

Chatham News + Record

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SHINING BRIGHTLY

Mace family's Christmas lights deliver smiles, joy

BY BOB WACHS
News + Record
Correspondent

The Biblical truth that it's more of a blessing to give than to receive is alive and well every day for Michelle and Scott Mace, but especially at this time of year.

They're the folks who live in — and decorate for Christmas — the house on U.S. Hwy. 64 about halfway between Pittsboro and Siler City featuring more than 50,000 lights and, when the sun goes down, a heavy stream of onlookers.

And not just their house, but also their yard and their nearby barn, the lights of which cast a reflection in the pond fronting it.

The Maces do it in order to help make the holidays bright, in every sense of the word.

"We do this to bring smiles and joy to people going by," Michelle Mace says of the lights — and all the work done in preparation — which make up the displays. "I think last year there were 56,000 lights; we stopped counting after 50,000. And we don't put up all the lights we have. Some are for spares."

And it doesn't happen overnight, of course. It's taken the Maces years to develop a plan for the display and it takes days to put together each year.

A Thanksgiving target

"We bought the house in the early 2000s and started with the lights around '03," she says.

When it's time to start decorating — usually around Nov. 1 — displays are set up in sections. They include large



Staff photo by Matt Ramey

Scott and Michelle Mace's Christmas lights display attracts lots of onlookers during the holiday season — as well as concern for the safety of passersby.

figurines and metal trees, some of which are homemade. Lights are everywhere, hoisted by hand or placed in the upper reaches with tools like landscaping slingshots; large snowflakes on the house are actually magnets that stick to the metal roof.

The goal is to have the display completed by the day after Thanksgiving.

"We'll usually have 85% of them ready by then," Scott says, "depending on the weather."

With all those lights glowing for two months or so, it might seem to be a financial drain on the family utility bill. But

See LIGHTS, page A7



Staff photo by Matt Ramey

Scott and Michelle Mace pose outside their home at 8311 U.S. 64 West, between Pittsboro and Siler City. Each year, the couple puts up more than 50,000 Christmas lights to 'bring smiles and joy' to those who pass by.

WASTEWATER WORRIES

What's with Pittsboro's sewer?

BY MAYDHA DEVARAJAN
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — This town's water and sewer problems are no secret.

Contamination of the town's water supply and the dueling realities of aggressive development and constrained water and sewer capacities have been documented for years.

Still, in 2022, the town progressed on a number of key matters related to its water and sewer issues — navigating a potential merger of utility systems with the city of Sanford, pursuing funding for the Sanford force main, and successfully installing a granular activated carbon (GAC) filter system to improve water quality in the Haw River.

With multiple municipalities, timelines and projects involved, there are a number of moving parts in the pathways forward. So how did Pittsboro's utilities — specifically with wastewater — reach their current states? And what's likely to happen in 2023?

How did we get here?

Bill Terry came to Pittsboro as town manager back in 2007. During the first year of his tenure, it became clear that water and sewer needs had to be prioritized, he said.

At the time, he recalls the town facing a moratorium on development; moratoriums on development in Pittsboro date back to 1999 and span through

See SEWER, page A3

THE CN+R Q&A | DANIEL SIMMONS

Boys & Girls Clubs' CEO takes national post

Simmons transitions to director of government relations position in January

In January, Daniel Simmons, the CEO of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Carolina, will leave his post to join the national Boys & Girls Clubs of America staff as Director of Government Relations Club Services. This week, News + Record Publisher + Editor Bill Horner III talks to Simmons about his transition.

It was more than seven years ago that Simmons took over leadership of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Sanford/Lee County. After a merger and acquisition of a club, and after the formation of two new clubs, the B&GC of Central Carolina

today consists of four clubs across three counties — including the Wren Family Center club in Siler City and the recently-formed Pittsboro club — employing nearly 50 people and serving 1,000 students throughout the year.

At the local level, Simmons will be replaced Jan. 3 on an interim basis by Sarah Reese Womack; Womack now serves as director of resource development for the B&GC of Central Carolina.

Tell us about the new position, and talk about why they sought you out — and why you were interested...

I'm really excited about this

See CEO, page A6

'THE DARK ALWAYS COMES TO LIGHT'

Victim speaks out about childhood sexual abuse

BY TAYLOR HEEDEN
News + Record Staff

CONTENT WARNING: This story discusses topics of childhood sexual assault and abuse.

SILER CITY — Anna Hackney was raised in a household where the family unit was the most loved and trusted entity.

Little did she know it would be a member of her own family who would betray her in the worst way possible: between the ages of 11 and 15, Hackney was sexually and emotionally abused by an uncle.

"As I got older, it definitely made me more uncomfortable, and it definitely made me feel like he targeted me," Hackney told the News + Record almost a month after her uncle's sentencing. "I definitely started to realize that what was happening was normal for me, but I needed to find out if it was normal for anyone else."

That uncle, John Mark El-

See VICTIM, page A12



Courtesy of Anna Hackney

Anna Hackney, left, poses with her stepdad Jason Clark and mom Traci Clark. Hackney, a victim of childhood sexual assault, says she's determined to not let it define her.



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).

• **Chatham County Public Libraries** to host Winter Reading BINGO Challenge - Children and teens are invited to participate at all Chatham County Public Libraries branches from January 3 through February 11. The Challenge, sponsored by the Friends of the Chatham Community Library, is open to youth ages 2 thru18. Readers participate by picking up a reading BINGO sheet at their local library branch and completing a 5-in-a-row BINGO to earn a free book (one book per participant, while supplies last). All readers who complete at least one BINGO will be entered into a drawing for a \$50 Gift Card to McIntyre's Books. For more information about the Winter Reading BINGO Challenge, or other youth events and programs at the Public Libraries, contact youth.services@chathamlibraries.org or visit www.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 home 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.

• **CORA will hold its 11th annual 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.

• **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.

• **Second Bloom** will be closed for the holidays on Christmas Eve and New Years Eve. Our winter hours are from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. Tuesday until Saturday. Credit cards are accepted. We are located at 630 E. Street, Pittsboro, in the Food Lion shopping center. All proceeds provide support for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and promote community education in collaboration with Chatham County.

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

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

• **Motorcycle Association** — The Motorcycle Association for Chatham, Western Wake, Lee, Orange and Alamance counties meets in Pittsboro

and is open to all riders. For information, call 919-392-3939 or visit www.chathamCBA.com.

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

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

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.

News + Record's offices closed Friday, Monday for Christmas holiday

The News + Record's offices will be closed on Friday, Dec. 23, and Monday, Dec. 26, in observance of Christmas and to allow employees to spend time with their families.

Ad deadline for the Dec. 29-Jan. 4 edition is 5 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 22. Email advertising@chathamnr.com for advertising-related questions and news@chathamnr.com for news tips and to share stories with the newspaper's newsroom. Newsroom staff will be working remotely on Monday, Dec. 26.

Many local businesses and government offices and offices of local service providers will be closed all or part of Friday, Dec. 23, and Monday, Dec. 26, in observance of Christmas.



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Eric Andrews
Accredited Land Consultant

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66 PROPERTIES SOLD IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS!

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LAND (Representing Buyers) 4 Units 0 Pearleman Teague (23.1 Acres) 00 Roberts Chapel Road (123.87 Acres) 45 The Whites Way (5.61 Acres) 0 US 64 Hwy W (11.396 Acres)	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 Hoyt 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) 5975 Pleasant Hill Church Road (Siler City)
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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)
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COA hosts teambuilding activities

The Chatham County Council on Aging will hold a series of teambuilding activities beginning Wednesday, Jan. 11, at the Eastern Chatham Senior Center in Pittsboro.

Sessions will be held on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month from 2 until 3:30 p.m.

The event is open to the public.

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SEWER

Continued from page A1

2011, when the town put in place functional limits on sewer capacity.

“[The town] had concluded that they were in the last few thousands of gallons of sewer capacity available, and they had no clear vision about how they were going to fix that,” Terry, who later served as Pittsboro mayor from 2013 to 2015, said. “So they basically slammed the brakes on development.”

Mayor Cindy Perry also spoke to the lengthy history of moratoriums on development in town, saying the focus on increasing the capacities of the town’s utilities just weren’t “a priority” in the 1990s.

“And being a small town and being one that didn’t have a tremendous amount of growth at the time, I don’t know that we thought that that was a huge problem, or there wasn’t a ready monetary solution for it — I think all of that combined,” Perry said.

Pittsboro’s wastewater treatment plant was built in 1977 and underwent a major upgrade in 1989. Its current capacity sits at 750,000 gallons of wastewater a day.

Last year, the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) allowed the town to use up to 90% of the capacity, meaning Pittsboro’s current wastewater capacity is 675,000 gallons.

The town’s water plant was constructed in 1964 and is able to produce 2 million gallons per day of flow. Currently, the plant is handling about 25% of its production capacity.

Based on estimates from a report provided by Freese and Nichols — an engineering firm Pittsboro hired to explore the town’s capacity options — the town will be out of water capacity around 2024 or 2025 with the current 2 million gallons per day.

Terry also recalls serious sewer capacity and compliance issues around 2007. For ex-

ample, every time a huge rainstorm passed through town, the plant’s small capacity would become overwhelmed, Terry said, leading to high levels of raw wastewater being dumped into the Haw River.

Ultimately, the town was able to build holding basins for the wastewater treatment plant through Recovery Act funds, which slowed down the transfer of wastewater. The water plant also added carbon filters, and the board lifted the development moratorium, Terry said.

“While we wanted to expand our capabilities — both water and sewer — first we had to solve the problem that we had, you know, two limping plants,” Terry said. “And we eventually got that done.”

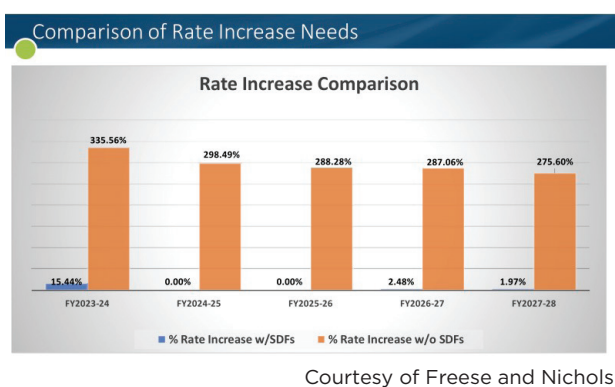
And while he was able to target some of the town’s water and sewer issues during his five years as town manager, reducing the threat of receiving fines for contamination and putting out the immediate fire at hand, Terry said he unfortunately “ran out of time” to address other aspects of Pittsboro’s utility needs, like the expansion of capacities, when he retired in 2012.

“As many of these things do, it came down to money,” he said. “The wastewater treatment plant of the size that we needed, or we were authorized to build, was going to be on the order of \$30, \$35 million, something like that. And the debt on that — a little town like Pittsboro can’t absorb that much debt without massive increases in water and sewer rates and tax rates, and the sort of thing.”

What’s happened with sewer capacity?

Kent Jackson, who serves as town engineer, said around 2016, town staff and the commissioners started to consider the best course of action for Pittsboro’s sewer capacity was to send wastewater to Sanford.

“And then that has just evolved over this last six



Engineering firm Freese and Nichols presented Phase I of its evaluation of the financial impact of a Sanford-Pittsboro utilities merger to the Pittsboro Board of Commissioners on Dec. 13. The graph displays how utility rates would be impacted should the town not implement a system development fee if the merger takes place.

years to, well, maybe we need to further that, and not only send the sewer there, but just consider merging systems,” Jackson said.

In May 2022, the Pittsboro Board of Commissioners authorized former Town Manager Chris Kennedy to send a letter of intent to Sanford to merge the two municipalities’ utility systems.

There are a number of towns in North Carolina smaller than Pittsboro which still operate their own water and sewer systems, said Interim Town Manager Hazen Blodgett. But as regulations have changed over time, he said it’s become an increasingly technical skill to be a wastewater treatment plant operator.

Jackson reiterated Blodgett’s point, saying that one of the primary considerations for Pittsboro in merging is the extreme cost to keep up with changes to system requirements and capacity needs for utility systems.

“I think another point of that is the capital costs for the water and sewer systems are so excessive, that it really strains smaller jurisdictions to be able to afford the capital,” Jackson said. “So I think that is a big part of what leads them to merge, or what have you.”

When it comes to sewer issues in Pittsboro, the other major project being explored is the construction of the Sanford force main.

The force main, a 14-mile pressurized sewer pipe that will transport wastewater from Pittsboro to Sanford, has been in the works for a number of years. The project would see Pittsboro’s current 750,000-gallon wastewater plant decommissioned, as untreated sewer instead gets sent to Sanford’s Big Buffalo Wastewater Reclamation Facility, which has a capacity of 12 million gallons per day.

Pittsboro opened construction bids for the force main infrastructure project in early November. Since then, the town has received four bids each for two contracts. The first contract, with

the base bid priced around \$15 million, would convert Pittsboro’s Wastewater Treatment Plant to an equalization station and a lift station to collect and transmit wastewater to Sanford. The second contract has a base bid around \$40 million and focuses on the effluent connection and line work for the force main to get to Sanford.

Aside from serving the city of Sanford, the municipality’s wastewater plant services other portions of Lee County and the Moncure megasite, and sells water and wastewater services to the town of Goldston.

And though Sanford’s water plant has 12 million gallons per day capacity, the city is planning on expanding the plant to 30 million gallons a day and is negotiating plans to sell water to nearby municipalities like Holly Springs and Fuquay-Varina, in addition to Pittsboro.

Victor Czar, Sanford’s public works director, highlighted the strength of the Cape Fear River as a raw water source and the steady, incremental growth of the utilities that matched the growth of the city.

“But it’s allowed us to grow and learn as we did, you know, versus if somebody with a smaller utility, and all of a sudden somebody wants to come and put a major development on top of you,” Czar said. “That would be difficult to handle here.”

Czar said the utility business is prone to economies of scale, an important factor in the merger conversation.

“The more gallons of water, whether it’s wastewater or drinking water that we send through a plant, the less it costs per gallon to treat,” he said.

In considering the benefits for Sanford in a merger with Pittsboro, Czar also pointed to the general growth coming to the region, referencing VinFast — the Vietnamese electric vehicle manufacturer that, back in March, was announced as the largest economic development project in state history — which promises to create 7,500 new jobs in Chatham County.

“There’s a little bit of rising tide lifts all boats kind of thing,” Czar said. “We like to see our neighbors be successful because we think that makes us successful.”

Over the next two decades, Pittsboro’s population is expected to grow by more than 1,000%. In that time, the town will have to find ways to meet the water and sewer needs.

Town staff see some benefits to growth, however. At the moment, Pittsboro has 2,100 customers for its utility services, Blodgett said. Chatham Park — the 7,068-acre development in the northern portion of town — will have 22,000 homes, meaning there will be more customers to split costs of debt service should the merger with Sanford take place.

By 2042, Freese and Nichols has estimated that Pittsboro will need about 10 million gallons of wastewater disposal.

“We need to be able to

grow and be in control of our own destiny, as far as water and sewer [goes],” Blodgett said. “Because water and sewer does drive development.”

How might my rates be impacted by a merger?

At a special meeting Dec. 13, Pittsboro’s board of commissioners heard an update from Freese and Nichols regarding the financial impact of the proposed merger.

The town had previously engaged in an agreement with the consulting group in late summer to conduct a two-phase study examining the proposed merger.

Phase I, which was presented at the Dec. 13 work session, provided an overview of capital improvements needed and the two revenue streams to pay for utilities — rates and system development fees (SDF). Phase II, which will only take place per the approval of both Pittsboro and Sanford, provides a deeper examination of details regarding the operations and maintenance of the merger, including system interconnections and how SDF collection would work with two separate municipalities.

Based on a capital improvements plan developed by Freese and Nichols, Pittsboro is facing around \$380 million for water improvements and close to \$190 million for wastewater improvements over the next 20 years.

“That’s a big push for any community,” said Account Director for Freese and Nichols Charles Archer. “And it’s particularly a big push, big effort for the town of Pittsboro.”

Archer also laid out a five-year capital improvements plan with estimated costs of \$122 million, encompassing the major projects Pittsboro is undertaking:

- \$55 million for the Sanford force main (based on the lowest bids)
- \$37 million for the Water Treatment Plan expansion project in partnership with Sanford, Chatham County, Holly Springs and Fuquay-Varina
- \$30 million for water line transmission from Sanford to Pittsboro
- \$325,000 for wastewater planning in considering Pittsboro’s long-term needs

Based on Freese and Nichols’ model, SDF would pay for major capital projects while rates paid by existing and new customers would cover typical operating costs.

A system development fee refers to an upfront charge from a local government for water and sewer, intended to standardize how utility systems in the state calculate fees charged to new development for the impact they’d have on water and sewer capacities.

If the town sets the SDF at \$38,000 per unit and 500 housing units are built a year, Pittsboro should expect \$19 million in revenue per year to help pay for the capital improvements, Archer said. The revenue from the SDF would also mean Pittsboro should retire the first wave of capital investment in 10 years or less.

Should the town not implement a SDF, Pittsboro would have to increase utility rates 335% in the 2023-24 fiscal year to make up for the loss in revenue.

“It’s just not practical,” Archer said.

In September, the town applied for a \$30 million grant from the Division of Water Infrastructure; without a merger, Pittsboro would only be eligible for \$15 million in funding, Archer noted.

Pittsboro’s average water bill for residential

customers is around \$115 per month, while Sanford’s is around \$59 per month. Archer also pointed to the economy of scale that Sanford benefits from, with 20,000 utility customers compared to the 2,100 Pittsboro has.

Based on the model used by Freese and Nichols, rates would have to increase in the next fiscal year by around 15%, in year four by around 2.5% or in year five by around 2%. In its presentation, Freese and Nichols proposed instead spreading out the increases over a five-year period at around a cumulative 2% each year, which also takes into account the additional ratepayers from a merger.

“If you were to adopt a model like we’re suggesting this evening, it will stabilize,” Archer said. “You’ve had rate increases over the last two years for your ratepayers, it will stabilize the rate of those increases to what we’re talking about, to something that’s manageable with a typical homeowner.”

What’s next?

When it comes to how Pittsboro’s capacities are expected to expand in the coming steps of the proposed merger and other developments in town and Chatham County, it’s a decades-long timeline.

At a Nov. 14 board meeting, Commissioner Kyle Shipp said with the increased capacity from the Sanford force main and the Chatham Park Water Recovery Center, Pittsboro’s sewer capacity should expand from 675,000 gallons to 1.25 million gallons a day.

The Western Intake Partnership — a raw water intake and pump station out of Jordan Lake — would also see an additional 6 million gallons a day for Pittsboro, but is only expected to be operational by 2030. Chatham Park and Sanford also have an agreement for a 3 million-gallon-a-day water line, which would stretch from VinFast’s Moncure megasite up to the town of Pittsboro and is expected to open around 2026.

In July, the town commissioners accepted a “distressed community” designation, and voted to become part of North Carolina’s Viable Utility program. The program and designation means Pittsboro is eligible for grant money — potentially in the millions — specifically intended to assist distressed utilities in addressing water and wastewater infrastructure challenges.

The town applied for two grants in September and will know whether the town will be recipients of grant funds in February. One of the grants would be used toward financing the force main, while the other would be used to finance bringing a water line from Sanford, Jackson said.

On Dec. 13, in separate meetings, both the Pittsboro Board of Commissioners and the Sanford City Council agreed to have Freese and Nichols proceed with Phase II of the merger evaluation.

The next steps, given that all groups are still on board after the evaluation, include developing an interlocal agreement and having an attorney specialized in utility mergers assist Pittsboro in the process of navigating the merger.

Perry said there are still questions to be answered and she’s hopeful that all three entities — Pittsboro, Sanford and Chatham Park — can operate cooperatively as a pathway forward with the merger becomes clearer.

“It’ll be a fascinating crossword puzzle to watch us be able to put it together,” Perry said.

Macpage Communications

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VIEWPOINTS

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE | THE REV. LARRY NEAL

‘Tis (always) the season



LARRY NEAL
Reverent

Of all the holidays we celebrate, Christmas is the only one celebrated for an entire month. People all over the world decorate their homes, send out greeting cards, buy gifts, go to parties, attend church services, watch TV specials, sing Christmas songs, and travel long distances to be with family and friends. There are stores that dedicate their annual budget in preparing for this holiday. When Christmas comes, you can't miss it because it's everywhere. But the true meaning of Christmas is Jesus, and He should be celebrated daily.

The original Christmas story is introduced to us in the Holy Bible. It reads like this:

There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night, an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all Peo-

ple. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in clothes and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests." (Luke 2:8-14)

The purpose of Christmas is to celebrate. We see this from the angel's opening statement to the shepherds of Bethlehem. God had wonderful news for us that would cause us to rejoice, celebrate, and throw a party. Christmas is a party. Specifically, it's a birthday party for Jesus, and birthday parties are meant to be celebrated. Ironically, the person whose birthday we're supposed to be celebrating is often times ignored or mentioned. Although Jesus is the reason for the season, Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer, Frosty the Snowman, Santa Claus, the Grinch, and elves get more attention than the Savior.

The entire reason for Christmas is the love of God.

"God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but

have eternal life." (NKJ)

In other words, God loves you so much that He came to earth as a human so you could get to know Him and learn to trust Him and love Him back. God became one of us, a human being, so we could understand what He is really like. Prior to Jesus' arrival, our understanding of God's love was limited. So God literally invaded earth. It is historically known to be the greatest occurrence on earth! The purpose of His coming is threefold:

IT'S A TIME FOR CELEBRATION

God gave us the most expensive gift we will ever receive. Jesus paid for it with His life. It's the only gift we will ever receive that will last forever, and finally, it is an extremely practical gift—one that you will use for the rest of your life. It's no coincidence that you are reading this article. God planned your birth, He knew you would stumble upon this article.

Think about this: if God had wanted to communicate to birds, He would have become a bird. If God had wanted to communicate to cows, He would have become a cow. But God wanted

to communicate to us, so He became one of us. He came because love is the essence of his character. The reason that everything in the universe exists is because God wanted to love it. In fact, it may be that all your whole life up to this moment has been preparing you to receive God's love. Interested?

A TIME FOR SALVATION

The Savior is "for you." He came for your benefit. Jesus is a personal Savior. Jesus saves us FROM something, Jesus saves us FOR something, and Jesus saves us BY something. Let me be blunt: sin is our greatest problem. We sin every day, with our words, thoughts, or deeds. Nobody bats a thousand, no one has a perfect record. God says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

When Jesus died on the cross He paid for everything you've ever done wrong or ever will do wrong. God's forgiveness is far more powerful than all your mistakes and sins put together, so you get a clean slate. Salvation is freedom from the guilt of the past, salvation is freedom from the bitterness of others, salvation is freedom from addictive habits, and freedom from the fear of death.

When Jesus was on the cross, He was paying for our sins. He didn't come to save Himself — he came to save you. What have you got to lose by saying yes to Jesus? God gives you the choice. You can continue to live a self-centered life, or you can ask for forgiveness of all your sins and put your trust in God's son, Jesus.

A TIME FOR RECONCILIATION

Without salvation, there is no reconciliation. There is no peace with God, no peace with others, and no peace in your own heart. It doesn't matter whether you are Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, or Mormon, or have no religious background at all. God didn't send Jesus to bring us religion! He came to make a relationship with God possible.

In Jesus, your past is forgiven, you get a purpose for living, and you get a home in heaven. It's impossible to celebrate Christmas if you're not going to receive the best gift of all.

The Rev. Larry Neal Sr. is pastor of the Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church, located at 530 Lystra Rd. north of Pittsboro.

Great literature, people one of keys to good life



BOB WACHS
Movin' Around

There are numerous benefits to grandparent-hood. You get to love on babies — while they remain babies. You get to see how the next generation is looking and, if your own youngsters were a handful at times, you get to say to the grandchildren's parents things like "I'm glad you've got one just like you were."

You're glad to see them come and sometimes glad to see them go. For a period of time you can do no wrong and your grandchildren think you hung the moon. When they're nice and clean you get to enjoy the nice clean baby smells and when one of the babies smells bad you can hand them off to their parents and say, "Here. You do it." Unless they're not there and you're the babysitter.

And babies teach you lessons and serve as reminders. In as why, for instance, God intended for moms and dads to have their children when they (the parents) are young.

But lately I've discovered or remembered something else grand about grandchildren, namely that you get to read all sorts of really outstanding literature to the little folks and in the process, your memory gets jogged. From time to time, the five young princesses who make up the biggest chunk of my grands have taken a shine to a growing collection of books with which they and I have spent many a fine moment together. Among them are such classics as "Barnyard Dance!," "If You Give a Pig a Party," "Rustie Gets Dirty," and maybe our mostest favorite — "Llama Llama Red Pajama."

That particular offering is about a young llama whose mama reads him a bedtime story, tucks him in his upstairs bed and then goes downstairs to wash dishes and such. Somewhere along the line Baby Llama wants a drink of water and then gets all bent out of shape when his mama doesn't come right away. Before it's all over he's gone from whimpering to yowling that he "wants his mama."

I know how he feels.

I want mine, too.

Maybe it's because Christmas is around the corner and I remember what Mama did in anticipation and celebration of that Event. Maybe it's because I'm old enough now to allow Uncle Sam to give me back some of the money he "borrowed" from me, interest-free I might add, through my 50 years and still going on of employment. Sometimes the realization I am a bona fide Senior Citizen just doesn't feel right in my little head and I think that's what my mama should be.

Maybe it's lots of things. Maybe I just miss her and wish she — and the other parents in my life — could see and meet the new generation. I think they'd like them.

Whatever it is, this Christmas marks another in a growing number of Christmases when I'll visit with my Mama only in my thoughts and remember the decorations and the shoe boxes of candy and nuts and fruits she put under the tree and the food and the music on the stereo while she did all the preparation.

If you've still got yours — your mama, that is — tell her you love her... And let her see the grandchildren.



Consider the Christmas tree



ANDREW TAYLOR-TROUTMAN
Hope Matters

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree ... just why are your branches so lovely?

This year, my cut tree is modest in comparison to previous years. More importantly, it is fresh. Rubbing a branch between my thumb and pointer finger, I can carry the scent of pine out the door.

But the loveliest thing is to sit before the lit tree in a darkened room. Most evenings, I'm on the couch next to my wife and quietly hold her hand, even as our three young children shriek like banshees around the room. Early mornings, I rub the dog's head while the rest of the house sleeps. After they awake and race downstairs, I'll corral one of the banshees and hold him or her tight for as long as I'm permitted.

The couch is in the same place in my living room year-round. I often work on my laptop to answer emails, research sermons and write newspaper columns. But over the past several weeks, I've found that I'm more apt to just be with my loved ones. Upon consideration, the difference is the Christmas tree.

Perhaps you know that an ancient rabbi invited his listeners to "Consider the lilies." This is the same rabbi from a little desert village whose birth



is now celebrated by billions around the world. But how many of us actually take him at his word about the lilies? If we stop to look at all during this busy time of the year, is it only to consider making a purchase?

Don't get me wrong: I am as liable as you in our consumer culture to think of things in terms of their economic value. I even write about intangible things as transactions — how I invest my energy, spend my time and afford my creative efforts.

I invite you, then, to reconsider your Christmas tree. Mine is strung with white lights and hung with ornaments of various shapes and sizes — some that are brand new, others older than me and a couple that have been partially chewed by the dog. (I try not to focus on those.) Your tree has its own unique, per-

sonal touches ...

Yet, can we agree that the ultimate loveliness of any tree is not of our own making? Each tree has grown in the rich soil and was nourished by sun and rain. The same is true of trees that was said long ago about the lilies: "Not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these." Luke 12:27.

Consider how something that beautiful causes you to reach out to others. I reach for my wife's hand and for our delighted banshees — I mean kiddos. I can't keep the joy all to myself.

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

This is the same rabbi from a little desert village whose birth is now celebrated by billions around the world. But how many of us actually take him at his word about the lilies? If we stop to look at all during this busy time of the year, is it only to consider making a purchase?

VIEWPOINTS

Carolina leader sides with Christmas



JOHN HOOD
John Locke
Foundation

Josephus Daniels, one of the most prominent North Carolinians of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, played a key role in a story that often circulates around Christmas-time. He's not exactly its hero, but in the end, Daniels makes the right call — and thus helps to save the celebration of Christmas during wartime. After the election of Democrat Woodrow Wilson as president in 1912, Daniels left his post as publisher of the Raleigh News & Observer to become Secretary of the Navy. When America entered World War I in 1917, Daniels assumed responsibilities beyond naval administration. One of them was service on the Council of National Defense, a federal panel which, among other things, supervised private

industry's contribution to the war effort. The term "contribution" is a bit of a euphemism. While business leaders were highly patriotic and did many things of their own volition to help America win the war, the Council also compelled industry compliance with government directives on what could be produced and sold. Arms, ammunition, and other war materiel were to be the priority. As American troops began arriving in Europe in 1918 and entering combat for the first time, the Council listened to a parade of business executives and trade associations complain about wartime restrictions. Sometimes the Council modified or suspended its regulations. But not often. During the summer, Council staff drafted a rule to limit the production of gifts for the 1918 Christmas season. Not surprisingly, manufacturers and retailers were outraged. In August, a group of business

leaders organized by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other associations went before Josephus Daniels and the other members of the Council to dissuade them from imposing such a heavy burden. One of the presenters, A.C. Gilbert, stole the show. This shouldn't have been at all surprising. Gilbert, an Olympic gold medalist and entrepreneur who had invented the Erector Set a few years earlier, had revolutionized his industry in part by skillful marketing of construction toys directly to children. The first president of the new Toy Manufacturers Association, Gilbert was convinced that toys were more than just trivial playthings. Playing with toys stimulated the imagination, built social relationships, and trained young people in practical skills, he thought. Gilbert had converted some of his factory capacity to wartime production. He was glad to do so. But he resented the notion that government

bureaucrats in Washington could tell him what to do with the private business he founded and managed. He resolved to fight the proposed ban on Christmas gift-giving. And he brought some secret weapons. During his presentation to the Council, Gilbert argued that his toys were both fun and educational. He suggested that American soldiers were good shots in part because they had played with air rifles as kids. Deprive children of Christmas toys, he said, "and the country will lose a generation of doctors, engineers, and scientists." An overstatement? Perhaps. But then Gilbert brought out his secret weapons: Erector models. One of them, a toy submarine, seems to have enchanted a certain Secretary of the Navy. Daniels "turned it over, noting the torpedo holes, raising the periscope, imagining a German U-boat in his sights," wrote Gilbert's biographer, Bruce Watson. Sitting on the carpet, Daniels looked up at Gilbert sheepishly

and admitted that "there's no use trying to deny the toys get every one of us." The gambit worked. The Council of National Defense decided not to impose a significant burden on Christmas gifts. Gilbert and his colleagues had prevailed. A few weeks later, the Boston Post ran a story about the event that labeled A.C. Gilbert "the man who saved Christmas for the children." Characteristically, Gilbert turned the story into a pitch. "I didn't do it," he insisted, urging the Post to tell America's children "it was their own toys that won the day!" Josephus Daniels made many decisions during his public life — some praiseworthy, some profoundly misguided. Leaving Christmas alone was among his better ones.

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

Remembering the pro and anti-Santa church factions



D.G. MARTIN
One on One

It is hard to make sense of Christmas if you try to explain it in one dimension. As I wrote in this column several years ago, the holiday means different things to different people. It is a religious holy day, of course — but so much more. Or so much less, depending on how you look at it. A time of magic and dreams come true for children. An orgy of shopping and spending. Festive parties, crowds of people from office or work — seeing each other in different ways. Or jammed into other

people's houses seeing if you can find a few of your friends among their friends. Standing. Eating. Drinking. Talking. Trying to relax as you walk past people who don't even look up from their conversations. Rushing to the airport, packing everything in the car to get from one set of in-laws to the next. Going out for last-minute gifts and getting stuck in traffic. Putting off the flu. Closing in from the darkness of the short days. Amongst all this we sometimes try to make sense of how it all fits together. I remember the first time I thought about the competing and conflicting messages that come down on us at Christmas. Growing up in my hometown, things revolved around school and church. With schools on holiday, the church took

charge. Young people practiced for the Christmas service. Our choir conductor persuaded us that we could really sing — and that our carols were serious and important. We sang on the Sunday evening before Christmas, and worshipers brought wrapped canned goods as gifts to be distributed to needy families. Just before Christmas, the young people who sang in the choir walked around the town singing their Christmas carols at the doors of their favorite people. There was another custom that one year made our church face up to the conflicts in the various Christmas themes. On the afternoon of Christmas Eve the church always gave a party. Almost everybody came for the simple refreshments and fellowship. At some point during the party — as if by surprise even though everybody knew what would happen — Santa Claus would appear for a visit and to give the little boys and girls presents. The toddlers were awed. The very young children, though doubting, thought that maybe Santa was real, after all. The older children snickered as they, along with the adults, tried to guess who was playing Santa Claus this year. As far as I knew, nobody had ever worried about whether it was proper for the church to endorse Santa by bringing him into the church. Then, one year, the group that planned the party decided not to invite Santa. When word got out, there was an angry reaction — and a series of arguments in the church between "an-

ti-Santas" and "pro-Santas." The "anti-Santas" thought that the church's Christmas activities should be Christ-centered, not Santa Claus-centered. They thought that the appearance of Santa at the church's Christmas was inconsistent with the celebration of Christ's birth. If Santa Claus were the center of attention and interest, they asked, how were the children to get the real message of the Christmas season? On the other hand, the "pro-Santa" faction could see no real harm in Santa. We had always had him. It was our tradition. Why should we change things that had worked so well? Why take away the fun that Santa Claus brought to every party? In the end, the "anti-Santa" group won.

Santa lost his place at the party. But every victory has its price. I missed the party that year. But people told me it wasn't as much fun and not as many people came. The hard feelings didn't last long, and most people came around to the "anti-Santa" way of thinking — welcoming a few precious moments away from his dominance of the seasons. When Christmas comes around each year, some folks back home still remember the anti-Santa/pro-Santa battle. I remember it too. And this year I find myself wishing that some group like the "anti-Santas" would take charge of my Christmas, filter out the conflicting messages, give order on the overwhelming demands of the season, and impose a welcome peace.

Will 2023 be naughty or nice?



MIKE WALDEN
You Decide

The traditional holiday question to children, "Have you been naughty or nice?" is a perfect lead-in to the economic outlook in 2023. As 2022 ends and 2023 begins, we face two economic challenges: inflation and recession. The big questions are, will inflation return to normal in 2023, and will it take a recession to do so? Actually, we've already seen some progress on inflation. Year-over-year inflation was over 9% in the summer, but recently it's been under 8%. That doesn't seem like much, but at least the rise in prices has been slowing. But the decline in the price of gas at the pump has certainly brought smiles to our faces. After the national price per gallon jumped to over \$5 in June, we're now seeing gas prices in the low \$3 range. Interest rates are another matter. If you're borrowing money for a home, vehicle or another big-ticket item, you're now paying more than twice as much as a year ago. For example,

despite some slippage in November and December, 30-year fixed mortgage rates are still hovering near 6.5%. At the end of 2021, they were under 3%. The bottom line is that most people are still struggling economically as we end one year and move on to another. Even if a person received a pay boost in 2022, it was likely less than the increase in prices they paid. If your income rises less than prices, then your standard of living has dropped. 2022 has been a rough year. Will it get any better in 2023? Part of the reason for inflation has been problems with businesses getting enough supply of the products we want to purchase. The pandemic gave us a new term for this situation: supply chain problems. When we are trying to buy things, but there are not enough of those things to buy, then the prices of those things jump. The good news is that supply chain problems have eased. One measure shows the intensity of supply problems improving 75% since 2021. As a result, sellers have more inventories, and delivery times have returned to pre-pandemic levels. The improvement in the supply chain should help

moderate inflation. But will it be enough? The Federal Reserve doesn't think so. The Federal Reserve — commonly called "the Fed" — is the nation's central bank. It has the ability to create money, and it uses that power to nudge interest rates up and down. If the Fed wants to stimulate borrowing and spending, it lowers interest rates. It did this at the height of the pandemic, which, among other things, created massive home buying. But if the Fed wants to moderate borrowing and spending, it pushes interest rates higher. In the Fed's view, we are trying to spend more than the economy can provide. This puts upward pressure on prices, meaning the inflation rate jumps. Even though the supply chain is improving, the Fed still thinks consumer spending is running too hot. But part of today's problem is a result of the Fed. When the pandemic was raging, the Fed's key interest rate was zero. This was designed to boost spending. The Fed has now raised its key rate to nearly 4%, and most economists think the rate will go higher. The Fed will watch the pace of the economy to guide them on interest rate policy.

Of course, the Fed doesn't want to create a recession where sales fall and unemployment rises. Unfortunately, one of the best predictors of a recession — a measure called the "inverted yield curve" — is giving its strongest forecast of an upcoming recession in forty years. Thus, I — and many economists — are forecasting a recession for some period in 2023. The good news is that it will likely be relatively mild. The unemployment rate, currently under 4%, could rise to 5% or 6%. An unemployment rate in that range is historically low for a recession. Still, with a jobless rate of 5% or 6%, between 50,000 and 100,000 workers in North Carolina would be added to the unemployment rolls. Although North Carolina's economy has been growing faster than most states, North Carolina will feel a recession. Even North Carolina's rapidly expanding cities and metropolitan areas will know a recession has arrived. In fact, if history is any guide, metro regions could suffer more. For example, in the so-called "subprime" recession of 2007-2009, the economies in metropolitan North Carolina contracted by a larger percentage than the

economies in rural regions. If a recession does happen in 2023, look for businesses in sectors selling products or services that can be postponed to be hit harder. These are sectors like real estate, construction, manufacturing, retail and leisure/hospitality. Businesses selling necessities like food, health care, education and energy will be less negatively impacted. When will the economy get better? When will we have inflation under control and the economy growing again? I'm hoping we will see these conditions toward the end of 2023. By then, I think we could see the inflation rate half of what it is today, thereby allowing the Fed to ease up on the brake and slightly push down on the gas pedal for the economy. That is, I think the Fed could be reducing interest rates and stimulating the economy a year from now. A year from now, we could see the 2023 recession end and a new economic expansion beginning. So, I see challenges but then relief for us and the economy in 2023. I wish I could be more upbeat, but my intent is to be honest and clear. Is my forecast helpful? You decide.

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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.



LIGHTS

Continued from page A1

Scott says it's not. "Most of the bulbs are LEDs," he says, "and not incandescent, so they use less electricity. It costs around \$300 a month for them, and that's a small price to pay for the pleasure." And pleasure is what Scott and Michelle get out of their collective efforts. "It seemed to me when we started that fewer and fewer people were just riding around seeing lights," he said. "So we just started putting some up and each year just added more and more." It's a team effort, but Scott credits Michelle with carrying the bulk of the load. "We really enjoy doing this," Michelle says.

For a number of years, Michelle's mother Glenda Johnson, who lived with the couple, was a big part of the activities.

"She would visit with people who came, sharing memories and cookies," Michelle says. "Last year was our first year without Mama; it was hard. We had children come and we showed them around. I needed that."

No parking, though

The growing popularity of the displays has meant more and more traffic. And that has created a situation the Maces want people to be aware of: there's no parking for visitors hoping to get an up-close look at the lights.

"We don't have parking for people who want to stop," Michelle says. "And we can't have people park in the gravel driveway up to the barn because our

neighbors behind it have got to be able to get to their property."

In an effort to get a longer, closer look, some passersby have taken to simply stopping along the highway. As a result, there have been accidents. So far, there haven't been injuries, but the Maces worry there could be — that, or worse.

Pulling onto the shoulder of the highway can be OK, but to Michelle's dismay, some actually stop their cars *on* the highway.

"There was an accident the Monday after Thanksgiving," Michelle says. "And once we had several cars just stop in the road and the people in them get out and walk across the road and onto our property. I told them to get back in their cars or I would turn off the lights. Law enforcement tells us not to stop what we're doing, that we're not to blame. And we've put up 'No Trespassing' signs, and I hate to do that, but it's frustrating when there are wrecks."

In an effort to draw attention to the traffic the lights help create, illuminated digital signs are placed along the highway shoulder urging motorists to reduce their speed near the house, located at 8311 U.S. 64 West, not far east of Bowers Store Road and Pleasant Hill Church Road.

"We don't really encourage people

to get out and walk around because of the number of power cords and uneven terrain," Michelle says. "There are also some places where there's some high voltage and we don't want anyone to get tangled up in drop cords and fall or disconnect the lights."

The home's displays are lighted until New Year's Day. After that, Michelle and Scott start taking them down in sections and storing them until the next year.

"We'll take some down and then light what's left," Scott says. "The next day we'll take some more down and light what's left and keep going until they're all down."

We don't want to turn them all off at the same time."

While the lights are meant to bring joy to all ages, Michelle admits there are two groups in which she has special interest — children and older adults.

"The kids are often just awed by it all," she says, adding there are sometimes similar reactions from older adults. "I remember the time a man who was 90, if he was a day, pulled up — and the look of wonderment on his face was something to see."

Truck drivers also react, she says. "It's nothing to hear a truck going by at 3 in the morning blowing his horn coming down the road. And once, an over-the-road family — husband, wife and year-old child — from Texas stopped and stayed for half an hour. They said it really meant so much to them."

While many face-to-face encounters with onlookers result from the display, there are also hand-written thanks. Recently, Scott and Michelle received a card from a commuter who told them she passed by twice a day in the darkness — in the morning on her way to her work and in the late afternoon on her way home. The traveler wrote to the Maces that the lights "make my heart happy and bring a smile to my face. Thank you for bringing happiness, peace and joy to your part of this wonderful world. We need more people like you. The world would be much better off."

Michelle says, "I needed that after the wreck. I know I'm a softie at heart."

So while there's giving and receiving, blessings and being blessed because of the displays, Scott and Michelle believe there's also a deeper meaning.

"If you think about it," Scott says, "most religions involve light in their beliefs. Take the Chinese lantern festivals, for instance. For Christians, Christmas takes note of Jesus as the light of the world."

And in a nod to Christmas, Michelle's mother, Glenda, more than once noted that sometimes people who were depressed or sad would stop by and say the displays "made Christmas" for them.

"Holidays can be hard," Michelle quoted her mom as saying. "But they shouldn't be. We're celebrating the greatest miracle ever."



Scott and Michelle Mace's home is brightly illuminated during the Christmas holiday, with more than 50,000 lights strung on the couple's home and around their property off U.S. Hwy. 64 between Pittsboro and Siler City. News + Record photographer Matt Ramey captured these images during a recent nighttime visit.



JORDAN LAKE WATER SUPPLY PROJECT

Western Intake Partnership

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

Tuesday, January 10, 2023
4:30-7:30 p.m.
Chatham Community Library
197 NC-87, Pittsboro, NC 27312

You can drop in any time for your convenience.

WIP invites you to attend a Public Open House to learn more about the Jordan Lake Water Supply Project. At the meeting, attendees will have the opportunity to review information about the project, speak with members of the project team, and provide comments.

The Triangle region is growing. To support this growth, the WIP aims to access State-authorized water supply allocations in Jordan Lake for the City of Durham, Town of Pittsboro, Chatham County, and OWASA.

This project will provide access to the lake's water supply while protecting its other uses and natural resources — all to benefit our communities.

You can provide your comments on the project website, in-person at our Public Open House, or by mailing a letter to 555 Fayetteville Street, Ste 900, Raleigh, NC 27601.

For more info, please visit:
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To request translations, interpretation, or service accommodations at the open house, please contact us at 919-379-5774 or contact@westernintakepartnership.com.



OBITUARIES

MARY LOUISE SILER ALSTON



February 24, 1932 ~ November 20, 2022
Mrs. Mary Louise Siler Alston (Momma) was born on February 24, 1932, to the late Roy and Margaret Siler. She departed this earthly home on November 20, 2022.
Momma attended and graduated from Chatham County Schools. She later met and married Johnnie Alston (Daddy) who preceded her in death many years ago. In this union five children were born and one

child preceded her in death.

At an early age she joined the First Baptist Church and worked in various departments of the church (Junior church, Choir, Sunday School, Missionary and Usher Board.) She was employed in various positions but always loved working with children. She was a Teaching Assistant for many years with Chatham High School before leaving the educational system to work at Boling Chair Co. She later retired from Boling Chair to work with the town of Siler City as a gym supervisor during the summers. She also worked with Faith Family Ministries as a Child Care worker and finally at home to watch her grandchildren. She encountered many children that still remember her now as adults and often checked on her through the years. She was also an avid sports fan and loved to travel.

She was preceded in death by her parents Roy and Margaret Siler; her husband Johnnie Lee Alston; her daughter, Robin Marie Alston; brothers, Roy Siler Jr., Johnnie Clemmon Siler (Jake), Harold Siler, Robert Lewis Siler, Carl Linwood Siler, Nathaniel Siler; and sister, Jessie Ruth Kennedy.

She leaves to cherish her in memory: four children, Mary Alice Brooks (Michael), Lala Sharonelle Alston, Phyllis Ann Alston, and Johnny Alston Jr. (Rochelle); one sister, Margie Ann Person; one sister-in-law, Peggy Siler; ten grandchildren, Crystal Johnson, Michael Brooks Jr. (Tracy), Phillip Marsh (Abigail), Devin Alston, John James (Sirrell), Quinn Alston, Tyrell Brooks (Chelsey), Wesley Alston, Paris Alston, and Averie Lassiter; five great-grandchildren, Kenyetta (KiKi) Johnson, Sydney Alston, Austin Brooks, Levi Brooks and Johnnovyn James; and one great-great-grandchild, Emmerson Johnson.

Special thanks to Faye Carol, Linda, Mattie, Mildred, Wilma, Gail and Bertenna who called Momma everyday to converse with her about life, Young & the Restless, and Bold & the Beautiful. She also leaves to cherish her memory a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends who always showed their love for Momma.

Professional services of Love and Dignity were entrusted to Knotts and Son Funeral Home in Siler City.

The funeral service was held Saturday, November 26, 2022.

LULA FRANCES SEAGROVES BRASWELL



August 15, 1939 ~ December 16, 2022
Lula Frances Seagroves Braswell, 83, passed on Friday, December 16, 2022, at FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital in Pinehurst.

A graveside service was held 1 p.m. Tuesday, December 20, 2022, at the Farmville Cemetery in Chatham County.

Mrs. Braswell was born August 15, 1939, in Chatham County to the late William Wharton Seagroves and

Mary (Jefferies) Seagroves. She attended the Emmanuel Baptist Church in Carthage. She was a loving sister who loved gospel music, NASCAR, cooking, and the food channel.

She was preceded in death in 1994 by her husband of 29 years, Robert Earl Braswell; brothers, Joseph Seagroves, Edwin Seagroves, Frank Seagroves, Charles Seagroves, Horton Seagroves; and sisters, Irene Patterson and Margie Rubin. She is survived by her two sisters, Libby Wilmoth and husband Wayne of Sanford, and Marie Macko of Sanford; a brother, Larry Seagroves and wife Treva of Goldston; many nieces and nephews.

Online condolences may be made to www.millerbolesfuneralhome.com.

Services entrusted to Miller-Boles Funeral Home of Sanford.

DORIS ROSENELL JONES HILLIARD



November 28, 1943 ~ December 16, 2022
Doris Rosenell Jones Hilliard, 90, of Bear Creek, passed away Friday, December 16, 2022, surrounded by her family.

Mrs. Hilliard was born in Columbus County, South Carolina, on November 28, 1932, to William C. and Alma Cartrette Jones. In addition to her parents she is preceded in death by her husband, Walter Harrold Hilliard; son, William H. Hilliard;

daughter, Patricia Gaines Wagner; sister, Maybelle Maness; and granddaughter: Tonya Annette Sigmon.

Doris retired after 32 years working as a winder at Hadley Peoples. She was an active member of Hickory Grove Baptist Church, where she enjoyed going on church bus trips. She loved her family, flowers, traveling, good food and doing word puzzles.

She is survived by her daughter, Carolyn Hilliard Patterson; grandchildren, Jerry Thompson, Heather Culberson (Willie), Brad Gaines (April), Kenny Gaines, Lance Gaines (Tabitha), and Josh Hilliard (Cherie); great-grandchildren, Dustin Sigmon (Tiffany), Wyatt Culberson, Mason Gaines, Mason Diver, and Charlie Gaines, great-great-grandchildren, Sadie Mae Dom and Aries Sigmon.

The family received friends Tuesday, December 20, 2022, at Smith & Buckner Funeral Home from 6 to 8 p.m. and other times at the home of Carolyn. The funeral service was held on Wednesday, December 21, 2022, at 2 p.m. at Hickory Grove Baptist Church with burial following in the church cemetery. Rev. Buster Lucas officiated.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the American Heart Association at www.heart.org.

Smith & Buckner Funeral Home is assisting the Hilliard family.

LACI DAWN CULBERSON HART



May 14, 1991 ~ December 17, 2022
Laci Dawn (Culberson) Hart, 31, of Snow Camp, passed away Saturday, December 17, 2022.

Laci was born in Mecklenburg County on May 14, 1991, to Eddie Culberson and Misti Dawn Barbee. Laci was a graduate of Jordan-Matthews High School, class of 2009. She attended Nursing School at Wake Tech, and worked as an R.N. She attended South Fork Friends Church. She was a devoted mother to her daughter

Scarlett Dawn. She enjoyed going to the beach and going to the mountains in the winter time. "She was our princess." Laci was very close with her Mimi and Pawpaw and loved spending time with them. Laci was a hero as she chose to donate vital organs in order to save others' lives.

She is survived by her daughter: Scarlett Dawn Hart; mother, Misti Dawn Barbee of Huntersville; father, Eddie Culberson and wife Joan of Snow Camp; step sister, Alicia Murray and son Camden Glenn of Durham; step-brother, Stephen Murray of the U.S. Army, Germany; and many loving aunts, uncles, and cousins.

A memorial service will be held on Thursday, December 22, 2022, at 1 p.m. at South Fork Friends Church with Daniel Thames officiating. Inurnment will follow in the church cemetery. The family will receive friends from 12 to 1 p.m. prior to the service and other times at the home of Eddie and Joan Culberson.

Memorials may be made to the South Fork Friends Cemetery fund.

Smith & Buckner Funeral Home is assisting the Culberson family.

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

GUADALUPE HERNANDEZ HERNANDEZ

Guadalupe Hernandez Hernandez, 43, of Broadway, died on Tuesday, December 6, 2022.

She was born in Mexico, daughter of the late Mateo Hernandez Hernandez and Herminia Hernandez Montaro.

She was preceded in death by her parents, grandparents, Geronimo Hernandez Hernandez, Sirina Hernandez Finada, Nicolas Hernandez, and Guadalupe Montaro; sister, Catalina Hernandez and brother, Mateo Hernandez.

The family received friends from 5 to 7 p.m. on Friday at Smith Funeral Home in Broadway. The funeral service and burial will be held in Mexico.

Surviving is her daughter, Selena Guadalupe Manuel Hernandez and her father, Jose Manuel Candelario of the home; daughter, Anahi Hernan-

dez Hernandez of Mexico; sons, Jose Uziel Hernandez Hernandez and Brayn Hernandez Hernandez of Mexico; sister, Ines Hernandez Hernandez of Mexico; brothers, Omar Hernandez of Brooklyn, N.Y. and Hilario Hernandez of Mexico.

BENJAMIN HARRIS ALBRIGHT

November 3, 1993 ~ December 13, 2022

Benjamin Harris Albright, 29, of Bennett, passed away on Tuesday, December 13, 2022, at FirstHealth Moore Regional. The family received friends from 6 to 8 p.m. Saturday, December 17, 2022, at Joyce-Brady Chapel. The funeral was at 2 p.m. on Sunday, December 18, 2022, at High Falls Christian Church with Rev. Chris Wilson, Rev Colton Moore and Rev. Darrell Rabon presiding.

Ben was born the son of Gary and June Hoover Albright. He was a welder/fabricator with Caterpillar and attended High Falls Christian Church.

He is survived by his wife, Tiffany "Lauren" McNeill of Carthage; sons, Waylon Harris Albright and Wyatt Fletcher Albright, both of the home; parents, Gary and June Albright of Bennett; brother, Charles "Chae" Albright of Apex; sisters, Stephanie Brixey of Highfalls and Shalan Costa of El Paso, Texas.

SHARON KAY SUMPTER

October 14, 1952 ~ December 14, 2022

Sharon Kay Sumpter, 70, of Broadway, passed away on December 14, 2022, at UNC Rex in Wake County.

A celebration of life was held Tuesday, December 20, 2022, at 2:30 p.m. in the chapel of Bridges-Cameron Funeral Home with Rev. Robert C. Thomas presiding. Entombment will follow in Buffalo Cemetery.

She was born in Lochgelly, W.V., to the late James Edward Thomas Sr. and Nancy Lee Vest Thomas. She was employed as an Apartment/Storage Manager. Sharon graduated from Medical Assisting School in 1991.

Surviving relatives include her husband, Terry Lee Sumpter of 51 years from Broadway; a daughter, Terri Lynn Sumpter Thompson of Sanford; brothers, Charles Wayne Thomas, Robert Lee Thomas, and James Edward Thomas Jr.; sisters, Lois Ann Thomas and Connie Sue Thomas Hammontree; and three granddaughters. He was preceded in death by a brother, Keith Allen Thomas.

SAMMY JAMES WOMACK

June 21, 1954 ~ December 15, 2022

Sammy James Womack, 68, of Broadway, passed away on Thursday, December 15, 2022, at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center in Fayetteville.

Funeral services were held on Monday, December 19, 2022, at 2 p.m. at Holly Springs Baptist Church with Rev. Scott Yow and Rev. Jerry Parsons officiating.

He was the son of the late Wesley Hoyle Womack and Sarah Lynch Womack. He was preceded in death by his par-

See **OBITS**, page A9

KARL 'JAY' GREENHAW III



September 15, 1959 ~ December 16, 2022

Karl "Jay" Greenhaw III, 63, of Silk Hope, passed away on Friday, December 16, 2022.

Mr. Greenhaw was born on September 15, 1959, in Whidbey Island, Washington to Patricia Perme and Karl Jennings Greenhaw II. In addition to his parents, he is preceded in death by his beloved brother, Kurt Greenhaw.

Jay loved to be outside in nature. Some of his favorite times were when he was hunting, deep sea fishing, or scuba diving. He also loved to barbeque and garden while listening to classic rock. He was an alumni of the University of Florida and a big Gators fan. Jay was a structural engineer and worked for many years with various construction companies, most recently Sanford Contractors. He was a passionate project manager and led many unique projects across the U.S.

Mr. Greenhaw is survived by his wife of 30 years, Bethany "Babs" Greenhaw; daughter, Chelsea "Chess" Greenhaw Sloggy and husband Andrew of Houston, Texas; sister, Kimberly Smoak and husband Gilbert of Flagler Beach, Florida; Kristal Hance and husband Daryl of Jacksonville, Florida.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to UNC Hospice.

Smith and Buckner Funeral Home is assisting the Greenhaw family.



www.donaldsonfunerals.com



Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah And a Blessed New Year in 2023

396 West St., Pittsboro, NC 27312, 919-542-3057

OBITS

Continued from page A8

ents, and brothers, Joey (Babe) Womack and Randy Womack.

He is survived by his wife of 39 years, Glenda McNeill Womack, of the home. In lieu of flowers the family request memorial gifts be made to Holly Springs Baptist Church, 385 Holly Springs Church Road, Broadway, N.C. 27505. Online condolences can be made at www.smithfuneral-homebroadway.com.

ALBERTO CASIMIRO BARRAGAN

August 10, 1998 ~ December 4, 2022
Alberto Casimiro Barragan,

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

The funeral mass was held at 1 p.m. Saturday, December 17, 2022, at St. Stephens Catholic Church.

PAMELA ANN (HUBBARD) JONES

January 5, 1963 ~ December 7, 2022
Pamela Ann Jones, 59, of Sanford, passed away on Wednesday, December 7, 2022, at Sanford Health and Rehab. The funeral service was held at 11 a.m. Saturday, December 17, 2022, at Knotts Funeral Home with burial following at Macedonia AME Zion Church.

RICARDO ESQUIVEL ESPARZA

December 14, 1978 ~ December 8, 2022

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

The funeral mass was held Sunday, December 18, 2022, at 4 p.m. at Saint Julia Catholic Church.

BRENDA FAYE (SUTTON) PEMBERTON

April 18, 1955 ~ December 11, 2022
Brenda Faye (Sutton) Pemberton
Funeral service was held at 2 p.m. Friday, December 16, 2022, at Knotts Funeral Home in Sanford.

JAMES NILS BOCKMAN

James Nils Bockman, 36, of Cameron, passed away on Thursday, December 15, 2022.

ALLENE ELIZABETH (MURCHISON) WILLIAMS

November 19, 1933 ~ December 17, 2022
Allene Elizabeth Williams, 89, of Sanford, passed away on Saturday, December 17, 2022, at her residence.

MIGUEL GALLARDO ALVAREZ

August 26, 1990 ~ December 16, 2022
Miguel Gallardo Alvarez, 32, of Sanford, passed away on Friday, December 16, 2022, at his home.

BRENDA CAROL GUNTER GILMORE

Brenda Carol Gunter Gilmore, 76 of Sanford passed away on Friday, December 16, 2022, at her residence.

ROBERT ANDREW BARNES JR.

Robert Andrew Barnes Jr., infant son of Katrina and Robert Barnes Sr., passed away on Saturday, December 17, 202 at UNC Hospitals in Chapel Hill.

CARL BRYANT

April 2, 1937 ~ December 16, 2022
Carl Bryant, 85, of Moncure, passed away on Friday, December 16, 2022, at his residence.

EVERETTE ELMER WORTHY

Everette Elmer Worthy, 79 of Sanford passed away on Friday, December 16, 2022, at FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital in Pinehurst.

CARL SCOTT: SILENT HERO

Chatham Central history class honors veteran through history project



Staff photo by Nikki Witt

Olivia Jones and Travis Crissman, who are the great-grandchildren of Carl Scott, speak during the Dec. 12 presentation to the Chatham County Board of Education.

BY BEN RAPPAPORT
News + Record Staff

BEAR CREEK — At just 19 years of age, Carl Scott, a military truck driver and mechanic, was deployed from Fort Bragg to the shores of Malta during World War II. Soon, he boarded a ship and expected to return home. But when he awoke the next morning in London, he discovered the ship was not headed back to North Carolina.

Instead, Scott was told he would be part of what became a historic Allied invasion against the Axis powers — storming the shores of Normandy, France, on June 6, 1944, now remembered as D-Day.

Scott, a Bear Creek native, survived the deadly offensive. He went through what would later be known as a “death trap” — Easy Red, Omaha Beach. The beach was the most heavily defended by the German army and was surrounded by cliffs on all sides. Those who did make it to the Omaha shores describe being pinned down by gunfire. All told, the 34,250 Americans stormed Easy Red that day, leading to 2,400 casualties, the largest number of any single beach on D-Day.

While many lives were lost and traumas remain, the result of D-Day was

France’s liberation and a step toward the end of WWII.

Scott was honorably discharged July 28, 1945. He died in 2006, but his memory and legacy live on — with the help of his family, a history teacher and a local high school class.

Bringing global history home

Scott’s heroic story was re-discovered by an American history class at Chatham Central High School led by Amy King. In 2020, King was named a Grosvenor Teacher Fellow by National Geographic. She was one of just 50 fellows selected from more than 2,500 of applicants across the U.S. and Canada. The fellowship took King, along with four other fellows, on a sailing expedition across six European countries to visit historical sites and engage in professional development training.

She called the trip, through Lindblad Expeditions, “a career-changing” opportunity.

On the voyage, which was delayed until this past summer due to COVID-19, she visited sites that defined WWII across France, Denmark and beyond, including Easy Red, Omaha Beach, along the French coast. As part of this expedition



Staff photo by Nikki Witt

Teacher Amy King’s American History II class at Chatham Central: from left, Hallie Webster (grade 11), Lesley de la Sancha Arroyo (grade 12), Matthew Smith (grade 12), Olivia Jones (grade 12), Travis Crissman (grade 12), Rachel Batten (grade 11), Ms. King and Kelsey Hussey (grade 11).

and professional development, King was tasked with creating a project for her students that would be presented to the public.

She knew the perfect place to start.

“I happen to know that I was going to have two students this semester in my class: Travis Crissman and Hallie Webster,” King said. “They are two great-grandchildren of Carl Scott, who lived in our community in Bear Creek and landed at D-Day.”

Crissman and Webster’s involvement in the 32-student class sparked what would become a semester-long research project about telling the story of WWII, its impact on N.C. and Scott’s life story.

After countless hours of research, synthesizing the information and 11-plus hours of practicing, King’s class presented the information to the Chatham County Board of Education and the community at the Dec. 12 board meeting.

“It’s obviously something we’re proud about,” said Matthew Smith, one of the students taking part in the 15-minute presentation. “Normally a school project you just do it to get it done, but this one had everyone buy-in because it was more important than the individual. It just meant a lot more.”

Seven total student presenters — Smith, Crissman, Webster, Rachel Batten, Lesley de la Sancha Arroyo, Kelsey Hussey and Olivia Jones — walked through a 32-slide presentation entitled “Impacts of D-Day and WWII: Global, Regional, Local,” detailing research they’d completed.

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.”

From past to present

Prior to giving the final presentation, King said she made a conscious effort to make the story of Scott feel personal to every student in her class.

Earlier in the semester, two of Scott’s children came in and shared videos, brought in war medals and showed video recollections from Scott to make his heroic experiences come to life.

“It was just so moving for the students,” King said. “To hear him in his own words, when we watched his videos, and especially for his great-grandkids, they were really moved.”

It was more than just Scott’s story of WWII that came to life. King also gave the students choice in how they wanted to approach the presentation. While only seven students presented, it took all 32 to engage in the research.

“I know personally when I look at history and see the numbers it doesn’t really mean anything,” Hussey said. “But when you put a face to that number and realize each one of those was a person, it really makes it more real.”

Students were each asked to rank their choices of research interests. Focal points included the impact of the tides on ship movements for more science-minded students, battle strategies of each major world power, cemetery research on N.C. WWII veterans and more. “Choice allows stu-

dents to follow their passions,” King said. “And encourages greater participation because they have buy-in.”

The project also sparked curiosity among several of her students, which extended beyond the scope of the classroom. For example, Batten said she examined her personal family history after working on the project and found she was also connected to WWII veterans.

“I’ve been trying to find stuff like this on my granddaddy,” Batten said. “But it’s just tough to do, and it makes me wish I was old enough to ask him some of these big questions before he passed.”

Batten said it serves as an important reminder of the value of documenting family history.

Digging into the family tree

For Scott’s participating grandchildren, the project was especially impactful. Webster said her grandfather died when she was an infant so she never really knew his stories or details about his war service. The project in King’s class was the first time she learned about this part of his life, and the first time she’s truly dug into her own family tree.

“I knew that he had been at D-Day, but never all the details before this,” Webster said. “I had never heard the stories.”

King said there were several times throughout the research that she and the class had to lean on the familial connections of Webster and Crissman to move the research forward. Crissman even called his grandmother and put her on speakerphone so the class could listen in to her responses

to questions.

Jones, one of the student presenters who lives in Bear Creek and attends the same church as Webster, said she grew up hearing tidbits of information about Scott, but never knew his full story. Jones said she discovered through the class that Scott was a “silent hero.”

Jones wasn’t alone. King said she knew Scott personally from going to church with him before he died, which became a big reason for choosing to focus the project on his legacy. But even with that personal knowledge, she said she never realized all the experiences he had throughout the war. His family members describe Scott as fairly tight-lipped about his war stories except for brief moments when he came home from reunions with his war buddies. When he would return home from those reunions, his children and grandkids could get him to open up about his experiences, which his family documented. Those videoed recollections were shown to King’s class.

“It wasn’t just D-Day,” King said. “He went to France, then all of Northern Africa, then through the Strait of Gibraltar and on and on and all this stuff. You never see people who survive through all that.”

In many ways, Scott was fortunate throughout his deployment to go through so many war zones and return home relatively unscathed. He survived one of the bloodiest days in American history and was able to return to Bear Creek and start a family. Now, those stories finally get to be shared with the community.

“It’s kind of a miracle that I exist if you think about it,” Webster said.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Saturday, December 24, 2022

at the

First Baptist Church of Siler City
314 N. Second Avenue
Siler City, North Carolina

5:00 pm

Join us for Carol Singing, Communion,
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POWELL SPRINGS APTS. Evergreen Construction introduces its newest independent living community for adults 55 years or older, 1 and 2 bedroom applications now being accepted. 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

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FIREWOOD FOR SALE - Dry, 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, D15,22,29,J5,4tc

AUTOS FOR SALE

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

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

AUCTIONS

RICKY ELLINGTON AUCTIONEERS - Equipment, business, liquidation, estates, land, houses, antiques, personal property, coins, furniture, consignments, benefits, etc., NCAL #7706, 919-548-3684, 919-663-3556, rickyellingtonauctions@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

HELP WANTED - Charter Furniture is now accepting applications for: Upholsters and Sewers - Experience needed. Please apply in person at: Charter Furniture, 50 Industrial Park Rd, Siler City, NC 27344. D22,1tc

TOWN OF SILER CITY, BUILDING MAINTENANCE MECHANIC - Performs difficult technical and mechanical work; oversees general maintenance of designated Town facilities. Required Education and Experience Qualifications: High school diploma or high school equivalency. Coursework in mechanical, electrical, HVAC, or plumbing trades. Considerable experience in mechanical, electrical, or plumbing

trades. Possession of a valid NC driver's license. - Preferred Education and Experience Qualifications, Bilingual in both written and spoken English and Spanish. - Hiring Salary, \$35,262/year, depending on qualifications. -- Please refer to our website for a full job description. To Apply: This posting is open until filled. A completed Town of Siler City application and resume is 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, Attention: 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. The Town of Siler City will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that disabled persons are provided necessary accommodations. D22,1tc

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

LEGALS

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
SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION
CHATHAM COUNTY**

**BEFORE THE CLERK
FILE NO: 22-E-642**

IN RE: ESTATE OF ROSANNA MOOREHEAD DAVID
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
THE UNDERSIGNED having qualified as Executor of the Estate 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 Dec'dgedent 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-14-1. This the 1st day of December, 2022.

ESTATE OF ROSANNA MOOREHEAD DAVID
Rhianna B. Wells
240 The Preserve Trail
Chapel Hill, NC 27517

Taylor Avioli
Narmon 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 E 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 the estate of the decedent to 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

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

HAVING QUALIFIED as Administrator 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
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

**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 ROBERTSON**, 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**

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 CREDITORS
NORTH CAROLINA
CHATHAM 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, Executor
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 persons 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
Post Office Box 51549#Durham,
North Carolina 27717

D15,D22,D29,J5,4tc

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A
PUBLIC AUCTION**

**TO SELL CERTAIN PROPERTY
OF
CENTRAL CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Chatham Cottage AY 2021-2022
The Central Carolina Community College Board of Trustees moves the adoption of the following resolutions: WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of Central Carolina Community College owns personal property known as "Chatham Cottage" which is a small, energy efficient home built by Building Construction and Sustainability Technologies students at the Central Carolina Community College campus in Pittsboro, North Carolina; and WHEREAS, located on the Pittsboro campus of Central Carolina Community College and known as the "Chatham Cottage AY 2021-2022", a 672 gross sq. ft, high performance, house with 560 sq. ft. enclosed space and a 128 sq. ft. front porch. The wood frame construction uses 2x4 for the exterior walls with ZIP R Sys-

tem insulated sheathing: 2x10s for the floor joist system and for the stick built, enclosed roof assembly, also clad in insulated Zip R Sheathing. All framing is on 24" layout to decrease thermal bridging with exception to the gable ends where layout is on 16" centers for structure. The siding is a Nichiha fiber cement product applied using a rain screen construction technique. The roofed porch deck is clad with a premium 1" x 6" treated deck board with locally sourced and hewn Japanese Cedar support posts.

The roof is clad with an Energy Star metal roofing panel. Energy efficient casement windows by Marvin provide ventilation and plenty of natural light. At the insulation inspection stage, before installing sheet-rock, the Cottage tested at 2.9 ACH (NC Building Code calls for a Target of 5 ACH).

The Cottage includes rough-in plumbing and electric and all interior framing, air-sealing and rough-in work. The interior, however, is in an unfinished state and the purchaser of the Cottage will be responsible for the completion of all remaining work. This may include the installation of some drywall, painting, flooring, interior doors, cabinetry, fixtures, electrical trim out, plumbing trim out, and interior carpentry trim work and tile. The exact extent of this work is determined per progress made during the concluding semester of the Cottage build and the influencing variables of weather, etc.

The house will require the addition of a heating and cooling system, appliances, electric water heater, footing, and foundation upon placement at permanent site. The house is now on temporary pillars and must be removed from the premises after sale is complete.

Upon sale, the Cottage construction permit will be closed out with the Chatham County Inspections Department and the records and associated construction documents transferred to the new owner who will need to pull new permits in their municipality. To date, the Chatham Cottage AY 2021-2022 has passed Rough-in inspection and Insulation inspection. To date, the transition of the permitting process

CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

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Tuesday — Noon

Display ad deadline
Monday — 5 p.m.

Rates and payment
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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.

to new owners has been a relatively smooth transaction. WHEREAS, a public auction for the Cottage was opened at 8:00 am on October 1, 2022 and concluded at 12:00 pm on October 8, 2022, the high bidder was awarded the right to purchase the Cottage at the high bidder's offered price, and the high bidder defaulted on payment in full for the Cottage, thereby breaching the agreement for the sale of the Cottage. WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of Central Carolina Community College hereby cancels the sale of the Cottage to the high bidder at the conclusion of the aforementioned public auction due to being in breach of the agreement, summarily rejects all other bids, and moves to rebid the Cottage. WHEREAS, pursuant to the legal authority contained in North Carolina General Statutes 115D-15 and 160A, Article 12, the Board of Trustees of Central Carolina Community College proposes to sell said cottage at public auction. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Trustees of



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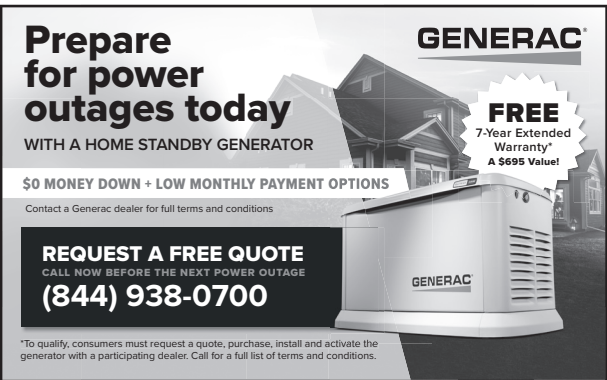
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Central Carolina Community College:

1. That President Chapman or her designee is hereby authorized to proceed on behalf of and in the name of the Trustees with such action as is necessary and legally appropriate to sell and dispose of the above described "Chatham Cottage".

2. That the sale shall be by public auction conducted by online auction scheduled to open at 8:00 am on January 28, 2023, and to close at 12:00 pm on February 4, 2023. The Cottage is located on the Pittsboro Campus, 764 West Street, Pittsboro, North Carolina, and is available for walk-throughs by appointment from January 30 through February 3, 2023. Interested persons may contact Jeff Gannon at (919) 545-8032 or (919) 842-2304. Auction details may be viewed at <https://www.charityauctionstoday.com/auctions/chatham-cottage>, with bids to be made at the same address.

3. That the successful bidder will be required to make a 10% deposit by either cash or certified check to be delivered by 5:00 pm on February 6, 2023 with the balance due within ten (10) days after confirmation of the sale by President Chapman or her designee. Legal transfer of the "Chatham Cottage" shall not take place until the sale is confirmed and the successful purchaser has complied with the terms of the sale. Any and all bids may be rejected if determined to be inadequate.

4. That the building must be removed from the college premises within thirty (30) days from the date the successful bid is approved and accepted. After thirty (30) days the risk of loss shall be on the successful bidder.

5. That the property shall be sold "AS IS" with no warranties as to quality, condition, or value and can be inspected at its location by appointment on from 9:00 a.m. through 11:00 a.m. on the day of the sale.

6. That college personnel shall publish this resolution or a summary of this resolution no later than ten (10) business days prior to the **auction opening date of January 28, 2023**. In the event that the auction web address is changed for whatever reason, college personnel may update this resolution or a summary of this resolution to reflect the appropriate address prior to publishing. Adopted the 16th day of December 2022 via email vote by the Board of Trustees of Central Carolina Community College.

/s/ Julian Philpott, Chairman
Board of Trustees
D22,1tc

CREDITOR'S NOTICE

NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
Having qualified on the 31st day of October, 2022, as Administrator of the Estate of **MADELEINE HAMMILL**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the decedent to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 22nd day of March, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to the estate should make immediate payment. This the 22nd day of December 2022.

W. Woods Doster, Administrator of the Estate of Madeleine Hammill
206 Hawkins Avenue Sanford, N.C. 27330
Attorneys: Law Offices of W. Woods Doster, P.A.
206 Hawkins Avenue Sanford, N.C. 27330
D22,D29,J5,J12,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of **IRENE GRANTHAM SMITH aka IRENE LAURA GRANTHAM SMITH**, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of the decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned at the office of Ivey & Eggleston, Attorneys at Law, 111 Worth Street, Asheboro, North Carolina 27203, on or before March 24, 2023, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms or corporations indebted to said estate should make immediate payment to the undersigned. This 22nd day of December, 2022.

Kathy Ellen Smith, Administrator of the Estate of Irene Grantham Smith

aka Irene Laura Grantham Smith
BENJAMIN SCOTT WARREN, Attorney
IVEY & EGGLESTON, ATTORNEYS AT LAW
111 Worth Street Asheboro, NC 27203 (336) 625-3043
D22,D29,J5,J12,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 22 E 000679
All persons having claims against **CYNTHIA GALE THOMPSON**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 22nd 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 22nd day of December, 2022.

Steven Andre Page, Administrator
205 Springdale Drive
Pittsboro, NC 27312
D22,D29,J5,J12,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 22 E 662
The undersigned, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of **VIVIAN F. ROVER**, 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, 196 Johnny Burke Road, Pittsboro, North Carolina, 27312, on or before the 22nd 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 15th day of December, 2022.

Rodney T. Rover, Executor
196 Johnny Burke Road
Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312
GUNN & MESSICK, PLLC
P. O. Box 880
Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312-0880
D22,D29,J5,J12,4tc

IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION BEFORE THE CLERK File No. 19 SP 83 State of North Carolina County of Chatham BOOKER T. FRANKS,

Petitioner, vs.

SHEMIKA SKILLINGS,

Respondent.
NOTICE OF SALE
Under and by virtue of an Order of Sale of the Clerk of the Superior Court of Chatham County, North Carolina, made in this Special Proceeding, the undersigned Commissioner will on **January 6, 2023 at 2:00 o'clock P.M.** at the Chatham County Judicial Center, Pittsboro, North Carolina, offer for sale to the highest bidder for cash, the following described real estate located in Hadley Township, Chatham County, North Carolina: BEING all of Lot #90, containing 4.505 acres, more or less, as shown on a plat entitled

"Survey for Bobcat Point Subdivision – Phase IV; Lots 89, 90, 102 and 103," prepared by Van R. Finch – Land Surveys, PA, dated November 14, 2003, revised November 2, 2003 and revised December 1, 2003, and recorded in Plat Slide 2003-438, Chatham County Registry, reference to which is hereby made for a more particular description. The street address of the property is **120 Elsa Jane Lane, Pittsboro, North Carolina**. The highest bidder will be required to deposit \$750.00 or ten percent (10%) of the bid price, whichever is greater, with the undersigned Commissioner on the day of sale. The bid will remain open for ten (10) days for an upset bid as by law provided. Said property is being offered for sale in its "as is" condition. The undersigned Commissioner makes no representation or warranty as to the title or any physical, environmental, health or safety condition existing in, on, or relating to the property being offered for sale, and any and all responsibilities or liabilities arising out of or in any way relating to such conditions are expressly disclaimed. The purchaser shall pay the costs of \$0.30 per \$100.00 of the purchase price (up to maximum of \$200.00) required by NCGS §7A-306(a)(2). The purchaser shall also pay, in addition to the price bid, the tax imposed by NCGS §105-228.30 and any other transfer tax. This 22nd day of December, 2022.

/s/ Paul S. Messick, Jr., Commissioner
Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312
Telephone: (919) 542-3253
N.C. State Bar No. 2979
Post Office Box 880
Facsimile: (919) 542-0257
Email: pm@gunnmessick.com
D22,D29,2tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM NEWS
All persons, firms, and corporations having claims against **CYNTHIA JOAN LYMAN**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 22nd 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 22nd day of December 2023.

Ethan Lyman Haynes, Administrator
620 Silver Spring Circle
Colorado Springs, CO 80919
c/o John M. Perna, Attorney at Law
202 Davis Grove Circle, Suite 105
Cary, N.C. 27519
D22,D29,J5,J12,4tc

Bivins named interim principal for Chatham Middle School

CN+R Staff Reports

PITTSBORO — Dr. Emily Bivins has been named interim principal of Chatham Middle School. She will transition to her new role on Monday, Jan. 2.



Bivins

Bivins has been a teacher, a school administrator and a central office administrator. She is the former principal at Frank Porter Graham Bilingüe, an elementary dual language (English-Spanish) school in Chapel Hill. She has been a principal for 15 years in dual language schools, and previously been a central office administrator and primary teacher in several rural and suburban areas of North Carolina.

Bivins holds a bachelor's degree from Wake Forest University, a master's from Elon University and UNC-Chapel Hill and a doctorate from UNC-Chapel Hill. She has contributed to several books and is an active blogger about dual-language leadership. She also serves as an adjunct professor at East Carolina University in educational leadership.

Bivins was named Principal of the Year for Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools in 2018 and has been recognized for her work in bilingual education in a variety of publications and conferences.

During her time as principal at Frank Porter Graham Bilingüe, an

inappropriate touching incident between two kindergarten students occurred that led to a lawsuit filed in November, which accuses Chapel Hill-Carrboro school officials of dismissing allegations that a male kindergarten student bullied and assaulted a female classmate in 2019. According to the Raleigh News & Observer, the lawsuit claims a 5-year-old girl faced repeated harassment, sexual assault and bullying from the boy at FPG. The male student was not removed from class or disciplined, and neither school nor district officials followed their policies for handling assault reports, the lawsuit states.

The lawsuit alleges the school took a "dismissive response" to the incident and that Bivins did not respond to questions from the mother of the girl during the time of incidents. The mother in the lawsuit asked the school to acknowledge the assault and implement a safety plan before letting her daughter return to class, it states. A school counselor later gave a "safe touch" lesson to the class, but the male student was allowed to remain and also went on a field trip that the female student did not feel safe attending, the lawsuit states.

The mother removed her daughter from the district and enrolled her at a private school, the News & Observer reported.

Chatham County Schools says it is aware of the situation.

"Dr. Bivins shared information

last week with Chatham County Schools officials when she was made aware of a lawsuit being filed against the Chapel Hill Carrboro City Schools district, where she formerly worked," the district told the News + Record in a statement. "We want to make very clear that the lawsuit was not filed against Dr. Bivins. This is a civil matter, not a criminal lawsuit. Dr. Bivens has served as an interim principal and Dual Language curriculum consultant supporting many of our schools for the past two years. Inquiries about the lawsuit should be directed to CHCCS. We will continue to monitor the situation."

"I believe education is the equalizer in our society. Every student deserves to have the highest quality experience for learning," Bivins said. "I look forward to supporting Chatham Middle School during this transition and I am excited to be a part of the Chatham County Schools' community."

Chatham County Schools Superintendent Dr. Anthony Jackson said he was excited to have Dr. Bivins at the helm.

"The skills Dr. Bivens brings to her new role will enable Chatham Middle School to continue to grow and progress," he said. "Her expertise is valued and will benefit the students and staff at Chatham Middle."

Bivins succeeds Chad Morgan, who resigned his position earlier this year to pursue other opportunities.

Courtesy of Dolly Sickles

A Christmas tree forest

Dolly Sickles' collection of small Christmas trees has grown, increasing her 'forest' to nearly two dozen. 'The simple lines of the modern trees are as beautiful to me as the elaborate vintage glass ones, though my favorites are the ones my son renders for me on his 3D printer,' she says. 'My tiny forest makes me inordinately happy, and I like to set it up in different places so I can see it from different angles every year.'



CHURCH NEWS

NEW SALEM CHURCH

The Candlelight Christmas Eve service will be held at 6 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 24, at New Salem Church.

All are welcome to come and celebrate Christ's birth. The church is located at 5030 Old Graham Rd., Pittsboro.

SANDY BRANCH BAPTIST CHURCH

Sandy Branch invites you to join us in our celebrations of Jesus' birth. Our Christmas Eve service will begin at 4 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 24. The film "Why the Nativity" produced by Dr.

David Jeremiah's Turning Point Ministries will be shown.

On Christmas Day, Sunday School will begin at 9 a.m., followed by the worship service at 10. During the worship service we will reflect on the Christmas story through Scripture and Hymns.

Dec. 23 will be a very special day for Sandy Branch, as it will be our 150th anniversary. This special occasion will be celebrated during the worship service on Jan. 29.

We hope you can join us for these special events and anytime at 715 Sandy Branch Church Road, Bear Creek.

RIVES CHAPEL BAPTIST CHURCH

Sunday, Dec. 25, in the 11 a.m. service at Rives Chapel Baptist Church, the adult choir will present the Christmas Cantata, "The Greatest Story Every Told."

Come celebrate with us the Birth of Jesus.

The church is located at 4338 Rives Chapel Church Road, Siler City.

LOVES CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

We will be worshipping at 10 a.m. on Sunday, Dec. 25, at Loves Creek Baptist Church.

We will also be observing The Lord's Supper. Join us for this service on this special day.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

First United Methodist Church will hold a Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 5 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 24. On Sunday, Dec. 25, there will be a Christmas Day Community Communion Service from 9 to 10 a.m.

The public is invited to attend. F.U.M.C. is located at 1101 West Raleigh Street, Siler City.

VICTIM

Continued from page A1

lington, stepped into Hackey's life after her parents divorced. Hackney found herself at the home of Ellington and his wife, often on a weekly basis; the two helped to fill in the gaps when needed.

Ellington is a familiar face in Siler City; he worked previously for the Sheriff's Office and served as a youth minister at his church, Rocky River Baptist Church.

Hackney said while Ellington was out and about in the community doing what many perceive to be good things, behind closed doors, he was sexually abusing her — touching her inappropriately, beginning at age 11 — and, according to Hackney, blaming the various medications he took for his actions.

"In the town's eyes, he's never done anything wrong," Hackney said of Ellington. "As far as people that know him, he is the type of person that you wouldn't believe would ever do anything like this."

The abuse continued until Hackney saw Ellington engaged in similar grooming behaviors — special treatment, gift giving, etc. — with her niece. That led to Hackney reaching out to her older sister, Victoria Daggett, asking whether Ellington's medications would cause him to act inappropriately towards her.

"I truly think she [Hackney] was afraid of the reaction of all of us because she knew the types of relationships we had with him," Daggett said. "I am a person that believes when somebody has the bravery and the courage to speak out against something that sensitive in nature, I believe them."

In 2020, five years after the abuse began, Hackney told her sister what had been happening — and then her parents — before telling law enforcement authorities. As a result, Ellington was arrested Mar. 13, 2020, and charged with 23 counts of statutory sex offense with a child by an adult and 23 counts of indecent liberties with a minor.

Hackney said while her family and friends have been overwhelmingly supportive, she said Ellington's wife and church friends had taken to Facebook to try to discredit Hackney and the assault claims she made.

"He (Ellington) was making Facebook posts leading up to his day ... people were com-

menting, 'Don't leave, we'll miss you,'" Hackney said. "It was very hurtful to see people on Facebook that I knew growing up not believing me."

Hackney underwent medical examinations and gave her phone to law enforcement for evidence collection as part of the investigation. She said her phone contained hundreds of messages from Ellington on different platforms containing explicit content — sexually-charged messages, photos and more — which likely would've come to light if a trial happened.

Ellington, though, pleaded guilty on Nov. 17 to five counts of indecent liberties with a minor.

Neither Hackney nor Daggett, though, believe the sentence Ellington received served justice for what happened: he was sentenced to serve 140 days in the county jail, serving four weeks a year for the next five years. His sentence was the result of a plea deal, which allowed Ellington to receive a lesser punishment for his crimes in exchange for admitting guilt.

Hackney says she never wanted a plea deal in the first place. She wanted to take Ellington to trial; it would have begun on Dec. 5.

The fact that there was no trial frustrated Hackney's family. The assistant district attorney handling the case, Kayley Taber, emailed Hackney's family several times after Ellington's arrest, but Daggett claims her communication wasn't always consistent.

"There are emails that she (our mom) sent [to Taber] that went unanswered for weeks at a time," Daggett said. "She wouldn't tell us about court dates until days before, and my parents all work jobs that you can't just drop."

But that wasn't the main concern for Hackney and her family.

Hackney said after Taber told her she would follow Hackney's wishes, the district attorney's office went on to make a plea deal with the defendant's legal team.

Daggett said in an email sent to her mother, Taber said she wasn't prepared to move forward with the Dec. 5 trial after just completing a six-week-long murder trial. Taber is also leaving the DA's office at the end of the year — she's taking a position in the Cumberland



Ellington

County District Attorney's office following her unsuccessful bid earlier this year to be Chatham County's District Attorney.

"She [Taber] said, 'I appreciate her opinion on this, but we're [the DA's office] going to move forward with this plea deal regardless,'" Daggett said. "It was horrible."

After the plea deal was made, Daggett logged onto Facebook and made a post about how she and her family felt about the outcome of the case, writing: "I hope that now, people who blindly and openly supported Mr. Ellington and chose to try and silence and shame the victim, see him for what he is. A predator. A convicted felon. A sex offender."

Daggett also wrote that she felt the sentence fell short of what her family considered justice for what Hackney had to endure, and she believed the prosecutor in her sister's case didn't make a strong enough effort to get the outcome the family wanted.

Incoming District Attorney Jeff Nieman, who worked alongside Taber in the DA's office, told the News + Record that plea deals, though, are often made when there's the possibility of the defendant facing no punishment when evidence points to them.

"It is our goal as an office ... that we are able to find a meeting where of what we think is the best outcome for a case," Nieman said.

Nieman wasn't the main prosecutor on Ellington's case, but he said he and other attorneys in the DA's office thoroughly reviewed the evidence and the charges. He added, too, that victims in cases like this are able to participate in the process, and even voice their opinions.

"We are required to offer the victim an opportunity to be heard about what, if any, plea offer may be made, and ... the victim in this case has a right to have input on whether a plea offer is made and what kind of plea offer it is, if one is made," he said.

Ultimately, though, Nieman said it's up to the DA's office and prosecuting attorneys to make the decision to pursue a plea deal. He also said while a majority of cases will follow the victim's wishes, there are a considerable number of cases where a prosecutor's office pursue a plea deal instead of a trial, or vice versa.

"I know for a fact that this case, the disposition in this case, was reviewed by multiple

members of our office, and there was a consensus that this was the appropriate outcome given all the factors," Nieman said.

When it comes to the lesser sentence Ellington received, Nieman said there are a few factors that could've played into that. He said the guilty plea and Ellington's lack of a criminal record prior to the charges may have impacted the sentence.

"We have to balance ... those possible outcomes at trial," he said. "On one end there's not guilty and there's no punishment, and on the other end, there's a guilty to all counts with substantially more punishment. We have to assess what are the odds are of those outcomes when we're reaching plea agreements, and so I'm quite confident that that's what was being considered in this case."

Allen Baddour was the presiding judge on the case and the one who passed the 140 day sentence on Nov. 17. Hackney said on sentencing day, Baddour offered Ellington the chance to apologize to her. When he didn't take the judge up on his offer, Hackney said Baddour had some words for Ellington.

"He [Baddour] gave him [Ellington] three different opportunities to speak to apologize because that's about the only thing he can do," Hackney said. "He said [to Ellington], 'The one thing that you can do, you're choosing not to.'"

Nieman said he wants to make sure the victim in the case knows the plea deal was made to ensure the offender served time for his crimes instead of running the risk of Ellington not going to jail.

"I want the victim in this case to know that this has nothing to do with the police ... or anyone in this office not believing her," Nieman said. "This is not a decision based upon doubting her. This is a decision based upon all of those considerations and weighing the possibility of possible outcomes."

Today, two years after reporting Ellington to the authorities, Hackney is in trauma-specific therapy. She still attends weekly sessions with her therapist, Mary Miracle, and says the sessions have helped her learn to cope with the years of abuse she suffered at the hands of her uncle.

Hackney said she wants to help others with what she's learned from Miracle, and ultimately, she wants to use her

voice to help others in situations like hers.

"It is one of my goals to be an advocate for people of all ages who've through any kind of sexual trauma — to be available, to be a friend to talk to," Hackney said. "I think that I could help point people in the right direction, and help get them the help that they need. Plus, I have tips that I've gotten from therapy that I would love to share with somebody."

Daggett has taken to Facebook to encourage victims of abuse to report their offenders to authorities — and to be brave in the pursuit of justice.

"The strength it takes to do that is unimaginable, and no one deserves to be doubted or victim shamed," Daggett wrote. "The punishment [Ellington] faces pales in comparison to the trauma that the victim endured at his hands and the PTSD that they will continue to battle. But there is peace in knowing that, albeit minimal, there is justice and the truth prevailed."

What's next for Hackney?

Now 18 years old, she's working with her father, Chris Hackney, at his brewery, The Thirsty Skull in Siler City, after her graduation from Burlington Christian Academy. Hackney has dreams of one day owning her own brewery, but she also wants to eventually be involved in activism surrounding child sexual abuse victims — even potentially starting her own nonprofit.

"I want to be a resource for children who can't afford it," Hackney said. "Because we realize how therapy is so expensive, and if my family weren't as fortunate as we are, I wouldn't be able to have that as an option."

Hackney has a message for her abuser, as well. She said she won't let Ellington's actions define who she is. Rather, she's determined to prove to him, and those who emboldened him, that she's a survivor.

"What he did was not does not define me as person, and it will never define me as a person," she said. "I think that deep down, he knows what he did, and so the fact that he's not sorry for what he did, I'm not sorry for publicly humiliating him. The dark always comes to light."

Ellington didn't respond directly to requests for comment. His attorney, Kellie Mannette, of Thomas Ferguson and Beskind Law Firm, responded "no comment" when contacted for this story.

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SPORTS NEWS & ENTERTAINMENT

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BOYS BASKETBALL

Frazier, Parrish are unsung heroes for Chargers



Staff photo by Simon Barbe

Northwood senior Max Frazier powers home a dunk in the Chargers' win over Williams on Dec. 13.

BY SHELBY SWANSON
News + Record Correspondent

RALEIGH — Very few high school basketball teams have a 6-foot-11 center, let alone a lanky 6-foot-8 power forward who can run with him. Throw in a UNC basketball commit and two knockdown 3-point shooters into the starting five, and you have a dangerous combination.

That's exactly the arsenal the Northwood boys basketball team put on display in its 81-64 win over Millbrook in the Dexter Cooley Showcase on Saturday.

While 4-star UNC commit Drake Powell's season-high 33 points were no doubt the highlight of the game, the combined 22-point performance of senior forwards Kenan Parrish and Max Frazier shouldn't go overlooked.

"I try to get a triple-double every game," Powell said. "These two (Frazier and Parrish) being as talented as they are, I think it's very easy to give them the ball and let them do their work."

On Saturday, Powell was, to put it lightly, dominant. He put on a show with multiple dunks, a variety of mid-range

See **HEROES**, page B4



Staff photo by Simon Barbe

Northwood senior Kenan Parrish — a 6-foot-11 center — is averaging 10.4 points and 5.5 rebounds per game this season.

YEAR IN REVIEW

2022 was year to remember for Chatham sports

BY JEREMY VERNON
News + Record Sports Editor

As it nears its end, 2022 will be remembered as a banner year for Chatham County sports, with one team and several individuals winning state championships.

Here's a season-by-season breakdown of some of the biggest athletic moments to happen in the county over the past 12 months:

Winter

The first big event of 2022 was the indoor track and field state championships, held Feb. 12 in Winston-Salem. And while Northwood placed outside the top 10 in both team competitions, several Chargers made names for themselves by winning individual state titles.

One of those athletes was Caroline Murrell, who won the 3,200-meter race in a time of 10:46.69. Murrell — who graduated in June — is now a member of the N.C. State cross country team. Outside of Murrell, Northwood also saw its boys 4x800 relay team take home a state title after winning the event in a time of 8:25.61.



Staff photo by Simon Barbe

Northwood girls basketball players celebrate after winning the 2022 3A state championship with a 70-41 win over Enka on March 12.

The one Chatham County team to win a state championship in the past 12 months was the Northwood girls basketball team, which claimed the 3A crown with a 70-41 win over Enka on March 12 for the school's first-ever team state title in any sport.

The Chargers finished the year with an overall record of 30-1, including a perfect 12-0 mark in the Central 3A Conference. Northwood was led

by senior Olivia Porter — now a freshman on the Michigan State women's basketball team — after averaging 18.0 points, 6.4 rebounds, 3.8 assists and 4.3 steals per game in her final season at Northwood.

Coming up just short of a state championship, meanwhile, was the Chatham Charter boys basketball team. The Knights made it all the way to

See **REVIEW**, page B4

Messi and Mbappe's greatness is something to behold



JEREMY VERNON
Sports Editor

Sunday's World Cup final between Argentina and France was something to behold. At what one point looked like an easy victory for the South American side slowly devolved into chaos in the game's latter 15 minutes, as France made up a two-goal deficit to force extra time and, eventually, penalty kicks.

At the end of a tournament marred by death and the larger human rights issues on the surface, Sunday was proof that few things can capture the world's attention like a compelling soccer match.

It truly looked like Argentina would cruise to a victory after the game's opening 45 minutes. Defending champion France couldn't keep possession of the ball, and La Albiceleste ("The White and Sky Blue") had built a two-goal cushion on the backs of a Lionel Messi penalty and a strike from Angel Di Maria. They carried that advantage into the final 10 minutes before things went completely haywire. In the 80th minute, France cut the deficit in half on a penalty kick by Kylian Mbappe, and less than two minutes later, the French 24-year old equalized with a right-footed volley that sent the Argentine supporters into a stunned silence.

There was even more drama in extra time, as Messi gave Argentina the lead in the 108th minute, but Mbappe once again equalized in the 118th to send the game to penalty kicks, where Argentina eventually won, 4-2.

Watching Sunday's match made me appreciate several things, but the first was the true greatness of Messi.

Back in my first few years out of college, I played a lot of the FIFA video games with my roommate. Whenever we faced off against each other, neither of us were allowed to choose Barcelona, or later PSG, the team's Messi belonged to. It was

See **GREATNESS**, page B2

GIRLS BASKETBALL

McManaman, Bland lead Northwood to 3-0 start in conference play

BY SHELBY SWANSON
News + Record Correspondent

PITTSBORO — Gianna McManaman remembers playing against Te'Keyah Bland in middle school, yearning for the days they'd become high school teammates.

"I would always say to myself, 'I can't wait for when we're on the same team,'" McManaman said. "(In) middle school, there's

not many people that are her height."

Now, the two Northwood seniors are spearheading a Chargers girls basketball team that is trying to clinch the Central 3A Conference championship despite losing major role players from last year. After winning the 3A state title in 2022, Northwood graduated three of its top four scorers — leading to an uncharacteristic 0-3 start to the season.

Despite the rough beginning, the Chargers are now gaining both momentum and confidence thanks to a 3-1 record over the past week. After that 0-3 start, the Chargers will head into winter break with a 5-4 record thanks to the leadership of New Mexico commit McManaman and Howard commit Bland.

Last week the team picked up

See **PLAY**, page B2



Staff photo by Simon Barbe

Northwood senior Gianna McManaman (4) helps fight for a loose ball in the Chargers' win over Williams on Dec. 13.

SCORES AND SCHEDULES		
SCORES	Chatham Central 59, Harnett Central 25	
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13		Boys basketball
Girls basketball		Chatham Central vs. Southwestern Randolph (7:30 p.m.)
Seaforth 55, Cummings 15 Northwood 65, Williams 53 Chatham Central 60, Graham 31	Chatham Central 54, Harnett Central 48	SCHEDULES
Boys basketball	FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16	THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22
Seaforth 68, Cummings 41 Northwood 53, Williams 34 Chatham Central 60, Graham 28	Girls basketball	Wrestling
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14	Seaforth 59, Bartlett Yancey 40 Cummings 41, Jordan-Matthews 20 Southern Alamance 42, Chatham Charter 41	Chatham Central at Davie High (6 p.m.) Northwood/Seaforth at Tiger Classic at Chapel Hill (9 a.m.)
Girls basketball	Boys basketball	Boys basketball
Southwest Guilford 45, Seaforth 42 Northwood 60, Orange 27	Seaforth 59, Bartlett Yancey 40 Northwood 73, Cedar Ridge 26 Chatham Charter 65, Southern Alamance 50	Seaforth at Lee Christian (7 p.m.)
Boys basketball	SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17	FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23
Northwood 72, Orange 47	Girls basketball	Wrestling
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15	Millbrook 54, Northwood 40	Northwood/Seaforth at Tiger Classic at Chapel Hill (9 a.m.)
Swimming	Boys basketball	TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27
Seaforth wins boys meet against Carrboro, Cary Academy and Durham Academy with high score of 122.8, and comes in fourth in girls competition with score of 75.8.	Northwood 81, Millbrook 64	Boys basketball
Girls basketball	MONDAY, DECEMBER 19	Northwood vs. First Flight at Broughton High in Raleigh (2:30 p.m., John Wall Holiday Invitational)
	Girls basketball	Seaforth vs. Richland Northeast at Lexington High in Lexington, S.C. (3:30 p.m., Chick-fil-A Classic Tournament)
	Chatham Central vs. Southwestern Randolph (6 p.m.)	

GREATNESS

Continued from page B1

the “Messi Rule.” He was simply unstoppable, and often times it felt like you had an extra man when you took a touch with the skilled forward inside your opponent’s penalty box.

For as ludicrous as Messi’s virtual skills were, he has been even more video-game-like in his actual playing career. In 558 games between Spanish side Barcelona and French team PSG since the start of the 2004-05 season, Messi has totaled 487 goals and 215 assists. He has been awarded the Ballon d’Or — annually given to the

top player in the world — a record-seven times to go with 11 La Liga trophies and four Champions League crowns.

Messi, now at 35, is done with his international career, and what a way it was to go out. Now rumors are swirling that the lefty will take his talents to South Beach and join MLS team Inter Miami. While he would be one of the older players in the league if he decides to play club soccer in the U.S., he undoubtedly still has the skill to dominate. I look forward to seeing him tear apart the Charlotte F.C. back line.

Of course, one can’t mention Messi and his performance Sunday without also mentioning

Mbappe, the heir apparent to the title of World’s Best Player, who scored a hat trick in a losing effort Sunday. At just 24, the talented French striker already has 12 World Cup goals, as many as Brazilian great Pele and just one back of Messi’s 13. He’ll have a real chance to break the all-time record for career WC goals — currently held by Germany’s Miroslav Klose (16) — when the World Cup returns in 2026 in North America.

The 2026 World Cup is being jointly hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico. This will offer American fans their first up-close-and-personal look at Mbappe and some of the other top

players in the world.

But why wait that long to see the best the soccer world has to offer? Club teams like Liverpool, Manchester City, PSG, Real Madrid and others are back in league action on Dec. 26 — Boxing Day. The league season runs through May, when the Champions League tournament will take center stage.

If you enjoyed Sunday’s final as much as I did, or were even somewhat entertained by the madness that ensued, I implore you to follow the sport over these next few months, especially teams across Europe. Soccer popularity is on the rise globally, and one way to get a leg up on your

friends before the next World Cup is to take in all the English Premier League, the Spanish La Liga, the French Ligue 1 and the Italian Serie A have to offer.

Also don’t forget that the Women’s World Cup takes place in 2023! The United States have won the past two tournaments, but this time around the USWNT should face stiff competition from other countries

like England, Germany and Sweden.

The 2023 WWC is being jointly held by Australia and New Zealand. The tournament begins July 20, and the United States plays its first game against Vietnam on July 21.

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

PLAY

Continued from page B1

double-digit wins over Williams, Orange and Cedar Ridge to start the conference slate off 3-0.

“We saw a lot of good things,” Northwood head coach Kerri Snipes said of her team’s performance. “We seemed a lot more confident with the basketball. Offensively, we were getting after it a lot more. Defensively, (we were) going after rebounds really strong. Those are big things that we’ve been looking for so far this season.”

Even in Northwood’s one loss of the week, a highly-physical battle against a talented Millbrook team, there were many positives to take away.

In Saturday’s non-conference contest, the Chargers held 4-star senior combo guard and Alabama commit Reychel Douglas below her scoring average. Northwood was also able to use a zone defense to combat the threat of senior center Corrie McLaughlin — limiting the 6-foot-2 center and UNC-Wilmington commit to just two points.

The game gave the Chargers an opportunity to navigate their offense without Bland, who had to sit out for a large portion of the first half after early foul trouble. While Snipes said it hurt to lose Bland that early, it allowed the underclassmen to enter the game and gain experience against a talented Millbrook roster.

“Millbrook is a really tough team,” Snipes said. “They were the (only) team that beat us last year and they returned

seven seniors so we knew that they had a lot of leadership and a lot of strengths and they had been playing together a long time. We didn’t have the first half that we necessarily wanted but we were still battling it out (in) that first half.”

While Millbrook led for much of the game, the Chargers cut into what was at one point a 20-point lead to end the game at a 54-40 score. McManaman championed this late-game push at the point and Bland went to work in the second half with a variety of post moves.

“They both were working really hard,”

Snipes said. “Gianna is the hardest worker on our team, for sure. I think the girls can agree with that. She was just trying to continue to push the tempo from the point.... (Te’Keyah) got some buckets there, even late in the fourth quarter, just by getting rebounds and trying to go up strong. Having both of them really encouraged the younger girls who haven’t always been in these positions with us to continue to fight it out until the end.”

Encouraging their teammates is a role that both Bland and McManaman have had to step into more this year. Both

players cited that being more vocal is the main change in their roles this year, especially given the departure of four seniors from last year’s squad. They’re also aware of how their play can help inspire their teammates.

This is a role they’ll continue to champion as the team marches further into conference play, with the hopes of remaining undefeated in the Central 3A.

“I know for me and (Gianna) both, especially in our past couple of home games, when we get it started and score the first couple of points, it gets the bench and gets everybody else locked into the game,” Bland said. “It sets the tone for the rest of the game.”



Staff photo by Simon Barbe

Northwood senior Te’Keyah Bland (12) attempts a shot while being surrounded by two opponents against Williams on Dec. 13.

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CLIPBOARD Q-A


Amy has Seaforth athletics thriving in 2nd year

BY JEREMY VERNON
News + Record Sports Editor

PITTSBORO — Seaforth High is only in its second year as a school, but the Hawks have already had plenty of success when it comes to athletics. Since the start of the 2021-22 school year, numerous Seaforth teams have defied expectations to become some of

the top squads in the county. Among the teams to earn better than .500 records in their first or second seasons are both basketball teams, volleyball, girls tennis and girls soccer. This past November, the Hawks earned their first state championship in any sport when sophomore Jack Anstrom won the 2A boys cross country title.

Behind the early success of Seaforth's athletic programs is athletic director Jason Amy. Amy, who was named the N.C. Athletic Director of the Year in 2021, spoke with the News + Record about his experiences the first year and a half on the job, his expectations for the future and his work with UNC grad senior wrestler Austin O'Connor, who is currently interning at Seaforth as an athletic director. Here's what he had to say:



Jason Amy



Council on Aging Activities Calendar

December 26th through December 30th

Monday, December 26
Council on Aging Closed

Tuesday, December 27
Council on Aging Closed

Wednesday, December 28
Eastern Chatham Senior Center

- **10 a.m. - Chair Yoga w/Liz (in-person and Zoom)**
- **1 p.m. - Open Art Studio**

Western Chatham Senior Center

- **8 a.m. - Veterans Benefit Assistance**
- **9 a.m. - Strong & Fit w/Olivia**
- **10 a.m. - Bible Study**
- **10:30 a.m. - Great Apps for Senior Safety w/Kathryn**
- **1 p.m. - Cornhole**
- **2 p.m. - Crafting w/Kathryn (Washi Tape Earrings)**

Thursday, December 29
Eastern Chatham Senior Center

- **10 a.m. - Crafts and Conversation**
- **11 a.m. - Science w/Alan**
- **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. - Tai Chi**
- **3 p.m. - Bingo**

Friday, December 30
Eastern Chatham Senior Center

- **11:15 a.m. - Chair Volleyball**
- **1 p.m. - Card Games/Euchre**
- **3 p.m. - Jukebox Live! "90s Country"**

Western Chatham Senior Center

- **9 a.m. - Strong & Fit w/Olivia**
- **9:30 a.m. - Blood Pressure Checks**
- **10:30 a.m. - New Year, New You - Talk With Kathryn**
- **7 p.m. - Friday Night Dance (fee required to attend)**



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

You're in your second year as Seaforth's athletic director. How do you feel like this first year and a half has gone? What have been some of the biggest challenges in building the athletic program?

JASON AMY: Honestly, I think things have gone a lot better than what I had heard from other people. Most people would say, "Oh, you'll start seeing success in Year 3." For the first year and a half, I'm pleased with where we're at and seeing our progression of success.

Last year, specifically, I believe the biggest challenge was dealing with all the new coaches. Not that they were new to coaching, but they were coaches in a new role with a bunch of freshmen and sophomores. Usually you try to lean on the seniors and upperclassmen for leadership. That was one of the biggest things for a lot of our teams. We basically had to get our younger kids to understand, "This is what we need to do, and this is how we're going to do things." And I guess that's where our younger leaders were molder. You take for granted that most upperclassmen teach the other kids how to do things, and my coaches, they had to take on that role. They had to do a little bit extra in terms of anything and everything — expectations for practices and games. You name it.

Seaforth has had success in several different sports — volleyball, tennis, track and field, etc. What has allowed your teams to have so much early success? Are things coming along quicker than you thought they would?

Yes, I think so. And that's kind of my expectation. I heard people telling me it would take a few years to get everything going, but I'm more of a person who wants to do things now. I don't really want to hear about later. This is our year. I think that's the mentality from my past coaching. We just need to work harder to achieve any of our goals. I think that's the mentality of all my coaches.

The boys basketball team has been strong the past few seasons thanks to junior Jarin Stevenson and Coach Jaron Stevenson. What has it been like seeing the

two of them work together, and what has it been like seeing Jarin handle the college recruiting process?

I'll say this. Both of them are true professionals. Them both, and Jaron's wife, Nicole, they understand all the dynamics of what it takes to be elite. I've had the opportunity to sit back and watch a different college coach come in every week, whether it's Hubert Davis or Patrick Ewing. Every other day, it's like, "OK. Who do we have coming in?" It's a pretty neat dynamic. It's not every day you have the opportunity to have kids who are kind of sought after like that. It's a blessing.

I think a lot of the other kids and coaches like to see that, and I think it's elevating everyone else's mentality. Other kids are like, "I want to work hard. I want to be like Jarin." It's definitely rubbing off, and I think it's been a big key to the success we're having now. All the kids are seeing that the amount of work Jarin puts in is unreal. He's consistently, whether it's before or after practice, he's always in the gym working out, trying to become a better player. Hard work pays off, I guess. It also helps when you're that tall.

You've brought on Austin O'Connor — a grad senior wrestler at UNC — on as an assistant athletic director. What has been like having him on board and having his perspective on staff?

I hadn't had this happen before, but UNC (School of Education) professor Dr. Todd Cherner reached out to me and said he had a student of his who was going for his masters and wanted to do an internship to be an athletic director. And all I'm thinking was, "All of these years, why have I not had this?" I wish I could have had one every year.

I touched base with the county and got everything situated with it. He's trying to shoot for eight hours a week. He's helped me out a lot with our sports calendars and our weekly newsletters. A lot of the online stuff, I've been giving him that. And he's shown up to several sporting events so far to just see what it is an athletic director does. Everyone sees you at the game, but they don't see all the behind-the-scenes stuff.

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BASKETBALL

2 Central hoops teams enter break with 12-5 combined record

BY JEREMY VERNON
News + Record Sports Editor

As we enter the winter break, one of the top stories in Chatham County is the surprise success of the two Chatham Central basketball teams.

After Monday night's games against Southwestern Randolph, the two Central basketball teams are a combined 12-5 overall. This comes after a 2021-22 season that saw the two sides combined to go 21-26 overall, with both falling to Bertie in the state playoffs.

In eight games so far this winter, the Chatham Central boys team is off to a 6-2 start, which included a 47-46 win over Southwestern Randolph on Monday night. The Bears' two losses so far this season have come by a combined three points — a 50-48 loss to Southwestern Randolph on Dec. 1 and a 92-91 loss to Eastern Randolph on Dec. 6.

The boys' 6-2 start is their best mark to open a season since going 7-1 in its first eight games of the 2020-21 season. That year, the Bears entered the state tournament with just one loss before falling to Lincoln Charter in the second round.

In his eighth season at the helm, Chatham Central boys coach Robert Burke has led the Bears to an overall record of 85-68 since the start of 2015-16. The program's best season during that stretch came in 2019-20, when the Bears amassed an overall record of 22-6 and reached the second round of the state playoffs before falling to West Columbus.

This year's Chatham Charter boys team had to find its footing after graduating seven seniors over the

offseason. Stepping up as seniors for the Bears this winter have been Mathew Smith, Travis Crissman, Owen Kirt, Jaquan Gordon and Brandon Toomet.

The Chatham Charter girls team lost to Southwestern Randolph by four points, 46-42, on Monday night, but the Bears still boast a 6-3 record under head coach Lynda Burke through nine games.

Since taking over ahead of the 2017-18 season, Lynda Burke has led the Lady Bears to a 75-35 overall record. After boasting a 22-4 mark and reaching the fourth round of the state playoffs in 2018-19, Central posted a 34-31 in the previous three seasons entering this winter.

Last season, the Bears finished 14-14 overall despite going 9-2 in Mid-Carolina Conference play. Central's only two conference losses came to Seaforth, whom the Bears will meet in their first game after the holiday break on Jan. 3. Over the offseason, Central graduated six seniors.

Among the senior leaders for the Lady Hawks this time around are Olivia Brooks, Kailey Green, Meredith Peele and Jaylee Williams. Brooks also played tennis for Central this fall, while Williams played tennis and golf.

Central lost its two games to the Hawks last season by an average of 17.5 points per game. This year, Seaforth is 6-1 through its first seven games, setting up what should be a fun matchup when the two teams return from the break.

Sports Editor Jeremy Vernon can be reached at jere-my@chathamnr.com or on Twitter at [@jbo_vernon](https://twitter.com/jbo_vernon).



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Chatham Central senior Mathew Smith (24) attempts a fadeaway shot over an opposing defender.

REVIEW

Continued from page B1



Staff photo by James Kiefer

In November, Seaforth sophomore Jack Anstrom won the 2A boys cross country state championship race in a time of 16:15.43.

the 1A state final before falling to Hayesville in overtime. Chatham Charter finished the year with a 33-2 overall record, the best mark among county boys teams.

Spring

As temperatures got warmer, Chatham County athletes stayed hot through the final few months of the school year.

The top-performing team among county schools this spring was the Woods Charter girls soccer squad. The Wolves finished the year with a record



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

As a sophomore this past spring, Woods Charter's Leyla Noronha scored 50 goals to help lead the Wolves to the finals of the 1A state playoffs.

of 19-1-2 overall, with their lone loss coming to Christ the King in the 1A state championship game.

Woods was led on the field by sophomore Leyla Noronha, who led all Chatham players with a whopping 50 goals, to go with 14 assists. Noronha, as well as many of Woods' other top players, are expected to return for the 2023 season.

At the outdoor track and field championships in May, it was once again Murrell stealing the show for the Northwood teams. This time around,

the senior won both the 1,600- and 3,200-meter races, giving her three state titles in a single calendar year.

Murrell was able to add more hardware to her trophy case this fall as a member of the N.C. State cross country team, which repeated as national champions for 2022.

Fall

While some schools, namely each of Chatham's football teams, struggled to find momentum during the 2022 fall season, others saw inspired



Photo courtesy of Chatham Central

Chatham Central seniors Olivia Brooks (left) and Ellie Phillips (right) won the 1A doubles state title on Oct. 29 over Bishop McGuinness' Isabella Ross and Nina Holton.

performances from county athletes.

The top girls tennis team in the county this fall was Chatham Central, which went 17-4 overall. The Bears won the Mid-Carolina Conference tournament and advanced all the way to the 1A state finals before falling to Mount Airy in early November.

Despite losing in the state final, the Bears did see two seniors — Olivia Brooks and Ellie Phillips — win the 1A doubles state championship. The pair defeated Isabella Ross

and Nina Holton of Bishop McGuinness in straight sets, 7-6 (1) and 6-3.

Elsewhere in the county, Seaforth sophomore Jack Anstrom had a huge fall season. After winning the boys race at the 2A mideast regional in a time of 16:22.10, Anstrom followed it up the following weekend by winning the 2A state title after finishing the 5,000-meter course in 16:15.43.

Anstrom's victory in the 2A state title race earned Seaforth its first state championship by a team or an individual.

HEROES

Continued from page B1

moves and disruptive defensive plays.

But the most impressive sequence of the night might've been his pass to Frazier with two and a half minutes remaining in the third quarter. Powell shook his defender and delivered a bounce pass through traffic to Frazier, who rose up and delivered an emphatic dunk to give Northwood a double-digit lead.

"I definitely knew I could get by my man, so I'm always thinking about the next defender," Powell said. "Max's man stepped up, I gave him a little bounce pass and he dunked it home. [It's] a connection we've had since we were 5."

Frazier was a reliable presence on the offensive boards and also showcased his court vision in high-low play with Parrish. On multiple occasions, Frazier was able to connect with Parrish in the low post, feeding him the ball over the heads of multiple defenders.

"He (Kenan) gets the open shot really [easily]," Frazier said. "I can just lob it over and he scores."

It's a connection Parrish described as "very easy." The cohesion of the two forwards is not only a result of their time together in the Chargers' program, but also their

experience as teammates for the Durham Hurricanes AAU program.

"It makes things a lot easier, just always playing with him," Parrish said. "I can understand how he plays and where he likes to catch the ball."

Aside from their offensive performances, both Frazier and Parrish were dominant on the defensive end.

Frazier was tasked with guarding Millbrook sophomore Colt Langdon, who averages nearly 22 points per game. Frazier held the 4-star prospect to 14 points, putting his perimeter defense on display.

"I think Max did a real-

ly good job of containing him," said Northwood head coach Matt Brown. "He's (Langdon) a really good player, but I think Max did really well. We challenged him today to try to limit him as much as possible."

While Frazier held Langdon well below his scoring average, Parrish bullied opponents on the defensive boards. His sheer size was dangerous for any Millbrook player that dared to drive to the paint, as he was a threat to contest shots and limit the Wildcats to one-and-done possessions.

"It's huge," Brown said of Parrish's presence on the boards. "I chal-

lenged him (Saturday), he should be getting at least a double-double every game. He came out with that attitude and he owned the boards tonight."

Aside from Saturday's performance against the No. 1 team in the 4A East, Parrish and Frazier have put their talents on display against two other top teams in N.C.

this season — Cannon and Carmel Christian. Parrish was particularly impressive, scoring in the double-digits against both teams.

Their recent performances have led to Brown and basketball scouts alike calling for the frontcourt duo to receive more attention from college recruiters. So far, Parrish has received

offers from Navy and Army, while Frazier has received an offer from Catawba.

"College coaches really need to take notice of Kenan and Max," Brown said. "I keep telling everyone, if you recruit them and you get them, you're going to look really smart in the end. I really think that those guys can play on that level."



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Northwood senior Max Frazier is averaging 8.6 points, 6.3 rebounds and 3.7 assists through 10 games this season.



Pittsboro Rotarians know how to throw a holiday party! While decked out in our best ugliest sweaters, we wrapped almost 800 books for elementary school students. Thanks to the generous donation by Flyleaf books, Pittsboro children will be going home with a book for the holidays! We encourage you to fan the flames of imagination by visiting their store. They have books for all ages & interests, so check them out! Weekly meetings will resume January 11, 2023, at Postal Fish Co., so come join us at noon for a fantastic lunch & to learn more about Rotary.



Chatham Land Team: Rotarians
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N.C.'s energy seesaw

King Coal drops dramatically in last 20 years as nuclear power remains the fulcrum

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

LEI: Why the binoculars, Buck?

BUCK: I'm watching for progress on climate change.

LEI: Want to see a picture of China's use of coal in its energy mix? Just look at this chart for North Carolina from 20 years ago.

BUCK: You mean coal was the dominant player in North Carolina like it is in China today, right?

LEI: Yep. North Carolina's use of coal to generate electricity is dropping like a lump of coal.

BUCK: Let's just say neither China nor North Carolina will ever be confused with Norway as clean energy producers. About 98% of that country's electricity comes from renewable sources, mainly hydropower.

LEI: But then Norway, with 5.4 million people, has only about half the population of North Carolina, about the same

number of Duke Energy customers in North Carolina and Kentucky, and nothing like China's electricity needs.

BUCK: Like what?

LEI: China is producing more electricity for its 1.4 billion people than the next three countries — U.S., India and Russia — combined. India's population alone is 1.3 billion.

BUCK: So that's why you're leaning on King Coal.

LEI: Actually not as much. About 20 years ago, coal accounted for 70% of China's energy mix. We've lowered that rate over the years by relying more on natural gas, nuclear power and renewables.

BUCK: And improved air quality, I'm sure.

LEI: You can't imagine how bad the pollution got. People literally got sick of it, and the government responded.

BUCK: So what happened?

LEI: A Bloomberg headline said it all about our progress from 2013



Illustration by Ruby Wang

To keep electricity rates below the national average, North Carolina continues to shift away from coal and toward natural gas and renewables while relying heavily on nuclear power.

to 2020: "China reduced air pollution in 7 years as much as U.S. did in three decades." That was according to the University of Chicago's Energy Policy Institute.

BUCK: Why did you mention Duke Energy?

LEI: It's one of the major players on America's climate-energy chessboard. It's based in Charlotte but covers seven states with 9.8 million customers for electricity and natural gas.

BUCK: So what's Duke's position on coal?

LEI: It wants to move from its 33% reliance on coal five years ago down

to 16% in 2030, then totally eliminate coal usage by 2035. Duke is really pushing renewables.

BUCK: And all that change without giving ratepayers serious sticker shock, eh?

LEI: So it hopes.

BUCK: Now Duke is not the only player

supplying retail electric service to North Carolina, right?

LEI: Right. The North Carolina Utilities Commission lists about 75 municipal- and university-owned electric utilities, about 30 electric membership corporations and three investor-owned utilities — Dominion North Carolina Power and the Big Sisters: Duke Energy Progress and Duke Energy Carolinas.

BUCK: So how do the feds paint North Carolina's energy picture?

LEI: Well, here's a snapshot of how the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) calculated the state's electricity generation by source in August: natural gas (48.9%), nuclear (29.3%), renewables as in wind, solar, biofuels and other non-hydro sources (9.9%), coal (7.4%), hydropower (4.4%) and petroleum (less than 1%).

BUCK: And what about the cost to consumers?

LEI: The average price of electricity to residential consumers in North Carolina (13.2 cents per kilowatt hour) is less than for Americans overall (16.3 cents), or so calculates the EIA as of September. That's the good news.

BUCK: And the bad news?

LEI: Prices are up from a year ago — 12% for North Carolina and 15% for the U.S.

BUCK: When did North Carolina make its turn away from coal?

LEI: A dozen years ago, according to the EIA. It says 35 coal-fired power plants units have been retired since 2010 and a like number of natural gas-fired units have been added.

BUCK: That's a big switch.

LEI: Yep. Before 2012, coal provided more than half of the electricity generated in North Carolina. Over the last 20 years, the one source that has remained steady is nuclear power.

BUCK: So how does North Carolina fit into the U.S. picture?

LEI: The U.S. depends a lot more on petroleum (36%) and a lot less on nuclear (8%). North Carolina uses a lower percentage of coal than the national average (11%) but more natural gas than the U.S. overall (32%). The use of renewables and other sources is similar either way (13%).

BUCK: And then there's China.

LEI: According to the EIA, China's energy mix goes something like this: coal (55%), petroleum and other liquids (19%), natural gas (9%), hydroelectric (8%), other renewables like wind, solar, geothermal and biomass (7%) and nuclear (2%).

BUCK: Does China import coal from the U.S.?

LEI: Yes, a little bit. China's imports of U.S. coal is about 2% down from 4%. Most U.S. coal is produced in Wyoming, West Virginia, your Kentucky, Illinois and Pennsylvania.

BUCK: So not North Carolina?

LEI: The heyday for coal production in North Carolina dates to a special time when about 14,000 tons of coal were produced in the coal field along the Deep River in Chatham County alongside Moore and Lee counties.

BUCK: When was that?

LEI: 1949, when the People's Republic of China was founded. Production began in the 1850s and ceased in 1953. Although coal reserves still exist, there's no commercial production these days.

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See SEESAW, page B6

Chatham’s Board of Health sends letter in support of keeping hospital’s Maternity Care Center open

SILER CITY — The Chatham County Board of Health is sharing a letter sent to executives at UNC Health in support of keeping the Maternity Care Center at Chatham Hospital in Siler City in operation.

The letter was approved by a unanimous vote during a special meeting last Thursday, Dec. 15. The letter was addressed to Janet Hadar, president of UNC Medical Center; Dr. Audra Caesar, chief diversity, equity, and inclusion officer of UNC Health; Steve Burris, chief operating officer of UNC Health; and Dr. Jeff Strickler, CEO of Chatham Hospital.

The body of the letter reads as follows: “As the Chatham County Board of Health, it is our responsibility to ensure the health of all residents in

the county, with a focus on those who are underserved and marginalized. Given this charge, we write today to express our concern regarding the potential closure of the Maternity Care Center (MCC) at Chatham Hospital. This concern is underscored by data detailing disparities in Chatham County. From 2016 through 2020, infant mortality in the county was 50% greater than the North Carolina average and 2.7 times higher for Black residents than White residents. Prior to the opening of the MCC, the average distance to receive childbirth care ranked among the worst in the state, according to a report from the UNC Sheps Center for Health Policy Research.

“Like UNC Health, the Cha-

tham County Board of Health seeks to eliminate disparities such as these and achieve health equity and overall health for all. Losing the MCC would significantly impede our collective work toward these important goals and put mothers and infants in Chatham County at risk. This is especially true with regard to the county’s most marginalized populations — roughly 80 percent of MCC deliveries to date have been for women of color. With tremendous population growth anticipated in Chatham County, ensuring equitable access to quality maternal health care services is all the more critical.

“The Chatham County Board of Health appreciates UNC Health leadership’s engagement with the Cha-

tham County community as it weighs this important decision, and applauds the formation of the MCC Task Force. We respectfully ask that adequate time be given to implement the Task Force’s recommendations and measure their impact. We are concerned that six to nine months will not be sufficient to conduct the rigorous evaluation needed to inform future decisions. We appreciate your willingness to extend this timeline as needed to carry out this important work.

“Representatives of UNC Health and/or the MCC Task Force are always welcome to present at one of our public meetings. Reaffirming UNC Health’s own statement upon the opening of the MCC, that ‘it takes a team of dedicated partners with a vision of the future

and the inspiration to break from the status quo,’ we commit to working in partnership with UNC Health to protect the overall health and well-being of all residents of Chatham County, and doing whatever we can to help support the continuation of services at the MCC at Chatham Hospital.

“Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to continuing our partnership with UNC Health in the years ahead.”

To learn more about the Chatham County Board of Health, visit

www.chathamcountync.gov/boardofhealth. To learn more about the Chatham County Public Health Department, visit www.chathamcountync.gov/publichealth or www.facebook.com/chathamhealth.

Council on Aging gets \$3,000 grant from CEMC

From the Chatham County Council on Aging

SILER CITY — The expansion of activities at the Western Chatham Senior Center will take another step forward with the Chatham County Council on Aging’s recent receipt of a \$3,000 grant from Central Electric Member Care Trust. The grant funds are powered by voluntary donations from Central Electric members and will be used to assist in equipping a dedicated sewing room for center patrons, including the purchase of seven sewing machines and other needed accessories.

“Our Western Center manager, Kathryn Walters, has done a phenomenal job in populating our Western Center calendar with events and activities as the 60-and-over population returns to our facilities,” COA Grants and Communications Specialist Jimmy Lewis said. “In particular, there has been a demand for dedicated sewing space at our Western Center. Through the generosity of Central Electric, we will be able to fulfill this request and our participants will have full ability to express their creativity at the sewing table.”

Walters assured the grant funds would quickly be put to use.

“We are so excited about the opportunities that this sewing room will create for our participants,” Walters said. “The center is a place to learn new things, create and build relationships to enhance the lives of seniors in our community and this sewing room will help us do just that! We are looking forward to sewing and quilting classes and the beautiful things that will be made!”

The Chatham County Council on Aging is in its 48th year as a nonprofit organization committed to helping older adults remain healthy, engaged and able to live safely at home. The COA offers a wide array of services, programs and opportunities.

For more information, visit the Council’s website at www.chathamcoa.org or call its Eastern Center at 919-542-4512 or Western Center at 919-742-3975.

SEESAW

Continued from page B5

BUCK: So North Carolina needs to import its coal?

LEI: Right. North Carolina depends on imports from other states for nearly all its energy supply. It doesn’t produce or have reserves of the fossil fuels it relies on — not coal, oil, natural gas or uranium.

BUCK: Change doesn’t come easily, nor in a straight line.

LEI: You don’t have to tell the people downwind from Chapel Hill’s coal-fired power plant on the University of North Carolina’s campus.

BUCK: Oh what happened?

LEI: UNC said it would end the use of coal in 2010, but didn’t. Then last year a state agency handed the university a new air-pollution permit to continue burning coal.

BUCK: What is the state legislature doing about climate change?

LEI: Well, North Carolina passed a law last year — HB 951, Energy Solutions for North Carolina — that includes carbon reduction requirements.

BUCK: And specifically it says?

LEI: “The Utilities Commission shall take all reasonable steps to achieve a seventy percent (70%) reduction in emis-

sions of carbon dioxide (CO2) emitted in the State from electric generating facilities owned or operated by electric public utilities from 2005 levels by the year 2030 and carbon neutrality by the year 2050.”

BUCK: And how realistic is that?

LEI: Well, a John Locke Foundation report to the commission delivered this main takeaway: “North Carolinians can either have a least-cost, reliable electric grid or reduce carbon dioxide emissions. They cannot have both.”

BUCK: So what are China’s goals?

LEI: 2030 is a target date for us, too, to reach peak carbon emissions. At the same time, China’s leader just visited Saudi Arabia to ensure it’s “a reliable major exporter of crude oil to China.”

BUCK: And carbon neutrality? By that I mean achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions, so the amounts emitted are equal or less than those removed from the atmosphere.

LEI: Well we’re in a race for that, too. But North Carolina is about a decade more optimistic than us.

BUCK: You mean?

LEI: China is aiming for 2060.

BUCK: The world will be watching, Lei.

CHATHAM COMMISSIONERS

Managing Moncure: Commissioners hear first draft of Small Area Plan

BY BEN RAPPAPORT
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — With \$4 billion in investment and 7,500 jobs, VinFast is bringing more than just electric vehicles to Chatham County. It’ll also bring a population boom, and those new families will need other places in and around Moncure to live, work and play.

That expected growth is why the Chatham County Board of Commissioners called on the services of consulting group White & Smith LLC to create a Small Area Plan for Moncure — the future home of VinFast, the Vietnamese electric vehicle manufacturer.

The SAP calls for focused planning in areas of economic development in and around Triangle Innovation Point, the megasite which will house VinFast. The first phase of the SAP was delivered by White & Smith during the work session of Monday night’s board meeting at the Chatham County Agriculture & Conference Center.

According to the plan, key goals of SAP stakeholders include:

1. Reflect the feedback and input of residents, businesses, and other members of the historic Moncure community;
2. Generate a concrete vision for how the community should develop over the coming years, in light of Plan Chatham’s goals and the significant economic growth now anticipated for the area;
3. Reflect independent expertise and generate data in key areas such as demographics, growth trends, infrastructure and public services, market analysis, and culture and environment;
4. Be completed as efficiently as possible while also achieving these other critical goals.

Phase one of the plan included preliminary findings of the report, additional firms added to the planning process and laying out a timeline for final rollout. After hearing phase one, commissioners voted unanimously to renew the contract of White & Smith, which means phase two will begin in January.

“What the county does in response to this kind of change, and the pace at which the change is occurring, is crucial,” Ben Hitchings, a consultant with White & Smith, told commission-

ers Monday. “And that’s part of what this plan is intended to do — to inform decisions, to keep pace with this kind of change.”

The preliminary findings also showed areas of Moncure that would benefit from specific zoning modifications, such as creating an activity district, neighborhood districts and other accessory uses such as health centers or places of worship.

“We had this big idea and broadly knew we wanted a small area plan for Moncure,” Karen Howard, chairperson of the board of commissioners said. “So getting the right people in the room means we end up with all the right ingredients and then some extra flavor on top of that.”

The next phase of the SAP includes outlining watershed protections for Moncure and finding leaders within Moncure for community input sessions, which White & Smith would be completed by the end of February.

Following the renewal of contract for the SAP, the board also moved to exercise its legislative discretion to pause taking legislative action on new rezoning requests for the Moncure area as outlined in the plan. This means rezoning requests previously heard by the board will continue through the county’s planning board, but no new rezonings in this area will receive final approval by commissioners until Aug. 1, 2023, when the final SAP is expected to be completed.

Other business:

• Commissioners unanimously approved the Fiscal Year 2024-2030 Capital Improvements Plan. (See previous News + Record stories for full analysis of the CIP.)

• Commissioners approved a \$270,000 allocation to human services nonprofits for Fiscal Year 2024. Howard said she was disappointed in the allocation because it was not substantially more than in previous years. The allocation was \$260,000 for Fiscal Year 2023. Howard said she wanted the allocation to increase at at least \$10,000 per year, but preferably more, to keep up with the rising housing costs of the county and other inflation-related price increases year to year.

• Allocations of more than \$37,500 were also approved for the Housing Trust Fund. Commissioners also allo-

cated more than \$185,000 in grants and loans for housing-related nonprofit projects. Those projects included a townhome project by Chatham Habitat for Humanity, which was funded by a \$65,000 grant from the county.

• Chatham County named Veteran Services Officer Michael Daniels and Application Solutions Engineer Lucian Stewart as its 2022 employees of the year.

Daniels, who served 21 years in the US Army, has been Chatham County’s Veteran Services Officer since June 2021.

“Michael is an incredibly valuable asset to Chatham County veterans and their families, and routinely goes above and beyond to assist them,” said Carolyn Miller, assistant county manager. “Michael often travels great distances across the county, including to the hospital, to meet with veterans and their families to complete forms, ensuring they receive the benefits they deserve.”

Stewart is an Application Solutions Engineer with Management Information Services (MIS) after joining the GIS Department in September 2020.

“Lucian provides excellent customer service, he works continuously to improve himself and others around him, he is a team player, and he has a positive attitude every day he comes to work,” said Chatham County MIS and GIS Director Nick Haffele. “Lucian’s contributions to various county application deployments have improved efficiency across multiple departments by extending functionality of already existing county business systems.”

• The Coalition to Keep the MCC Open gave a presentation about the sustainability issues surrounding the Chatham Hospital Maternity Care Center. Those issues include low birthing volumes and staffing issues, which have made the future of the center uncertain. Commissioners, along with the Chatham Board of Health, have affirmed their support for the center. Commissioner Franklin Gomez Flores, who is also a member of the Board of Health and a member of the taskforce established by UNC Health for the MCC, offered to draft a resolution of support for the MCC on behalf of the county to be read at its January meeting.

Your local team of Real Estate Experts wishes you and yours a very Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!





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‘TIS THE SEASON

CN+R staff: sharing our favorite holiday traditions

Going to mom’s house

My favorite Christmas tradition is going to my mom’s house on Christmas Day.

Her home is always so festive with the most beautiful decorations. I’m not talking about glamorous, in-style trending decorations, but old and vintage Victorian style decorations. It always takes me back to a time when things were simple and meant more to people than it does now. A time when Christmas was about being together as a family, reminiscing about Christmases past and the good memories we have from them. My mom always made the best fudge that I have ever ate and she would wrap presents with the most beautiful wrapping paper with a little trinket on top. She would prepare a delicious meal or snacks with ham, cheese, wholesome crackers and bread, chips and a dessert or two.

As I get older, it seems like everybody, including myself, gets into too much of a hurry. The meaning of Christmas has seemed to fade. Loved ones have tragically been lost. I miss my daughter Ashley, my brother, Keith, and my sister-in-law Valerie. For now, though, I guess we have to make the best of it.

My children are grown and I have two beautiful grandchildren. New traditions will be made, but I could never make things as warm and beautiful as my mom has. We will be celebrating with her again this year and I am looking forward to cherishing every moment!

- Karen Pyrtle, office manager

Movies and a laid-back Christmas Eve

Our family doesn’t have many traditions, but the few we do are treasured.

On the nights leading up to Christmas, we always make the effort to watch “Polar Express,” “It’s a Wonderful Life,” and “Christmas Story,” and spend an extended evening driving

through brightly-lit and drinking hot chocolate with sprinkles from our favorite mugs (after shooting Reddi-wip straight into our mouths, of course).

Christmas Eve is laid back; dinner is comprised of appetizers and snacks, and a timer — which is typically set first thing in the morning by our second-born — counts down the hours until we can finally open family presents later that night. The youngest person in the room delivers the gifts round-robin style beginning with the oldest, and one by one, each present is shaken, guessed about, and eventually, unwrapped.

A crude attempt is made at clean up before putting out milk and cookies, herding children upstairs, and collapsing into bed.

Christmas morning again finds us gathered around the tree, mugs of coffee in hand, and laughing at the odd assortment of what was stuffed into our stockings and discovering what gifts Santa left behind for those who still believe in his magic. Since 2015, an unopened gift to my grandmother has had the distinction of being the first present placed beneath the tree and the final item safely tucked away in a holiday bin at the end of the season.

- Dawn Parker, advertising specialist

The classic Lebanese Christmas gathering

Growing up in a Lebanese Catholic household, Christmas was a one and a half month-long celebration. It starts with Advent — a four week period of reflection and preparation for Jesus’s birth. In my parents’ house, it also meant the beginning of turning the house into the North Pole and an endless marathon of Christmas movies such as “National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation,” “Elf, the “Santa Clause” trilogy and more. The real celebration, however, starts on Christmas

Eve with my whole family — both maternal and paternal side — attending the 4 p.m. Happy Birthday Jesus mass.

As I’ve said before in my conversation with Chatham Superior Court Justice Allen Baddour, Lebanese culture places a strong emphasis on the importance of family and that includes my family’s Christmas traditions.

Before COVID, the entire paternal side of my family would drive to my grandmother’s house, where we would spend Christmas day opening gifts, playing with cousins and cooking all the traditional Lebanese dishes. These gatherings often lasted well into the night, with us kids often begging our parents and our aunts and uncles to allow a huge sleepover with all the cousins.

The smell of kibbeh and tabouli accompanied with Johnny Mathis carol covers, basketball and football matches in the backyard and laughing with those I love are my favorite part of my family’s holiday celebration. Not only is it just a fun time with my family, but it also is a reminder to be proud of my identity as a Lebanese woman.

- Taylor Heeden, reporter and web editor

A Jewish Christmas classic

I’ve never had a Christmas tree or laid out cookies for Santa. Instead, this time of year is a reminder of my Jewish identity. Where my friends had Christmas lights, I have the flames of Hanukah candles; where they had turkey dinners, I had latkes (potato pancakes); and where they had “Silent Night,” I had family screaming matches over games of dreidel.

My family and I love lighting the menorah together for all eight nights of Hanukah and watching the flames dwindle down as the smell of sufganiyot (donuts) wafts through the kitchen.

It’s a time to celebrate light and enjoy company. But just as the Macabees fought off assimilation

from the Greeks in the original Hanukah tale, the holiday is a reminder to embrace our differences from the status quo and celebrate our cultural history.

- Ben Rappaport, reporter and social media editor

I’ll (not) Be Home for Christmas

Most Christmases, you’ll find me blearily meandering through an airport. I hadn’t really thought much about it until we discussed this question for our staff, but I think I’ve spent more Christmases away from home than at home, to the point where that it’s probably qualified to count as my family’s tradition.

My family is made up of atheists and what I’d classify as cultural Hindus (our celebrations of Diwali are more centered around eating Indian sweets than any religious import), so Christmas isn’t something we celebrate in the traditional sense.

But, every year as the winter holidays approach, my mother, father, brother and I will gather around our breakfast table and cross reference our lists of places in the world we dream of visiting together. This exercise has taken us to Italy, where we once saw Pope Francis speak to a crowd on Christmas Day at the Vatican, and to Mexico City, where we stuffed ourselves with some of the best vegetarian food I’ve ever eaten — and where I witnessed my 82-year-old grandmother throw back a tequila shot.

We’ve braved icy trails in a near-abandoned Acadia National Park in Maine and had a memorable COVID Christmas in New Orleans, where two of us got sick and we spent the rest of the trip isolating from each other and ordering lots and lots of takeout.

I’m very grateful that we have the means and ability to partake in a holiday tradition as global and expansive as this. As my brother and I get older

and life circumstances continue to inevitably change, I’m also continuously reminding myself how important it is to savor the moment and how lucky I am to spend such quality time with the people I love most in the world.

- Maydha Devarajan, reporter

Family traditions

I’d like to think my Christmas traditions are fairly normal, if not a little mundane.

Since I’ve been little, we normally split Christmas/holiday festivities between my parents’ families. On Christmas Eve, my dad’s parents normally come over to eat, open gifts and enjoy quality time together. But in the few years since my paternal grandfather passed away, we’ve had my grandma come with one of her best friends. Growing up, we used to make a big feast out of Christmas Eve dinner, like it was another Thanksgiving, but the past couple years we have gone with a more non-traditional meal of lasagna from our favorite local Italian restaurant.

Christmas day, my mom, dad and I normally wake up early, have coffee and get right to opening presents. This year will be the first time we celebrate with my dog, Summer. I’m looking forward to seeing how she handles all the chaos of the morning.

Then, we’ll get ready for lunch at my mom’s brother’s house, something we’ve done for 90% of Christmases over the last decade. Another feast ensues, highlighted by prime rib and oyster stuffing. Then another round of gift-opening ensues with my mom’s family, much to the joy of my younger cousins.

My favorite part of Christmas Day, however, are the quiet moments after the chaos — when you can look around the room, stuffed from your second helping of lunch. During these times, I like to reflect on how thankful I am to have a family who is able to celebrate together every year.

- Jeremy Vernon, sports editor



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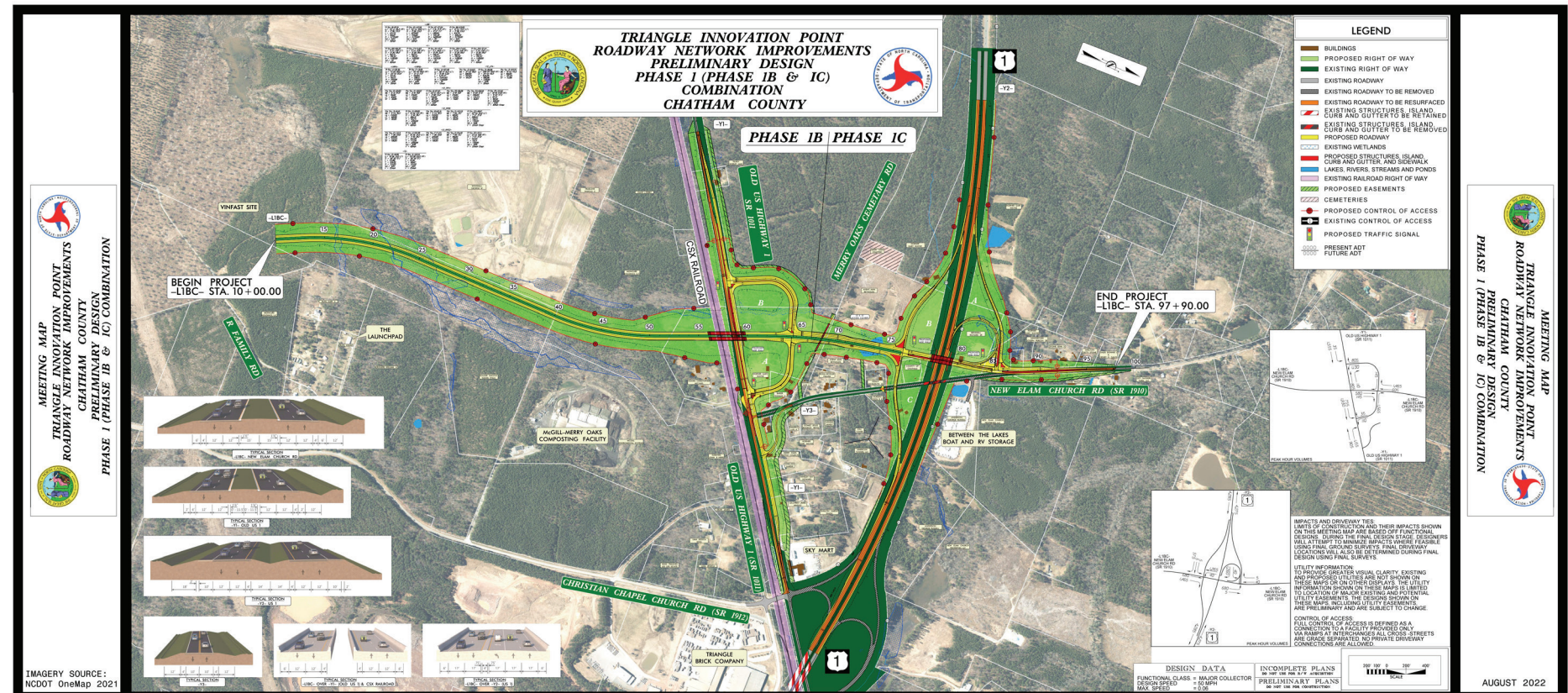


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A N.C. Dept. of Transportation map illustrating preliminary road improvement plans for Triangle Innovation Point, the future home of Chatham's VinFast facility.

The road ahead: Updates to NCDOT's plans for the VinFast facility

BY BEN RAPPAPORT
News + Record Staff

MONCURE — Original plans from the N.C. Dept. of Transportation for the VinFast's facility in Moncure showed the roads leading to the new electric vehicle plant utilizing eminent domain to take 27 homes, five businesses and Merry Oaks Baptist Church.

NCDOT has made some adjustments to those plans in the wake of public comments.

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 near Siler City. VinFast is planning a 1,765-acre facility in nearby Moncure at the Triangle Innovation Point (TIP) site.

NCDOT heard public comments from more than 250 Chatham residents during meetings in August. Many had concerns about the way the VinFast roadway plans would disrupt their personal property and impact community spaces, like Merry Oaks Baptist Church. (See story, photos from Merry Oaks in last week's edition of the News + Record.)

The News + Record provided questions to NCDOT regarding updates to these roadway plans since the original maps were shown to the public over the summer. Jamie Kritzer, assistant director of communications for NCDOT, said the department continues to address and will update the designs before finalizing them in Jan. 2023.

Kritzer said construction on the first phase of the roadway is planned for spring 2023. The second phase of construction cannot begin until VinFast meets its jobs target — 3,875 jobs — to the county, which would trigger the release of funding for further construction.

Site preparations on the VinFast site are now more than a third completed on its land at the TIP site. The plant is set to roll out EVs in the summer of 2024.

Areas that are on the original maps, like Merry Oaks, currently have orange and white flags, and orange and red spray paint placed outside along the sites of the future roadway. According to NCDOT officials, the flags and markings are for locating utilities — with orange paint being communications and red paint being power.

This indicates that plans for roadway construction are underway before final designs are shared. Here's more from the News + Record's conversation with Kritzer; responses have been slightly edited for clarity and brevity:

Members of Merry Oaks Baptist Church and nearby residents say there are alternatives to route roadways to the Moncure Megasite. Is this something you all have looked into? Why is it that this specific section of roadway near the church and these homes in Moncure/New Hill must be taken?

A new interchange is proposed at New Elam Church Road with U.S. 1 in addition to the proposed modifications to the existing Pea Ridge Road interchange with U.S. 1 at Exit 81. Two access points from U.S. 1 into the VinFast development are needed to adequately accommodate future traffic volumes.

In consideration of public comments and further evaluation of future traffic volumes, closure of the U.S. 1 interchange with Old U.S. 1 at Exit 84 is no longer proposed. It will be modified to reduce impacts to the area. However, direct access to the VinFast development is not provided by Exit 84. The road to the VinFast site from U.S. 1 would need to be grade-separated over the railroad tracks to improve traffic operations and safety. U.S. 1 and Old U.S. 1 in this location (Exit 84) are too close together to be able to provide a grade separation (bridge) over the railroad to go into the VinFast site.

The existing interchange at Exit 84 is insufficient to carry the traffic that is anticipated for the new VinFast development, and the location of that interchange prohibits bridging over the railroad to provide direct access into the VinFast site. Therefore, the interchanges proposed at realigned New



Staff photo by Anna Connors

A white flag placed outside Merry Oaks Baptist Church by N.C. Dept. of Transportation denotes where services and utilities will be placed for roadway expansion plans. Merry Oaks is expected to be taken under current NCDOT plans.

Elam Church Road and realigned Pea Ridge Road are needed to adequately accommodate future traffic volumes.

Multiple concepts were considered for the transportation improvements needed for the VinFast site. Concepts that met the project requirements and design criteria were carried forward for additional consideration. They are documented in the environmental supporting documentation for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Public Notice for the project. After further refinement, one concept which included the alignments that minimized impacts as compared with the other concepts was carried forward for detailed study and its preliminary design was illustrated at the August 2022 public meetings.

None of the design concepts were able to avoid the relocation of Merry Oaks Baptist Church due to the location of the planned employment center (Triangle Innovation Point) and the VinFast development, access needed from U.S. 1, future traffic volumes, and the location of Merry Oaks Baptist Church. A link to the U.S. Army Corps of

Engineers' public notice is included on the project webpage and is listed below. The comment period runs until Jan. 5, 2023 and can be made through <https://publicinput.com/Chatham-TIP-Road-Improvements>.

Note: The public notice from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers also indicated VinFast is seeking authorization to permanently discharge, dredge or fill material into a total of 3,688 linear feet of stream channel, 22,789 acres of wetlands and one acre of open water impoundments associated with developing an electric vehicle manufacturing complex in Moncure. Streams and wetlands impacted are part of Shaddox Creek in the Haw River watershed.

What will further community engagement plans look like between NCDOT and the impacted residents?

Coordination is ongoing with residents and business owners to address calls, emails and meeting requests. Also, there is an active public notice from the U.S. Army Corps (as noted previously) to solicit input and comments. Individual meetings will be scheduled with property owners with parcels that involve a temporary or permanent right-of-way acquisition or easements.

Is Merry Oaks Baptist Church still set to be taken? If so, what is the timeline for that process, and what would it look like for those church members?

The property owned by Merry Oaks Baptist Church will be needed to build the roadway project. Currently, the right-of-way acquisition process is anticipated to begin in January 2023 and property owners impacted by Phase 1 will be contacted early next year.

A right-of-way process brochure is included on the project's webpage, which summarizes the appraisal process, written offer to purchase, and other details: <https://connect.ncdot.gov/business/ROW/ROWManualsandPublications/Right-of-Way-Brochure-Single%20Page%20layout.pdf>.

The NCDOT-Division 8 Right of Way Office can be reached at 910-621-6100 if you have any questions concerning the right of way process or the details in the brochure.

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Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps

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WHY A JAY?

ACROSS

1 Conga cousin
6 "Ho-hum" feeling
13 Old Toyota coupes
20 "Tosca" tunes, e.g.
21 Dodgy
22 Hat with the brim turned up on three sides
23 The choosing of cosmonaut Gagarin?
25 Its capital is Tallinn
26 Border of Utah and Idaho, e.g.
27 Primo pitcher
29 Of higher rank
30 Cooks in fat
31 Sign that an egg may have gone bad?
35 Listed from memory
38 Felt sorry for
39 King-size tub
40 Santa — (hot desert winds)
41 Distributed, with "out"
42 Pamper

DOWN

1 Articulates
2 In — (mired)
3 Hollywood's Sorvino
4 Angler's chum
5 Put forward
6 Proved false
7 Kilns, e.g.
8 Go really fast
9 Winter hrs. in Fla.
10 Twice CCLI
11 Lacto- — diet
12 Threatened hostilely
13 Sword metal
14 Surgery sites, in brief
15 Scholarly group
16 Devoted attendant
17 Many a sonata finale
18 Disney mermaid
19 Sarcasm, informally
24 Writer Wiesel
28 North Atlantic catch
31 Pig's grunt
32 Bouquets-to-order co.
33 "Pshaw!"
34 Egg producer
35 Having light beams

ACROSS

46 That guy over there with the famous signature?
50 Indian dress
51 Round figure
52 High trains
53 Real stunner
54 Writer known for twist endings
57 Chimney duct
58 Possible result of a computer crash
60 Key with no sharps or flats
61 Side street
62 Given "four years at a New Haven university" as punishment for a crime?
65 Painter Max
68 Frigid epoch
69 University near Fort Worth
73 Water, in Cuba
74 "Ars — artis" (MGM motto)
75 "I'll do it," in radiospoken
76 '16 Olympics city
77 Major conflict

DOWN

78 Dirt in a 57-Across
79 Lemon-hued growth on old bread?
81 Suspend, as a meeting
83 Certain British noble's domain
86 Kind of sword
87 "Notorious" Supreme Court initials
88 Vintage Ford
89 People using swearwords
92 A typical casual greeting?
96 Bagel centers
97 Lena of song
98 Angry feeling
99 Food-packing plants
103 "Tail cone," for "Lance Ito"
105 Shaggy ox that's a baseball mascot?
109 Floral decoration
110 Satan, with "the"
111 Philosopher Kierkegaard
112 Printing machines
113 Loathes
114 Telling signs

DOWN

36 — Gay (WWII plane)
37 Have the capacity to, to Shakespeare
38 Treaty
41 Indoor tabby
42 Tote bag
43 See 93-Down
44 Correct
45 Comply with
47 More skilled
48 Gas in lights
49 Strong alloy
50 In a snobbish way
54 Psi follower
55 Camouflage
56 Doc treating apnea
57 Hightail it away
59 Perplexed
60 Certain palm berry
61 Give the OK
63 Take-home
64 Former BP gas brand
65 H2O, to a tot
66 "Yipes!"
67 — Khalifa (Dubai sky-scraper)
70 Overused theme
71 OPEC ship
72 Center points
74 Big ravine

WHY A JAY?

75 Traveled
78 Undermines the power of
79 "Seize the day" acronym
80 Ship dining place
82 "Navel" fruits
83 Just missed parring
84 Suffix with fruit names
85 California's Marina del
88 Do injury to
89 Rabbits
90 Elbow-to-wrist bone
91 Appear to be the case
92 Twyla of choreography
93 With 43-Down, list of superb students
94 Expunge
95 Singer LeAnn
96 "In case you — noticed ..." noticed ...
99 Corp. money honchos
100 As to
101 Idyllic garden
102 IRS form IDs
104 Enjoyed food
106 St. crosser
107 First-aid —
108 Bullring cry

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Solution for the puzzle in last week's edition.

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

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally
Unlisted clue hint: KIDNEY-SHAPED NUT

Cash bar	Cash-and-carry	Cashmere	Lancashire
Cash cow	Cash-poor	Cold cash	Noncash
Cash crop	Cashbox	E-cash	Uncashed
Cash flow	Cashier	Encash	

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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	4		3		2		5	
5					8			9

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps

AHH GEEZ, I AM STUFFED. I COULDN'T EAT ANOTHER BITE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? DON'T YOU KNOW COWS ACTUALLY HAVE FOUR STOMACHS?

FOUR STOMACHS, HUH?....

OK, WELL, I'M NOT ONE TO ARGUE WITH SCIENCE.

John Cheesborough, MD **Dawn E. Kleinman, MD** **Mary Candace Seagle, PA-C**

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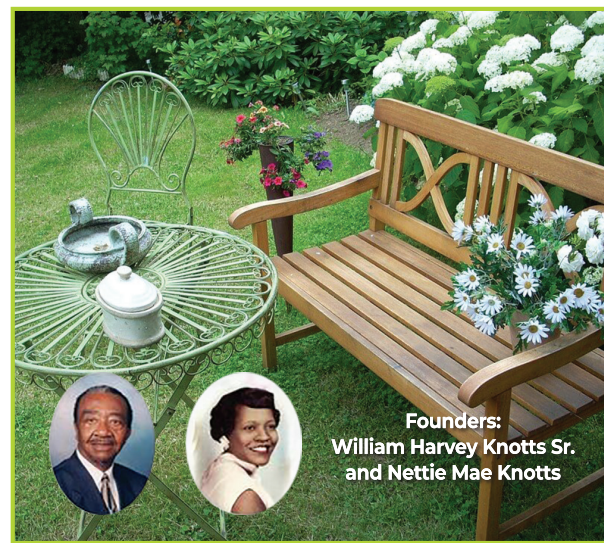
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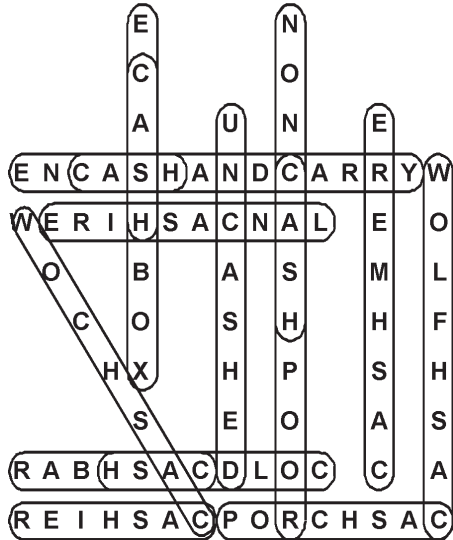


Founders:
William Harvey Knotts Sr.
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chatham brew

Chatham News + Record
chathamnewsrecord.com

CASH-RICH WORDS



Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

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

Merry Christmas to us all



DEBBIE MATTHEWS
The Curious Cook

Cherished Gentle Readers, you may not know this, but you are not alone.

In addition to writing for the Chatham News and Record, I also pen columns for the newspapers in Sanford and Henderson.

I don't have the words to explain how gratifying it is to me. When I write, sitting in my Jimmies on my comfy plaid chair, I picture you in my mind. The picture looks something like a 1970s coffee commercial: a family sitting around the breakfast table with mom and dad each reading the newspaper. Or Hepburn and Tracy, in sensible yet chic pajamas, reading the paper out loud to each other.

But this column is going out to every pair of eyeballs that reads my scribbling.

Chatham readers, let me introduce you to Sanford and Henderson, and vice versa. And I also want to say "thank you." Thank you to my long time readers, new readers or readers who don't slow down at my column and even those readers who've read my stuff and would rather not, not ever again, please.

Because the important thing is that you are all newspaper readers. In the 21st century that may

Buckeyes

5 ½ cups confectioner's sugar, sifted
1 cup creamy peanut butter
½ lb. (2 sticks) butter, softened
1 teaspoon salt
Caviar from 1 vanilla bean
½ bag semi-sweet chocolate chips
½ bag milk chocolate chips
About ¼ cup canning paraffin wax, finely chopped

Blend butter, peanut butter, and vanilla. Add sugar and beat to dough-like consistency. Form into balls with small scoop and chill or freeze. Melt chocolates and wax in microwave on 20 second intervals, stirring after each, until almost fully melted. Then stir until completely smooth. Double-dip balls in chocolate, leaving circle of peanut butter showing. Makes about 6 dozen.

seem somewhat anachronistic, yet newspapers (either in paper form or online) are vital. They are vital for informing a community and bringing it together.

For a democracy, they are its life blood. Organizations whose mission is to speak truth to power and illuminate which many would rather keep in the dark are the bellwether of liberty. An informed society can make informed decisions.

So, keep reading and supporting your local paper. This work can be dangerous, even sadly, deadly. Let them know how important their work is to you and how much it's appreciated. Because to put out a truthful, thoughtful newspaper these days is an act of heroism that can sometimes feel like a one is lone voice on the wind.

A country with a free press is by definition a free country.

Thank you to those Gentle Readers who have reached out to me. When I include my address each week, I don't do it because it's what one does. I do it because I hope that you will actually write back to me. A dialog with a reader is as good to me as plate of potato salad and a side of Dewey's cake.

And thank you for everyone's support in this year of drastic change for me. The only feedback I have received concerning my journey has been unreservedly kind and encouraging.

As my holiday thank you gifts to you, Gentle Reader, I leave you with a photo of my 4-year-old self in my flannel Christmas nightgown, and a favorite family candy recipe: buckeyes.

I often give these as gifts. I make up the peanut butter balls, and then freeze. When I need some, I just coat with chocolate, without even thawing them. Use a toothpick to



Courtesy of Debbie Matthews

The author during Christmas at age 4.

dunk them, then smooth out the little hole you've made. The wax is a cheat to substitute the difficult and time-consuming

chore of tempering chocolate. It keeps the chocolate glossy and gives it a crisp shell, but you won't taste it.

Thank you, Gentle Reader, for absolutely everything.

Contact me at dm@bullcity.mom.



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



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