that two Pennsylvania boys died in the 1990s after separate sludge exposures. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency declined to draw a causal link.) The measure banned corporate sludge application and made it illegal for corporations "to interfere with the existence and flourishing of natural communities or ecosystems."

The sludge never arrived, and that victory caught the attention of global environmentalists. An organization working with Indigenous people in Ecuador invited Margil and her colleague Linzey to help draft that country's 2008 Constitution.

'Nature, or Pacha Mama, where life is reproduced and occurs, has the right to integral respect for its existence and for the maintenance and regeneration of its life cycles, structure, functions and evolutionary processes," the document says. "All persons, communities, peoples and nations can call upon public authorities to enforce the rights of nature."

Enforcement in Ecuador, however, has been uneven. The new Constitution didn't stop oil drilling in species-rich areas, but it did halt other projects, including a copper and gold mine in the Los Cedros cloud forest.

its intended effect: last summer, a Florida judge dismissed a lawsuit filed on behalf of two lakes, two streams, and a marsh to stop a construction project in wetlands near Orlando. The case is under appeal.

At the Red Road's Missouri River stop, Cavalier-Keck set up camp and turned her attention to the next speaker: Guy Reiter, an organizer with the Menominee Tribe of Wisconsin. The tribe has been fighting a proposed open-pit gold and zinc mine along the Menominee River, on land Reiter called "one of the last remnants of our great culture."

"It was always reactive, reactive, reactive, reactive to whatever the mining company was doing," Reiter told the travelers. "We always wanted to be proactive." In 2020, the tribal legislature enacted a resolution declaring that the river "possesses inherent and legal rights" and vowed to help protect those rights. Now, Reiter said, he is working to incorporate that sentiment into the tribal constitution.

Reiter's passion and his takecharge approach to protecting an Indigenous treasure moved Cavalier-Keck. That same excitement, she believed, could be harnessed to protect the Haw, native land of the Sissipahaw tribe.

'We need to have these conversations in North Carolina," she thought.

A river's fortunes

Last October. I met Sutton. the Haw's riverkeeper, at a canoe launch near Pittsboro. We walked a short distance from the parking lot and reached her favorite spot just as a great blue heron flew overhead. In front of us, the river rushed over stairstep rocks speckled with moss and autumn leaves. The biggest boulders sported faint graffiti. "Which I don't hate," Sutton admitted, "because I love when the public accesses these wild spaces."

It was hard to reconcile this scene with reports from the mid-20th century, when the river changed colors depending on which dyes the textile mills had discharged. "People called it an open cesspool," said Richard Jarrett, a retired wildlife officer who died in 2003, in Anne Melyn Cassebaum's book Down Along the Haw. "You couldn't stand to be near the river, the smell of dead fish was so bad."

When Don Francisco, a public health professor at UNC-Chapel Hill, took mud samples in 1970 - near the spot that Cavalier-Keck would later visit with her grandmother — he found "the only place of sterile nature I had ever seen," he told the Burlington Times-News. "I found nothing alive in it.'

searchers at N.C. State and Duke terways. "But there's really no found outsized PFAS levels in residents' bloodstreams. These "forever chemicals," so-named because they don't break down easily, can be traced in part to upstream industries that sent their wastewater to municipal treatment plants in Burlington, Greensboro, and Reidsville. When revealing her team's findings in October, N.C. State epidemiologist Jane Hoppin said strong evidence links PFAS exposure to kidney cancer, cholesterol imbalances, weakened vaccine response, and decreased infant and fetal growth.

In 2019, DEQ directed wastewater treatment facilities to screen for PFAS. Analyzing the results, the agency concluded that none of the Haw's upstream facilities discharged enough of the chemicals to exceed EPA's drinking-water health advisory. However, in June 2022, EPA issued interim guidance reducing the amount of PFAS it considered safe — in the case of one substance, to 1/17,500th of its previous level. DEQ has not compared the discharge numbers to the new guidance.

Likewise, upstream industries have tainted the Haw with 1,4-Dioxane, a chemical used in making paint strippers, antifreeze, and pharmaceuticals that EPA calls a likely carcinogen. "These levels are unbelievably high," Detlef Knappe, an engineering professor at N.C. State, told Pittsboro commissioners after a 2019 spike. "Your water plant is not equipped to handle this. Actually, almost no water plant in the whole country would be able to handle this."

Later that year, DEQ issued notices of violation to the wastewater plants in Greensboro and Reidsville for discharging harmful amounts of 1,4-Dioxane and failing to report it on time.

River pollution forced Pittsboro to install an advanced filtration system last summer, which, at \$3.5 million, "emptied our piggy bank," said town commissioner John Bonitz. A report posted online in October showed the filter had removed more than 95 percent of PFAS chemicals.

"We no longer have a hair-onfire situation," Bonitz said, but he still worries about the health impacts. He and his children had some of the highest blood concentrations in the testing, and his son had a failed response to the measles and mumps vaccines. (Some research has linked PFAS exposure to lower antibody concentrations for these two illnesses.)

Meanwhile, the region around the Haw is booming. Most of its 110-mile course runs through Alamance and Chatham counties, which are among the iastest-growing in the state. "People need houses," Sutton told me, but local governments can't keep up with the demand for permit review and enforcement. "So when these construction projects start, we see that there's sediment leaving the job site, or massive loads of mud entering our streams." She motioned toward the river; an egret passed in the distance. "All of these habitats here that we're seeing — the rocks, and the small pebbles at the bottom, and the air that's getting in through all of these bubbles - that is the entire reason that these sensitive macroinvertebrates can live here.' The tiny creatures, like stoneflies, nourish the river's fish, which in turn feed the egrets and herons above. "If a streambed is coated with clay and silt, that kills everything in the stream," she said. "Then you have a dead habitat. You've got a dead river.' Sutton and her colleagues are particularly anxious about Chatham Park, a development under construction that straddles Pittsboro city limits, five miles from where we sat. It will add 50.000 or more residents by 2045 and provide schools, restaurants, medical offices, an amphitheater, and a swim-and-pickleball club. Pittsboro's current population is 4,500. Building what is essentially a new city means bulldozing much of the wooded 7,000-acre site, which abuts the Haw and Jordan Lake. Fewer trees means fewer root systems to absorb excess nutrients. It also means more stormwater runoff, carrying with it sediment, nutrients, and toxins. Sutton said there are ways to mitigate this - for example, with green stormwater infrastructure like constructed wetlands, which filter sediment and nutrients before they reach nearby waincentives in North Carolina,' she said.

Chuck Smith, vice president for planning at Preston Development Company, the Carybased firm that's helming the project, said Chatham Park will preserve wider stream buffers, save more trees, and adhere to stricter nutrient standards than the law requires. It will use both conventional and green stormwater technology, though the proportion of each, he said, is 'impossible to answer."

"For the Haw River Assembly, it may not ever be enough, but for some people it's too much,' Smith said. "We're getting a lot of criticism from [private-sector] engineers in the town of Pittsboro who don't believe in green infrastructure."

'Let the water know'

As we watched the river, I asked Sutton what she thought of the rights-of-nature movement. "I think that it's a long uphill battle for North Carolina," the riverkeeper said. Still, it intrigues her as a mobilizing tool. "I think it's worth pursuing if only to make people think about how we give rights to corporations," but not ecosystems.

That's key to this movement: People gravitate toward big ideas, and the principle of the rights of nature has proven a magnet for both progressives and conservatives.

In the United States, successes have been limited and scattershot. Sometimes the courts have reversed them. But they have also resonated beyond municipal and even national borders.

The day after my interview with Sutton, I sat in on a Zoom meeting that Cavalier-Keck's 7 Directions of Service convened to discuss strategy. Fifteen advocates attended, most from nearby, but also a few veterans of similar campaigns elsewhere.

The North Carolinians were taking an unusual approach, even for the rights-of-nature movement. In the United States, most of the efforts have been local ordinances passed by ballot measures or municipal bodies.

But North Carolina doesn't allow citizens to vote directly on most policies, and local governments here have limited regulatory power. Instead, Cavalier-Keck, her husband, and their allies are pushing for statewide legislation — a reflection of where environmental decision-making typically takes place. They have not yet lined up a sponsor.

Earlier, they had met with Linzey, the attorney. He had drafted a model bill called the Rights of the Haw River Ecosystem Act. Not only would it authorize residents to sue on the river's behalf, but it would also direct state regulators to review their policies and practices for any that interfere with the Haw's right to "full restoration." Cavalier-Keck had talked with state Rep. Ricky Hurtado, a Democrat who represents Alamance County, about introducing the bill. He said he was open to further conversation. Cavalier-Keck acknowledged that passing a state law was a heavy lift. Much of the effort, she said, will go toward building a coalition along the river — a long-haul movement that she and Campos-Keck hope will bring together environmentalists, civic organizations, tribal citizens, and conservative rural residents who rely on healthy ecosystems for hunting, fishing, and farming. "We work with every kind of two-legged: every label, every box, every class, every culture, every religion," said Campos-Keck at the meeting. "And it's going to be uncomfortable for North Carolinians." But building a cross-ideological coalition, the couple believes, is the only way to gain political traction in a state like this. Before the meeting ended, Campos-Keck asked the others on the Zoom call to grab some water from their homes. "Pray with that water," he said. "Let the water know that you're coming to protect it, and that you need a little help." A month later, the effort Hurtado, the legislator they'd had the most traction with, lost his re-election bid. Cavalier-Keck seemed disappointed but not deterred. She has a bipartisan list to approach as possible sponsors. And she has secured billboard space to publicize the first of a series of community meetings. It is slated for Saxapahaw on Dec. 16.

pelleved would interfere with business.

But rights-of-nature has proven a potent organizing tool elsewhere, and a periodic deterrent to polluters by its political, if not always legal, force. Linzey, who has met with Haw River advocates, said the novel approach is designed to "rip apart that bundle of rights" that inherently benefits polluters.

"I think it's the last hope of this place, to actually protect what needs to be protected," he said. "Unless humanity is able to redefine their relationship to the natural world, we're all fried."

The right to exist

Cavalier-Keck's insight came last year during the Red Road to DC, a summer caravan that escorted a 5,000-pound totem pole from Washington State to Washington, D.C. Along its two-week meandering route, the caravan stopped at Indigenous sacred sites threatened by industrialization. Her husband, Jason Campos-Keck, provided security for the pole.

The Haw was heavy on the couple's minds that summer. They run an environmental-justice collective, 7 Directions of Service, and had spent considerable energy fighting the proposed Mountain Valley Pipeline. A spur of that natural gas pipeline, Southgate, would enter the state from Virginia and parallel the river in Rockingham and Alamance counties. Critics worry it would degrade woodlands and streams and leave the area vulnerable to leaks and explosions.

The project, first announced in 2018, has not received water-quality certification from North Carolina regulators and its developer recently halted an effort to acquire in-state land through eminent domain. But the company insists that it has "not abandoned this project,"

Since then, Bolivia, Uganda and Panama have codified similar rights nationwide, and politicians elsewhere have passed local measures. New Zealand granted legal rights to a region considered sacred by the Maori people. Colombia's Supreme Court granted rights to the Amazon rainforest, and Bangladesh's highest court did so for all rivers.

About three dozen U.S. municipalities have passed their own measures, often in response to specific threats. Pittsburgh's 2010 ordinance, for example, was an effort to deter hydraulic fracturing for natural gas. Whether or not it had legal teeth, the Pittsburgh measure did scare away gas companies. "It was as though the city put a 'do not enter' sign up to keep drillers away," Kathryn Klaber, former CEO of the Marcellus Shale Coalition, told a reporter in 2015.

But state laws still take precedence over municipal ordinances, which puts innovative local initiatives at risk of being overturned from above. In Orange County, Florida, voters in 2020 passed a charter amendment giving local waterways the "right to exist, flow, [and] be protected against pollution." It was popular, winning 89 percent of the vote in a politically divided county. But shortly before the vote, state legislators passed a law banning local rights-of-nature measures.

Granting rights to ecosystems "will damage our tremendous economy," state Rep. Blaise Ingoglia, a home builder and Florida's former Republican Party chair, told his colleagues. As litigation drives up the cost of construction, "there will be no such thing as affordable housing in these areas that have these amendments." The state law had

The federal Clean Water Act of 1972, and later state regulations, eliminated the most egregious pollution. A fledgling environmental movement gave rise in 1982 to the Haw River Assembly, which monitors pollution, raises public awareness, and lends muscle to political battles. A statewide ban on phosphate detergents, passed in 1987, eased the nutrient load. And global forces like the 1992 North American Free Trade Agreement shuttered Piedmont mills, which tattered the economy but gave the river a reprieve. "It looks more like a river now," Francisco said in 2001.

A 2006 U.S Geological Survey report found a "definable decrease" in sediment and nutrients in the Haw. These improvements, however, have not reversed Jordan Lake's oxygen-starved state. And many environmentalists are reluctant to view the progress too optimistically. In 2014, the conservation group American Rivers added the Haw to its national most-endangered list, citing the nutrient-laden stormwater and sewage that continued to seep into its waters. "The Haw River has been the victim of death by a million cuts," the organization says on its website.

One reason it's difficult to quantify progress on the Haw is that our scientific understanding has improved so much since the late 20th century. "The lack of information was astounding," said Sutton. "We just didn't know the scale and what the dangers were for human health or the ecosystem as a whole."

Back then, regulators were just beginning to understand the dangers of pollutants like PFAS and 1,4-Dioxane, which DEQ calls "emerging compounds."

In Pittsboro, the only municipality that draws its drinking water directly from the Haw, re-

OBITUARIES

ROBERT FRANKLIN SOOTS JR.

December 30, 1933 ~ December 8, 2022

Robert Franklin Soots Jr. of Pittsboro, North Carolina passed away peacefully on Thursday, December 8th, 2022, at the age of 88.

"Bob," or Junior as his siblings lovingly referred to him, was born in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, on December 30, 1933, to Robert Franklin Soots Sr. and Cleo Byrd Soots. He was married to his loving wife Sharon Soots in 1962. He is survived by his wife, Sharon Soots, daughter Shannon Kay, son-in-law Aaron Kay, and adoring granddaughter Avery Kay.

Robert is survived by his siblings, Ralph Soots, Larry Soots and Joyce Smith. He was pre-deceased by siblings Arnold Soots, Roger Soots, and Richard Soots. He is also lovingly remembered by their spouses and his many nieces and nephews.

Bob grew up in Midland, North Carolina, and loved the out-of-doors from his early childhood. He often talked fondly of a dentist, who gave him bird identification cards when he was just a little boy. He loved fishing, animals, and plants. As a young child, he witnessed the effects of pollution when a favorite fishing spot was damaged by a hosiery mill dumping dyes in the river. This shaped his world view, and his life was dedicated to environmental protection and conservation. He joined the army in October 1953 serving in the 18th Airborne 54th Field Artillery Group and he was stationed in North Carolina.

After the Army, he attended N.C. State College where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Wildlife, Conservation Management, Master of Science in Ecology, and his Doctorate In Zoology/Ecology. He went on to be the Chairman of the Biology department at Campbell University and spent 15 happy years developing and teaching future environmentalists, biologists and scientists. While at Campbell, he founded Raven Rock State Park in 1969 and was thrilled to be honored at its 50th anniversary celebration. More information about the founding of the state park and his story can be found at https://www.chathamnewsrecord.com/stories/ state-parks-creator-recalls-the-50-year-old-effort-to-preserve-raven-rock-land,2839.

He went on to become Chief of the Environmental Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and held subsequent positions in centralized programs and systems management. He was very proud of helping transition the Army Corps of Engineers to an electronic management system from a paper system. He loved technology, in addition to his lifelong love of the environment.

In his later years, he was an avid gardener and birdwatcher, participating in the Audubon bird count every year. He often gave friends, neighbors, and family advice on plants and continued to point out and identify birds even in his last months.

People wishing to honor Bob's lifelong commitment to the environment can make donations to the Friends of Raven Rock State Park at https://www.friendsofravenrock.org/ Friends of Raven Rock, P.O. Box 1572, Lillington, N.C. 27546

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

Memorial tributes can be left at www.donaldsonfunerals. com.

CHARLES THOMAS BRITT

August 15, 1947 ~ December 4, 2022

Charles Thomas Britt, 75, of Cameron, passed away Sunday, December 4, 2022, at his home. He was born in Columbus

He was born in Columbus County, to the late Thomas Randolph Britt and Mary Alice Cribb Britt. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife, Robin Dale White Britt: a daughter. Mary Elizabeth Britt Sasser and grandson, David Allen Britt. Charles served his Country in the U.S. Navy and worked many years as a crane operator in the construction industry including Dupont. Following retirement, he worked as a security guard for Moen. He is survived by sons Thomas Randolph Britt II, Phillip Durant Britt, Jonathan Charles

FUNERAL HOME &

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Britt, Charles Jonathan Britt, Matthew Conway Britt; and numerous grandchildren

Condolences may be made at www.bridgescameronfuneralhome.com.

ALMA DORIS TILLMAN

July 27, 1930 ~ December 2, 2022 Alma Doris Tillman, 92,

MONCIE TALLY WILKIE

June 12, 1929 ~ December 11, 2022

Moncie Tally Wilkie (Mama, Granny), born June 12, 1929, to William Berry and Emma Phillips Tally, ran to the arms of her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on Sunday morning, December 11, 2022, surrounded by her children.

She was 93 years young. The youngest of 12, she said her mother never gave her a middle name just "Moncie Tally" because after having so many kids, she ran out of names.

A lifelong member of Hickory Grove Baptist Church she taught and attended Sunday school, Vacation Bible School, Women's Missionary Group and was always involved with Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes. A lady of exemplary faith, her biggest desire was to see others receive Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior.

She raised chickens for Townsend, made beautiful wedding cakes, worked in the chicken plant, worked in a recycle plastics mill, and worked for Southern Supreme Fruitcakes in their early years. Most recently, until she was 83, she was a courier for Community Family Medicine. When she retired, she volunteered at the West Chatham Food Pantry.

She loved to read especially her Bible, novels, her missionary book, and daily devotionals, watch Hallmark movies, attend yard sales and thrift stores, the mountains, visiting historic homes, looking at the moon at night, watching birds, and dark chocolate. She said many times that she was the last living of 51 first cousins.

She is preceded in death by her parents, her husband, Rex Wilkie, daughter Bonnie Wilkie, great granddaughter McKenna Jessup, and brothers Ike, Talmadge, Sam, Joe, Fred, Woodrow, and sisters Swannie, Lona, Beulah, Malinda, and Leah.

Those left to cherish her memory are a son Randy Wilkie and wife Kay; daughters, Joan Jessup and husband Joel, Connie Henson and husband Rick; and grandchildren, Teresa Humphrey and husband Oza, Keith Jessup and wife Maria, Jason Wilkie, Jana Williams and husband Lee, Timmy Jessup, Brooke Little and husband Justin, Meredith Lambert and husband Anthony, great grandchildren, Dakota Humphrey and wife Brynn, McKayla Wilkie, Jona Humphrey and wife Celeste, Emma Humphrey (Drew), Haven Jessup, Jaylee Williams, Laura Jessup, Gavin Williams, Ansley Little and Addison Little; and great-great grandchildren, Layla Humphrey, Oaklyn Humphrey, and Blakely Humphrey.

One of Granny's memories is of her Daddy ringing the bell at the church, while watching his pocket watch for 5 minutes — this was for others to come help dig the grave. In her honor, the church bell rang before the funeral service.

She loved flowers, but if you choose, donations can also be made to Hickory Grove Baptist Church.

The family received friends from 12 to 1 p.m. on Wednesday, December 14, 2022, at Hickory Grove Baptist Church, 17721 NC Hwy 902, Bear Creek, N.C. A funeral service followed at 1 p.m. at the church with Rev. Darrell Garner officiating. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Smith & Buckner Funeral Home is assisting the Wilkie family.

Online condolences may be made at www.smithbucknerfh. com

Doris was preceded in death by her parents, Henry Clay and Walcie Curl, her former husband of 42 years, Lonnie Alvin Tillman, two sons, Greg Tillman and Ted Tillman, as well as her two sisters and two brothers.

Surviving relatives include her daughter, Lori Tillman Barbier; five grandchildren and numerous great-grandchildren.

Doris was a graduate of Pittsboro High School. She and her husband established and operated Tillman Heating and Air Conditioning, She attended Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Pittsboro. In lieu of flowers the family requests that donations be made to Mt. Olive Baptist Church, 5043 Mount Olive Church Road, Pittsboro, in support of Senior and Youth activities. Donaldson Funeral Home & Crematory in Pittsboro, served the Tillman family.

VIVIAN BOGGS THRIFT

November 17, 1937 \sim December 5, 2022

Vivian Boggs Thrift, 85, of Siler City, passed away on Monday, December 5, 2022.

The family held services on Friday and Saturday, December 10 and 11, 2022, at the home her son, Trent Thrift. Flowers are accepted or donations may be made to Brush Creek Baptist Church Cemetery Fund, 5345 Airport Rd., Bear Creek, NC 27207 or Bennett Baptist Church Cemetery Fund, P.O. Box 91, Bennett, N.C. 27208.

Condolences may be offered online at www.joycebradychapel.com.

CAROLYN LAVERNE ELKINS KIDD

April 2, 1943 ~ December 9, 2022

Carolyn Laverne Elkins Kidd, 79, of Eagle Springs, passed away on Friday, December 9, 2022, at FirstHealth Moore Regional.

The funeral was held on Tuesday, December 13, 2022 at 2 p.m. at Fall Creek Baptist Church with Dr. Ron Chaney presiding.

Carolyn was the daughter of Wilton and Edna Hill Elkins. She was a homemaker and member of Fall Creek Baptist Church. In addition to her parents, Carolyn was preceded in death by her infant son, Keith Kidd and brother, Grover Elkins.

She is survived by her daughters, Karen Williams of Eagle Springs and Beth Wade of Lake Wylie, S.C.; brother, Edison Elkins; five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Flowers are accepted or donations may be made to Fall Creek Baptist Church Cemetery Fund, 1745 Fall Creek Church Rd., Bennett, N.C. 27208.

Condolences may be offered online at www.joycebradychapel.com.

DELLA MAE OAKLEY BEAN

November 9, 1927 \sim December 8, 2022

Mrs. Della Mae Oakley Bean, 95, of Cameron, passed away Thursday, December 8, 2022, at the FirstHealth Hospice House.

A memorial service to celebrate Miss Della's life will be held at a date to be announced

She was born in Surry County, the daughter of the late William Oakley and Jessie Fannie Johnson Oakley. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Leroy Bean.

Survivors include daughters, Evelyn Bean of Hurst, Texas, Peggy Maples of Cameron and Sandra Bean of Berkley, California; two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Condolences may be made at www.bridgescameronfuneralhome.com.

passed away Friday, December 2, 2022, at the Health Center at St. Joseph of the Pines in Southern Pines.

Services were held at Mt. Olive Baptist Church, on Saturday, December 10, 2022. Following the service, burial was at the church cemetery and a reception with time to share stories with friends and family immediately after in the church Fellowship Hall.



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Mrs. Thrift was the daughter of Joseph and Caroline Allen Boggs. She was a member of Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church. She retired after many years as a cook for Hardee's. In addition to her parents, she is preceded in death by her husband, Clarence Eugene Thrift, a daughter, Wendy Thrift, and a brother, Merle Boggs.

She is survived by her son, Trent Thrift of Siler City; daughters, Jane Bray of Bear Creek, Wanda Ellis and Annie Jean Thrift, both of Siler City; a sister, Mary Ruth Bradley of Norwood; six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

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

REBECCA ANN DIXON ROUTH

April 17, 1936 ~ December 10, 2022

Rebecca Ann Dixon Routh, 86, of Bennett, passed away on Saturday, December 10, 2022 at her home.

A graveside service was held on Wednesday, December 14, 2022 at 2 p.m. at Brush Creek Baptist Church with Rev. Patrick Fuller and Rev. Tim Strider presiding.

Becky was born in Chatham County to Colon and Ollie Dixon. She was a member of Brush Creek Baptist Church. She worked in data processing at Acme McCrary for over 35 years. She and her husband, Buddy, owned and operated Routh's Grocery and Bennett Hardware for many years. In addition to her parents, Becky was preceded in death by her husband, Lester Ervin (Buddy) Routh Jr.

She is survived by her sister, Virginia Fitts of Siler City; and brother, John Thomas "Tom" Dixon of Aberdeen.

RANDY MARTIN KELLY

June 7, 1957 - November 29, 2022

Randy Martin Kelly, 65, of Sanford, passed away on Tuesday, November 29, 2022 at his home.

There will be no services for him at this time.

He was the son of the late Clinton Lawton Kelly and Grace Elizabeth Cardillo Kelly who preceded him in death. He spent his professional life in logging, carpentry work and construction.

Surviving is his wife, Corina Kelly of Lemon Springs; a son, Joseph Martin Kelly of Lemon Springs; and brothers, Wayne Clinton Kelly and Bruce Allen Kelly, both of Sanford.

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

HAZEL CECILIA WELCH RIVERA

Hazel Cecilia Welch Rivera passed away on December 7, 2022.

The family received friends on Tuesday, December 13, 2022, from 12 to 1 p.m. at Bridges-Cameron Funeral Home. The funeral service will follow at 1 p.m. in the Chapel with Fr. Craig Lister officiating. Burial will follow in Chalybeate Springs Baptist Church Cemetery.

Hazel was born in Ironsides, Maryland, in 1927 to Adella and John Welch. She attended the University of Maryland. After graduation, she worked for the National Security Agen-

See OBITS, page A9

JULIA HART BEAL

January 23, 1964 - November 25, 2022

Julia Hart Beal, 58, of Cape Carteret, formerly of Chatham County, passed away on Friday, November 25, 2022.

Ms. Beal was born in Chatham County, the daughter of Willie Madison Hart Jr. and Doris Buckner Hart. Julia graduated from Jordan-Matthews High School. She retired after many years as an FDA Inspector for Pilgrim's Pride in Sanford. After retiring, she accomplished her goal of moving to the beach. She was a member of Moon's Chapel Baptist Church. Julia loved spending time at the beach, her flowers and crafting. She was a diehard Tar Heel fan. Julia cherished her time with her family.

Julia is survived by her son, Dustin Beal of Bear Creek; sister, Sharon Baird and husband Dr. Bruce Baird of La-Grange; significant other, Steven Everwine of Cape Carteret; nephews Joshua Baird (Ruthanne) of Raleigh, Ethan Baird of Garner, Luke Baird (Anna) of Kinston, Caleb Baird (Janet Leighton) of Wilmington, and Jacob Baird (Peyton) of Snow Hill; great nieces Emma, Kinsley and Chloe Grace Baird. She is also survived by many aunts, uncles and cousins.

A funeral service was held at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, November 30, 2022, at Moon's Chapel Baptist Church, 175 Moon's Chapel Rd., Siler City, with Rev. Bruce Brown officiating. Burial followed in the church cemetery. The family received friends after the service in the Fellowship Hall.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to a charity of your choice.

Smith & Buckner Funeral Home assisted the Beal family. Online condolences may be made at www.smithbucknerfh.com.

OBITS

Continued from page A8

cy in Washington, D.C. After decades of venturing back and forth from the U.S., the family settled in Chalybeate Springs and Sanford and worked at Campbell University's Book Store.

Hazel is survived by her three children, Patricia Rivera, Kenneth Rivera, and Roland Rivera; three grandchildren, one step-grandchild, and three great-grandchildren. She is preceded in death by her husband, Ismael Rivera, mother and father, and siblings, Mildred Bowie, John "Junior" Welch and Harry Welch.

Condolences may be made at www.bridgescameronfuneralhome.com.

JAMES DOUGLAS SEAL

November 27, 1978 ~ December 11, 2022 James Douglas Seal, 44, of

Bear Creek, passed away on Sunday, December 11, 2022.

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. on Friday, December 16, 2022, at Smith & Buckner Funeral Home, 230 N. Second Ave., Siler City with Pastor Tim Qualls officiating.

James was born in Forest County, Mississippi, the son of Ivan Seal and Marilyn Tucker. He was a member of Old Paths Baptist Church. James enjoyed participating in the Special Olympics. He is preceded in death by his mother, Marilyn Boone Tucker, and brother, Christopher Seal.

Survivors include his father, Ivan Seal of Bear Creek; brother, David M. Seal, of Mississippi; and stepfather, Gary Tucker of Bear Creeks. Memorials may be made to the North Carolina Down Syndrome Alliance, P.O. Box 99562, Raleigh, NC 27624.

Smith & Buckner Funeral Home is assisting the Seal family.

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

ANDREW LOUIS RIPLEY JR.

January 15, 1937 ~ December 3, 2022

Andrew Louis "Big Al" Ripley Jr., 85, passed away Saturday afternoon, December 3, 2022, at his home in Pittsboro.

A native of Durham County, Al was born January 15, 1937, to the late Andrew Louis Ripley Sr. and Essie Vickers Ripley. Al cherished his years at both Wrights Machinery and Nortel, where he retired as a supervisor in shipping and receiving. In addition to his parents, Mr. Ripley was preceded in death by his wife of 60 years, Shirley Marie Gooch, and son, Andrew Louis Ripley III.

He is survived by sons, Thomas R. Hayes of Winston-Salem, Ector P. "Pat" Hayes of Pittsboro and Dana M. Ripley of Durham; seven grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

A graveside service was held 10 a.m. Tuesday, December 6, 2022, at Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Pittsboro with Reverend Robert Elmore officiating.

In lieu of flowers, consider making a donation to Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, 1309 North Pea Ridge Road, Pittsboro, N.C. 27312.

Donaldson Funeral Home & Crematory is honored to have served the Ripley family.

SHAQUITA EVETTE MCDOUGALD

June 27, 1985 ~ November 24, 2022

Shaquita Evette McDougald, 37, of Broadway, passed away on Thursday, November 24, 2022, at Central Carolina Hospital in Sanford, NC.

The funeral service was held at 11 a.m., December 9, 2022 at Life Springs Church.

IDA LEE COTTEN

Ida Lee Cotten, 79 of Moncure, passed away on Tuesday, December 6, 2022, at Jim and Betsy SECU Bryan Hospice Home.

Funeral service was held at 2:30 Sunday, December 11, 2022, at Liberty Chapel Church, with burial following in the church cemetery.

MILTON THOMAS 'TOM' BURCH

Milton Thomas "Tom" Burch, 74, passed away on Sunday, December 4, 2022, at Central Carolina Hospital, Sanford.

The funeral service was held at 1 p.m. Sunday, December 11, 2022, at Works for Christ Christian Center, with burial in Lee Memory Garden.

SHARON INEZ NEWBY

Sharon Inez Newby 51, of Sanford, passed away on Friday. December 2, 2022.

The funeral service was held at 2 p.m., Saturday, December 10, 2022, at Works for Christ Christian Center with burial following in Lee Memory Garden.

PAMELA ANN JONES

Pamela Ann Jones, 59, of Sanford, passed away on Wednesday, December 7, 2022 at Sanford Health and Rehab.

Professional services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home.

TONY LAMONT MARTIN

Tony Lamont Martin III, 31 of Wendell, passed away on

Tuesday, November 29, 2022, at his residence.

Funeral service was held at 11 a.m., Saturday, December 10, 2022, at Works for Christ Christian Center.

ALBERTO CASIMIRO BARRAGAN

Alberto Casimiro Barragan, 24 of Sanford, passed away on Sunday, December 4, 2022.

Professional services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home.

BRENDA FAYE (SUTTON) PEMBERTON

Brenda Faye (Sutton) Pemberton, age 67, of Sanford, passed away on Sunday, December 11, 2022, at UNC Hospital in Chapel Hill. Services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home.

ADOLPHUS HEADEN

Adolphus Headen, 81, of Goldston, passed away on Monday, December 5, 2022, in his home.

Arrangements are entrusted to McLeod Funeral Home in Sanford.

ESTELLA THOMAS MCNAIR

Estella Thomas McNair, 90, of Sanford, passed away on Monday, December 5, 2022, at Accorduis Health Care, Aberdeen.

Wake was held Sunday, December 11, 2022, from 3 to 5 p.m. at Knotts Funeral Home.

RICARDO ESQUIVEL ESPARZA

Ricardo Esquivel Esparza, 43, of Siler City, passed away on Thursday, December 8, 2022, at his residence.

Professional services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home, Pittsboro.

Chatham County athletes participate in N.C. Senior Games

From the Chatham County Council on Aging

A total of 49 athletes representing Chatham County competed in the 2022 North Carolina Senior Games held August through November at various locations throughout the state.

Chatham athletes combined for 31 gold medals at the state competition in various disciplines. Steve Barrett, 89. captured gold in the Men's Ages 85-89 100-yard backstroke in a time of 2:05.10. He added another first-place swim in the 200 breaststroke, touching the wall in 6:54.18. In the Men's Ages 65-69 division for pickleball, Mike Briggs paired with Sandro Francioni to claim gold in Division 2. Priya Chinnaswamy made it a clean sweep of first-place performances in Women's Ages 50-54 table tennis, winning singles gold and partnering with Arlene Green in doubles competition en route to a first-place showing. Stan Cox, 67, led the way in the Men's Ages

65-69 200 breaststroke. He touched the wall roughly nine seconds ahead of his closest competitor, finishing in 3:55.97 in the finals. In addition, he added two silver medals in the 200 individual medley and 200 butterfly while placing fifth in the 100 IM.

Anne Granath conquered the grueling Women's Ages 85-89 500 freestyle to finish first in a time of 13:47.84. Specializing in distance events, the 88-year-old Granath added a silver medal in the 50 freestyle. Ages 55-59 50-meter dash, finishing in 8.35 seconds. Lynch tacked on bronze in the 100.

In croquet, John May prevailed in the Men's Ages 80-84 division as did Mary Norgren in the Women's Ages 65-69 field. Competing in table

tennis, Duane Millslagle claimed singles gold in the Men's Ages 70-74 ranks.

Raymond Philipps mastered sprint events during his time in the pool, winning gold in the Men's Ages 90-94 50 freestyle (52.73) and the 50 backstroke (1:14.45). At 91 years of age, Philipps was second in the 100 freestyle. Bill Powers secured two first-place efforts, winning the Men's Ages 85-89 400 dash in 2:26.24 and the 5K run in 42:51.05. He was second in the Men's Ages 85-89 100 event. Arguably the most dominant individual effort among Chatham athletes was turned in by David Schumann in the pool. The 76-yearold Schumann supplied six first-place swims in State Games competition, routing the Men's Ages

75-79 field in the 200 freestyle (3:19.50), the 100 IM (2:02.70), 200 backstroke (3:50.46), 200 IM (4:13.46), 500 freestyle (8:49.16) and the 400 IM (9:10.75).

In the softball throw, Don Weisz uncorked an effort of 144 feet, 2 inches to win gold in the Men's Ages 75-79 division. That cleared his next closest competitor by roughly 35 feet.

A new State Games record was set by Kevin Williams in the Men's Ages 55-59 division. Williams, 56, blistered the field to claim first place in the 50 dash in a time of 6.58 seconds — breaking the previous meet record of 6.96. Silver-medal performances were turned in by Virginia Aldige and Maurice Brookhart (pickleball mixed doubles), Bill Bass and Adam Schoenfeld (tennis doubles), Ronald Bousquet (archerv conv-recurve barebow), Tim Brvden and Jimmy Comer (pickleball doubles), Drew Carson and Betsy Fonke (pickleball doubles), Chester Hwang and Jerry Gevirtz (tennis

doubles), Hwang and Carmen Yee (tennis mixed doubles), Mel Reinhardt (horseshoes) and Dean Sellseth (archery comp w/sight and release aid).

Bronze medal efforts were logged by Baas and Eric Haake (pickleball doubles), Dan Burns (table tennis singles), Jan Cox (100 breaststroke), Frankie Jordan (archery conv-recurve barebow), Danny Rogers and Tiersa Tavana (pickleball mixed doubles), Baas and Pamela Schoenfeld (pickleball mixed doubles) and Anna Shearer (croquet). In addition to her third-place swim in the 100 breaststroke, Jan Cox was seventh in the 100 freestyle. Other competing athletes in N.C. Senior Games from Chatham included Edward Beroset (5K run), Diane Potter (mixed doubles — Dan Burns), Richard Cordes (Cycling – 10K), Jenna Davis and Miriam De St Aubin (pickleball doubles), Wayne Eckert (400 dash, 800 run, 1,500 run), Richard Poole (50 dash, 100 dash) and Daniel Tunstall (Cycling 1 mile,

5K, 10K).

Chatham County Senior Games is part of a statewide network of 53 local programs sanctioned by North Carolina Senior Games Inc. NCSG is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing year-round health promotion and education for adults 50 years of age and better. NCSG is a statewide nonprofit organization sponsored

Mary Anne Kendall earned gold in the Women's Ages 80-84 tennis competition and moved to a smaller court for table tennis, teaming with Lillian Pruett for doubles gold in the Women's Ages 80-84 ranks. Kendall placed fourth in the singles ranks for the Women's Ages 80-84 division. Pruett found success on the singles circuit, as she claimed first place in table tennis for the Women's Ages 80-84 division.

Denise Lynch, 57, enjoyed a comfortable firstplace run in the Women's by the North Carolina Division of Aging and Adult Services.

NCSG also offers SilverArts, the statewide heritage, visual, literary and performing arts program; SilverLiners senior line dancing program and SilverStriders national award-winning walking program. Qualification for next year's State Finals will be held in the spring of 2022 at local senior games across North Carolina. For more information on a Senior Games program in your area, please contact North Carolina Senior Games at 919-851-5456 or visit their website at www.ncseniorgames.org.



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THE CN+R Q&A | REP. ROBERT REIVES II Reives on leadership role, moving N.C. forward

CN+R Staff Report

Rep. Robert Reives II, who won re-election to his Dist. 54 N.C. House seat in November, was recently chosen by his fellow Democrats as House Minority Leader for the second time. Reives has served in the state General Assembly since 2014.

He spoke recently with the News + Record about his outlook for the coming two-year legislative term.

Let's start with your re-election as House Minority Leader. What do you think that says about the confidence your colleagues have in you, and how are you feeling about this honor?

I am extremely appreciative of my caucus for entrusting me with this position again. I think it is a testament to the hard work that we put in over the past two years and the major accomplishments we achieved working across the aisle. I look forward to continuing in this position and building upon the success we had in the previous session.

From a practical standpoint, with some changes in House membership, how will your role as House Minority Leader change in the

coming legislative sessions?

Practically speaking, this position will not change much. We have never failed to sustain a veto under Governor Cooper, and I do not anticipate that changing. It will be more difficult because our margin for error is nearly nonexistent, but I hope that this important check remains intact and that it encourages our friends across the aisle to work with us. Our state is made better when both parties have to negotiate. A supermajority — of either party – prevents the important voice of the Governor in those conversations.

Looking back on this past fall, what did the election process and your campaigning teach you or leave you with — what did you gain from the work you did to get re-elected that will serve you well for another two years?

Campaigning in the toughest race I have had since being appointed to this office has taught me a lot. Primarily, it reiterated my belief that we need to be listening to every constituent, not just the ones who vote for us. Having competitive races in every district would create a legislative body that is more open to compromise and



Courtesy of the N.C. General

Rep. Robert Reives II

working together. Entrenched partisanship is not the best way to run our state.

You've talked a lot in the last couple of years about cross-aisle cooperation and working across party lines. In the next two years, what Democratic policies and goals will you work to advance?

Workforce development remains a top priority for my caucus and for me. This requires fully funding public education, making meaningful steps in expanding broadband access — not just throwing money at the problem, promoting fair elections and finally reducing health care costs, which requires, among other things, expansion of coverage.

Are there any Republican policies/goals that you're wary of?

The majority ran on the promise of a heartbeat ban with no real exceptions. That has incredibly negative effects on women's health care and employment and is contrary to what the majority of North Carolinians favor. Free and fair elections are another. Gerrymandering has plagued our state for decades and unfortunately that will not go away. Redistricting does not have to be approved by the Governor so we will not be able to prevent districts that do not reflect the makeup of the state. Moore v. Harper, which is being considered by the US Supreme Court at this very moment, could have major implications for North Carolina and every state moving forward.

And finally, in what ways can the two parties work together in the coming two-year term to move N.C. forward?

Over the previous session we showed a real ability to work together on economic development issues. Increasing prosperity in North Carolina helps everyone, regardless of political party. We should also

keep in mind that these jobs locating in North Carolina do not have to stay here. When we veer toward legislating on divisive social issues rather than making lives better, we can easily lose the investments made. That is why it is important for us to actually come together and find workable solutions instead of focusing on scoring political points.

What specific challenges do you want the General Assembly to "fix" for North Carolinians in the next two years? What's on that list for you?

Expanding health care coverage to more North Carolinians will improve so many lives. I know there is bipartisan interest in accomplishing that this session so that is at the top of our priority list. Education funding remains important, not just funding classrooms but making sure that our educators and support staff have competitive pay. And with the uncertainty we face with the economy, we should consider how we can make sure state employee salaries, and retirees, keep pace with inflation. I am less optimistic that we will fix fundamental issues with our elections, like fair maps, but I will

continue to advocate for that as well

And what are your specific goals to help Chatham **County and your district** (including that slice of Randolph County) in the coming term?

Our district is a microcosm of the state. We have wealthy, quickly-growing parts of Chatham County and rural parts in the western part of the county that need more attention right now. I am excited that, within this district, we have the Toyota plant, VinFast and Wolfspeed all coming. Those are going to need thousands of workers, and we can provide them from within our community. To that end, we need to ensure Chatham County and Randolph County schools are the best they can be. We need to provide ample funding for CCCC to help train workers. We should continue targeting broadband investments to make high-speed internet available to every resident. And we should work with local and state leaders to find creative ways to make housing more affordable so that everyone can call Chatham home without struggling to pay their rent or mortgage.

Chatham Sheriff's Office charges Moore man in 'death by distribution' case

CN+R Staff Report

The Chatham County Sheriff's Office has announced the arrest of Nathanial Lynn Rush, 28, of 521 Fox Spring Drive, Robbins, in connection with a death by overdose which occurred in the Bear Creek area of Chatham County. Authorities say an autopsy

was performed on the victim and revealed the cause of death to be a fatal mixture of methamphetamine and fentanyl. According to Chatham County investigators, the victim obtained the controlled substance from Rush on the day he died. The crime falls under North Carolina's "Death by Distribution" Act, which first took effect on Dec. 1, 2019. NC Governor Roy Cooper signed the Act (NCGS §14-18.4) into law in response to the increasing number of deaths related to the opioid epidemic. The law allows for the prosecution of individuals who sell drugs to buyers who later overdose as a result of using those controlled substances. Rush was arrested in Moore County on Dec. 6 after Chatham County deputies charged him with felony death by distribution. He was assigned a \$100,000 secured bond and held in Moore

The crime falls under North Carolina's "Death by Distribution" Act, which first took effect on Dec. 1, 2019. NC Governor Roy Cooper signed the Act (NCGS §14-18.4) into law in response to the increasing number of deaths related to the opioid epidemic. The law allows for the prosecution of individuals who sell drugs to buyers who later overdose as a result of using those controlled substances.

County awaiting transfer to the Chatham County Detention

Center. He is

due to appear in

District Court

in Pittsboro on

"Our staff

members take

Wednesday.

Chatham County

arrests are only a small piece of a greater plan developed and implemented by the Sheriff's Prevention Partnership on Controlled Substances (SP-PCS). The SPPCS is a coalition of local authorities and first responders, medical and mental health professionals, educators, stakeholders, survivors and other service providers who joined forces to combat the opioid epidemic and its impacts locally. The group has directly contributed to increased education, training, programming, and life-saving efforts in Chatham County. Anyone who suspects criminal activity in their area, including drug-related activity, should call 911 to speak with a deputy as soon as possible. Chatham County residents may also call 919-542-2911 for non-emergencies or to report tips.

Siler City commissioners talk strategic plan

BY TAYLOR HEEDEN News + Record Staff

SILER CITY - Commissioners held a special session meeting on Monday evening to hear a presentation about the town's new strategic plan.

The board heard from Gary Jackson of MCGIII Associates the firm contracted by the town to develop a draft strategic plan – and he laid out the groundwork to begin the drafting process. The plan will feature five strategic visions, with each vision having three to four goals. Jackson met with town employees, elected officials, administrative staff, business owners and residents to evaluate what direction they wanted to see Siler City go. He said there seemed to be a lot of commonality between

what elected officials and staff want to see, but it seemed staff feels they aren't appreciated or compensated enough.

"When you ask employees to rate policy direction, almost entirely it's about resource decisions," Jackson said. "Is my program getting the funds needed? Am I being well compensated? Is there financial planning that's going to help me to reward for my work ethic? So those are different questions and attributes having a policy direction." Commissioners will be given a draft strategic plan early in the new year for consideration.



Rush

public health and safety seriously, and we recognize that drug abuse and addiction impacts us all," said Chatham County Sheriff Mike Roberson. "Law enforcement must continue working together with the community to create lasting change. As we unite, we must be willing to share

resources, ideas, and experiences in order to make educated decisions on behalf of our families and shared community. We have to support one another.'

Roberson also stressed that

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

HONORED

Continued from page A6

For Meghan, the grief she's experienced since Kenzie's death has ebbed and flowed. She describes it like a train — it doesn't stop, no matter how hard one tries.

"Because if there's one thing about grief is it's going to come out, it's going to come out in one form or another," she said. "And if you hold it in for too long, it will leave you in a cemetery at 9 o'clock at night screaming at the top of your lungs because you are so angry and so tired of feeling sad all the time. So whatever way you can, get it out, whether it be talking, helping other people, crying, watching videos.'

In many ways, Kenzie was a miracle, according to her family. She was born six weeks prematurely, spending a week in the NICU before coming

home on Christmas Eve. "She was our little miracle baby," Meghan said.

acle of her existence is something that her loved ones continue to marvel in every day.

In her memory, Kenzie's preschool is holding a "Love Like Kenzie Day" fundraiser for her birthday, which they plan to make an annual tradition. This year, the preschool is raising donations for a child in need who was in Kenzie's class to celebrate Christmas. The Disney song, "Waiting on a Miracle," was played at her memorial service. And after her passing, the Scogginses donated Kenzie's brain to Stanford; her cultures are now growing, contributing to much-needed

"I just feel like she gave the world the miracle that she didn't get," Meghan said.

In her wake, the mir-

research for DIPG.

For those looking to support DIPG research, visit Kenzie's family partner page with ChadTough Defeat DIPG

Stitch from 'Lilo & Stitch.'

Foundation at www. chadtough.org/meet-thekids/kenzie-scoggins/. Contributions to Noah-BRAVE can be made at

noahbrave.org/donate/ and to Tough2gether Against DIPG at www. flipcause.com/secure/ cause_pdetails/MTA-

3ODEx. Contact Christy Welch at (919) 799-9615 to donate to the Write **Beginnings** Christian Preschool fundraiser.



Meghan and Dusty Scoggins hold beloved stuffed animals of their daughter Kenzie, 5, who died from

an aggressive brain tumor on Sept. 18. Kenzie loved Disney movies, and her favorite character was

Staff photo by Matt Ramey

COMMUNITY

Continued from page A1

A devoted community

When Jerry Holden isn't attending services at Merry Oaks — located not far from the Sky Mart convenience store at the intersection of U.S. 1 and Old U.S. 1 — you can find him on its front lawn mowing the grass, cleaning the red pews of the sanctuary or tidying up the community space adjacent to the church. To him, like many in the congregation, Merry Oaks is a second home.

Holden, 70, has been attending the church since he was a child. It's where he met his wife, Karen, and where he's felt a sense of community.

But Merry Oaks isn't the same place as it was when he growing up, he says. And while he isn't exactly worried about the future, he fears what it could mean for the little town.

Holden has seen this play out before in other rural towns and churches nearby — a big entity makes big promises for the future, but with those promises comes the destruction of history.

"I've seen so many little communities like this one go down to nothing but a crossroads," he said. "You go by and you see what used to be seven or eight or 10 stores, and there's nothing. They're either rotten down or just a foundation and a crossroads."

He doesn't want his beloved community to meet the same fate. But as the Merry Oaks community ages, Holden said it seems more and more likely. People die off, their kids don't stay. Family farms get sold to developers for subdivisions, and with each purchase, the history goes with it.

"All they cared about was the money," he said. "That's what's taking this community: money. They say, 'Look how much money this thing's gonna bring in. Look what it's gonna do.' They don't care about us people. They just want money."

To Jerry Holden, Karen Holden and the more than a dozen members of Merry Oaks Baptist, preserving this space is about more than money — it's about preserving history.

In Merry Oaks, the past is part of the present. Few places in the rural South still exist where you can find a preacher whose grandfather grew up a quarter mile from the church. A place where one of the congregation members is the great-granddaughter of someone who built the town; where the church has one unofficial car mechanic; or where every congregation member is just a few degrees of

Staff photo by Phillip Teasley

The church is the last pillar of a community once touted as the next big thing in the state. A century ago, Merry Oaks was an up-and-coming small town, sporting a dance hall, a train station and the first school in the county.

feel that.

Members of the congregation are frustrated and upset at the current NCDOT plans, but they also believe the future of the church is in God's hands. In nearly a century and a half, the tall white steeple atop Merry Oaks Baptist has been no stranger to trying times.

The NCDOT plans are only the latest to come its way. The red pews of the sanctuary hold more memories than the aging minds of its members can recall. It holds the beginnings of awkward relationships that later became marriages, the echoes of old choir practices and maybe even the hidden crumbs of cookies made by the preacher's wife every Sunday.

Beyond the walls of the sanctuary, the church is an important symbol because it is the last remaining pillar of the community that once was the town of Merry Oaks.

'Shredding the community'

Prior to the construction of "new" U.S. 1, the Merry Oaks community was touted as the next big thing in the state. A dance hall in nearby New Hill drew people in from as far as Raleigh. It was home of the first-ever school in the county opened in 1906, and dozens of families lived in rental housing along what is now Old U.S. 1. All of that is now gone. As the Raleigh News & Observer said in an article from 1966, "Merry Oaks is a town that was."

On the train between Maine and Key West, Florida, New Hill was once a prominent stop on the railway. The rental houses and inns once housed the likes of Babe Ruth and even the legendary Bonnie & Clyde.

And much like robberies perpetrated by the infamous criminals, the roadways to Chapel Hill, Durnam and Raleigh ultimately stole families away from the rural town that once thrived. It became an afterthought in the pursuit of industrial progress and urbanization. It's a history, though, that isn't even a lifetime old. Merry Oaks Baptist Church and its congregation may be its last living memory. "I call it 'shredding the community," Kay Hinsley said. "From Merry Oaks up to New Elam Church over to the Christian Chapel area and Corinth - that was our community. It's just going to be shredded. There's not going to be a whole lot left. Katherine Holden Haynes, 86, is the older sister of Jerry Holden and one of the people that still has fond memories of what Merry Oaks used to be. She remembers the travelers coming through on their way south. 'Somebody would come up and ask if they could sit in on the service," Katherine said. "A family that was traveling, that

Six community members recalled generations of change in Merry Oaks through oral history interviews. From top left:

Katherine Holden, 86, was born in Merry Oaks and has lived all but 12 years of her life in the town. She is a regular at the church's services.

Kay Hinsley, 68, was born in Merry Oaks, has lived there her whole life and attended the church for many years. NCDOT plans show roads to VinFast will cut through her front yard.

Faye Crutchfield, 82, was born in Merry Oaks and lived the first 17 years of her life in the town. Her father was one of the town's main employers through his various business ventures. Faye moved back to the area a year ago.

Karen Holden, 60, was born down the road from Merry Oaks and has spent her whole life coming to the church. She met her husband, Jerry, in the church's youth group. Today, she plays piano and sings each week at the church's services.

Sharron Bouquin, 60, Katherine Holden's daughter, was born and grew up in Merry Oaks. Today, she regularly attends church services.

Jerry Holden, 70, was born in Merry Oaks and has attended the church his whole life. He met his wife Karen Holden through the church, and today has taken on the job of caring for the church's property.

was here at church time. 'Of course, come on in,' [we'd say]."

But she also understands why people have been drawn away, because it's happened in her own family. While Katherine and her brother still live near Merry Oaks, her daughter Sharron Bouquin, 68, moved to Apex and her cousin Faye Obler Crutchfield, 82, moved to Chapel Hill. With limited job opportunities or attractions in the area, it's hard to keep people in a place with history alone.

"When the new U.S. Hwy. 1 came through, they needed 25 acres of our land," Faye said. "That took all the stores and houses and things. There was not much left [afterward]. It was a thriving little community, at one time."

Preserving a legacy

Merry Oaks got its name. according to Katherine Holden, because of the giant oak trees surrounding the property of Joe Mann, a once-renowned business owner who some say was Chatham County's first millionaire. Farmers would gather on his property after a long day, rest under the massive oaks and share their tall tales. It's a scene one could picture in modern day Merry Oaks, too. Attending services at Merry Oaks nowadays, you'll still feel that sense of welcoming the stranger and embracing them with open arms. The regular attendees know intimate details of everyone's families and goings on. Any given Wednesday night service, stories of community members, mutual friends and family members are shared and everyone is prayed for. It's that deeply personal nature of the church that the congregation says you just can't get elsewhere. "Here [at Merry Oaks] you pull in and it's like, 'Oh, I wonder if such and such is sick,

I wonder if something happened," Bouquin said. "In other places, especially urban areas, you don't have that."

While Bouquin no longer lives in the area, she still commutes to Merry Oaks every Wednesday and Sunday for services because of the value she finds in the community.

She's also been at the forefront of trying to preserve the historic church from being destroyed by NCDOT. She started a Facebook page called "Save Historic NC Church," which features 50-year-old photos from Easter egg hunts, weddings from the early 1900s and old photographs of some of the congregation members who still attend services there.

From contacting attorneys, examining NCDOT maps, pulling archival records and communicating with the press, it's not a stretch to say Bouquin is Merry Oaks' most vocal advocate. She says she continues to do this work because she sees it as living up to the legacy of her great uncle, Victor Obler. Obler was, in many ways, the reason Merry Oaks was once a thriving community. A Russian-Jewish immigrant who started from nothing when he arrived in 1923, Obler decided to use his savvy to put Merry Oaks on the map. He owned pottery stores, and grocery stores and farms — all employing dozens of people throughout the town. "Victor was one of the few in the area who would not have sat back and said, 'Well, government says they're doing this, so there's nothing I can do," Sharron said. "He would try to fight it, and most others would not.' Obler, along with Joe Mann, employed most of the town in the early 1930s, according to his daughter, Faye Obler Crutchfield. But in 1959, as U.S. Hwy. 1 was being built, many of Obler's properties were being taken by the state for construction. One of those properties included 11.7 acres and seven buildings. The N.C. Highway Commission offered him just \$23,000 for all of it. Obler sued the commission claiming it was worth at least \$78,000, equivalent to \$793,342 today according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Inflation Calculator. According to an article in the Durham Morning Herald at the time, Obler equivocated his land being taken to Russian communist rule. In fact, he said the reason he came to the U.S. in the first place was because the Russian government took his home. After fighting the settlement in court for four days, Obler was awarded \$27,250 on Sept. 3, 1959, for his property — equivalent to \$277,161 today. According to the Durham Sun, Obler said the settlement was "not satisfaction

to my heart."

"He knew there was no way we could keep what we had physically, but he thought he should be paid fairly," Faye said. "So he wasn't arguing about it. With the church, he would encourage the people to fight for it."

It's that spirit that Bouquin hopes to embody in her work to keep Merry Oaks alive.

In August, NCDOT held two public input sessions where the agency showed community members its roadway plans for the VinFast site. One was held in person at the Chatham Agriculture & Conference Center in Pittsboro and the other was held virtually. More than 250 Chatham residents attended these meetings, but Bouquin said they were inaccessible for many members of Merry Oaks because of the distance or limited internet capabilities.

"Some of [the congregation] has commented, 'We wouldn't know who to call, or what to say, and we couldn't fight or voice anything," she said.

So, as one of the youngest regular members of the church, Bouquin has taken on the task herself. She said, however, she isn't a community organizer she isn't going to plan a protest or picket outside the Governor's Mansion. In her mind, that's not what Merry Oaks is about.

"That's not who we are," Sharron said. "Nobody is encouraging that."

She said the congregation urged her to continue investigating the situation and looking into the possibilities for the church's survival.

No pickets, just fences

You may not see a protest, or mass community organizing from Merry Oaks; for the congregation, that's largely because of its Baptist faith. But make no mistake, that doesn't mean members are throwing in the towel on their sanctuary.

"If I'm going to listen to what the Bible says then I'm not going to protest," said Rev. Brady. "I'm going to live the life that would make Jesus proud."

Brady said the future of the church will always be in the hands of God, and when it comes time for God to take the church back, there's no fighting that will. To Brady, Merry Oaks is like King David pouring out the water despite the sacrifices of his men — standing at the mercy of a power beyond anyone's control.

"His will is not always clear," Brady said. "When the time comes, we will graciously give back to God what God gave to us. But in the meantime, the only thing I know how to do is stand."

If you had driven by Mer-

the nearby cemetery.

Facing threat

The future of Merry Oaks, both the community and the church itself, is uncertain. The tall white steeple has stood on the border between Moncure and New Hill — on the corner of Old U.S. 1 and New Elam Church Rd. — since 1888. But under recent roadway plans from N.C. Dept. of Transportation (NCDOT), the church is set to be taken to make way for a highway into the new VinFast facility.

VinFast, the Vietnamese electric car manufacturer, has promised to invest \$4 billion and bring 7,500 jobs to Chatham County over the next decade in the second-largest economic development project in state history — surpassed only by Wolfspeed, which will build in western Chatham County near Siler City. VinFast is planning a 1,765-acre facility in nearby Moncure at the Triangle Innovation Point (TIP) site. The roadway plans from NCDOT into the facility include taking 27 homes, five businesses — and Merry Oaks Baptist Church.

Plans for the roadways have not been finalized by NC-DOT. Updated designs may be available by next month, and the project team is still in the process of addressing public comments, according to NCDOT Communications Officer Harris Kay.

Kay said Phase 1 is estimated to relocate three businesses, 11 homes and Merry Oaks Baptist Church; Phase 2 is estimated to impact an additional two businesses and 16 homes.

Unless you're looking at a map alongside a traffic engineer, the maps for these roadway plans are confusing and difficult to interpret for the layman; the people of Merry Oaks certainly



Staff photo by Anna Connors

In October, Merry Oaks Baptist Church held its annual Homecoming service. Generations of members returned to worship together and share in fellowship after the service. Katherine recalls growing up that more than 50 people showed up to church every Sunday. 'The church would be packed,' Katherine said. 'You'd have Bible school, and the choir was filled and there were kids everywhere.' Today, the church's regular attendees have dwindled. ry Oaks Baptist Church four months ago, you might have seen its historic white steeple protected by a dilapidated fence. Some pieces broken off, other portions fallen in the grass.

Following the August NCDOT meeting where the congregation discovered its beloved church was in jeopardy, they decided they weren't going anywhere anytime soon. To symbolize that, they decided to put up a new white vinyl fence in front of the church.

Brady said he had been planning to put up the fence for some time prior to that August meeting. But after it was held, fears among the community started growing. It was then that fence became a necessary symbol.

Soon after the fence went up, Brady said others started to follow suit. A neighbor who lived near the church, whose home was shrouded in overgrown bushes, cut his shrubbery a week after the fence went up. Brady said he also noticed some shorter lawns in the weeks that followed.

"If you honor what God has given you, you'll take care of it," Brady said. "If you don't, he'll take it away from you."

It's that same methodology that's motivated Jerry Holden to mow the grass and tidy up the space. Whether there is a physical Merry Oaks Baptist or not, he said there will always be a church. He said the congregation will still worship together, appreciate one another and engage the same way they always have.

"We're gonna act like we ain't going anywhere," Holden said. "I've had people in the community tell me — who have seen me down here cleaning up — 'You're wasting your time. It's gonna be torn down.' I say, 'Have they told you that?' 'Oh yeah, I know that,' they say. 'Well, they haven't told us that,' I say." Management, office manage-

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RENTAL APARTMENTS

POWELL SPRINGS APTS. Evergreen Construction introduces its newest independent living community for adults 55 years or older. 1 and 2 bedroom applications now being ac cepted. Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Call 919-533-6319 for more information, TDD #1-800-735-2962. Equal housing opportunity, Handicapped accessible, A2,tfnc

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS now for one bedroom apartments, adults 55 years or older. Water included, appliances furnished, on-site laundry, elevator, keyless entry. Section 8 accepted. No security deposit. Application fee \$25 per adult. Call Braxton Manor. 919-663-1877. Handicap accessible. Equal Housing Opportunity. Jy14,tfnc

FOR SALE

FIREWOOD FOR SALE - Drv. ready to burn. Call 919-742-4561, D15,22,29,3tx

TV ANTENNAS - Come by MacPage Communications at 102 N Third Avenue, Siler City, 919-227-6698, D15,29,J5,3tc

NICE BIG. BEAUTIFUL COL-LARDS, Turnip Salad and Cabbage for sale. Crutchfield Crossroads area. (cell) 984-265-0402 or (home) 919-663-5780, D8,15,2tc

AUTOS FOR SALE

2003 BMW - \$3,500 -- Runs good, Call for information, 910-986-7135. D1,8,15,22,4tp

WANTED

WANTED - Good condition wood burning wood heater, 919-799-2343. Call before 7:30 p.m. No glass doors! D15,22,2tp

AUCTIONS

ment, business management, or related field; moderate experience in administrative support, management support, secretarial, clerical, and office operations; or an equivalent combination of education and experience. - Extensive customer service experience dealing with both internal and external customers utilizing excellent oral and written communication skills. - Expe-rience with MS Word, Excel, and Outlook. - Experience in a Parks and Recreation department or similar agency. Experi ence in planning and executing special events and working with the community. - Possession of a valid NC driver's license. - Preferred Education and Experience Qualifications: Bachelor's degree in Recreation Administration, Recre-ation Management, or related field. Certified Pool Operator Certification upon hire. Aquat-ic Facility Operator Certification upon hire. Certified Parks and Recreation Professional (CPRP - Extensive experience in a Parks and Recreation department. Moderate supervi-sory experience. - Bilingual in both written and spoken English and Spanish. -- Additional Employment Requirements: Must obtain Certified Pool Operator Certification within six months of hire. - All required certifications and licensures must be maintained with no lapse during the course of em-ployment. -- Anticipated Hiring Salary, \$40,820.00. To Apply: This posting is open until filled. A completed Town of Siler City application and resume are required for consideration. The application may be found on our website at www.silercity. org or picked up at City Hall. The application may be mailed or delivered to City Hall, Atten-tion: Human Resources, 311 N. Second Ave., PO Box 769, Siler City, NC 27344 or submitted via email to dritter@silercity.org. Pre-employment drug testing, DMV check, and background checks are required upon job offer. EOE. -- The Town of Siler City is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The Town of Siler City's applicants are considered for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital or veteran status, disability, or other legally protected status. D15,1tc

FOOD SERVICES STAFF,

Pittsboro Christian Village is accepting applications for Server, Pantry Cook, and Cook. Apply in person 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday – Friday, at 1825 East St. in Pittsboro. Jy14,tfnc

SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION CHATHAM COUNTY

BEFORE THE CLERK FILE NO: 22-E-642 IN RE: ESTATE OF ROSAN-NA MOOREHEAD DAVID NOTICE TO CREDITORS THE UNDERSIGNED having qualified as Executor of the Es tate of **ROSANNA MOOREHEAD DAVID**, Deceased, in the Office of the Clerk of Superior Court of Chatham County, do hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the said Dec6Gedent to present them to the undersigned on or before March 3, 2023, said date being at least three months from the date of the first publication or posting of this Notice as indicated below, or the same will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate, please make immediate payment. This Notice is given pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 28A-This the 1st day of December, 2022. ESTATE OF ROSANNA MOORE-

HEAD DAVID Rhianna B. Wells 240 The Preserve Trail Chapel Hill, NC 27517

Taylor Avioli Narron Wenzel, P.A. 5400 Glenwood Ave., Suite 201 Raleigh, NC 27612

D1,D8,D15,D22,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 22 E 474

All persons having claims against ELLEN MORROW LIGHTSEY, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 1st day of March. 2023, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 1st day of December,

2022. Kelley Lynn Knight, Executrix 127 Sagebrush Rd Chapel Hill, NC 27516

D1,D8,D15,D22,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA **CHATHAM COUNTY** 22 F 623

Having qualified as Co-Executors of the Estate of BETH SCHUBERT KRICKER. late of 224 Buteo Ridge, Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312-9326, the undersigned do hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against a dacad state of exhibit them to the undersigned on or before February 1, 2023 or this Notice will be pled in bar of recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned. This the 1st day of December, 2022. Joshua R. Kricker, Marcia C. Kricker, Co-Executors-Estate of Beth Schubert Kricker 224 Buteo Ridge Pittsboro, NC 27312-9326 D1,D8,D15,D22,4tp

Apex, NC 27502 % Monroe, Wallace, Morden & Sherrill, P.A. 3225 Blue Ridge Road, Suite 117 Raleigh, NC 27612 D1,D8,D15,D22,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY

22 E 664 The undersigned, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of ETTA B. THOMAS, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, notifies all persons. firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned at his address, 229 Hillsboro Street, Pittsboro, North Carolina. 27312, on or before the 8th day of March, 2023, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment. This 1st day of December, 2022.

Joseph Edward Thomas 229 Hillsboro Street Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312 **GUNN & MESSICK, PLLC** P. O. Box 880 Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312-0880

D8.D15.D22.D29.4tc

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

A public hearing will be held the Chatham County Board of Commissioners on Monday, December 19, 2022, beginning at 6:00 p.m. The hearing will be held at the Chatham County Agriculture and Conference Center, 1192 US 64W Business, Pittsboro NC 27312.

Additional information is available at the Chatham County Planning Department office. Speakers are requested to sign up at the meeting prior to the hearing. You may also sign up on the county website prior to the meeting at www.chathamcountync.gov by selecting the heading County Government, then Commissioner Meetings, then Public Input/Hearing Sign Up. The public hearing may be continued to another date at the discretion of the Board of Commissioners

The purpose of the Public Hearing is to receive input both written and oral, on the issues listed below:

1. A legislative public hearing by the Chatham County Board of Commissioners to amend "An Ordinance Establishing A Planning Board for Chatham County, North Carolina" to revise term limits for Planning Roard memh Substantial changes may be made following the public hearing due to verbal or written comments received or based on the Board's discussions. Notice to people with special needs: If you have an audio or visual impairment, unique accessibility requirements or need language assistance, please call the number listed below prior to the hearing and assistance may be provided. If you have any questions or comments concerning these issues, please call the Chatham County Planning Department at 542-8204 or write to P.O. Box 54, Pittsboro N.C. 27312. D8.D15.2tc

All persons having claims against **RAYMOND CHARLES CROTTS, JR.,** deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 8th day of March, 2023, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 8th day of December, 2022.

Dana N. Daniel, Executrix 726 MEG-WAG LANE Chapel Hill, NC 27514 D8,D15,D22,D29,4tp

NOTICE TO ALL PROPERTY OWNERS

Tax Listing Notice All persons owning real, per-sonal and business property on January 1, 2023, have the duty to list property that is subject to Chatham County property taxation. Certain personal property must be listed every year. Real estate listing is not required unless buildings or other improvements having a value in excess of \$100 have been acquired, begun, erected, damaged, or destroyed in the year prior to January 1, 2023. Listing Period Begins - January 2, 2023, Listing Period Ends -January 31, 2023 For Business Listings only, requests for an extension must be received in writing by January 31, 2023. Extensions will only be granted until April 15, 2023.

Listing Assistance is available at: Chatham County Tax Department, 12 East Street, Pittsboro NC 27312 Monday - Friday 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Except Holidays What to list? You are required to list un-licensed vehicles, trailers with multi-year registrations, mobile homes not designated as real property, all types of water craft, aircraft, and items used in a business. Business Property also includes items used for farming, a trade or profession, or furnishings or appliances you provide to a tenant. Except for trailers with multiyear registration, exempted from listing are licensed vehicles, mobile homes (considered real estate.) and household items used for your own residence.

Forms may be picked up at the office or obtain from our website www.chathamnc.org. You may list in person. Bring all detailed information necessary to identify your property and its value. If forms were mailed to you, please bring them with you. Listing by mail is permitted. Listings must bear a U.S. Postal Service postmark on or before January 31, 2023. Penalties apply to late listings. If you have not received your listing forms by January 20, you should make satisfactory arrangements with this office so that you may make a timely

CLASSIFIED INFORMATION Line ad deadline

Tuesday — Noon **Display ad deadline** Monday - 5 p.m.

Rates and payment

Minimum charge of \$5 for each classified advertisement of 25 words or less per week. For each additional word, no matter how many insertions, add 20¢ per word. Payable in advance.

Blind ads

No information will be given out by this office to the identity of person placing "keyed" or "blind" ads.

Errors

In advertisements that run more than one week, we are responsible for errors appearing in the first week only. If you find an error in your ad, report it immediately.

sons at least 65 years of age or persons that are permanently and totally disabled whose income does not exceed the maximum, may apply for a tax reduction or tax deferment on their permanent residence. The maximum income to qualify for the 2023 tax reduction is \$33,800, the maximum income to qualify for 2023 tax deferment is \$50,700. If you meet the qualifications your taxes could be significantly lowered. Please contact our office or visit our website for more details on this program and to

obtain an application. PROPERTY TAX RELIEF FOR DISABLED VETERANS: This program excludes the first forty-five thousand dollars (\$45,000) of the appraised value of a permanent residence owned and occupied by a North Carolina Resident, who is an Honorably Discharged 100% Disabled Veteran, or the unmarried surviving spouse of an Honorable Discharged 100% Disabled Veteran. Please contact our office or visit our website for more details about this program.

Chatham County Tax Department P O Box 908, Pittsboro NC

D15,1tc

27312

(919) 542-8250

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

RICKY ELLINGTON AUCTION-

EERS - Equipment, business. liquidation, estates, land, houses, antiques, personal property, coins, furniture, con-signments, benefits, etc., NCAL #7706. 919-548-3684. 919-663-3556. rickvellingtonauctions@ yahoo.com, J6,tfnc

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LETT'S TREE SERVICE - tree removal, stump grinding, lot clearing. Visa & Master Card accepted. Timber. Free estimates. 919-258-3594 N9,tfnc

HELP WANTED

TOWN OF SILER CITY -- Recreation Coordinator - Performs intermediate technical work planning, organizing, and supervising recreation programs, special events, and community pool; recruits and supervises part-time pool employees; maintains records and files, prepares reports and coordinates facility maintenance and repair work at the pool. - Required Education and Experience Oualifications: Associate degree in Recreation Administration, Recreation

LEGALS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS **NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY** 22 E 644

All persons having claims against GLENN RAY MURPHY, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 24th day of February, 2023, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 24th day of November, 2022. Donna B. Murphy, Administrator

232 Moody Loop Rd Siler City, NC 27344 N24,D1,D8,D15,4tp

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF CHATHAM NOTICE TO CREDITORS IN THE MATTER OF THE

ESTATE OF BILLY G. TWEEDY, DECEASED

The undersigned, having heretofore qualified as Executor of the Estate of **BILLY G. TWEEDY**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, hereby notifies all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said estate to present them to the undersigned on or before March 1, 2023 or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of any recovery thereon. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned. This the 1st day of December, 2022.

Glenna Jean Orr, Executor Estate of Billy G. Tweedy, Deceased c/o Ronald P. Johnson, Esq. Carruthers & Roth, P.A.

Attorneys & Counselors at Law 235 North Edgeworth Street (27401)

Post Office Box 540 Greensboro, North Carolina 27402

D1,D8,D15,D22,4tc

IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE

NOTICE TO CREDITORS STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA **CHATHAM COUNTY**

HAVING QUALIFIED as Admin-istrator of the Estate of **DEWEY** DALE HEFNER late of Chatham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned on or before the first day of March, 2023, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery This the 23rd day of November,

2022. Scarlett M. Robinson, Administrator of The Estate of Dewey Dale Hefner 3141 Campbell Road Bear Creek, North Carolina 27207 MOODY, WILLIAMS, ATWATER

& LEE ATTORNEYS AT LAW BOX 629 SILER CITY, NORTH CAROLINA

27344 (919) 742-5614 D1,D8,D15,D22,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA **CHATHAM COUNTY** 22 E 648

All persons having claims against JOHN DANIEL MURPHY, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 1st day of March, 2023, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 1st day of December, 2022.

Denise Popeo-Murphy, Executor 913 Homestead Park Dr

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA **CHATHAM COUNTY**

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against TERRY L. PEGRAM, deceased of Chatham County, N.C., are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before March 8th, 2023, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery.

This 8th day of December, 2022. Larry W. Pegram, Executor c/o Manning, Fulton & Skinner, P.A. P.O. Box 20389 Raleigh, NC 27619-0389 D8,D15,D22,D29,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS **NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY** 22 E 548

All persons having claims against LINDA SUE ROB-ERTSON, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 8th day of March, 2023, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment This the 8th day of December, 2022. Casey P. Clark, Administrator 110 Audubon Lane Goldston, NC 27252

D8,D15,D22,D29,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA **CHATHAM COUNTY** 22 E 647

listing. Persons who fail to comply are subject to listing penalties and other penalties which are prescribed by N.C. General Statutes PROPERTY TAX RELIEF: PerCHATHAM COUNTY 22 E 673

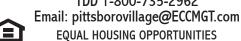
All persons having claims against ANDREW ANTHONY AMARANTE, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 15th day of March, 2023, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.

This the 15th day of December, 2022

John Phillip Amarante, Exec-



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utor 110 Swiss Lake Drive Cary, NC 27513 D15,D22,D29,J5,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF CHATHAM THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 2nd day of December, 2022, as Executor of the ESTATE OF PATRICIA

B. LEARNED A/K/A PATRICIA LOU LEARNED, Deceased, of Chatham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to

the undersigned on or before the 16th day of March, 2023, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All per-sons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This, the 15th day of December, 2022. TONI G. CONSTANT, EXECUTOR ESTATE OF PATRICIA B. LEARNED A/K/A PATRICIA LOU LEARNED C/O Walker Lambe, PLLC

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Photo by Zachary Horner

On Dec. 7, 23 employees from county governments and local nonprofits graduated from the Chatham County Leadership Academy, designed to give class members skills to be more effective and to assume leadership roles. The program helps prepare employees for greater responsibilities, including supervisory roles.

Chatham County's 2022 Leadership Academy class graduates

From Chatham County Government

PITTSBORO - Chatham County honored 23 graduates of its Leadership Academy Class of 2022 on Dec. 7. Since its inception in 2002, the leadership development program has produced 381 graduates.

The Leadership Academy was developed to help employees gain the skills necessary to effectively manage their jobs while preparing them for expanded responsibilities. It is the only such program in the state where all classes are taught by county employees, many of whom are graduates of the academy. In the past few years, the program was able to also include employees of the towns and nonprofit partners serving Chatham County.

"In its 20 years of existence, the Chatham Leadership Academy has consistently provided us an opportunity to improve our best asset — our people," County Manager Dan LaMon tagne said. "I have no doubt these graduates will take the valuable skills they've honed back to their various departments within Chatham County, municipalities and non-profits to do great things. I appreciate the hard work and commitment of our instructors, coordinators and students to make this program a success."



Photo by Zachary Horner

Chatham County Manager Dan LaMontagne presented the Chatham Leadership Outstanding Student award to Mallory Peterson, who works for Chatham County's Parks and Recreation Department.

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academy honored Mallo-

ry Peterson, who works

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• Hunter Glenn, Planning

 Chance Mashburn, Elections

 Lacee Monte, Aging Services

· Amy Moore, Management Information Systems

 Anthony Norton, Sheriff's Office

 Mallory Peterson, Parks and Recreation

· Caleb Phillips, Utilities & Water

· Joy Roberts, Boys and Girls Club of Central Carolina

• Luisa Rojas, Sheriff's Office

 Thomas Stanifer, Management Information Systems • Peter Stephan, Tax Office

· Lucian Stewart, Management Information Systems

• Kennedy Strowd, Fire Marshal's Office

 Christopher Summerlin, Utilities & Water

• Justin Taylor, Environmental Quality

 Kaitlyn Warren, Court Services

• Brittany York, Town of Siler City

The Leadership Academy program must be completed over three years, but most graduates do so in two years. Those enrolled in the supervisory track must successfully complete 106 hours of classes, including 96 hours of mandatory classes and 10 hours of electives.

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A crash on 'highway to climate hell'

U.S. bungles energy as China puts coal in world's Christmas stocking

BY BUCK RYAN & LEI JIAO Special to the News + Record

Editor's note: This is the first part of a two-part series on the global climate challenge. Next up: How North Carolina fits into the world of energy.

LEI: Why are you running, Buck?

BUCK: Didn't you hear what the Secretary-General said at the COP27 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Egypt?

LEI: What's that? BUCK: "We are on a highway to climate hell with our foot still on the accelerator."

LEI: So you're using your feet rather than taking a private jet like what delegates flew to the summit. I salute you for not contributing to global warming by emitting tonnes of greenhouse gases.

BUCK: Thanks a lot. I'm also running because I just read the last line of President Biden's National Security Strategy report: "There is no time to waste."

LEI: You mean to out-compete China and constrain Russia?

BUCK: Right. Biden is talking about nothing less than "the contest for the future of our world."

LEI: Well these days China and Russia have a friendship "with no limits," especially on one thing that's critical to every nation's national security.

BUCK: What's that? LEI: Energy. BUCK: So you think

China's energy strategy has the edge?

LEI: Yup. BUCK: I guess you've seen the news: We're facing a diesel shortage. President Biden fistbumps Saudi Arabia's leader, then OPEC+ gives him the back of their hand. And when he releases millions of barrels of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to reduce gas prices, some power plants into operation. They're much cleaner than the old ones. China is the world's biggest producer of coal, mining over 4 billion tons last year. We expect to boost coal production through 2025 to 4.6 billion tons. BUCK: More coal plants

than the U.S., eh?

LEI: Yes, and a lot more people, too. We now have 1,110 coal-fired power plants on the mainland compared with 240 in the U.S. China employs more than 6 million people in the coal business compared with about 40,000 in the U.S., down from 90,000 or so a decade ago. BUCK: That's a big

drop. LEI: In 2017, early in the

LEI: In 2017, early in the Trump administration, The Washington Post ran a headline, "The entire coal industry employs fewer people than Arby's" (nearly 80,000).

BUCK: What about coal consumption?

LEI: China is the world's biggest consumer of coal, burning maybe six times the amount as the U.S., which ranks third in the world for coal consumption behind India.

BUCK: So you're going to keep burning coal for several years. Why's that?

LEI: So as not to repeat last year's power shortages and blackouts. We're realistic about the need for coal to produce electricity, especially as drought has cut our hydroelectric power.

BUCK: So I guess that's your official energy policy, eh?

LEI: You obviously didn't listen to President Xi's two-hour speech in October at the Chinese Communist Party's 20th National Congress.

BUCK: Two hours, geez. How many jokes did he tell to keep people's attention?

LEI: Zero, Buck. That would be like the Pope doing a stand-up routine during Easter Mass at the Vatican. Not going to happen.

BUCK: So what did he

by 2060.

BUCK: Carbon neutral? LEI: That means making no net release of carbon dioxide into the air. Something we're doing to offset emissions is planting a record number of trees. Last year we planted nearly 2.5 billion, putting us in 1st place around the world.

BUCK: You have a long way to go, Lei. A Global Carbon Project report says China is pouring out slightly more carbon emissions (11.4 billion tonnes/year) than the U.S. (5.1), Europe (2.8) and India (2.9) combined.

LEI: That report also says China's carbon emissions growth is expected to decline 0.9% in 2022. The U.S. can expect its carbon output to rise 1.5% while the increase for India, another big coal user, is projected to be a whopping 6%.

BUCK: Wow. How can China's numbers be lower?

LEI: Our economy has slowed under the zero-COVID policy. At the same time, China leads the world in manufacturing and using solar panels and wind turbines, producing energy from hydroelectric dams and building new nuclear power plants.

We've invested heavily in energy storage batteries, electric vehicles and ultra-high transmission lines — all for a clean energy transition.

BUCK: We got serious about pollution with the Clean Air Act in 1963, then the Environmental Protection Agency in 1970 and the Clean Water Act in 1977.

LEI: Don't forget the China factor since 2001.

BUCK: You mean when China joined the World Trade Organization and the U.S. ended up losing more than 60,000 factories.

LEI: Right. We can thank you for giving us permanent normal trade relations status, and you can thank us for eating all that smokestack smoke and sending you all those inexpensive goods to buy.

nexpensive goods to buy. BUCK: Quite the deal.



Illustration by Ruby Wang

As the U.S. tries to curtail the use of coal, China's official energy policy calls for increasing coal production and putting more coal-fired power plants into operation to avert electricity shortages.

our national security." LEI: Ironic then that the COP27 climate summit

was in Africa. BUCK: Why's that? LEI: Since 2013 when

China rolled out its Belt and Road initiative, we have poured billions into infrastructure projects with 52 nations in Africa, including a \$7 billion oil pipeline in Niger. Since 2015 the U.S. reportedly invested more than \$9 billion in oil and gas projects in Africa.

BUCK: 2015, that's when we signed the Paris Agreement. Its goal was to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius, preferably 1.5 (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit), compared with pre-industrial levels, to stave off severe climate disruptions.

LEI: Right. President Trump scrapped the Paris Agreement in 2017 like President George W. Bush refused in 2001 to ratify the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, saying the climate treaty would have wrecked the U.S. economy. If it makes you feel any better, China eventually signed on to the Kyoto and Paris climate accords.

BUCK: As I recall China, like India, was exempt from the Kyoto Protocol because it was considered a "developing country."

LEI: We still classify ourselves that way, and so does the U.N. energy?

LEI: Yes indeed, Buck. As the ancient Chinese expression goes: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."

BUCK: Something fishy happened at the COP27 summit when developing countries pounded the table seeking "climate justice."

LEI: What was that? BUCK: President Biden promised to donate \$11.4 billion annually — money he doesn't have and only Congress can approve and China said it would support ways to compensate poorer countries, but not contribute any cash.

LEI: Right. We'll stick with loans and contracts for projects in those countries. So far they have received only a fraction of the \$100 billion-a-year that wealthy nations promised them by 2020.

BUCK: Billions? The U.N. estimates it will take trillions.

LEI: I hear the twoweek summit with its delegates from nearly 200 nations went into 36 hours of overtime, desperate for a concrete outcome before it ended.

BUCK: Right. They reiterated last year's agreement to phase down coal, but not lower goals for reducing emissions. Then they achieved something that hasn't happened in three decades. LEI: What was that? BUCK: Agreement on a global fund to compensate poorer nations for "losses and damage" caused by climate change. It's something that's been talked about since 1992. LEI: Oh, so what counts as losses and damage? Who will oversee the fund and how will the money be dispersed — and to which countries? Will they force China to contribute? BUCK: Nobody knows for sure yet. They're still

working on those details in hopes of making recommendations at next year's climate summit.

LEI: Sad to say, Buck, but all this looks as hopeless as "Just Stop Oil" protesters throwing tomato soup over Vincent van Gogh's "Sunflowers," smartly shielded, in London's National Gallery.

BUCK: I hear you, Lei. LEI: Do you know that New Zealand is targeting cow burps to reduce global warming? New York is trying to curtail crypto mining to cut emissions. And how about actor Rainn Wilson from "The Office" saying he wants to change his name to "Rainnfall Heat Wave Rising Sea Levels Wilson."

BUCK: We need to get as serious as "Dr. Doom." But he holds out little hope for any meaningful cooperation on climate between China and the U.S., the world's top polluters, even though talks have resumed after Pelosi-gate.

LEI: Oh, yeah, you mean when the soon-tobe former Speaker of the House flipped Beijing's lid with her visit to Taiwan in August. Who's "Dr. Doom"?

BUCK: You know, Nouriel Roubini, the New York University economist who predicted the 2008 financial crash. He just published a new book, "MegaThreats: Ten Dangerous Trends That Imperil Our Future, And How to Survive Them." LEI: How do U.S.-China relations and climate rank as threats? BUCK: The "New Cold War" between China and the U.S. ranks No. 9 and No. 10 is "global warming." LEI: Cold and warm, that's very vin and yang. Meanwhile, the United Nation reports that more than 160 countries are slacking on their climate pledges

exporting it to China.

LEI: That "plus" in OPEC+ includes Russia, where China can buy oil and gas with our friendship discount. And one other advantage, Buck.

BUCK: What's that? LEI: King Coal. China burns more coal than the rest of the world combined.

BUCK: Oh really. President Biden says, "We're going to be shutting these plants down all across America."

LEI: Not here. We're putting new coal-fired

say about energy?

LEI: Here was the money line: "We will advance initiatives to reach peak carbon emissions in a well-planned and phased way in line with the principle of building the new before discarding the old."

BUCK: And old means coal, I get it. What did he say about climate?

LEI: He's sticking to his "double carbon" pledge from a speech in 2020. BUCK: Double carbon? LEI: That means China plans to reach peak carbon use by 2030 and become carbon neutral LEI: Don't get me wrong, Buck. The Chinese people care about climate change. Just like you we've seen the intensity of storms, droughts and natural disasters rise to scary levels.

BUCK: Talk about scary. Here's what Biden's National Security Strategy report says under Climate and Energy Security: "A warming planet endangers Americans and people around the world — risking food and water supplies, public health, and infrastructure and BUCK: That's ridiculous, Lei. China is the world's second largest economy.

LEI: We are that, too. But China's GDP per capita income is \$17,192 (ranked No. 77) compared with \$63,416 in the U.S. (No. 7), according to the World Population Review. Economists disagree on whether the cutoff for a developed country is as low as \$12,000 or as high as \$30,000, or some other figure.

BUCK: I see. So are some of China's projects in Africa for clean

BUCK: Looks like we all need to keep running.

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NCHSAA to vote in February on adding new classifications, PAGE B3

SPORTS NEWS & ENTERTAINMENT

DECEMBER 15 - 21, 2022 | chathamnewsrecord.com/sports | SECTION B

BOYS BASKETBALL Putting Chatham County hoops on the map

BY EVAN ROGERS News + Record Correspondent

Four- and five-star recruits in high school basketball are hard to come by around the country.

But having multiple high-caliber players in one county? That's nearly impossible to find.

Jarin Stevenson and Drake Powell have been making waves in Chatham County ever since the two first stepped foot on a high school basketball court back in 2020. As freshmen teammates, they starred for Northwood and led the Chargers to a runner-up finish in the 3A state championship.

But when Seaforth High opened last year, the young duo was split up, with Northwood retaining the talents of Powell while Stevenson became a Hawk. Now in their junior seasons, Stevenson and Powell look to take their respective schools to uncharted heights this season.

Powell lighting it up

Throughout his high school career, Powell has experienced success on the highest level.

After a runner-up finish his freshman year, Powell led the Chargers to the state quarterfinals last season. His plethora of success has earned him a four-star rating according to 247Sports, and the North Carolina commit currently ranks as the No. 50 prospect in the country in the Class of 2024.

In the Chargers' 76-65 win over Durham's C.E. Jordan last Tuesday, Powell's talents were on full display. He finished with a game-high 26 points and dished out seven assists, but even more impressive than that clinical display of offense was his defensive versatility.

Powell — who is committed to play collegiately at UNC was all over the court against the Falcons, manning the back of the Chargers' full-court press and pressing opposing guards near half court when Northwood switched to a 1-2-2 zone. When the Chargers elect- See HOOPS, page B2

ed to run their man defense, the lanky guard matched up with Jordan sharp-shooter Walker Woodall, who Powell held to three points and a scoreless from beyond the 3-point arc.

"I've said it before, and I'll say it again — he's the best two-way player in the nation,' Northwood head coach Matt Brown said. "He takes so much pride on the defensive end. I think that's what makes him so special."

On offense, Powell showed off his three-level scoring ability. The junior guard drilled a pair of 3-pointers, knocked down multiple midrange shots and even grazed his head on the rim during his two-handed dunk. For the season, the junior is a county-high 23.3 points per game.

Yet, what really sets Powell apart is his willingness to feed his teammates. His selfless play — largely seen in transition — is something others noted as a rare attribute for a



Chatham Community Library hosts

'Death and Cupcakes' event, PAGE B10

Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Northwood junior Drake Powell — a UNC commit — leads all county boys with 23.3 points per game so far this season.

Chatham Charter seniors Walden, Harvey make mark in history books



BY JEREMY VERNON News + Record Sports Editor

Last week was one for the history books for the two Chatham Charter basketball programs.

Last Tuesday — in a 51-43 loss to Uwharrie Charter — senior Tamaya Walden scored 16 points to move into first place all-time in scoring among Chatham Charter girls players.

Walden averaged 22.0 points per game while leading the Knights to a 19-9 record and a 7-1 mark in conference play. Chatham Charter won its conference tournament, defeating Clover Garden in the championship game, but Clover Garden won the rematch between the two teams when they met in the second round of the 1A playoffs.

INDOOR TRACK Northwood athletes, teams qualify for states

BY JEREMY VERNON News + Record Sports Editor

Competing at the COROS Explore Perfection Invitational in Winston-Salem on Saturday, the Northwood track and field teams had multiple individuals and a few relay teams qualify for February's state meet.

Northwood was one of 58 schools —

Staff photo by Lee Moody

Chatham Charter senior Tamaya Walden is now the all-time leading scorer in Chatham Charter girls history, sitting at 1,285 career points entering the week.

Through seven games this season, Walden is averaging 20.9 points, 5.6 assists and 3.6 steals per game. Heading into this Friday's game against Southern Alamance, Walden has a total of 1,285 points. In 77 career games with the Knights, the senior guard has totaled at least 20 points on 26 separate occasions.

"It's another goal accomplished," Walden said of her achievement. "Each season I come in setting goals for myself, and that was one of my goals coming into this year. Another one we have is going undefeated in conference play.' Last season as a junior,

Playing her final season with the Knights, Walden is determined to make things different this time around.

"Losing to Clover Garden (in the playoffs) didn't sit well with me," Walden said. "I told my parents, after that game, I looked at the scoreboard and smiled, because I was never going to let that happen again.'

But Walden wasn't the only Chatham Charter basketball player to etch their name in the record books last week. Last Friday, in a 68-43 win over Franklin Academy, senior Adam Harvey scored his 1,000th career point with the Knights' boys team.

See MARK, page B4

which featured public schools at all four classifications and several private schools - to compete at the event Saturday.

"Overall, Saturday was exactly what I wanted it to be ..." said Northwood head coach Cameron Isenhour. "Now our kids can see the rankings and see what they need to do (to improve) the rest of the season.'

The top performance of any Chargers runners on the day was the race put on by the 4x800 boys relay team (sophomore Trey Hudson, junior Noah Nielson, seniors Christian Glick and Jackson Adams), which won in a time of 8:20.91. That time is faster than the 8.25.61 that won Northwood the 3A state title in the event last season and is currently the No. 2 time of any high school 4x800 team in the country this indoor season.

Two members of the 4x800 relay team also won individual events Saturday. Nielson took home first in the 1,000-meter race in a time of 2:38.34, less than half a second faster than the second-place finish-

See STATES, page B3

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Northwood girls getting back on track after 0-3 start

BY EVAN ROGERS News + Record

Correspondent

PITTSBORO — A year removed from a 3A state title, the Northwood girls basketball team has gotten off to a rocky start to the 2022-23 season.

The Chargers lost three of their top four scorers from last year's championship squad, highlighted by the departure of Olivia Porter, who's now a freshman at Michigan State. With heaps of roster turnover, Northwood lost its first three games this season.

But in front of its home crowd — and the state championship banner — for the

first time this year, Northwood earned its second straight victory in commanding fashion, defeating Durham's C.E. Jordan 59-43, last Tuesday. The win featured a number of new faces stepping up throughout the game, a development head coach Kerri Snipes understands is part of her current team's process in defending its crown.

"We definitely had to make changes and get to figure out what everybody's role was, because we are a different team than last year," she said. "We had some really good senior leadership last year, so (we are) trying to fill those. And everybody's getting used to playing

with each other."

Entering last Tuesday's contest, the Chargers were challenged with slowing down one of the top scorers in the state, Sydney Barker.

The senior guard averages over 26 points per contest and is on pace to record her 1,000th career point this season. Barker's ability to create by herself was on display early, as her combination dribble moves created favorable mid-range and 3-point shot attempts, which she swished home with ease

Midway through the first quarter, Barker accounted for

See START, page B4



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Northwood senior Te'Keyah Bland (12) shakes hands with teammates between free-throws against C.E. Jordan last **Tuesday**

SCORES

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6

Girls basketball

Northwood 59, C.E. Jordan 43 Eastern Randolph 52, Chatham Central 29 Uwharrie Charter 51, Chatham Charter 43

Boys basketball

Northwood 76, C.E. Jordan 65 Eastern Randolph 92, Chatham Central 91 Chatham Charter 58, Uwharrie Charter 39

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7

Girls basketball

Woods Charter 44, Cornertsone Charter 35 Lee County 49, Jordan-Matthews 15

Boys basketball

Lee County 65, Jordan-Matthews 51 Cornerstone Charter 53, Woods Charter 16

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8

Girls basketball

Southern Lee 41, Jordan-Matthews 35 Seaforth 61, Western Alamance 46

Boys basketball

Seaforth 46, Western Alamance 28 Southern Lee 51, Jordan-Matthews 40

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9

Girls basketball

Chatham Charter 51, Franklin Academy 33

Boys basketball

Chatham Charter 68, Franklin Academy 43 Cannon Academy 74, Northwood 64

SCORES AND SCHEDULES

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10

Girls basketball

Chatham Central 59, Ocracoke 14

Boys basketball

Corvian Community 68, Seaforth 62 Northwood 71, Carmel Christian 64

MONDAY, DECEMBER 12

Girls basketball

Union Pines 52, Jordan-Matthews 2

SCHEDULES

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13

Wrestling

Chatham Central at Graham (6 p.m.)

Girls basketball

Seaforth at Cummings (6 p.m.) Northwood vs. Williams (6 p.m.) Chatham Central vs. Graham (6 p.m.) Jordan-Matthews vs. North Moore (6 p.m.)

Boys basketball

Seaforth at Cummings (7:30 p.m.) Northwood vs. Williams (7:30 p.m.) Chatham Central vs. Graham (7:30 p.m.) Jordan-Matthews vs. North Moore (7:30 p.m.)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14

Swimming

Jordan-Matthews at Ash YMCA (6 p.m.)

Wrestling

Seaforth vs. North Moore (6 p.m.) Jordan-Matthews vs. Cummings (6 p.m.)

Girls basketball

Seaforth at Southwest Guilford (6 p.m.) Northwood at Orange (6 p.m.)

Boys basketball

Northwood at Orange (7:30 p.m.)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15

Swimming

Seaforth vs. Cary Academy at Triangle Aquatics Center (11 a.m.)

Girls basketball

Chatham Central at Harnett Central (6 p.m.)

Boys basketball

Chatham Central at Harnett Central (7:30 p.m.)

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16

Wrestling

Chatham Central at Eastern Alamance (6 p.m.)

Girls basketball

Seaforth vs. Bartlett Yancey (6 p.m.) Northwood vs. Cedar Ridge (6 p.m.) Jordan-Matthews at Cummings (6 p.m.) Chatham Charter at Southern Alamance (6 p.m.)

Boys basketball

Seaforth vs. Bartlett Yancey (7:30 p.m.) Northwood vs. Cedar Ridge (7:30 p.m.) Jordan-Matthews at Cummings (7:30 p.m.) Chatham Charter at Southern Alamance (7:30)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17

Indoor track

Northwood at COROS Holiday Classic in Winston-Salem (10 a.m.)

HOOPS

Continued from page B1

player of Powell's caliber. Brown even went on to say that his willingness to pass, combined his elite shooting-making ability, make Powell a player unique in the head coach's tenure in Pittsboro.

"I've been trying to understand that getting to the next level is not all about scoring," Powell said. "It's what you can do other than score to impact the game. I have joy for my teammates' success, as well as my own." With Powell leading the charge this year, Northwood looks to make its way back to the state championship game and this time come out victorious. At the time of the News + Record going to press, the Chargers were 5-1 heading into their conference opener Tuesday night.







Stevenson doing it all

As Stevenson goes, the Hawks tend to follow.

The heart and soul of Seaforth basketball is undoubtedly its star forward, and the top-ranked junior in North Carolina in the Class of 2024 already holds offers from some of the nation's top programs, including UNC and Virginia.

In the Hawks' 46-28 win over Western Alamance last Thursday, Seaforth faced the Warriors' aggressive fullcourt press the entire night. Rather than dishing it off to a Hawk guard to maneuver through the pressure, Seaforth opted to use Stevenson as the lead ball-handler.

Despite his rangy stature at 6-foot-10, Stevenson's skillset stretches well beyond your typical back-to-the-basket forward. The junior big man has a tight handle, to which he used to single-handedly break Western Alamance's press numerous times Thursday night — a unique ability some of Stevenson's teammates

After winning just one of its first five games a season ago, the Hawks boasted a 4-2 record entering **Tuesday's game** against Cummings.

described as a "luxury."

"With this team we don't have much ball-handling," Stevenson said. "I know there's a lot of pressure and responsibility for me. I know I'm confident in my ball-handling because I've put the work in.'

Aside from being the lone Hawk to finish in double figures — with 15 points — Stevenson's presence was felt on the defense end. The fivestar prospect held down the center of the Hawks' zone defense and negated almost every paint touch the Warriors made.

"(Jarin's) very important, he does a lot for

us for defense," Seaforth head coach Jarod Stevenson — Jarin's father — said. "I think that guys trust that they can take gambles sometimes, because they know that he's back there behind them and he's going to protect the basket."

After winning just one of its first five games a season ago, the Hawks boasted a 4-2 record entering Tuesday's game against Cummings.

With Stevenson, who leads his team in points (23.0), rebounds (10.2) and blocks (3.2) per game, heading both ends of the floor, Seaforth is hoping to make noise around the county and state, despite the varsity program only being in its second year.

"People doubted us, and we turned it around," sophomore guard Noah Lewis said. "We came back this year and starting off 4-2, hopefully we can keep it going.'

Students, get your applications in for the **2023 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour!**

Each year, Central Electric sponsors two rising high school juniors or seniors on the trip of a lifetime to Washington, D.C in connection with the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. While in D.C., you'll join 1,800 other students from across the country to meet members of Congress and learn more about American history and electric cooperatives.

The 2023 trip is June 17-23 and the deadline for all applications is Jan. 23.

Visit CEMCPower.com to apply or to find out more information on this incredible opportunity. Central Electric is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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919-774-4900 800-446-7752

Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Seaforth junior Jarin Stevenson is considered the No. 1 player from North Carolina in the Class of 2024, according to 247Sports.











NCHSAA to vote in February on adding three classifications

BY JEREMY VERNON News + Record Sports **Editor**

Two weeks ago, the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) Board of Directors announced

presented a proposal to increase the number of classifications for high school sports from the

current four to seven. According to High School OT, the proposal would limit the number of schools in each classification to 64, meaning there would need to be

seven classifications with 432 current member schools.

As things stand, there are four classifications for NCHSAA member schools - 1A, 2A, 3A and 4A. The new proposal would introduce three new classifications, as well as limit the number of playoff teams in each sport for each classification down to 32. That said, some sports that do not have all 432 member schools participating might feature fewer classifications, and some schools might compete in different classifications in different sports.

High School OT reported that both the N.C. Football and Basketball **Coaches Associations** are supportive of the new proposal, which will be put to a vote in February. For the proposal to be approved, threefourths of the current 432 member schools must vote for it.

The introduction of new classifications would make North Carolina's high school athletic landscape similar to some of country's athletic hot spots. Members of the Georgia High School Athletic Association are separated into seven classifications, with new 6A and 7A classifications being introduced in the past decade.

So, how could this affect Chatham County schools if the proposal is approved?

The answer is unclear at this point in time. As things stand, all six Chatham County high schools are NCHSAA members. Northwood which has the highest student population of any county high school – competes at the 3A level in all sports. Seaforth and Jordan-Matthews are 2A schools, while Chatham Central, Chatham Charter and Woods Charter all compete at the 1A level.

The introduction of new classifications could help Chatham County schools become more competitive in football. This past fall, the four Chatham County football teams — Northwood, Seaforth, Jordan-Matthews and Chatham Central — combined to go 7-34 this past season. Adding more classifications could shake up the landscape, as some of the stronger programs that benefit from higher student populations would likely be placed in higher classifications than they are currently.

One issue that will need to be addressed if the proposal is approved is what to do with conferences. In a presentation to the board.

NCHSAA Assistant **Commissioner of Sports** Tra Waters said that the association would likely need to do away with conferences and instead adopt a district or regional model.

In Georgia, each athletic classification is separated into eight regions, with Region 1 being the southernmost region, and so on. In Georgia, region realignment happens every two years, and normally 10 schools belong to each region.

If the proposal is approved, there's a good chance the smaller schools in the county, namely Jordan-Matthews, Chatham Central, Chatham Central and Woods Charter, could compete against one another as part of the same region. As things stand, Jordan-Matthews and Chatham Central belong to the Mid-Carolina 1A/2A Conference with Seaforth, while Chatham Charter and Woods Charter are in the "1A Conference 13" which features other charter and academy schools from the surrounding counties.

Sports Editor Jeremy Vernon can be reached at jeremy@chathamnr. com or on Twitter at @ jbo_vernon.

STATES

Continued from page B1

er. Nielson's time was a new personal record and would have been the third-fastest time in the event at last year's 3A indoor state meet.

Glick, meanwhile, won the 1,600-meter race Saturday in a time of 4:35.55, which was also a new personal record. That time would have ranked eighth at last season's 3A indoor state meet and is the current No. 1 time of any 3A runner in North Carolina this season.

Nielson and Glick also led the Northwood boys 4x400 team to a fourthplace finish in a time of 3:42.47. The other two members of the winning

and senior Cabot Priddle. On the girls side, the only Northwood athlete to qualify for states was senior Sophia Cremeans, who came in ninth in the

pole vault with a height of 8.5 feet. The height was a new personal record for Cremeans, who cleared a height of eight feet the previous weekend at the Pole Vault Carolina 100th Invitational.

Northwood's indoor teams will next compete at the COROS Holiday Classic on Dec. 17 in Winston-Salem, the last event before the holiday break. The Chargers will return to the track on Jan. 7 at the Just Don't Lose HS Classic, also in Winston-Salem.

Isenhour said that while the three-week isn't ideal, the Chargers figure to be among the top 3A teams, especially on the boys side, when they return to action.

"Our boys are trying to win the 3A state meet, led by a strong distance trio," Isenhour said. "On the girls side, we're just trying to qualify as many individuals as possible. The hope is these next few weeks (during the break), that they're getting out the door, working out and doing what they need to do to be successful, so when we come back in January, we can pick up where we left off.'

Sports Editor Jeremy Vernon can be reached at jeremy@chathamnr. com or on Twitter at @

December 19th through December 23rd

Monday, December 19 **Eastern Chatham Senior Center**

- 8:15 a.m. Body Conditioning w/Jackie
- 9 a.m. Chair Yoga w/Liz (in-person and Zoom)
- 10 a.m. <u>Geri-Fit w/Jackie</u>
- 11 a.m. Cornhole & Shuffleboard
- 2 p.m. Table Tennis
- 3 p.m. Caregiver Support Group
 - Western Chatham Senior Center
- 9 a.m. Strong & Fit w/Olivia
- 10 a.m. Walking Through Grief Support Group; December Birthday Party
 - 10:30 a.m. Music w/Tom Hildebrand & Tom Kenlan
- 2 p.m. Strength & Tone

Tuesday, December 20 **Eastern Chatham Senior Center**

- 8:15 a.m. Body Conditioning w/Jackie
- 9 a.m. 3G's Men's Group
- 10 a.m. Woodcarvers
- 1 p.m. <u>Rummikub</u>
- Western Chatham Senior Center
- 9:45 a.m. Chair Exercises w/Olivia for Beginners (in-person and Zoom)
- 1 p.m. <u>Rook/Phase 10/Rummikub; Book Club; "Bring Your Own Project" Gathering</u> Wednesday, December 21
 - **Eastern Chatham Senior Center**
- 8:15 a.m. Body Conditioning w/Jackie
- 10 a.m. Chair Yoga w/Liz (in-person and Zoom); Coffee & Games w/Pittsboro Police Department
- 11 a.m. Mind Games w/Alan
- 1 p.m. Open Art Studio

Western Chatham Senior Center

- 8 a.m. Veterans Benefit Assistance
- 9 a.m. <u>Strong & Fit w/Olivia</u>
- 10 a.m. Bible Study; Nutrition Education w/Ann Clark
- 1 p.m. Cornhole
- 2 p.m. Crafting w/Kathryn (Felt Ornaments)

Thursday, December 22 **Eastern Chatham Senior Center**

For more information

on these and other

programs, call our

centers Monday-

Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Eastern Chatham

Senior Center 919-542-4512

Western Chatham

Senior Center

919-742-3975

Visit our website at

www.chathamcoa.org

- 8:15 a.m. Body Conditioning w/Jackie
- 10 a.m. Crafts and Conversation; Let's Move w/Jackie
- 11 a.m. Managing Holiday Stress w/
- **Tammy from Therapeutic Alternatives**
- 1 p.m. Board Games & Cards
- 3 p.m. Gentle Yoga w/Liz
 - Western Chatham Senior Center
- 9:30 a.m. Men's Coffee & Conversations
- 10 a.m. Music Jam Session
- 2 p.m. <u>Tai Chi</u>
- 3 p.m. Movie It's A Wonderful Life

Friday, December 23 **Council on Aging Closed** Western Chatham Senior Center

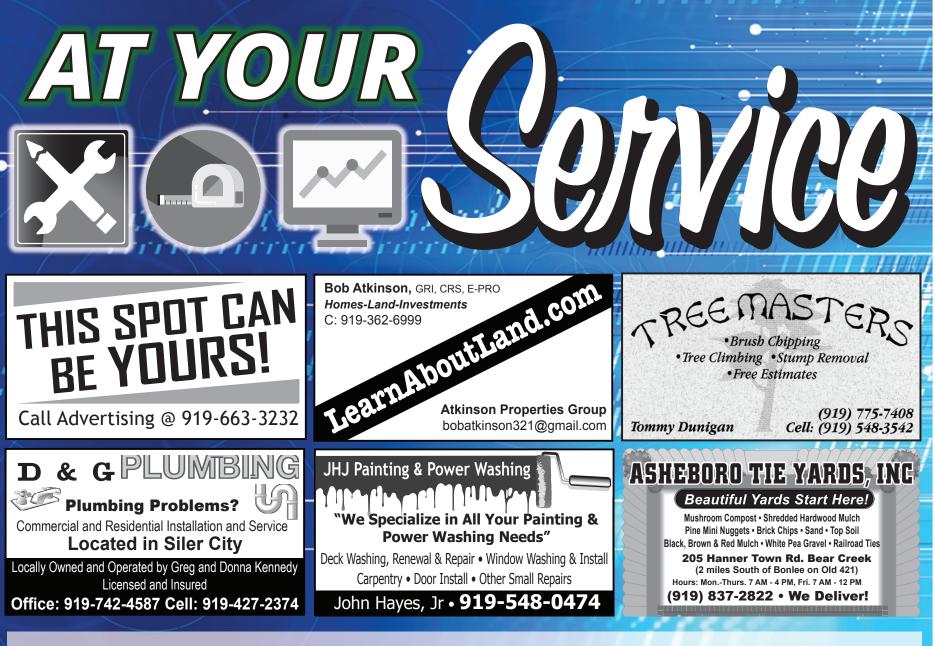
• 7 p.m. - Friday Night Dance (fee required to attend)

that they had been

Council on Aging Activities Calendar

relay team were Adams

break from competition



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The World Cup won't be the same without Grant Wahl



This

Saturday

marks the

finals of the

Cup in Qatar,

2022 World

but it will

be hard for

me to focus

on anything happening

JEREMY VERNON Sports Editor

on the pitch once things kick off.

Last Friday night, as I was lying in bed scrolling through Twitter, I caught wind that something had happened to U.S. journalist Grant Wahl, arguably the nation's premier soccer journalist. Then I saw the Instagram post from his brother, Eric, announcing that Grant had died in Doha while covering the quarterfinal matchup between Argentina and the Netherlands.

I couldn't believe what I was seeing.

Wahl, 48, had complained of feeling ill earlier in the week, and he told people on his podcast that he had been treated at the media center with what he expected was bronchitis. But now he was gone, and the questions began to flood social media.

The shock and sadness over Wahl's death quickly turned to anger and speculation, as his brother Eric claimed in an Instagram story that he thought his brother had been murdered rather than dying of a mysterious illness.

That theory has been pushed across social media in the week since his death. Wahl was a vocal critic of Qatar's World Cup organizers. His final post on his Substack on Dec. 8 was about how Qatari officials seemingly "don't care" about the numerous deaths of migrant workers, including one that happened in the opening

few days of the tournament.

In another viral incident, Wahl was stopped by stadium security from entering the United States' first group stage game against Wales after showing up to the gate in a rainbow-colored shirt in support of the LQBTQ+ community. Wahl said he was briefly detained before being released and allowed to enter the stadium to cover the match.

The courage Wahl showed during his time in Doha was immense. He knew he would catch hell for wearing the rainbow shirt, which he did in part to support his brother, who is gay. He also challenged Qatari officials with tough questions and continued to try and hold them accountable.

I don't know how exactly Wahl died, and I'd like not to speculate until a full autopsy is performed. That said, we should find out soon, as Wahl's body was returned to the U.S.

on Monday morning. For what it's worth, State Department spokesperson Ned Price said that the U.S. had no reason to expect foul play.

From here, I would like to remember Grant Wahl for his years of journalistic service. not his shocking final moments. He was the person who first introduced the masses to LeBron James with a 2002 Sports Illustrated feature on the then-high school junior. He was an all-star college basketball reporter in the earlier stages of his career, and I still remember the story he wrote about UNC's Tyler Hansbrough — titled "March Madman" — ahead of the 2008 NCAA Tournament.

Wahl eventually transitioned into full-time soccer writing, and he was the authoritative voice on the sport for millions of Americans who have discovered the global game over the

past decade.

His contributions to the sport, especially his support of the National Women's Soccer League and women's soccer in general, was commendable. When the news of his death broke, a flood of support came in from some of the sport's best female athletes, including U.S. legends Julie Foudy, Abby Wambach and Carli Lloyd.

This World Cup final, or any in the future, won't feel the same without Wahl covering it. It's especially disheartening knowing the next tournament is being hosted by the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

Wahl's insight will be missed, but his impact on the game will not be forgotten. We can't let it.

Sports Editor Jeremy Vernon can be reached at jeremy@ chathamnr.com or on Twitter at @ibo vernon.

Thinking of a pet as a **Christmas gift? Animal** activists urge caution

BY TAYLOR HEEDEN News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — With the holidays rapidly approaching, one Chatham resident is urging residents to think carefully about gifting their loved ones a new, furry best friend.

Rev. Terry Dorsey — one of the founding members of Guardians of Angels (now Team GOA) — said as an animal activist in Chatham County, he warns his fellow Chathamites not to gift their family or friends a pet this holiday season, as a lot of them will most likely end up back at the shelter.

"I cringe when I think of Christmas because a lot of people are going to just get puppies and kittens, and they have no idea of the chewing and the pooing that goes on," Dorsey said. "They don't think that through unless they've had pets themselves.'

Those animals who often become the stars of viral Christmas present reveals are often surrendered to shelters after the holiday season. Shelters across the U.S. have reported that one in 10 animals surrendered in the first half of the year were "present pets," which takes a toll on resources.

"Puppies and kittens are cute, but very often kids and families don't know what the full mount of responsidility is, Dorsey said. So after a few weeks, they just take them to the shelter, and now, the shelters are pretty full already.' Dorsey — who in the past has rescued dumped stray cats and had them spayed or neutered — said with the work he's done, he has already seen an increase in abandoned animals leading up to the holiday season.

surrender their beloved pets is due to the costs of healthcare, specifically the cost of spaying or neutering an animal. Dorsey said the county has a solution to that — a low-cost spay/ neuter voucher

If the low-cost spay/neuter vouchers are still not enough for an individual to afford their pet, Dorsey said it's best to return the animal to a shelter, instead of leaving the pet behind.

"Abandoning an animal is a Class B misdemeanor — it's against the law to do it, but people are doing it all over the county, especially in Siler City," Dorsey said. "Until towns work with the county to start addressing that issue, it's going to continue to be one."

He said when parents are considering giving their children a cat or dog this holiday season, they should consider offering to have a conversation about responsibility first.

They can consider [placing] a card under the tree saying they're going to go to the shelter and get a puppy, but first they're going to talk about what that means, making sure that the kid is ready," Dorsey said.

Pet ownership is one of the largest forms of responsibility for a child, according to Dorsey, so having a conversation about the chores that come with a pet is crucial before one is brought home.

START

Continued from page B1

a 7-0 run by herself, as a contested 3-pointer from the wing gave Jordan an 11-4 lead.

"(Barker) was really shifty," junior guard Skylar Adams said. "I knew I had to play up on her but I didn't want to get beat."

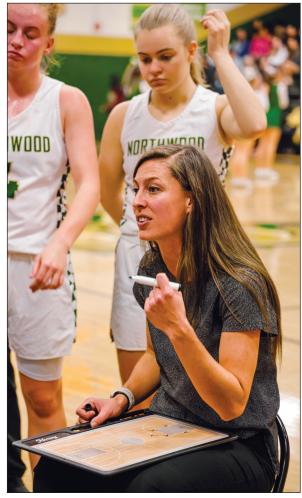
But it wasn't just the Falcons' isolation offense that gave Northwood troubles.

Jordan ran a 2-2-1 full court press for most of the night. In the first half, the visitors found success with the added pressure, turning the Chargers over on numerous occasions and even causing a five-second inbound violation.

Each turnover led to more opportunities for Barker to create in the half court, and Jordan entered the half ahead by three points, in large part due to 15 first-half points from their lead guard

"We came out a little slow," Snipes said. "After we got into the second half we started moving to the open spots to where you're supposed to be."

Out of the break, Northwood devised a new strategy to not only dismantle the Falcons press, but slow down Barker.



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Northwood girls basketball coach Kerri Snipes speaks with her team during a timeout in a win over C.E. Jordan last Tuesday.

a third quarter that saw Northwood take a 13-point advantage, Bland led the charge by canning a shot from distance and displaying her array of post moves. "We've got a couple of young ones on the team," Bland said. "So one thing I learned is really I have to set the tone for them — really make everyone comfortable.' With their offense returning to form, the Chargers began to defend Barker and the Falcons with more success. Adams — who was tabbed the primary defender on Jordan's leading scorer — began to press up higher on Barker. The intensified attack was coupled

with immediate help by Northwood teammates on any driving attempts by Barker, forcing her into tougher shot attempts.

After scoring 11 points

One of the reasons some people

One thing is just to prepare kids for what pet ownership means, and then the other is to have a family go to the shelter, maybe even together to pick out an animal," Dorsey said. "Make sure that the kid is ready because every kid says they'll take care of them but never does so."

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

its annual Christmas

Sunday morning wor-

The church is locat-

ed at 1745 East 11th

Street, Siler City.

Cantata during the

The Chargers began to flash someone in the heart of the zone pressure, usually planting senior forward Te'Keyah Bland near half court. From there, Northwood would usually find Bland, who was then responsible for either passing to a Charger on the opposite end cutting toward the basket or creating a play by herself.

The senior's experience and decision-making paid dividends. In

ADOP

HIGHW

in the first quarter, Barker only managed four buckets across the game's final three periods.

Snipes hopes the efficient display of togetherness on both ends is a sign that Northwood has put its early struggles in the rear-view and have returned to their allstate level of play.

"It's taken us a few games to kind of get settled in," she said. "I was really impressed with the way we came out in the second half of this game."

As Rotarians, we are proud of our community & do all we can to showcase it's beauty. We recognize it takes an ongoing effort to maintain the best living space for current & future generations, as such, we gather regularly to clean our section of the local highway, build planter boxes for pollinator gardens, and seek out multiple other opportunities

to build upon the strengths of Pittsboro. You are cordially invited to pull up a chair at an upcoming weekly meeting (Wednesdays at noon @ Postal Fish) to learn more about us & our mission.





Chatham Land Team: Rotarians Lonnie E. West & Julie Boone Cummins

CHURCH

The church is located at 1085 Mitchell Chapel Road, Pittsboro.

LOVES CREEK **BAPTIST CHURCH**

The adult choir of Loves Creek Baptist Church will present

ship service at 10 a.m. on Sunday, Dec. 18. Invite a friend and join us for this service with worship in song.

falling in the state final to Hayesville in overtime.

Harvey can lead them, but they have gotten big contributions from some of their younger players this season.

younger brother, Beau, who is a sophomore on the team. Through Chatham Charter's first 11 games, Beau is one of three players averaging double-digit points (10.8) while leading the Knights in both assists (5.3) and steals (5.0) per game.

"I love playing with him," Adam said of his younger brother. "We've been playing together ever since I was in the fourth grade. It's just a crazy experience to get to play with him at this level of basketball, go to the state championship with him and see his improvement. His 3-point shot has improved drastically. It's fun to see."

Sports Editor Jeremy Vernon can be reached at jeremy@chathamnr.com or on Twitter at @jbo_vernon.

MARK

Sunday, Dec. 18.

MITCHELL CHAPEL

Mitchell Chapel

sionary Department

will light luminaries

for our second annual

Luminaries Lighting

Event. Please come out

and join us at 5 p.m. on

A.M.E. Zion's Mis-

A.M.E. ZION

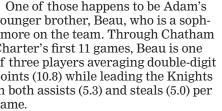
Continued from page B1

Harvey totaled 23 points in the victory and now has 1,011 for his career entering Friday's game against Southern Alamance. He is now the third Chatham Charter boys player to enter the 1,000-point club, joining 2020 grad Jordan Hamilton (1,628) and 2018 grad Jason Foulk (1,483).

"I was a bit nervous before the game," Harvey said. "I didn't know what was going to happen, or how it was going to come, or what was going to happen when I got it, but when I did, everybody was really excited for me. They all celebrated me and showed a lot of support. All the support from them, my coaches, all my friends and family — it was amazing.^{*}

For the season, the Chatham Charter boys are a perfect 11-0. The Knights are trying to reach the summit of the 1A classification this season after

The Knights figure to go as far as



THE SHOW MUST GO ON North Chatham Performing Arts Center gives update on efforts

CN+R Staff Report

PITTSBORO — Pittsboro Youth Theater's final production of 2022 "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" on stage Dec. 16 to 18 — is also the last production ever in Sweet Bee Theater's downtown Pittsboro location.

Negotiations to extend

their lease unexpectedly fell through in August, said PYT co-founder Craig Witter, so the family of performance arts organizations at CFTA, including local actors, dancers and musicians, had to find a new home in a hurry.

Witter, along with Pittsboro Youth Theater's other co-founder, Tammy Matthews, say they've poured their hearts and emptied their pockets into their community arts organizations since 2012. The couple searched and found a new location for their performing arts center in Bynum. Matthews and Witter quickly saw the vision and de-

cided the new space — to be called NCPAC (North **Chatham Performing** Arts Center) — would be a perfect centerpiece for patrons and theater audiences from Chatham and the Triangle.

"Our new Sweet Bee Theater will provide a much more rewarding theater experience for actors and audiences," Matthews said. In addition, to greatly enhance theater, NCPAC will provide expanded music instruction facilities and the finest dance floor and education space in Chatham.

Matthews and Witter say they cannot do all

this themselves: they need the community's help to continue and expand the only performing arts center in Chatham. Tax-deductible donations are needed to build-out NCPAC — now an empty building shell. Every small donation will make a positive difference in the lives of countless children, families and the Chatham community for decades to come.

"Tammy and I love to look back at all the children we've seen blossom as they've worked with us, and worked together in creative teams," Witter said. "Everybody

knows 'it takes a village.' What folks need to know right now is that the village has to step up and put a little something under the Christmas tree for Pittsboro Youth Theater."

"Sing. Dance. Act. It's the trifecta that makes Pittsboro Youth Theater such an asset to the Chatham community," he said.

To ensure the only performing arts center in Chatham continues to thrive with their patrons. please consider making a tax-deductible donation online, at www.pittsboroyouththeater.com.

Protect Financial Accounts from "Cyberthieves"

Cybercrime is booming. In 2021, the FBI reported that cybercriminals scammed nearly \$7 billion from Americans – a figure slightly higher than the gross domestic product (GDP) of Switzerland for that year, according to research organization World Economics. How can you protect yourself from cyberthieves?

Here are some suggestions that can

• Watch out for "phishing" attempts. You may receive emails that appear to be from a legitimate firm, requesting information your financial institution would never request online - confirmation of an account number, password, Social Security number, credit card number and so on. These notes can look official, often incorporating a firm's logo, so pay close attention to what's being asked of you.

• Think twice before clicking or downloading. If you are suspicious about a communication, don't click on a link or download an attachment — instead, go to your financial firm's website or use their app to verify they sent the information or request.

• Become adept with passwords. Use a different password for each of your accounts and change your passwords regularly. Of course, maintaining multiple passwords can be confusing, so you might want to consider using password management software, which generates passwords, stores them in an encrypted database and locks them behind a master password - which is the only one you'll need to remember.

• Use your own devices. Try to avoid using public computers or devices that aren't yours to access your financial accounts. If you do use another computer, clear your browsing history after you log out of your account.

• Be cautious about using Wi-Fi when traveling. When you're on the road, you may want to use public hotspots, such as wireless networks in airports and hotels.

Pittsboro

Chad Virgil, CFP^{®,} ChFC[®], CLU[®] 630 East St Suite 2 919-545-5669

Penguin Place Eric C Williams, AAMS® 114 Russet Run Suite 120 919-542-3020

But many people don't realize that these hotspots reduce their security settings to make access easier, which, in turn, makes it easier for cyberthieves to intercept your information. In fact, some hackers even build their own public hotspots to draw in internet-seekers in an effort to commit theft. So, if at all possible, wait until you can access a trusted, encrypted network before engaging in any communications or activity involving your financial accounts.

 Don't give up control of your computer. Under no circumstances should you provide remote access to your computer to a stranger who contacts you, possibly with an offer to help "disinfect" your computer. If you do think your device has an issue with malicious software, contact a legitimate technician for assistance.

 Know whom you're calling for help. If you need assistance from, say, a customer service area of a financial institution. make sure you know the phone number is accurate and legitimate-possibly one froma billing or confirmation statement. Some people have been scammed by Googling 'support" numbers that belonged to frauds-

ters who asked for sensitive information. • Review all correspondence with your financial services provider. Keep a close eye on your account activity and statements. If you see mistakes or unauthorized activity in your account, contact your financial institution immediately.

Advanced technology has brought many benefits, but also many more opportunities for financial crimes. By taking the above steps, and others that may be needed, you can go a long way toward defending yourself against persistent and clever cyberthieves.

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

Edward Jones, Member SIPC

Governors Club Sharon A Dickens, AAMS® 50101 Governors Dr Suite 118 919-967-9968

Pittsboro Kevin C Maley, AAMS® 984 Thompson St Suite E2 919-444-2961

Pittsboro Lee Shanklin, AAMS® 120 Lowes Drive Suite 107 919-545-0125

Chapel Hill Jessica L Villagrana 180 Providence Rd Suite 1c

of grants development. Duke Energy gives CCCC Foundation \$50,000 grant

From Central Carolina Community College

SANFORD — Duke Energy has provided a \$50,000 grant to the Central Carolina Community College Foundation to support workforce and economic development efforts. Funding will be used to develop and provide workforce training in support of area employers, including VinFast and Wolfspeed. "Duke Energy is committed to creating access to education and workforce development

for people in the communities where we live and work," Indira Everett, director for Duke Energy's east region, said. "Skilled workers allow our communities to thrive. Equipping individuals

CCCC President Dr. Lisa M. Chapman said. "We are especially appreciative of this community investment and thankful for our partners continuing to help us take care of our residents and our employers. "Central Carolina Community College is thankful to Duke Energy, one of our outstanding community partners, for providing funding to support workforce training,' Julian Philpott, chair of the CCCC Board of Trustees, said. "Thank you Duke Energy for your support and for being a great partner in helping our communities thrive and succeed." "CCCC appreciates Duke Energy's continued support of the college and our efforts to ensure that the individuals in our communities have the training needed to access amazing career opportunities in manufacturing throughout the region," Margaret Roberton, CCCC vice president for workforce development, said. "Duke Energy's investment in workforce training is a great example of partnership with community colleges and commitment to the residents of North Carolina.' The CCCC Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization affiliated with, but independent of, the college. It receives donations of money and equipment on behalf of CCCC and uses them to promote the educational mission of the college and assist students through scholarships and grants. For information on giving to the CCCC Foundation, contact Dr. Emily C. Hare, executive director of the CCCC Foundation, 919-718-7230, or ehare@ cccc.edu.



presents a \$50,000 check for workforce development training to Dr. Lisa

M. Chapman (front right), Central Carolina Community College's president.

Standing behind are, from left: Lynda Turbeville, chairperson of the CCCC

executive director; Dr. Mark Hall, CCCC Chatham County Provost; Margaret

Roberton, CCCC vice president for workforce development; Julian Philpott,

chairperson of the CCCC Board of Trustees; and Kelly Klug, CCCC director

Foundation Board of Directors; Dr. Emily C. Hare, CCCC Foundation

Indira Everett (front left), Duke Energy's director for the east region,

Siler City Laura Clapp, CFP[®], AAMS™ 301 E Raleigh St 919-663-1051

Fearrington Kathy Brommage, CFP® 190 Chatham Downs Drive Suite 103 919-960-6119

edwardjones.com

Member SIPC

THAM

Edward **Jones**

MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

with critical skills and knowledge is an important part of meeting the state's evolving workforce needs.

CCCC officials are appreciative of the grant.

"Our friends at Duke Energy and the Duke Energy Foundation have always been so supportive of the work of all of our 58 community colleges,"



POLICE REPORTS

ARREST BLOTTER

On Nov. 29, Tommy Shain Guthrie, 46, of 1124 Van Thomas Road, Pittsboro, was arrested by Deputy Conner Lee for failure to appear. He was issued a \$500 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Surry County District Court on Dec. 13.

On Nov. 30, Ieesha Nichole Alston, 31, of 902 Driftwood Drive, Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Reggie Griffin for other offenses and driving left of center. She was issued a \$2,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Lee County District Court on Jan. 9.

On Dec. 2, Carlos Junior Mendoza, 25, of 2389 Bear Creek Church Road, Bear Creek, was arrested by Deputy Joseph Scott for failure to appear. He was issued a \$100,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County Superior Court on Dec. 15. Mendoza was also arrested by Deputy Scott for failure to appear. He was issued a \$10,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court on Dec. 14. On Dec. 3, Codie Nicole Johnson, 27, of 7721 Lanes Mill Road, Bennett, was arrested by Deputy Alberto Estrada for resisting public officer and injury to personal property. She was

issued a \$500 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court on Dec. 13.

On Dec. 3, John Monroy-Pulido, 31, of 23 Glendale Drive, Pittsboro, was arrested by Deputy Reid Allshouse for assault on a female. He was issued no bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court on Dec. 14. On Dec. 4, Teddy Leon Martin, 34, of 181 Alex Watson Road, Pittsboro, was arrested by Deputy Rami Amer for robbery with a dangerous weapon, financial card theft, identity theft, felony conspiracy and misdemeanor larceny. He was issued a \$25,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court on Dec. 14. On Dec. 4, Tiffany Leigh Kearns, 31, of 181 Alex Watson Road, Siler City, was arrested by Cpl. Michael Cox for robbery with a dangerous weapon, identity theft, financial card theft, felony conspiracy, communicating threats and larceny. She was issued a \$25,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court on Jan. 30. On Dec. 5, Codie Nicole Johnson, 27, of 1012 Bacon St., Durham, was arrested by Deputy Amer for misdemeanor probation violation. She was

issued a \$5,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Wake County District Court on Dec. 29.

On Dec. 5, Charles Raymond Hart Jr., 54, of 8238 Pittsboro Goldston Road, Goldston, was arrested by Cpl. Brandal Harrington for Domestic Violence Protection Order violation. He was issued a Chatham County District Court on Dec. 14. On Dec. 6, William Dennis Riker Jr., 46, of 310 West Philadelphia Ave., Pine Bluff, was arrested by Deputy Tyler Welch for injury to personal property. He was issued a written promise to appear in Chatham County District Court on Dec. 14. On Dec. 7, Tiffany Leigh Kearns, 31, of 181 Alex Watson Road, Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Reid Kirkman for magistrate's order for fugitive. She was issued a \$50,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court on Jan. 30.

On Dec. 8, Dwayne Lenard Bland, 44, of 434 Dowd Hill Road, Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Andrew Gray for failure to appear regarding child support. He was issued a \$25,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Hillsborough District Court on Dec. On Dec. 10, Trent Alexander Phillips, 36, of 207 Delphus Stinson Road, Goldston, was arrested by Cpl. Brandal Harrington for probation violation. He was issued a \$5,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court on Dec. 14.

Phillips was also arrested by Cpl. Harrington for failure to appear. He was issued a \$10,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court on Dec. 14. On Dec. 10, Fernando Exau Hernandez, 32, of 3212 Hamp Stone Road, Siler City, was arrested by Cpl. Harrington for child support. He was issued a \$1,200 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Durham County District Court on Jan. 13.

GROUP ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH ARMED ROBBERY

A series of arrests have been made in connection with an armed robbery which occurred in Chatham County in early November. The victim in the case reported being threatened, robbed and held against her will in the home of Peter John Mein, 62, of 311 Piney Grove Church Road, Siler City. Mein, an acquaintance of the victim, was subsequently charged with felony robbery with a dangerous weapon, felony financial card theft, two counts of felony obtaining property by false pretense, felony identity theft, felony conspiracy and larceny. Mein was arrested on Nov. 27 and held under a \$15,000 secured bond.

In addition to Mein, investigators have charged Teddy Martin, 34, and Tiffany Kearns, 31, with felony robbery with a dangerous weapon, felony financial card theft, felony identity theft, felony conspiracy and larceny. Kearns was also individually charged with communicating threats. Both were arrested and assigned \$25,000 secured bonds for their roles in the crime. Juan Beiza Rebollar, 30, Codie Nicole Johnson, 27, and Missy Jo Riddle, 46, were also charged with felony robbery with a dangerous weapon and false imprisonment in connection with the incident. Rebollar and Riddle were taken into custody and assigned \$10,000 secured bonds while Johnson was held under a \$11,000 secured bond. Riddle, Mein, Johnson, Kearns and Rebollar are all due to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on Jan 30, 2023. Martin is scheduled to appear on Dec. 14, 2022.

Commissioners approve funding contribution project for Chatham Park Way

BY MAYDHA DEVARAJAN

News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — Discussions over Chatham Park's influence on development continued at Pittsboro's commissioners meeting Monday night.

During the commissioners' last meeting, on Nov. 28, board members spent more than an hour debating the approval of a local government fund ing contribution project with Chatham Park Investors in a conversation that, at times, bordered on tensity. Specifically, commissioners noped for more time to understand the specifications in the agreement. The proposed bonus allocation agreement focuses on Chatham Park Way, a state road that serves the transportation needs of residents and businesses in the 7,100acre development. Under the agreement, Chatham Park Investors (CPI) would pay \$9 million on behalf of the town as the "local contribution." The Town of Pittsboro would serve as a conduit for the funds paid to the NCDOT and to convey the right of way for the portion of the road on behalf of CPI.

million, which has to be spent within five years and would allow CPI to draw on a credit for the construction of additional roads that belong to Chatham Park.

The board and CPI ultimately decided to revisit the proposed agreement at this Dec. 12 meeting, once CPI had made the changes requested by commissioners, which included changing language around two roads - Suttles Road and Eubanks Road — listed in the proposed agreement as potential projects that could be addressed with the bonus funds, and making it clearer in the agreement that any additional roads built with the bonus allocation would be controlled by Chatham Park. Pursuant to the agreement, Chatham Park would have the right to select the additional roads, and the decision wouldn't be subject to the approval of Pittsboro, provided that the roads serve the town, provide a "material benefit" to the developer and be located on CPI property or property otherwise approved by the town. The revised version of the agreement also included an alternative acceleration procedure, which is the first time the concept has been raised. According to a memo

from Town Attorney Paul S. Messick Jr. to the board, CPI and NCDOT are in discussions that might allow the acceleration to occur at a lower cost to CPI. In the case that CPI chooses an alternative acceleration procedure for the project, Pittsboro would continue to serve as a conduit for the funds paid to the NCDOT and would continue to convey the right of way. The town would serve the same role it would have in the bonus allocation program and CPI would reimburse Pittsboro for "reasonable costs.'

Commissioners moved to approve the revised bonus allocation agreement 4-1, with Commissioner John Bonitz being the opposing vote. Bonitz said his opposition to the agreement increased due to the acceleration procedure, saying he believed it to be "like a bait and switch." 'And [I'm] very concerned that basically we have a town whose financial prospects, because of the dominance of residential development, because of the lower likelihood of significant revenues from industry or commerce, I don't believe that we're going to have the kind of revenues we need to take care of highway projects outside of PDD [planned

development district]," Bonitz said

The board also accepted the dedication and conveyance of 51 acres of parkland a section from the Chatham Park Planned Development District.

Bonitz also raised concerns about the usability of the park site in accordance with earlier plans in the town's Master Plan for a regional sports complex.

Katy Keller, director of the town's Parks & Recreations department. said, in theory, both the size and topography of 51 acres should be compatible with building a sports complex, but it depends on what the board and town eventually decide to include in the complex. "What we're saying is that it will really depend on what we're able to do once we get into it, of what this [a sports complex] looks like," Keller said. The board also unanimously moved to accept a \$125,000 donation from CPI to invest in Pittsboro's downtown. Commissioner Kyle Shipp said the funds would go towards reimbursing the town for downtown projects that address needs that have come up in community surveys and the Downtown Pittsboro Work Plan.

Other business

• The Land Use Plan update has been delayed by a month, and is now expected to be available for commissioners in February. Town Planner Janie Phelps said the delay was anticipated and as the holidays approached, it became clearer that the project required the additional time.

• Charlie Davis, director of marketing and business development from Wooten Company, provided an update on the Sanford sewer force main infrastructure project.

In September, the wooten Company, on the town's behalf, applied for a \$10.5 million construction grant from the N.C. Division of Water Infrastructure to supplement funding for the project. Earlier this summer, the town also approved the ability to pursue and request \$5 million in additional state revolving funding, which Pittsboro was successful in securing, Davis said. Pittsboro commissioners also accepted a "distressed com-munity" designation in June, which could open the town up for potentially millions of dollars in support for water and wastewater infrastructure challenges. Throughout the process, Davis said Wooten has been meeting monthly with DWI, which is an unusual occurrence, to maintain continuity.

Davis also outlined two impactful events that contributed to delays with the project, including environmental concerns brought up during developmental reviews. He emphasized that the two elements of the project — the pump station and over 14 miles of force main — had no environmental issues. The other event included a need for a re-routing of the force main last fall due to development changes in Lee County.

"That impact took a year out of this process. Davis said. "And I can tell you the engineering reports, the FONSI which is the 'finding of no significant impact,' de sign, permitting - essentially all elements of this project had to be revisited in some form, shape or fashion to ultimately get through the permitting process to get us back to where we could have authority to award or authority to bid again." Next steps for the project include continuing negotiations, potentially rebidding to mitigate cost escalation, pursuing supplemental funding and considering benefits like cost-sharing or cost provisions from the potential Sanford-Pittsboro water system merger.

The value of the right of way would qualify as a bonus allocation of \$4.5

Chatham's Emergency Management receives \$25,000 grant from Duke Energy Foundation

PITTSBORO — The Duke Energy Foundation presented Chatham Emergency Management with a \$25,000 Emergency Preparedness & Storm Resiliency Grant on Dec. 8 for the purchase of a Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV).

UTVs are designed to carry multiple responders and equipment and may be used to transport patients. The Chatham County UTV will be used to support emergency responses and pre-planned events including moving supplies, equipment, responders and patients.

"We are grateful for this generous donation from the Duke Energy Foundation," said Steve Newton, Chatham County's emergency management director. "As a suburban-rural county with miles of trails and creeks, recreation areas and lakes, and a growing population enjoying the outdoors, we are faced with incidents that occur in areas inaccessible to a full-size vehicle. The UTV will be a great asset to bolster our response efforts."

Duke Energy supports North Carolina communities with more than \$750,000 in grants to support emergency preparedness. Funding will support 24 nonprofits and government agencies from across the state and will help pay for training, life-saving equipment and essential tools to aid in disaster planning and recovery operations. Duke Energy supports these communities and their ability to help residents prepare for and recover from severe weather events.

"Emergency preparedness and storm recovery begin at the local level in the communities we serve," Indira Everett, Duke Energy's east region director said. "Households and businesses in Chatham County have endured significant and costly storms in recent years. These grants will help our communities and residents by



Photo by Adam Gaines

Pictured from left are Duke Energy District Manager Indira Everett, Chatham County Manager Dan LaMontagne, Emergency Management Director Steve Newton, Assistant County Manager Bryan Thompson, Assistant County Manager, Carolyn Miller, Finance Officer Roy Lynch and Commissioner David Delaney.

Education Corps partners with Chatham Schools to recruit, train, support high-impact tutors

From Chatham County Schools & North Carolina **Education Corps**

PITTSBORO — Chatham County Schools is partnering with North Carolina Education Corps (NCEC) to accelerate learning for young readers through high-impact tutoring. Applications are open for anyone interested in pursuing a paid part-time opportunity to support elementary school students as a literacy tutor.

Qualified candidates may include college students, recent graduates, parents, community members, and former educators who have flexible schedules (weekly time commitment: three days and a minimum of 10 to 15 hours in the class

room) and a desire to make a difference in the public school system.

Visit www.nceducationcorps. org/application to apply for a tutoring position.

In partnership with Chatham County Schools, NCEC will train tutors to provide effective support for students using evidence-based practices. Tutors are employed directly by the school district, with a commitment to serve for the 2022-23 school year.

Launched in September 2020 as a partnership among the North Carolina State Board of Education, the Office of the Governor, and local school systems, NCEC was established to help extend the reach of teachers to fill critical learning

gaps.

As members of the NCEC, tutors work with one to three students at a time in kindergarten through third-grade levels to improve their foundational reading skills and expand teacher capacity.

'NCEC has a proven track record of elevating student performance in reading," said Dr. Amanda Moran, Chatham County Schools assistant superintendent for Academic Services and Instructional Support. "This partnership will help bolster continued academic growth for some of our youngest students. We are excited to see the progress of our students as a result of this high-impact tutoring model."

Prior to the COVID-19 pan-

demic, just 36% of North Carolina's 4th-graders were reading at grade level. Test results from the past two years show young readers in North Carolina falling further behind, due to lost instructional time and other stressors.

This widening gap highlights the critical opportunity to step up and accelerate learning for students through high-impact tutoring.

"North Carolinians are coming together to accelerate learning recovery in the wake of the pandemic," said NCEC **Executive Director John-Paul** Smith. "They are coming together to close education opportunity gaps that have been around for far too long. We are grateful for the perseverance

and spirit of hardworking, service-minded people across the state, and we invite North Carolina residents to step up to give teachers and students the critical help they deserve.'

In addition to the N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction, NCEC is also supported by public-private partners, including the C.D. Spangler Foundation, Mebane Foundation, Goodnight Educational Foundation, SECU Foundation, and the North Carolina General Assembly, and North Carolina governor's office.

For more information about North Carolina Education Corps or to apply for a high-dosage tutoring position in a school district near you, visit http://nceducationcorps. org.

Chatham again gets receives national award for excellence in financial reporting

From Chatham County Government

PITTSBORO — The Chatham County Board of Commissioners recognized the county's Finance Department on Nov. 21 for receiving the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) for its annual comprehensive financial

report for fiscal year 2020-2021.

It's Chatham County's 32nd consecutive year of receiving this national honor.

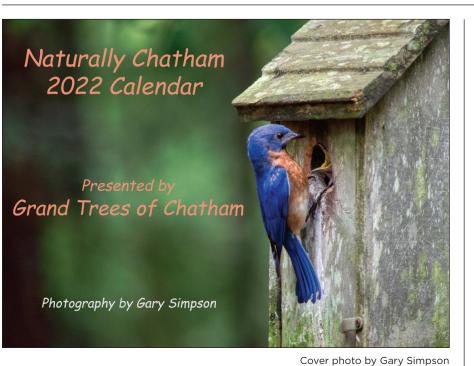
The Chatham County Finance Department received the Certificate of Achievement, which is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting. According to GFOA, its attainment represents a significant accomplishment

by a government and its management. "I couldn't be more proud of our

finance staff for demonstrating such a high level of professionalism, integrity and excellence with the county's financial reporting," Chatham County Manager Dan LaMontagne said. "The fact that the finance team has achieved this national recognition for more than 30 years is remarkable, and their high standards will continue to position us

well as Chatham County embarks on tremendous growth."

According to GFOA, the annual comprehensive financial report was judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the program, which includes demonstrating a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the report.





Contributed photo

Pittsboro Class of '57

The Pittsboro High School Class of 1957 celebrated its 65th year Class Reunion recently. Those in attendance were, front row: Frances Clark Smith, Ava Mae Fogleman, Katie Beckwith Cooper and Frankie Moore Danek; back row, Jean Carpenter Tripp, Graham Camp Oldham, Steve Jackson, Hoyt Beard, and Ronald Copeland.

Chatham residents

Grand Trees of Chatham is selling its 2023 calendars — featuring photographer Gary Simpson's pictures of some of the county's most beautiful trees — to help raise money for the organization. The calendars can be obtained for a \$20 donation at the following Pittsboro retailers who, without compensation, make room for the display and distribution of the calendars in their stores: Chatham Marketplace, Fair Game Beverage Company, Liquidambar Gallery and Gifts, New Horizons West. This year the calendar will also be available at The Chatham Rabbit in Siler City. GTOC was initiated in 2009 by a small group of Chatham County citizens with an interest in raising awareness of the county's outstanding trees and the many contributions trees make. County commissioners created an all-volunteer board to administer the program, and today GTOC is an independent non-profit with close ties to the N.C. Cooperative Extension - Chatham center.

Calendars

win medals at North Carolina SilverArts

From the Chatham County Council on Aging

A total of four Chatham County residents Evette Evans, Mark

Herboth, Alan Reid and Patricia Reid — secured medals at the recently completed 2022 North Carolina SilverArts competition.

SilverArts, which is "a celebration of the creative expression of seniors in North Carolina,' is a major component of the traditional athletic competition of the North Carolina Senior Games.

In a philosophy that strives to keep seniors healthy, active and involved, SilverArts unites the athlete and artist in a program that recognizes the similarities of both endeavors: discipline, dedication and pride in one's accomplishments.

Evans earned a gold medal in the Literary Arts category in the short story competition for her work entitled, "The Journey."

In Woodturning, Alan Reid and Herboth finished second and third, respectively. Reid picked up a silver medal in the Heritage Arts category for his woodturning work "Ornament," while Herboth earned bronze in Woodturning for "Vase."

Herboth earned gold in the visual arts category, picking up his first-place distinction for his film photography selection of "Hay Roll."

Patricia Reid won gold and bronze in heritage arts categories. Her gold-medal work came in tole/decorative painting with "Sleepy Cat Box," while "Cowboy" earned bronze in the stained glass competition.



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Here are Chatham County Schools' Science Fair winners

From Chatham County Schools

PITTSBORO — Chatham County Schools announced the winners of the 2022 District Science Fair on Thursday, Dec. 1, at Jordan-Matthews High School.

The competition was steep this year, with several award-winning entries. CCS is appreciative of the highly qualified judges who dedicated their day to evaluating the entries.

"Our students did an outstanding job presenting their entries with poise and knowledge. This was a difficult task for our judges, based on the number of substantive and well-developed entries from our students," LaShonda Hester, executive director of Middle School Instruction, said. "We were so excited to be back to in-person presentations and awards. I want to thank our teachers, science fair coordinators and principals who work diligently at our schools to bring science to life every day in our schools."

The overall fair winner, who received a \$100 prize, was Rebecca Hoopes from Margaret B. Pollard, whose project was "Trunks and Tops: Estimating Relationships Between Tree Height and Circumference in Pinus taeda."

Hoopes' brother, Jacob Hoopes, won last year's district competition.

Judges could award honorable mention, third place, second place and first place in each category. First-place projects in 3rd through 12th grade will proceed to the Regional Science Fair.

The Kindergarten through 2nd-grade projects do not move on to a regional or state competition. Chatham County Schools has chosen every year to offer this category because the district believes it's valuable for students.

Sherri Homan, the instructional program facilitator for Middle Schools, coordinates the science fair each year, and she will be helping prepare for the Regional and State competitions.



Chatham County's Science Fair winners for 2022.

"Gymnastics: Balance and the Senses" by Sydney Wolfe from North Chatham Elementary "Rainbow Celery" by

Lilly Hart from J.S. Waters Elementary "Repurposing Plastic Dage" by Man Manlotte

Bags" by Mrs. Marlette's Class from Perry Harrison Elementary *3rd Place:*

"Designing Earthquake-Proof Buildings" by Maya Merricks from Pittsboro Elementary

"Toys vs. Hurricanes" by Greyson Bochicco and Harrison Chastain from Chatham Grove Elementary

2nd Place: "Stop the Spread" by Mrs. Vazquez's Class from Perry Harrison Elementary

Ist Place: "The Sweet Spot" by Bryce Meulendyke and Ayden Williams from North Chatham Elementary

"Which surface lets a soccer ball roll the farthest?" by Keaton Jett and Audrey Jett from Chatham Grove ElemenCousett-Keyser from Chatham Grove Elementary

The following are winners in the 3-5 Chemistry Division.

Honorable Mentions: "The Chocolate Factory" by Emma Suczynski and Owen Suczynski from North Chatham Elementary

"Cleaning Copper" by Gabriel Hooft from Siler City Elementary

"Fizzy Bath Bombs" by Maxie Mitchell from Silk Hope School

"Can I relight a stick without a match, using oxygen?" by Calvin Weber from Pittsboro Elementary

"What's Poppin: Which brand of bubble gum makes the biggest bubbles?" by Emma Boyd and Ximena Cervantes from Pittsboro Elementary

"Cake Quest" by Caroline Owens from North Chatham Elementary "The Egg Shell Myr

"The Egg Shell Mystery" by Carisa Andrew from Silk Hope School "Parished Produce" by

"Perished Produce" by Eliza Andros and Addy Davis from North Chatham Elementary *3rd Place:* food will go furthest, fastest, and have the most airtime when launched from a potato cannon?" by Wyatt Lawson from Pittsboro Elementary "The Physics of

Engineering the Perfect Yo-Yo" by Leo Stewart from Chatham Grove Elementary

Tie for 1st Place:

"Effect of Friction and Angle of Incline on a Sliding Object" by Megan Leonard from Moncure School

"Stop! Get Out of the Pool" by Amaya Milliken, Anna Miller and Mackenzie Cress from North Chatham Elementary

6-8 Division

In the 6-8 division, students competed in one of seven categories. The following are winners in the 6-8 Biological Science A Division.

Honorable Mentions: "Flourishing Florals: Which Liquid Colors Flower More?" by Summer Causey, Hannah Culberson and Athena Dispenette-Estrada from Affect How Much you Cry" by London Crowling from Margaret B. Pollard Middle School

Tie for 3rd Place: "Paper Towel and Water Absorption" by Yamilet Camacho from Chatham Middle School

"Cookies" by Tiffany Glinoga and Emily Jump from Margaret B. Pollard Middle School

2nd Place: "What Aerosol Will Launch a Potato the Farthest" by Ivey Mitchell from Silk Hope School *Tie for 1st Place:*

"Chocolate Brands" by Betzy Hernandez and Maria Serrano from Chatham Middle School "Vitamin C Levels and Sunlight" by Khalil Shaw

Sunlight" by Khalil Shaw from Chatham Middle School

The following are winners in the 6-8 Earth/Environmental Science Division.

Honorable Mentions: "Commercial vs Natural Cleaning Supplies" by Sophia Grimes and Carmelina Beasley from Chatham Middle School "The Effect of Decomposers in a Sealed Terrarium" by Ben Galbraith from Moncure School "Water Filtration" by Elsa Sandvik from Margaret B. Pollard Middle 2nd Place: "The UVB Problem" by Caroline Sawyer from Moncure School 1st Place:

"Thermal Alternatives" by Jaden Guzman from Chatham Middle School

The following are winners in the 6-8 Engineering Division:

1st Place:

"What Burns Faster" by Christian Kennan and Lariah Rogers from Margaret B. Pollard Middle School

9-12 Division

The following are winners in the 9-12 Biological Science Division. 3rd Place:

"Feeding Time" by Andrew Brown from Jordan Matthews High School

Tie for 1st Place: "The Effect of Different Music on Human Physiology" by Athena Phan from The Chatham School of Science and Engineering

"Tomatosphere" by Fatima Lavariega from Jordan Matthews High School

The following are winners in the 9-12 Biological Science Division. 2nd Place:

"Does Light Kill Bacteria" by Christian Lopez from Jordan Matthews High School

1st Place:

"Fast Food Burger Project" by Skylar Breedlove, Markel McSwain and James Bain from The Chatham School of Science and Engineering

The following are winners in the 9-12 Chemistry Science Division.

2nd Place: "Candles" by Martha Flores from Jordan-Matthews High School

1st Place: "Another One Bites the Rust" by Karsyn Vann and Lizzie Bare from Jordan-Matthews High School

The following are winners in the 9-12 Earth/Environ-

K-2 Division

The following are winners in the K-2 Class Division; the K-2 class and K-2 Individual categories are for Chatham County Schools only.

Honorable Mention "Name brand or store brand cookies...Which tastes better?" by Claire Palmer from Bonlee School

"Bubble Pop" by Reese Burbank from North Chatham Elementary

"What Shape Ice Melts the Fastest? " by Bernadette Foreman from Pittsboro Elementary

"What food makes ants strong?" by Mia Pecot from Chatham Grove Elementary School

"Which trees make the most oxygen?" by Johanna Stone from J.S. Waters Elementary

"The Gingerbread Boy's Escape Boat" by Ms. Easterling's Kindergarten Class from Perry Harrison Elementary

"Photosynthesis" by Vanessa Phillips from Siler City Elementary

"Keeping flowers fresh" by Lillian Weatherington and Eleanor Weatherington from Chatham Grove Elementary

"Magnificent Mentos" by Graham Baucum from Pittsboro Elementary

"Milk Bones" by Kimber Starr from Siler City Elementary

"Alcohol's Effect on Leaves" by Arabel Gaines from Siler City Elementary tary

3-5 Division

The following are winners in the 3-5 Biological Science Division.

Honorable Mention: "How much will the grass grow under certain conditions?" by Lauen Plante from Pittsboro Elementary "How Long It Takoo

"How Long It Takes A Pumpkin To Rot" by Ethan Leonard from Silk Hope School

"Practice Makes Perfect — Progress" by Hannah Webster from North Chatham Elementary *3rd Place:* "Polar Plunge" by Ana

Burbank from North Chatham Elementary 2nd Place:

"Is My Dog, Jet, Right or Left Pawed?" by Jack Tarpley from Chatham Grove Elementary *1st Place:*

"Which Liquid is Best for Propagating Pothos?" by Andrew Zwahlen and Lydia Zwahlen from North Chatham Elementary

The following are winners in the 3-5 Earth and Environmental Division.

3rd Place:

"Worse Because It Was Wet? Salt Water Versus Tap Water" by Sarah Hoopes from Chatham Grove Elementary 2nd Place:

"Can We Purify Water with Daily Materials?" by Waylon Bryant, Mackenzie Gregory and Collin Palmer from Bonlee School

1st Place: "The Best Roof Case Scenario" by Emma Heron, Ava Delaney and Ayla "What an Ironic Breakfast" by Tymere Greene from J.S. Waters School

Tie for 2nd Place "Does temperature affect battery performance?" by Alice Drust from Pittsboro Elementary

"The Water Races" by Gwendolyn Frankowski from Chatham Grove Elementary *1st Place:*

"Boiling: It Was a Solution" by Lillian Kizer from Chatham Grove Elementary

The following are winners in the 3-5 Engineering and Technology Division.

3rd Place:

"Poppin' Wheelies" by Jesse Ritter from Bonlee School 2nd Place:

"Which flies best?" by Rafael Magana-Salinas and Jocelyn Magana-Salinas from Virginia Cross Elementary *1st Place:*

"Power of Pollination" by Jack Walker, Summer Fitzgerald and Sophia Wight from Perry Harrison Elementary

The following are winners in the 3-5 Physics/Math Division.

3rd Place: "Is the Iron in Cereal Magnetic?" by Wesley Chappell from Pittsboro Elementary

"The Physics of a Car Crash" by Elias Koshy from Chatham Grove Elementary

Tie for 2nd Place "Food in Flight: Which Slik Hope School

"How Much Sugar is Needed to Make Sweet Tea Preferred by the People in Siler City" by Matthew Cunningham, Preston Smith and Reagan White

3rd Place: "Do You Know What You Are Eating" by Saddler Hamm from Margaret B. Pollard Middle School

2nd Place:

"How Do Ants & Their Broods React to Heat" by Jake Tripp from J.S. Waters School *Tie for 1st Place:*

"Colored vs. Pencil Note" by Grace Wilson from Margaret B. Pollard Middle School

"Trunks and Tops: Estimating the Relationship Between Tree Height and Circumference in Pinus taeda" by Rebecca Hoopes from Margaret B. Pollard Middle School

The following are winners in the Biological Science B Division. 3rd Place:

"Eggs vs Water" by Ian Perry from Margaret B. Pollard Middle School 2nd Place:

"Flavored Eggs" by Cason Hayes, Sayvion Burnette and Bryson Alston from J.S. Waters School

1st Place:

"What's Poppin: Why Does Popcorn Pop" by Ella Davis and Juliana Andros from Margaret B. Pollard Middle School

The following are winners in the Chemistry Division.

Honorable Mention: "How Does the Temperature of An Onion School 3rd Place:

"Which Type of Soil Has the Highest pH?" by Reece Adams and Giovanni Ramos from Margaret B. Pollard Middle School

2nd Place: "Burnt Soil vs Unburnt Soil" by Keylor Urena-Secena from Chatham Middle School

1st Place: "What Secrets do macro-invertebrates tell about Chatham County's waterways?" by Reagan Sandel, Kinley Jordan and Madelyn Smith from Chatham Middle School

The following are winners in the 6-8 Physics Division.

3rd Place: "Effects of Size Bouncing" by Charlotte Britt and Levi Culberson from Silk Hope School 2nd Place:

"Different Shooting Styles" by Francisco Arteaga, Ridge Hicks and Elijah Rodriguez from Silk Hope School *1st Place:*

"Air Pressure in Soccer Balls" by Jose Mejia, Valentin Gorostieta and Alexis Ochoa from Chatham Middle School

The following are winners in the 6-8 Technology Division.

3rd Place: "Apple Sense" by Addison Overman and Reid Caviness from Bennett School

mental Sciences Division.

1st Place: "Particle Pollution" by Carly Cardman and Emily Dekaney from Jordan-Matthews High School

The following are winners in the 9-12 Physics Science Division.

2nd Place:

"Hooke's Law" by Julie Mateo and Jolitzy Fernandez by Jordan-Matthews High School *1st Place:*

"Under Pressure: How PSI affects the distance a ball travels" by Maggie Thornton and Buck Thornton from Jordan-Matthews High School

The following are winners in the 9-12 Technology Science Division.

2nd Place:

"Salinity and Aluminum" by Rebecca Narccizo and Alex Maldonado Reyes from Jordan-Matthews High School *1st Place:*

"Frequencies" by Jennifer Garcia-Torres from Jordan-Matthews High

The following are winners in the 9-12 Engineering Science Division.

2nd Place:

School

"Tension in Bridges" by Noah Emery, Mia Splendore and James McNabb from The Chatham School of Science & Engineering

1st Place:

"Testing Trebuchet Trajectory" by Caden Bailey, Leah Riggsbee and Mason Kratky from The Chatham School of Science & Engineering



Staff photo by Matt Ramey

The Northwood Marching Band played songs as they made their way through Pittsboro during the Christmas Parade.



Residents lined the streets of downtown Pittsboro to watch the annual Christmas parade.

HOMETOWN HOLIDAY CHEER

Pittsboro, Siler City host Christmas parades

CN+R Staff Reports

Siler City and Pittsboro hosted their annual holiday parades last Thursday night and Sunday afternoon, respectively. Residents came to each event clad in red and green festive wear, smiles evident as parade floats, school bands and businesses marched down N. Chatham Avenue in Siler City and Hillsboro Street in Pittsboro. The Siler City parade which was hosted by the Chatham Chamber of Commerce and sponsored by Mountaire Farms — featured a float contest where three winners were selected after entering floats that followed the theme Christmas: Past, Present and Future.

Winners were:

• Jordan-Matthews' Future

Farmers of America Chapter • Full Throttle Marine and Powersports

• Community Baptist Church You can see more photos from both parades on the News + Record website at www.chathamnewsrecord. com/.

Staff photo by Matt Ramey



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Clapp tractor riding in downtown this past Thursday night at the Siler City Christmas parade.



The Grinch waves to parade patrons in Pittsboro on Sunday.









Staff photo by Matt Ramey

Pittsboro residents watched fire trucks and cars go down East St. during the annual Christmas Parade.

Staff photo by Simon Barbre Chatham Hospital nurses on their float waving to the crowd at Siler City Christmas Parade.



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

A little boy posing for a picture from his mom, in front of the parade.



Trucks lined up, waiting in line for the Siler City Christmas parade.

Staff photo by Simon Barbre



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Sheriff Mike Roberson waving to the crowd as he rides his float through the Siler City Christmas Parade.



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

The Grinch riding the float in downtown of Siler City's Christmas parade this past Thursday night.



Staff photo by Matt Ramey

A man in a leather jacket touts his reindeer ears as he watches parade floats make their way through downtown Pittsboro.

LOVE AND LOSS 'Death and Cupcakes' event offers space to process death and dying



Staff photo by James Kiefer

Cathy Brooksie Edwards, the founder of heart2heart, listens while an attendee recounts a moment of grief.

BY MAYDHA DEVARAJAN

News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — In a low-lit room at the Chatham Community Library, a dozen local residents gathered Saturday to share their experiences of grief, death and dying over cupcakes and coffee.

The event, called Death and Cupcakes, was facilitated by local organizations heart-2heart and Abundance NC with the purpose of embracing honest conversations around death, offering a space for community connection regarding the processes of death and dying.

Cathy Brooksie Edwards is the clinical director of heart2heart, as well as a licensed counselor and bodyworker. The nonprofit heart2heart offers holistic services to individuals seeking support as they navigate the "living path" of a diagnosis or disease through death.

To Edwards, part of the reason the event is so crucial is that she sees it as helping to dissipate people's fears around death.

"I think, as humans, we're so compacted that we forget that death is a part of life," she said. "And people are really scared."

Sitting in a small circle in the library's Holmes Family Meeting Room, participants shared what brought them to the event, including losses of partners and irienas, and now they are processing their grief. Between personal testimonies, Amy Durso, a musician and member of heart2heart's staff, played and sang songs centered around nature and loss. Edwards opened the event by inviting individuals to share perspectives, whether they revolved around acute grief or expanded grief,

as "deep" and expanded grief as "wide." It's important to remember that grief is

describing acute grief

not just an experience that happens because of the recent loss of a loved one, Edwards said.

"Grief is the loss of an idea or the loss of who we thought we wanted to be," she said. "Grief is not just there for a certain thing. Grief is something of any change, we can have grief about anything."

This year marks the first time that Death and Cupcakes has been held since 2019. The event, free to the public, was sponsored by Friends of the Chatham Community Library; Aromatic Roasters provided coffee, while Carolina Cravings Co. provided cupcakes.

But it's not the only one of its kind in the area.

Abundance NC, a community hub based in Pittsboro and incubator for local non-profits, is led by executive director Ally DeJong. Since February 2022, Abundance NC has held a monthly healing circle at The Plant called "Stories of Grief & Healing," which encourages individuals to come together in a "community-centered" space and share personal experiences of love and loss.

"For me, I feel like there's a lot of healing in knowing that you're not alone," DeJong, whose own father died from colon cancer six years ago.

Part of the conver



Staff photo by James Kiefer

Attendees cast silhouettes during a conversation regarding death and grief. Around a dozen people shared stories during Death and Cupcakes on Saturday morning at the Chatham Community Library.



Cathy Brooksie Edwards, the founder of heart2heart, listens while an attendee recounts a moment of grief.

tions.

"If we don't do that [ground ourselves physiprostate cancer on Easter Sunday in 2020. "It was wonderful to

something in community or to be out with people. Talk about your



Staff photo by James Kiefer

Heartspace, a book edited by heart2heart founder Cathy Brooksie Edwards sits on a table during Death and Cupcakes at the Chatham Community Library.



Staff photo by James Kiefer

Musician Amy Durso plays the shruti box while others meditate. Held at the Chatham Community Library on Saturday, the Death and Cupcakes conversation involved guided meditation and music.

meditation and writing groups, as well as being involved in several prayer groups at ner church. Having those connections and being close to her children and family in Pittsboro has been beneficial in processing her grief. As the holidays approach, Edwards emphasizes the importance of not being in isolation while understanding and experiencing grief from death around this time of year. "Loneliness leads to depression," she said. "So try your best to do

Staff photo by James Kiefer

sation Saturday also revolved around grounding participants in their body, with facilitators leading individuals in deep breathing exercises and other sensory activities.

Research has shown that experiences of trauma can leave a lasting mark on the physical body, with connections to chronic health condi-

cally, our emotions just stay boxed up," Edwards said. "So if we do those kinds of practices, then it allows our body to kind of breathe a little bit and if we're willing to then let it out, it really helps.'

For Nancy Jones, 71, being able to share in the event with others was helpful. Jones, who lives in Pittsboro, lost her husband from aggressive

listen to everybody's stories, because it does give you encouragement, and the compassion and the recognition that you're not the only one out there," Jones said. "That was one of the things that I thought to myself right away — I'm not the first person to go through this.'

While Saturday was the first time that Jones has participated in the Death and Cupcakes event, she said she has been part of a number of loved ones.

"If it's around loss, like if it's the first Christmas that we don't have dad, then bring dad to the table, you know, like talk about [them]," Edwards continued. "You don't want the people that are dead to be gone, it's important to tell stories."

Reporter Maydha Devarajan can be reached at mdevarajan@chathamnr.com and on Twitter @maydhadevarajan.



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by Dave T. Phipps

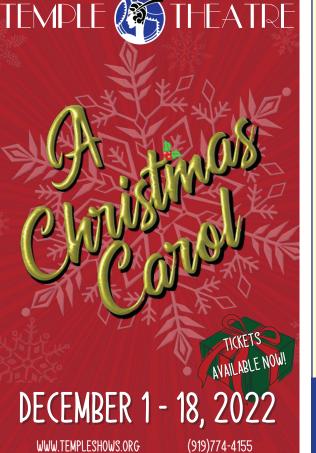
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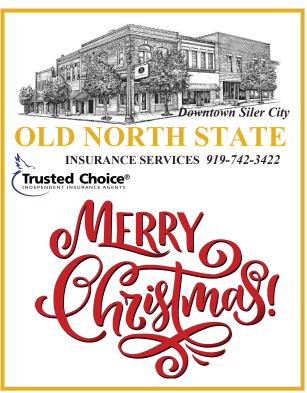
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Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally Unlisted clue hint: DERIVED FROM THE SUN

Battery	Coke	Fuel cell	Peak oil
Carbon	Crude oil	Grid	Renewable
Climate change	Fossil fuel	Nuclear	Wind farm
Coal	Fracking	Oil rig	

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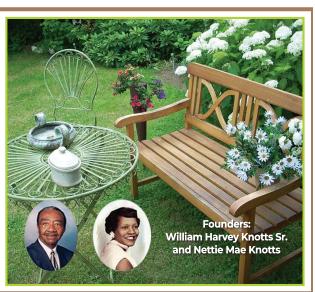
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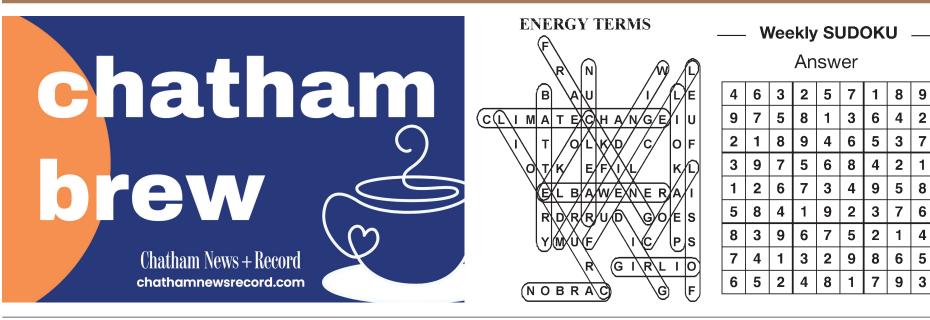
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Celebrate Feliz Navidad with some wonderful coquito



Becky's Family Coquito

5 fresh cinnamon sticks

1/4 thumb size piece of ginger (about 1/2 in.)

- 2 capfuls of vanilla extract
- 2 egg yolks (no membrane)
- 2 cans of evaporated milk 2 cans of coconut milk

1 can of coconut syrup (Coco Lopez)

151 proof dark rum or your choice of dark rum (Important: add only after mixture has cooled down)

*Bacardi stopped making 151 a few years ago. I now use Cruzan 137 aged rum.

Take cinnamon sticks and smash them in a paper towel with a mallet so that their oils and taste may be released in the boil. Peel the ginger then cut it into thin pieces. Place the cinnamon and ginger in a small pot filled halfway with water and boil it for about 15 min. This should yield no more than 1 cup of liquid mixture.

Open one can of evaporated milk and one can of coconut milk and empty them into large pot. Place egg yolks in this mixture. Stir well until there's no separation between eggs and liquid. Remove anything floating (remove any egg membrane) and cook on medium for 10 min. Turn off heat and add the coconut syrup, stir, then add the rest of the ingredients including the vanilla extract, cinnamon, and

Courtesy of Debbie Matthews

Coquito, a 'grown-up' milkshake from Puerto Rico.

ish grandmothers.

Only it's a



DEBBIE **MATTHEWS** The Curious

drink, which Cook is a heck of a lot more fun, and way tastier. It's a spirituous little beverage

called coquito. It's tempting to say it's a Puerto Rican eggnog - but don't.

Sure, there's egg and dairy in there, and of course booze. But coquito (little coconut) isn't just some random carton you

Puerto grab at the local A&P in early Ricans have December. This is a concoction their own with deep familial roots in version of Puerto Rico.

I encountered coquito for the first time when I was 10. At the time, we were living in Puerto Rico, and attended a Christmade by Jewmas party. The hosts served creamy, delicious-looking drinks called coquito. When I requested one, my mom said no, because they were "grownup" milkshakes.

Ten minutes later, on very wobbly legs, I made my way into a quiet corner after secretly sampling said milkshake.

Coquito is a delicious milky potion. Silky, rich, and full of the tastes of coconut, ginger, and spices. The ingredient that gave me noodle-knees was rum Barcardi 151.

Every Puerto Rican family has its own super-secret, super-special version. The recipe for it is normally tightly-guarded and handed down to only the very favorite offspring.

And somehow, I, and by extension you, Gentle Reader, are now in possession of one of those venerated family heirlooms.

Years ago I met the then-Durham chief of police, Jose Lopez, and his awesome wife, Becky, in line at Costco. They have become friends, and Becky is now my Puerto Rican food mentor, coach, and head cheerleader. And in the spirit of friendship for which Puertorriqueños are known, she gave me her

ginger water. Stir well. Cool down and add rum to taste.

Optional: before adding rum, place this mixture in a cold place (fridge or outside) @ 45 degrees or lower overnight then strain the congealed fat from the top.

When mixture's cooled down add rum to your taste. Because the eggs were slowly cooked this drink can last for years in the fridge. Grandma would always bring out the last year's Coquito (which always taste better) and served it in shot glasses. With time it thickens and becomes even more creamy.

I have had up to 4-year-old Coquito in my fridge. The trick is to shake your refrigerated bottles at least once a month.

Buen provecho! (Enjoy!)

family coquito recipe to share.

So, here, in her own words, is Becky Lopez' great-grandmother's coquito recipe. And if you'd like to say thanks for her generosity, take a moment and spare a thought or a prayer for the residents of Puerto Rico who are still in dire straits from this year's hurricane season. If you can do more, visit https://hispanicfedera-

tion.org/unidos, where 100% of vour donation goes to recovery efforts in Puerto Rico.

And from my snug little apartment in downtown Durham to your very own abode, have the most wonderful of holidays, and a happy, peaceful new year.

Thanks for your time.

Contact me at dm@bullcity. mom.



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