

Chatham News + Record

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2022: A YEAR IN REVIEW

22 STORIES THAT DEFINED CHATHAM



The year 2022 was one of triumph and remembrance in Chatham County, as these photos illustrate. From VinFast to vigils, from celebrating new students to remembering those we sadly lost, it was a year marked with milestones.

CN+R Staff Report

Historic is an understatement when discussing the progress of Chatham in 2022. With more than \$9 billion and 9,000 jobs in promised economic investment through WolfSpeed and VinFast, the future of the county was altered in significant ways by news that broke in the past year.

It was a year also defined by primary and midterm elections that saw Democrats win every contested race in Chatham, and where events at Chatham County's schools — in and out of the classroom — also made headlines.

From bustling businesses to ballot battles, the Chatham community showed us resilience, inspiration and reasons to hope for a better future. While it's hard to capture all the emotions of this incredible — and occasionally trying — year that was 2022, there are highlights worth a look back. Here are 22 stories that defined 2022 in Chatham, broken down by category.

Education

The beginning of the 2022-2023 school year was the first time since the pandemic began that masking became optional in Chatham County Schools. And

just as the masks came off, it seemed the gloves did, too.

The classroom became a political battleground both nationally and locally. Debates over Critical Race Theory, religious expression in classrooms and masking showed the pervasiveness of sometimes-competing ideologies. But through these debates, CCS also gave plenty of reason for hope with improvements in test scores across the board and increased focuses on equity in the school system under the leadership of sophomore Superintendent Dr. Anthony Jackson. Here's a few stories that showed the power of education in Chatham:

1. In contentious 3-2 vote, CCS set for optional indoor masking in March

At the beginning of February, Hannah McClellan reported on the debates surrounding masking in the classroom. In a contentious 3-2 vote Feb. 14, the Chatham County Schools Board of Education began a gradual transition to optional masking "on or about March 7," dependent on the community transmission metrics set by the state health department and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"We believe we came up with a balanced approach to move this forward," CCS Superintendent Anthony Jackson

told the board regarding the district's proposed roadmap to optional masking. "We believe that with the support of our public health officials, we can manage this. We believe that given the appropriate structures, we can continue to do what we're doing.

"The only caveat I will put out there is that if the data begins to go back up," he said, "We may have to come back to you and ask for a reversal."

The board had voted on masking policies monthly since the pandemic began, but the February vote marked the first time the BOE opted for optional masking in the classrooms.

2. Community rallies around family of student who was subject of 'slave auction' at J.S. Waters

Concerned community organizers and activists rallied around the family of a J.S. Waters student whose mother says was involved in a mock slave auction at the school in March, Bill Horner III reported.

The incident gained the attention of organizations across the state and beyond.

The nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization — the

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The people who made Chatham exceptional

CN+R Staff Report

Chatham County is full of characters whose stories provide us with awe and wonder. The place we know and love is defined by the people who make it a welcoming county to live, work and play.

Talk to any given person in the county and they'll have a story unlike any you've heard before. From building homes for the mentally ill to cooking up meals for thousands, the people in Chatham are truly extraordinary. Throughout 2022, the News + Record has captured some of their stories. While it's impossible to highlight all the noteworthy people we wrote about in the past year, here are 18 who made 2022 especially memorable:

1. Sera Cuni: Chef at Root Cellar Cafe who starred on Food Network

Sera Cuni rarely meets a competition she doesn't want to enter.

Whether it's Strong Man matches around the state or Guy Fieri's Grocery Games on the Food Network, Cuni will take her talents wherever she can compete.

Recently, Cuni made it to the grand finale of the 2022 N.C. Restaurant and Lodging Association's Chef Showdown, where she showcased her smoked barbecue rubbed porchetta, southern Panzanella salad, grilled peaches, watermelon, corn, pickled peanuts, cornbread croutons and chow chow. She didn't win the top prize, but she does have the distinction of being the only female finalist among the savory chefs.

"The Chef Showdown was so much fun," she told the News + Record back in August. "It was wonderful to see friends from all over the state who came out to cheer for me and to taste my food."

Cuni, co-owner and chef of The Root Cellar Cafe & Catering in Chapel

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IMMUNIZATION HESITANCY?

Viral diseases surging

But Chatham's kids bucking trends

BY BILL HORNER III
News + Record Staff

If there's growing vaccine hesitancy among parents in some pockets of the U.S., data suggests that's not necessarily true in Chatham County — where child immunization rates remain higher than N.C.'s overall rate.

Still, growing cases of viral diseases among children are trends local health care professionals are watching.

Johnsie Hubble, the infection preventionist and employee health director at Chatham Hospital in Siler City, pointed to recent national stories about the resurgence of viral diseases such as varicella (chickenpox), measles, mumps and rubella (German measles) in the U.S.

Included was a Dec. 26 article in The Washington Post which cited growing anti-vaccine sentiment — driven by the pandemic and the politicization of the COVID-19 vaccine and school mandates — among some parents. A resultant drop in child immunization rates in pockets of the U.S. has led to higher numbers of measles and chickenpox

cases and more hospitalizations.

"The article notes that there is more hesitancy to vaccinate children for routine childhood vaccines, and this is concerning that it may result in more outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases," Hubble said. "There is an outbreak of varicella in Ohio among children whose parents opted not to vaccinate them. The pandemic has magnified this due to a lot of misinformation around COVID vaccines."

Hubble quoted the article as saying most of the sentiments against vaccine mandates are among those "who identify as Republican or lean that way," with that percentage doubling since the pandemic.

A new Kaiser study found 44% of those surveyed felt parents should be able to opt out of childhood vaccines, up from just 20% pre-pandemic, according to the Washington Post story. It also said more than one-third of parents with children under the age of 18 should be able to opt out of vaccinating their children as a requirement for attending public schools, even if that meant creating health risks for others.

"And there are other diseases, such as polio, with a case in the northeast — not vaccinated — and testing now finding polio in waste-

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SILER CITY'S TOWN HALL



Staff photo by Taylor Heeden

Siler City's town hall has been undergoing renovations since 2020. The second and third floors are close to completion, according to Town Manager Hank Raper.

Renovations still inching toward completion

BY TAYLOR HEEDEN
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — Renovations began at Siler City's town hall back in 2020, with the expectation that all necessary work would be completed within six months.

Town administration said at the time that the renovations were necessary to make the building more accessible and efficient for the public.

But one pandemic and nearly three

years later, the project is just now entering the final stages of inspection before being able to open most of the building to the public.

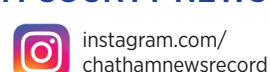
"As far as the building goes, we're about 95% complete with the renovation project," Siler City Town Manager Hank Raper told the News + Record. "And when I say 95%, that's 95% of what needs to be done so that the building can be opened

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IN THE KNOW

Jeff Nieman sworn in as new DA for Orange, Chatham. **PAGE A3**

STAY UP TO DATE ON THE LATEST CHATHAM COUNTY NEWS



‘POWER TO DO THE RIGHT THING’

Jeff Nieman sworn in as new District Attorney for Orange, Chatham

BY BEN RAPPAPORT
News + Record Staff

HILLSBOROUGH — When Jeff Nieman was 5 years old, he was a star on the soccer pitch.

His father, John, said Jeff was typically the team’s top goal-scorer, but recalled games when he’d brush back praises and accolades from family and friends until he was assured a teammate — a boy named Dennis — was safe and sound.

Dennis, Jeff’s youngest and smallest soccer teammate, often was dropped off at games without family members to see him play.

“Where’s Dennis?” Jeff would say, according to his dad. And it wasn’t until Jeff was assured that Dennis was OK, and in good hands, that he felt comfortable enough to celebrate the team’s win or his own star performance.

It was that sense of fairness and equality — shared by John Nieman about his son — that helped earn Jeff the role as the next District Attorney for Chatham and Orange counties.

In front of a packed Orange County Courthouse in Hillsborough on Monday, Nieman

was sworn into office by Superior Court Judge Allen Baddour. Nieman is just the fourth District Attorney to represent Chatham and Orange since the district split from Alamance County 40 years ago.

He replaces longtime DA Jim Woodall. Woodall had served as the district attorney for Prosecutorial Dist. 18, which encompasses all of Orange and Chatham counties, since 2005. He’d previously served as the district’s assistant district attorney for 17 years, and in the spring of 2021 alerted the judicial district’s bar about his decision not to seek re-election in 2022.

In the last May’s Democratic primary election, then-assistant DA Nieman was elected over his fellow assistant DA, Kayley Taber, with 53.7% of the vote. He didn’t face a Republican challenger in November.

Nieman has worked in the Dist. 18 office since 2006, when he interned there. In 2012 he helped create the Outreach Court in Orange County, which helps address the needs of those experiencing homelessness who have been charged with a crime by connecting

them to community resources instead of jail. He also set up a driver’s license restoration program in 2009 to help address the issue of poverty in the criminal justice system by helping those convicted of traffic crimes pay their tickets if they’re in a vulnerable position. With the help of Woodall, Nieman advocated for the Driver’s License Restoration Act, which was enacted in 2015 by the N.C. General Assembly.

On Monday, Nieman vowed to continue working toward a more equitable and just system for all residents of his district.

“Everyone believes we need to have a fair criminal justice system,” he told the News + Record. “What seems to be the consensus is that there’s nobody who has a greater ability to move the criminal justice system in the more positive, progressive, equitable direction than the DA.”

Nieman acknowledged that the district, which stretches from Chapel Hill to Siler City, includes people with varying socioeconomic status, backgrounds and worldviews, but he vowed to serve everyone in the district, as he promised through his campaign for office.

“We went to every corner of Chatham and Orange counties,” Nieman said. “We need to meet people where they are over the course of this service.”

The new DA said he would be meeting with attorneys in both counties to lay the groundwork for the term and let them know they have his respect and support.

The retiring Woodall said he and Nieman have been outlining the transition process since May’s election. Nieman has been proactive in his approach to helping staff and fellow assistant DAs with the transition of power, Woodall said, adding that there’s a bigger difference than most realize between assistant DA and being at the helm.

“Jeff’s ready for it but I think he’s going to be surprised



Photo courtesy of Annette Roberson

Jeff Nieman stands next to his wife and children as he is sworn in as the new District Attorney for Chatham and Orange counties on Monday at the Orange County Courthouse in Hillsborough by Superior Court Judge Allen Baddour. Nieman is the fourth DA to serve District 18 since it split from Alamance County 40 years ago.

that he has to make the final decision on so many different things,” Woodall said. “It’s everything from office policy to big cases and policies for the whole district.”

Woodall said while there will be an adjustment period, he predicts Nieman will be the “best district attorney” the district has ever had. He thinks Nieman’s devotion to justice and the region will earn him multiple terms in office.

Along with being Jeff’s father, John Nieman is also the chief public defender in Guilford County. He said his son has always had pride in this area. When Jeff was a senior in high school, his father got a job in Guilford County, but Jeff refused to leave the place he fell in love with: Chapel Hill. He would go on to graduate from UNC and serve as the student body president for two terms.

The passion for the area is especially important because of the people working in the DA’s office, Woodall said. Many of the current DA staff have been in the office for a decade or more, which the outgoing DA said he believes is part

of what makes this district special.

“It’s a different world out there now than when I entered this office 32 years ago,” Woodall said. “Prosecution is viewed in a different lens than it ever was before. There’s a lot more criticism. Jeff’s ready for it.”

As he addressed those who attended his swearing-in ceremony on Monday afternoon, Nieman said he understood the power and responsibility that came with the office of the DA. He said he recognized that his decisions may draw criticism, or that the actions of others may place blame on his shoulders, but he would always be proud to hold the office for the people of his community.

“Never in any job have I had as much power to do the right thing,” Nieman said. “This isn’t about self-aggrandizement, it’s about responsibility. I take that responsibility seriously and I will do my best every day to make you proud.”

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



Photo courtesy of Annette Roberson

The newly sworn-in District Attorney for Chatham and Orange counties, Jeff Nieman, addressed a full Hillsborough Court House on Monday. He vowed to push for a more equitable criminal justice system in the district.

OPENING

Continued from page A1

and publicly accessible.”

Raper said supply chain issues, the age of the building and other factors led to the almost three-year delay.

“When you have an 80-year-old cinder block building, unfortunately, when you start digging into things and start trying to replace things, you find other issues,” Raper said. “There’s been a lot of change orders to this project —

not because we changed the scope of what the project was intended to be, but because we’ve uncovered more systemic issues with the building.”

The project was originally set to cost \$500,000, but that has quickly ballooned to more than \$1.2 million. Raper said the increased costs could be attributed to a multitude of factors, including the sudden rise in inflation rates in the last year.

“Inflation and costs came in significantly higher than we antici-

pated because the cost of everything has gone up,” Raper said.

Inflation hikes and supply chain issues as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic have played a major role in delaying the completion of the town hall project. Another culprit, Raper said, is sub-contracting work — which was also not up to the highest standard and had to be redone on multiple occasions.

“Just to be honest, poor, soft subcontractor work had work that had

to be redone, or subcontractors didn’t show up to complete the job in a timely manner,” Raper said.

Despite setbacks, the town hall is nearing the end of its necessary repairs for the building to be reopened to the public. Raper said final inspections for the new elevator and the HVAC system are set to take place early this month, and he hopes the second and third floors of the building will be open by the end of January.

“The main goal is to

get the second and third floors open because those are the floors that administration and most departments for needs of the public such as planning and finance offices are located,” Raper said.

There’s still some work to be done in the basement, which is where the Public Works Department will be housed. Raper said, however, since that area isn’t needed right away for public access, the work is hyper-focused on the second and third floors.

“We’re trying to make it so the building is accessible on the second and third floors as soon as possible while we continue to work on the basement,” he said.

Raper said the project has been frustrating, not just for the public, but for town staff and elected officials. He said he hopes the inspections scheduled for the coming weeks will be able to close a chapter in the renovation project.

The work, however, won’t stop when most of the town hall opens to the public again.

Raper said there are still other accessibility items including permanent ADA ramps, badge systems and an improved courtroom AV system that need to be completed in town hall after it reopens, but many of those items will be constructed or improved until after the building is reopened to the public.

“There are other things related to the building that at some point need to be addressed, and we’ve just compiled a list of what all those things are for the board so that they understand what still needs to be done,” Raper said. “I don’t want to give the impression that after we’ve completed this and the buildings reopened, everything’s been addressed with that building because that would not be true ... The board is going to have to decide how many of those things they will tackle.”

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VIEWPOINTS

Thankful that some faux pas still aren't de rigueur



BILL HORNER III
Publisher + Editor

I distinctly remember when I learned what a faux pas was. I'd been caught, as a 12-year-old, committing one — licking my knife, and in a nice restaurant, to boot — in the company of my grandfather.

He was a man not known for pulling punches when it came to life critiques.

"Son," he said, with bewilderment in his voice, "now that's what they call a *faux pas*."

I wasn't sure what "that" was. Nor was I familiar with the phrase he used. He was an eager teacher, though, and

in short order I learned that using one's tongue to remove a morsel of gravy from your table knife was strictly *verboten*. (That's another word from Bill Horner Sr.'s colorful vocabulary — a preponderance of which had just four letters). And as a bonus I picked up some French with which I could use to tease my brainy sister Belinda. As in, "You know, it's just not right for you to make better grades than me. Chill out on the studying. A girl being listed higher on the honor roll than her brother is a real *faux pas*."

A faux pas, of course, is defined as a significant or embarrassing error or mistake. List of such include things like socially awkward or improper acts or remarks. You know: speaking with your mouth full of food. Checking your iPhone

in the middle of a conversation. Forgetting to unmute yourself on Zoom, or not using your turn signal when I'm driving behind you.

The nature of the faux pas means that they're most seriously committed in the company of witnesses. Which begs the question: Can you commit a faux pas at home? Maybe. I mean, aside from not wearing pants on a Zoom call?

When I said to my prim and proper wife a few weeks ago, "Son, that's what they call a *faux pas*," I probably crossed some kind of pedantic boundary. But the reality is she'd touched her tongue to her knife during dinner at home, and because she commits so few fouls (marital, social, Scrabble or otherwise), I felt like I had a responsibility — not necessarily to correct her, but to share

with her my nearly five-decades-old faux pas memory, and to casually inform her that the French phrase translates into "false step."

She wasn't so amused. In addition to living with my smart aleckness for 32 years, she minored in French in college.

At any rate, just like the so-called "soft skills" we used to acquire on the way to adulthood, gaffes and improprieties ain't what they used to be. Cell phones, cable TV news, social media, "Karen" videos, primeval presidential tweets and mask-shaming have helped lower the bar. The lines between what's considered a *faux pas* and what's considered *de rigueur* have been blurred.

Still, it's wise to pursue good manners and to practice things like self-awareness and kind-

ness. And to know not to use the "OK" hand sign in Brazil or the U.K. And to not give someone in Iran or Iraq the "thumbs up," or touch someone's head in Thailand. And to not smile at people in Korea you don't know.

And for heaven's sake, to know that you don't take bubblegum into Singapore. (Look that one up.)

So what about licking your plate when supper's just about done? I can imagine what my grandfather would have said about that one. But I know for sure what my grandmother would have done: she's pass me one of her mouth-watering biscuits and say, "Son, there's a better way to clean your plate."

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

Still not too late for resolutions that really make a difference



BOB WACHS
Movin' Around

They — whoever "they" are — tell us memory is the first thing to go.

I don't remember what's next. But recently a thought has come to me that even though we're now into 2023 and I'm still trying to remember to put that on checks and other documents, it still isn't too late to make a couple of resolutions for the upcoming year. And they all

revolve around forgetting more than remembering. Humor me, if you will, on this one.

In working on a Sunday morning message, I read about some things that would be good for us to forget in the New Year, and I share them with you while also trying to take my own advice.

One thing we should forget is past success, whatever form it takes. It's human, of course, to rest on our laurels and accomplishments. And it feels good to succeed, but there's a danger in remembering the past too much: it can paralyze us from looking forward and make us look downward on other folk who may not have been quite so successful.

Another thing to forget is just the opposite; we should forget past failures — and for the same reason. We've all had them, whether it's the grade of 8 that I once made on a high school chemistry test (my fault: I didn't like chemistry and I didn't study) or being passed over for the job promotion I once wanted.

If we drink too long from the fountain of failure we no longer want to go to the fountain at all for fear of failing again. And the longer I live, the more convinced I am of this one thing: we all experience failures — personal, family, business, spiritual — but none of us are failures if we keep at it and do our best.

A third thing to forget, and one that seems to be prominent in human life, is to forget past grievances. Keeping score is something that should only happen in ball games, not in relationships. It's been my sorrow to see family members all but come to blows over a piece of property or a slight that happened years ago, sometimes so long ago that even though the grudge has been nursed for years, the folks involved can't remember what it was that first upset them.

Don't keep a list of resentments; don't lug all your old grudges into 2023; don't make new ones; get over running battles with family members; resolve gripes with your parents (regardless of your age or theirs); if you're mad at God because your life isn't all you wanted it to be, do something about it. Get over your anger and turn your life around.

And finally, forget your handicaps and fears. All of us have some kind of "handicap." For some folks it's an excuse to do nothing; for others, it can be an excuse to do better. For instance, I'll admit up front that I know basically nothing about the workings of the internal combustion engine. You do not want me to stick a screwdriver into the 4-barrel carb on your Chevy Super Sport. But it's possible, if I'm interested, that I could find someone who would teach me the way around a set of wrenches.

And fears ... President Roosevelt in the dark days of the Depression and World War II told the nation the only thing we have to fear "is fear itself." Are there some unpleasant things in life? Does it get dark at night? The answer to both is "sure."

But the answer, I believe, is found in hope. The old adage says "where there's life there's hope." I think it's more the other way around — where there's hope there's life.

Forgive and be forgiven. Have faith in yourself, others and God.

A little verse I ran across sums it up this way: "It's better to walk in the dark with God than walk alone in the light; it's better to walk with Him by faith than walk alone by sight."

Let's try to forget those things this year and get back together in 360 or so days and see how it turned out.



A menagerie



ANDREW TAYLOR-TROUTMAN
Hope Matters

My family scooted down to the North Carolina coast for a couple days last week to celebrate the holidays with extended family. The kids received more Christmas presents, including a turtle for my daughter — a

hand-carved wooden one, that is. Sweet Baby Jesus, my kids don't need another pet!

But their Santa list was filled with live animals. A hamster, gerbil and guinea pig. Not just one, but all of those critters! My daughter even asked for a puppy. When I clarified that, surely, she meant a stuffed animal — not another real dog! — she shook her head.

"One dog is not enough!" There are actually no animals mentioned in the Bible at the birth of Jesus. (The recently deceased Pope Benedict XVI pointed this out in his book about the infancy narratives.) But tradition has it that Mary rode a donkey to Bethlehem. There were shepherds, so sheep are often included in the scene. Cattle "lowing" is from the popular carol "Away in a Manger."

Lobsters were with the Sweet Baby Jesus in the movie "Love Actually."

It can get a little out of hand. Possibly because they have heard about the manger their whole lives, my kids want their own menagerie. Not livestock, but definitely a herd of rodents. Oh, they promise, they will take care of them! They will feed and water them!

I replied that I'd be happy to get them a small plant.

They made another counteroffer — a snake!

My dear friend owns a pet snake. Recently, Mango was introduced to my sons during an afternoon visit to her house. The boys have not stopped talking about this experience. No, stuffed snakes did not slake their desire.

Thankfully, I have an important ally at home. My wife is not on board for more animals, whether rodent or reptile. She's a firm "no." The kids know better than to pester her. They have long known which parent is more likely to bend.

As I relaxed with my dog in our otherwise animal-free living room,

the kids approached bearing peanut butter-filled pretzels from Trader Joe's. Their scouting report showed all my weaknesses.

"Dad," the eldest began. "We have an idea about a new pet."

I stopped, midchew.

"You can get us a bearded dragon."

I'd sooner shave my own beard! Back to the beach house: Upon arrival, we discovered the presence of certain furry little creatures by their, ahem, "presents" dropped in the pantry. My kids spent a good hour scouring the house for them. I was touched that they wanted to help rid the house of mice.

"No, Dad. We want to take them home!"

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."

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

VIEWPOINTS

North Carolina food: great resources, great challenges



D.G. MARTIN
One on One

Let's take a culinary trip across North Carolina.

Our leader will be food expert and retired UNC-Chapel Hill professor Marcie

Cohen Ferris. Our guidebook will be her latest book, "Edible North Carolina."

For many years I traveled across our state searching for old-time country cooking eateries and simple barbecue restaurants, places where the locals meet to catch up with community news.

Ferris and the group of food experts she assembled for her book have taught me that I missed a lot about our state's foodways. They are changing and there is a growing awareness of conflicts between the goals of low-cost food productions, fair compensation of food workers, and protection of the environment.

Ferris's experts show how the state's food scenes are

changing. They explain the challenges that will face those who work for food equity and justice.

For instance, food writer Andrea Weigl explains how some barbecue restaurants have been transformed from modest places serving 'que and a handful of sides and sweet tea to restaurants with "full menus with appetizers and desserts, table service, cloth napkins, a full bar and even valet parking."

One of Weigl's examples of this new trend is Buxton Hall in Asheville, far away from the homelands of classic Lexington and Eastern styles barbecue. Buxton Hall's chef and co-owner Elliott Moss buys pasture-raised whole hogs — "up to fourteen hogs to serve between 3,000 and 6,000 customers during lunch and dinner seven days a week."

The suggestion that one of the state's best barbecue restaurants might be in far-away Asheville would have drawn laughs just a few years ago.

Back to the coast where

Harkers Island advocate Karen Amspacher explains how the state's commercial fishermen work to meet the demands of customers "who want fresh, local, sustainable seafood."

She worries that "campaign contributions, lobbyists, and media campaigns assure well-funded recreational user groups that allocations of fin-fish in particular, a public-trust resource, will be dedicated to those who have the time and money to fish for leisure rather than those who fish for a living and provide North Carolinians with the state's best, freshest seafood."

Durham chef and Saltbox Seafood Joint restaurant owner Ricky Moore was recently named Tar Heel of The Year by The News & Observer of Raleigh. He supports Amspacher's efforts, and believes that local, seasonal fish taste superior, offers more diversity, and, most important, supports North Carolina fisherfolk.

"My guests at Saltbox want to know where to purchase their seafood," he says. "My

advice is to go to your local fish market. At your neighborhood restaurants, do they serve regional fish? Where do they source their fish? Do not assume that all North Carolina restaurants get their seafood from our coast. Ask questions. What part of the North Carolina coast does the seafood come from? Is the fish in season? How do they acquire their seafood, where and when and from whom? My guests also want to know how fish should smell. If it smells fishy or rotten, it is old and has been handled incorrectly. Fresh seafood should have no smell at all or only the icy, fresh whiff of the ocean."

Former UNC-Chapel Hill and current Emory University professor Malinda Maynor Lowery takes readers to Robeson County where her Lumbee Indian kin introduce us to fried cornbread and collard sandwiches, food traditions they share with non-Indian rural neighbors.

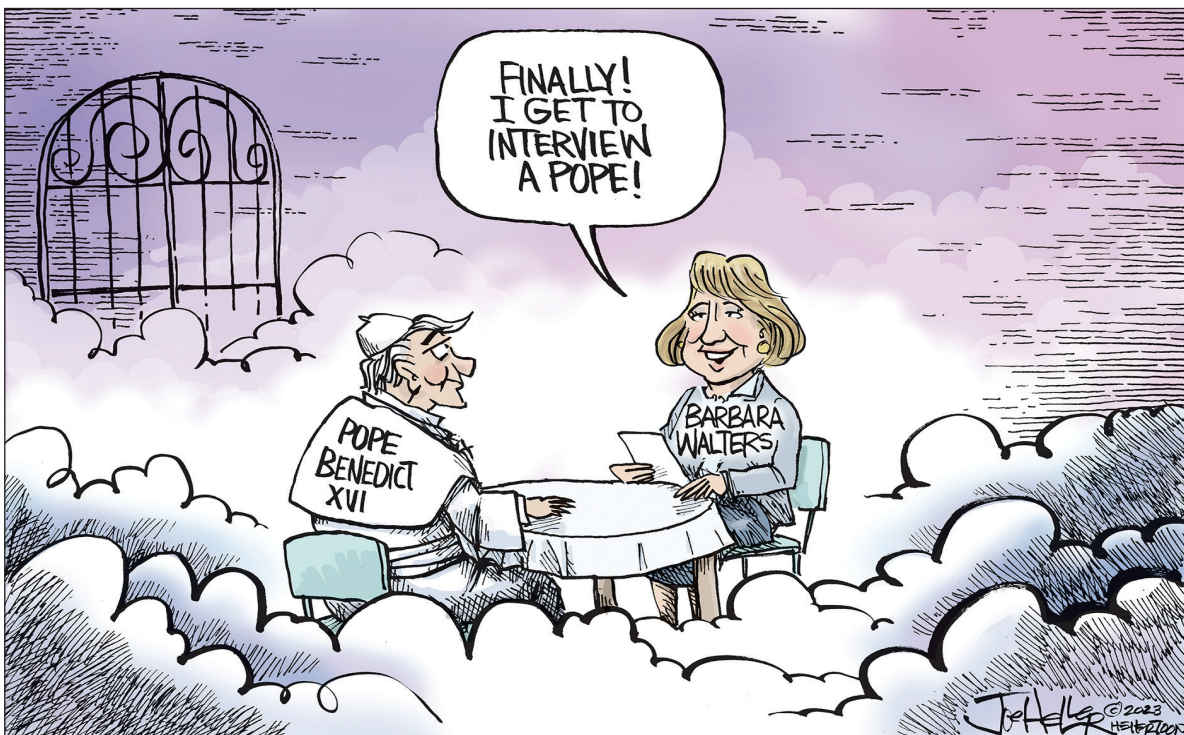
Durham resident and N.C. State community food system

outreach coordinator Shorlette Ammons "grew up Black and Country, and honestly, I have never had a strong desire to be anything else."

Her description of the annual hog killing contrasts with the "environmental cost of industrial hog farming." Struggling "to work effectively within institutions that historically perpetuated racial injustice requires a fair amount of soul searching," she says.

But, she continues, "Food, farming, family, freedom — and the audacity to confront the contradictions they muster — are inherent to our history these stories are weighted by ancestry and remembrance, like the heaviness of wet tobacco leaves."

These examples and many others demonstrate how Ferris's authors give recognition to North Carolina's admirable food resources and the challenges that accompany them. *D.G. Martin, a retired lawyer, served as UNC-System's vice president for public affairs and hosted PBS-NC's North Carolina Bookwatch.*



Can we have one more week of Christmas?



TOM CAMPBELL
N.C. Spin

Was it just me or did Christmas come too early? Yes, it's always Dec. 25, but it seemed like we were still eating Halloween candy when Christmas neighbor goodies started showing up on our doorstep. I'm not alone. Most of my family and friends said Christmas came on them too soon, adding they were exhausted. Thanksgiving was Nov. 24, and the Sunday following was the first day of Advent. The season was hurried and harried as we had to get more done in a compressed time frame.

This is normally the column each year where I pontificate and postulate about what to expect in the coming year, but I had a pretty lousy win-loss record on 2022 predictions and decided to forego the exercise this year. For example, I predicted we would see the re-emergence of the traditional Republican Party in North Carolina — clearly not the case. I forecast that Republicans would win 9 of our 14 congressional seats; the actual outcome was 7-7, one of few elections where Democrats did well. I predicted Pat McCrory would win our U.S. Senate election, but he didn't even win his primary. I boldly stated North Carolina wouldn't expect to see any more "elephant-sized" industrial announcements in '22, but it was another blockbuster year for new job announcements.

Sadly, my most accurate predictions were where I was also most pessimistic. We did see the level of rage and mistrust go up in almost every imaginable category, especially road rage, customer anger and gun violence.

Instead of my usual hard-hitting, always insightful columns, what I really wanted was one more week of good tidings, peace on earth, homemade goodies and Hallmark movies. OK, I admitted it. I promise to focus on current events over the next 52 weeks but permit me, and perhaps join me in a few more moments to take a breath, get a cup of eggnog and reflect on Christmas.

What were your favorite Christmas memories? I was glad to have participated (as Caesar Augustus) in our church's "living nativity," a whimsical, yet basically accurate revisiting of the Christmas scripture.

Other highlights included a personalized calendar for 2023 with each month displaying different family pictures. Knowing I love jigsaw puzzles, there were several outstanding ones, especially one of 1,000 pieces displaying seed packets and another with the barrels of candy from the Mast General Store. I got a copy of William Powell's North Carolina Gazetteer, a marvelous book with 20,000 references of every geographical nook and cranny in our state.

And who can't enjoy getting a new edition of The Farmer's Almanac, the 195-year-old publication edited and printed in Winston-Salem? Inside was a page looking back 100 years to 1923. It noted the mass production of Kellogg's Corn Flakes and talked about shopping from catalogs. Growing up in the '50s, I fondly remember the annual Sears Christmas catalog, dog-eared and worn out long before Santa came. And the Almanac reminisced that people were starting to take photographs with the new Kodak cameras.

Blum's Farmer's Almanac has monthly calendars for the next four years, first and final frost dates, when it's best to plant or harvest flowers and vegetables, and the always widely read (but not always widely accurate) weather forecasts. The current edition doesn't predict much measurable snow for us but does forecast lots of hot and humid weather in spring and summer, accompanied by much rainfall. We could use it.

We enjoyed visits with good friends with whom we haven't had enough time recently, reinstated some family traditions modified or canceled during the pandemic, and started some new ones.

Compressed though it was, we experienced a genuine spirit of bonhomie and good humor. It just wasn't long enough. On a personal note, year's end will be special as Lib and I celebrate 57 years of marriage. We still marvel that we put her parents through having to handle Christmas and a wedding within days of each other.

Democratic court blew it on redistricting



JOHN HOOD
John Locke Foundation

I've been on the redistricting beat a long time. Back in the early 1990s, I wrote numerous articles criticizing the collaboration among Republican and NAACP

activists to maximize the number of black-majority districts. After the egregious Democratic gerrymander of 2001, I cheered on the lawsuit that ultimately became the Stephenson v. Bartlett case, which overturned the gerrymander and enforced the state constitution's rule against unnecessarily splitting counties in legislative maps.

Later I endorsed and helped organize multiple coalitions to reform the process by amending North Carolina's constitution. Just as the whole-county provision had acted as a check on gerrymandering in Stephenson, we argued that adding other redistricting criteria such as compactness to the constitution could erect additional guardrails against abuses.

What I never believed — and what I still consider a patently fallacious argument — is that North Carolina's constitution already contained redistricting rules discoverable in such clauses as "all elections shall be free" and "no person shall be denied equal protection of the laws." We had, after all, spent many years seeking to persuade state lawmakers to place a redistricting-reform amendment on the ballot precisely because the current state constitution did not contain the safeguards in question.

Other reformers disagreed. More to the point, Republicans had won legislative majorities in 2010 — running in districts drawn by the other party, mind you — while a few years later Democrats regained a majority on the North Carolina Supreme Court. State and national Democrats decided they couldn't pass up the opportunity to sue.

Their federal litigation ultimately hit a dead end. The U.S. Supreme Court declared, correctly, that similarly vague language in the federal constitution did not empower the federal judiciary to police partisan gerrymandering or supplant the role of state legislatures in drawing congressional maps.

Their litigation in the state courts went a different direction, however. Back in February, the four Democrats on the state's highest court ruled in Harper v. Hall that the North Carolina constitution's general protections of free elections, equal protection, free speech, and free assembly did, in fact, constitute legitimate grounds for state courts to judge the fairness of districts drawn by the General Assembly — and even for judges to use their own consultants and resources to draw the maps instead.

The practical effect was that the 2022 elections for the General Assembly and U.S. House of Representatives were held within districts that were either drawn by court-appointed "special masters" or by legislators subject to a court order. Republicans still won a supermajority in the state senate and came within a seat of winning one in the state house, though Democrats fared better in the congressional races.

That was far from the end of

the legal fight. Both the Democratic plaintiffs and Republican defendants were dissatisfied. Both appealed separate elements of the decision. On Dec. 16, the North Carolina Supreme Court issued another decision in Harper v. Hall. Once again by a party-line vote, Democratic justices affirmed their original findings and even threw out the senate districts we just used in the election, ordering the legislature to try again in 2023.

I lack the space to describe in depth the majority and dissenting opinions here. If you're so inclined, go read them yourself. To my mind, the folly of the Democrats' original decision is clearly exposed. By liberally construing the state constitution to prohibit what its text clearly does not, and then refusing to spell out specific legal and numerical criteria for lawmakers to follow, the Democratic justices have created an intolerable mess.

And as my John Locke Foundation colleague Andy Jackson has observed, they have also likely doomed the litigation strategy. Whatever happens next year, the defendants are likely to appeal to a new North Carolina Supreme Court with an originalist majority. The Harper v. Hall standard "is a dead man walking," Jackson predicts.

That doesn't mean redistricting reform itself is dead. It just means we'll have to do it the proper way: by amending the state constitution.

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

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Hill and the Café Root Cellar, a sister restaurant in Pittsboro, was also one of two Triangle area chefs to make it to the finals.

2. Bob Hagemann: Chatham County Attorney who was the secret weapon behind VinFast, Wolfspeed

What do Charlotte's Bank of America Stadium, Fujifilm, VinFast and Wolfspeed all have in common?

The legal work on these massive N.C. economic development projects was overseen by one man: Bob Hagemann.

Hagemann, an attorney at Poyner Spruill in Raleigh, is now in his third year as the attorney for Chatham County's governmental operations, and in that short span, he's already made a huge impact — playing an instrumental role in bringing more than \$9 billion and 9,000 jobs in economic development to the county this year and helping set the stage for decades of growth and change.

His peers would describe him as laid-back, humble. The kind of guy you'd enjoy catching up with over a glass of wine. But underneath Hagemann's easygoing exterior is someone who knows how to get the job done, and whose skilled approach to the tasks at hand earned him the nickname — assigned by Michael Smith, the president of Chatham's economic development office — "Billion-Dollar Bob."

3. Michael Smith: President of Chatham Economic Development Corporation who helped bring VinFast and Wolfspeed here

In an age where landing even a \$50 million economic development project is considered a major win, Michael Smith sheepishly admits the numbers generated in Chatham County during 2022 were almost "cartoonish" in scope.

Smith, the president of Chatham's Economic Development Corporation, is the chief internal engineer of the county's industrial development efforts. It all got started last March with VinFast — at the time, with \$4 billion in investment and 7,500 new jobs, the biggest industrial announcement in N.C. history. The Vietnamese company is now more than a third finished with site preparation work on its land at Triangle Innovation Point, near Moncure, the future home of its massive electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing plant set to roll out EVs in the summer of 2024. (Plant construction will begin early this year.)

Add in semiconductor maker Wolfspeed's \$5 billion, 1,700-job announcement for the Chatham-Siler City Advanced Manufacturing site in September, and FedEx's April shipping hub launch near the VinFast site, and Smith acknowledges something truly unprecedented

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

Which is to say: even after landing the two largest economic development projects in state history, Chatham County isn't finished yet. The county still has more megasite property available than any county in the state. So even after an extraordinarily busy 2022, Smith's 2023 calendar could be just as full.

4 & 5. Mary Nettles & Bob Pearson: Community Remembrance Coalition-Chatham leaders who made a mark(er)

Mary Nettles was raised in Pittsboro and still lives there. Bob Pearson grew up on a farm in Tennessee, then got a law degree and served in the Foreign Service, working under six presidents in more than 50 counties before retiring in Fearington Village. She's Black; he's white.

In 2022, their four-year collaboration — through local branches of the NAACP and the help from fellow members of the Community Remembrance Coalition-Chatham, which they help found together — culminated in the placing in September of a historical marker in Pittsboro remembering the legacy of Chatham County's six lynching victims.

The work began in 2018, and when the marker was unveiled and dedicated near the courthouse in Pittsboro, Pearson reminded everyone of what preceded the unveiling.

"We are here today because history requires that this story be told," Pearson said. "Others now and in the future can read this marker and learn and be inspired by it to continue to bring justice to our community."

He said justice cannot be achieved without truth, and that the work of Nettles and the rest of the CRC-C was meant to reconcile Black history in the county and seek a progressive way forward.

The unveiling came just days after Nettles, Pearson, and other CRC-C members traveled to Montgomery, Alabama, to visit the Equal Justice Initiative's two landmark projects: The Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice.

After returning from the trip, Nettles said she was most impacted by the room with the sign, "A MAN WAS LYNCHED YESTERDAY."

"The room also displayed hundreds of jars of soil from around the United States, with the name of the person lynched, date and year lynched and a short story educating the public about the lynching," she said.

Those jars included soil from sites from Chatham's six lynching victims, which Nettles helped collect.

"In addition to the stories I have heard, I was able to see and read about a painful truth that

needs telling of a long history of racial injustice and wrongful convictions against people of color," she said.

One of the next steps Pearson said the CRC-C may devote energy toward is recognizing the enslaved Africans who were brought to Chatham County with European settlers. Currently, the Historical Museum in Pittsboro has a plaque of "the first settlers of Chatham County," but Pearson said it includes only white European names.

6. Jim Vanderbeck: Viet Nam Veteran remembering his fallen fellow soldiers

Many men and women from Chatham County have served with distinction in the military, but every year, as Veterans Day approaches, Jim Vanderbeck's memories of war are particularly poignant and painful.

In August 1969, he had a chance to move from crew chief on aircraft #64-13161 to an additional replacement ship — as aircraft were called — as flight engineer on a Boeing manufactured Chinook CH-47 being used by the Army. The fateful switching of "ships" would have eternal consequences.

"My friend Jim Mott was not surprised at my reassignment to the new ship as we had celebrated the previous night in the flight platoon hootch (living quarters) we shared; I took his picture," Vanderbeck remembered in a first-person Veterans Day story he wrote for the News + Record. "Jim Mott and I were both unaware at the time that two crew chiefs would be showing up for one flight engineer position in a conflicting situation the next morning, but Mott had been expecting a replacement crew chief, nonetheless.

"Aug. 30, 1969, is indelible in my mind, but the exact timing during the remainder of that day is now a bit blurry.

"161 took off with its five-man crew for the day's sorties as I continued to work on 141. Sometime later, word came out along the flight-line that one of the company's ships went down. I went to the flight operations shack to get more information. The report came in by radio that the downed ship was 161 but there was little additional information just then. The mission board showed the ship had been supporting the Australians out of Nui Dat base camp. More info started to come in that the ship had crashed in the jungle short of their intended LZ (landing zone), FSB Diggers Rest. The jungle, the ship's jet-fuel, and

the exploding ordinance the ship was carrying prevented on-the-ground field forces from quickly getting to the downed ship.

"A little later, it was reported that there were no survivors of the five-man crew."

Vanderbeck later flew over the crash site; the outline of a Chinook was burned into the jungle, he wrote.

"The cockpit was separated from the rest of the ship and the pilots, Bobby Gray and Marvin Butterfield, had been intact in their seats but were dead. Jim Mott, Scott Verner and Greg Trimnal were consumed by the fire that completely burned the remaining 52-foot fuselage except for the massive aft rotor head."

Now, the 113-acre site Vanderbeck owns in Chatham County is being used to recognize and honor "the sacrifices made that enabled me to literally continue my life ... We decided we would name our road Greg Trimnal Circle and look for opportunities in the future to name other areas of our land after the rest of the crew of 64-13161."

He wrote that he and his wife, Marie, are moving closer to their of recognizing the ultimate sacrifice of the crew of 161.

"Oh," Vanderbeck wrote. "How I miss them!"

7. Airryn Wharton: Northwood student who saved her father's life

When Airryn went outside to warm up her car on that chilly Feb. 7 morning, she noticed her father had returned from driving her younger sister to school. But when she came back outside to leave for school herself, his car was still there — in the same spot.

That was unusual, Airryn thought.

Normally, her dad would have already left for work. When Airryn investigated, she found him inside the car, his head against the window — unconscious.

Airryn immediately ran to get her mother and brother, who were inside, and then called 911. The car doors were locked, but the window was down and the family managed to open the door, pull Reginald Aaron Wharton Jr. from his vehicle and lay him down flat upon the driveway.

The sound her dad made sounded like snoring to Airryn. But she knew — thanks to a class she took at Northwood — that it wasn't.

Airryn proceeded to perform CPR on her father and continued chest compressions for about



Staff photo by Bill Horner

Bob Pearson of Pittsboro, who helped organize CRC-C and led the effort to place the memorial marker, watches as Chatham County Commissioner Karen Howard receives it on behalf of the county.

six minutes until help arrived. That sustained him until a police officer and Emergency Medical Technicians arrived; an ambulance then whisked her dad to UNC Hospitals, where he remained until late afternoon before being released.

Wharton's CPR training at Northwood High School saved her father's life.

8. Rose Pate: founder of JMArts

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

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

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

Since then, J-M has performed nine Broadway

musicals, including "Into the Woods," "The Little Mermaid" and "Oklahoma!" The theatre program is set to perform its 10th, "Shrek the Musical," next spring.

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

Pate remains involved as president of JMArts, even after her retirement.

9 & 10. Craig Witter & Tammy Matthews: founders of Pittsboro Youth Theater

Craig Witter and Tammy Matthews, co-founders of the Pittsboro Youth Theater, make the humble stage in downtown Pittsboro a place of family. Over the years they've seen the company evolve and grow, but the community they've created along the way has followed them.

The couple first opened PYT out of the Pittsboro Community House, where they ran the operation for five years before moving into their own space around the corner in the Pittsboro Center for the Arts. Now, after five years the theater is set to move again.

At the end of 2022, PYT was in the midst of moving into a new, bigger space in Bynum. It'll be a home that is authentically theirs, Witter said. Unlike previous spaces, they're designing everything essentially from scratch to make it the optimal place for youth theater rehearsals, music lessons, dancing, and of course, charming performances.

"There's just no way we can stay here," Witter said. "Business as usual won't cut it."

PYT is expanding faster than the corner space in downtown can keep up with, so the bigger space was a necessary move.

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Chatham Charter School

Chatham Charter School is now accepting applications for openings in kindergarten and limited openings in first through eleventh grade for the 2023-2024 school year. Kindergarten applicants must be five years of age on or before August 31, 2023. The application period ends on January 27, 2023. Applications may be submitted online (www.chathamcharter.org) under the "Admissions" link, at the school (2200 Hamp Stone Road, Siler City) or by calling (919) 742-4550.

Chatham Charter School administers all education programs, employment activities, and admissions without discrimination against any person on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, or other legally-protected classification.

La Escuela de Chatham Charter

La Escuela de Chatham Charter ahora está tomando aplicaciones para espacios del kinder y algunos espacios desde el primer grado hasta el grado once para el año escolar 2023-2024. Los niños que asistan al kinder deben tener cinco años de edad antes del 31 de agosto, 2023. El periodo de aplicación termina el 27 de enero, 2023. Puede completar una aplicación al Internet (www.chathamcharter.org) al enlace Admissions, a la escuela (2200 Hamp Stone Road, Siler City) o por una llamada (919.742.4550).

La Escuela de Chatham Charter es una escuela pública, multid denominacional, y no lucrativa que provee una educación de la calidad para los niños de todas las razas, los credos, una condición de discapacidad, y los orígenes nacionales.

Small Class Size
Individual Attention
Over 30 middle and high school sports teams offered

Las clases pequeñas
Atención individualizada
Ofrecen más de 30 equipos de deportes para los grados 6-12



Extra Curricular Activities
College Preparatory Tuition Free

Las actividades extracurriculares
La preparación de universidad
Enseñanza gratuita



Staff photo by Tanner Bubeck

Michael Smith, the president of the Chatham Economic Development Corporation, speaks to the audience during a 'Corridors of Opportunity' panel at the Chatham County Agriculture & Conference Center in Pittsboro.

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When Witter and Matthews first began the endeavor they never thought it would expand to where it is today. What used to be one musical a year is now an average of seven shows annually, a music school, and most recently, a competitive troupe preparing for the Junior Theater Festival (JTF).

What started with five families is now bigger than ever with more than 120 families consistently participating in the shows. They've even hired others to help out with the operation including choreographers and a music director.

In 2022, Witter and Matthews celebrated the 10-year anniversary of making PYT a home on stage for kids throughout Chatham County.

11. Thava Mahadevan: founder of Tiny Homes Village at the Farm at Penny Lane

On a bright fall morning, Thava Mahadevan heads down a gravel pathway to a clearing surrounded by orange construction tape and a circle of trees just beginning to fade in color. At the moment, the construction site itself isn't particularly impressive; white stakes in the ground demarcate plots of land and a septic route while tire tracks etch the soft mud of the property.

But through Mahadevan's eyes, it's the foundation of a dream years in the making.

In 2009, when Mahadevan purchased 40 acres of farmland in a neighborhood off Chapel Hill Road in Pittsboro, the idea of one day creating a space for safe, affordable housing was just a hopeful vision.

A licensed clinical addiction specialist and director of operations at the UNC Center for Excellence in Community Mental Health, he founded the Farm at Penny Lane in 2012 using a "holistic and sustainable approach" to improve the quality of life for those with serious and persistent mental illness.

Over the next 10 years, Mahadevan and his team at the Farm at Penny Lane saw the development of the organic therapeutic farm and its recovery-oriented programs, from music and yoga classes to animal-assisted and horticulture thera-

pies. Addressing social determinants of health and centering those with lived experiences are at the core of the Farm's practices.

"So it's a place to really build on the notion that collective impact makes a big difference," Mahadevan, who also serves as executive director of local nonprofit Cross Disability Services, told the News + Record in October.

Now, the Farm is getting closer and closer to seeing another part of its community finally in practice: the Tiny Homes Village.

The Tiny Homes Village, located on the grounds of the Farm at Penny Lane, will have 15 tiny homes; each will be built on a permanent foundation and encompass around 360 square feet. Five of the homes will be reserved for veterans with chronic health conditions, and the village will also have an outdoor pavilion and a clubhouse with fitness and cooking facilities.

12. Anna Hackney: 18-year-old who spoke out against her sexual assault

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 in December, 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 Ellington, stepped into Hackney'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. But Hackney said Ellington began sexually abusing her — touching her inappropriately, beginning at age 11 — and, according to Hackney, blaming the various medications he took for his actions.

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."

13. Jennie Knowlton: founder of Quiltmaker Cafe, feeder of the hungry

Jennie Knowlton established the nonprofit Quiltmaker Café in February 2021 with her husband David and daughter Elizabeth and a simple vision: to open a permanent fast-casual restaurant in Pittsboro using a pay-what-you-can model, in which those eating set their own price for the meal. Donations can take different forms, including monetary, produce or donations of time through volunteering.

Knowlton said there are around 50 other cafés in the country using the same model, and under the umbrella of the One World Everybody Eats nonprofit organization.

Quiltmaker Café, which has been serving meals at community events while it aims to establish a location in Pittsboro, follows seven tenets: pay-what-you-can pricing, the ability for guests to choose portion sizes, the ability for guests to volunteer in exchange for a meal, serving healthy and local food, offering a community table as "an equalizer" to guests, paid employees receiving a living wage and volunteers making up the majority of restaurant staff.

Knowlton, who grew up experiencing food insecurity, remembers the associated stigma. A core feature of the restaurant is dignity, she said, and being able to give agency to patrons to dine out and enjoy a meal with others.

"So there'll be no separation between who might be paying, who might be volunteering, who might be paying under," she said. "And just building that community also with using volunteers, rather than employees, [so] that everyone is also serving each other, once again, no matter from what type of means they might be coming from."

In Chatham County,

11.7% of residents, or 8,350 people, are food insecure, according to the 2019 Feeding America report. In comparison, the state's food insecurity rate for the same year was 13.5%. The Chatham County Public Health Department's 2021 Community Assessment found that more than 1 in 8 Chatham County adults reported worrying they would run out of food before they had money to buy more in the past year, including around 30% of Hispanic or Latinx residents and 20% of Black residents.

Since its establishment, the Quiltmaker Café has hosted different meals in the county, including a Thanksgiving Day feast at Postal Fish.

Knowlton, in a New Year's message to supporters this week, wrote: "I have to say that the nonprofit world is an amazing and one of the most incredible experiences I have ever had, second only to raising our child. The amazing people that I have met this year and even more importantly, have really gotten to know, truly blows my mind and sparks an internal hope that I'm sure all of us, at one time or another, have lost over the negativity and drama that can seem to take the spotlight. If you are ever feeling down, visit a local nonprofit, any nonprofit, and I can almost promise you that the people you meet will lift your spirits."

14 & 15. Tyler White & Chris Terry: owners of Bestfood Cafeteria

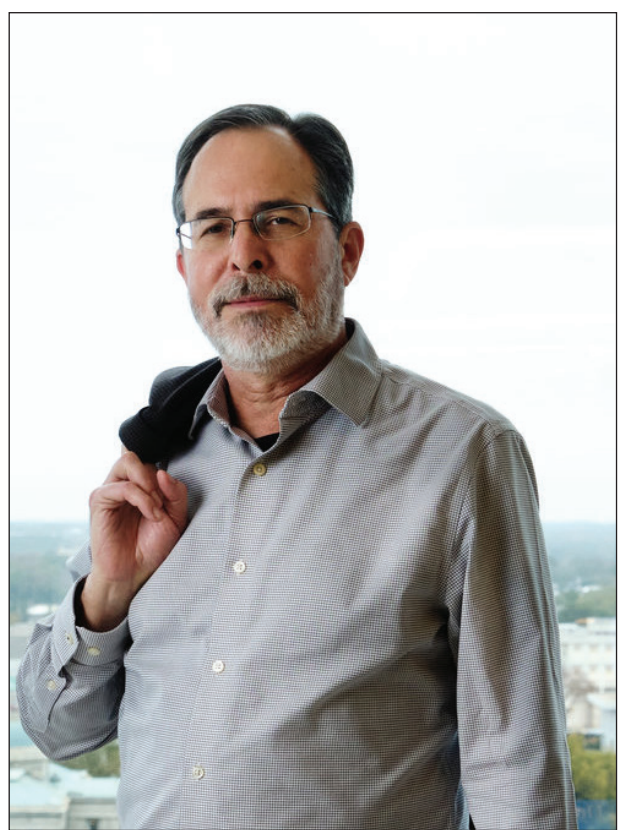
Tyler White and Chris Terry have spent the majority of their lives behind the serving line at Bestfood Cafeteria and working in Hayley Bales Steakhouse — starting back in 2003, when their fathers acquired the businesses.

Now, it's just the two of them.

Chris's father, Mike Terry, died in 2018 after a lengthy battle with cancer. And Tyler's father, Art White, died after contracting COVID-19 last August. Now, in the face of grief and loss, Tyler and Chris are carrying on the legacies of their fathers as the faces of two of Siler City's best-known eateries.

"When you look back on it, it gave our dads a lot of stability to know they had two people under them who cared, knew the sacrifice and could do the work," Tyler said.

Bestfood Cafeteria and Hayley Bales Steakhouse — located side by side off U.S. Hwy. 64 — have been a part of the Siler City community for decades. Bestfood (which opened in 1989) operates during lunch and dinner service as a more casual dining option, while Hayley Bales (which opened in 1992) serves a more formal dining experience



Staff photo by Matt Ramey

Chatham County attorney Bob Hagemann, who's helped steer three of the biggest economic development projects in state history to fruition.

with dinner-exclusive services.

The Terry-White duo strives to continue their fathers' dreams of serving up Southern cooking to the community that continues to support the cafeteria, the steakhouse and their fathers' dreams.

16. Erika Hoffman: writer for 'Chicken Soup for the Soul'

Erika Hoffman became a bit concerned about her own state of mind after reading a series of articles about dementia, a memory-loss condition which afflicted her late father, and decided to take action.

What happened next was downright laughable. A story Hoffman wrote — entitled, "You Smell That?" — led off the second chapter of a 2022 edition of "Chicken Soup for the Soul: Too Funny!" book, in a section called "I Can't Believe I Did That." The tale involved a magnifying glass, a bit of Italian, some fine print and a startling revelation about what she thought was "the nicest perfume I'd ever been given."

The story was the 17th Hoffman has had published over the last dozen years in the "Chicken Soup for the Soul" book series, which began in 1993 and now includes more than 250 titles. A new book is added to that list each month; more than 100 million books have been sold in the series so far and been translated into more than 40 languages. Nearly 30 years after the first "Chicken Soup" book was sold, the brand now includes a podcast, education programs, a line of pet food and films.

A retired educator, now a writer, Hoffman and her husband, Byron, were married in 1977. They moved to Chatham County when he took a job here as an internist at the old Chatham Hospital. These days, as a part of the "Chicken Soup" family, Hoffman keeps an eye on the Chicken Soup website — chickensoup.com — which lists upcoming book titles and deadlines.

"Usually, I have a personal story about whatever subject they suggest," Hoffman said.

All told, more than 400 of Hoffman's works have been published in various forms — in regional magazines, inspirational venues, or ezines on the craft of writing.

"Editors have said they like my humor," she said. "They like my humorous, conversational-style pieces. I have more trouble writing things that are poignant."

And her advice for aspiring writers who envision joining her as a "Chicken Soup" author?

"I would tell them not to be afraid of writing down a true story," Hoffman said. "And just do it. Submit it without mulling

it over too much. Don't let anxiety squash your hopes. If you don't succeed, just try, try again."

17. Abdul Chaudhry: owner of Chaudhry Halal Meats

Abdul Chaudhry likes to take care of his people.

He'll tell you as much on a walk-through of his Siler City business, Chaudhry Halal Meats, pointing to the several relatives he employs or the ways he looks to support his employees and their children in pursuing educational opportunities.

"I'll do anything for them," Chaudhry said.

Much of Chaudhry Halal Meats' business is rooted in servicing independent, local farmers in Chatham County. And whether it's establishing one of the first halal meat slaughterhouses in North Carolina — providing a much-needed service to Muslims across the Triangle — or founding and financing the construction of the only mosque in Siler City, Chaudhry knows what it means to carve out space for himself and the people he cares about.

After ringing in his 26th year in business in 2022 during a career in meat processing that stretches even longer, Chaudhry is seeing the fruits of his labor and preparing the next generation of butchers in his family.

18. Kenzie Scoggins: 5-year-old who battled rare cancer

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

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

Kenzie was diagnosed in late 2021 with an aggressive childhood brain tumor called diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma, or DIPG. DIPG spreads throughout a part of the brain stem called the pons, making it inoperable; most patients are given a survival range of eight to 11 months.

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

On Dec. 17, the towns of Siler City, where Kenzie lived, and Pittsboro, as well as Chatham County, marked what would have been Kenzie's 6th birthday with "Bushel & A Peck Day" — named after a song she would sing along with her mother, which has become emblematic of the love the child shared with those close to her.

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




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Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Jim and Marie Vanderbeck pose near their home in Pittsboro, off a road named in memory of Greg Trimnal — who died piloting the helicopter that Vanderbeck might have flown. Also killed in the crash was Vanderbeck's best friend, Jim Mott.

OBITUARIES

SUSAN GERALDINE GRAY



October 4, 1947 ~ December 22, 2022

With great sadness and profound respect for the life she lived, we announce the passing of Susan Geraldine Gray, who died bravely and peacefully at home on December 22, 2022, in Pittsboro. Susan was diagnosed with ALS in November of 2019 and faced her three-year journey with courage and grace.

Susan was born in Toms River, N.J., on October 4, 1947 — a birthday

she shared with her mother.

By her own account, Susan was a shy girl who enjoyed ice skating alone on the frozen pond in the winter woods, and loved the smell of lilacs in the spring. Her teenage years were spent on the coast of Florida in Eau Gallie and Melbourne — where she began her life-long love of the beach. Marriage brought her to Burlington; Omaha, Nebraska; Littleton, Colorado; a return to N.C., and finally Pittsboro.

She pursued higher education as an adult and received her Master of Education from UNCG in 1987. Susan then worked as a Speech Pathologist for the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools, helping scores of children find their voice. After placing an ad in the Personals section of the long-gone Spectator newsweekly, she met Bob Suber, originally of Cary. They married in 1991, and eventually lived in the house they built together in the woods — surrounded by hummingbirds, wind chimes and sweet black-eyed Susans. She was very active until the advent of her diagnosis, traveling to 45 states in her beloved teardrop Tab trailer — hiking, biking, kayaking, and publishing her photography. She ventured to Paris, England, Scotland, Italy and China and (through her son's work in the film business) charmed everyone from Meryl Streep to Mick Jagger. Susan was an original member of the Pittsboro pickleball league and was known for her fierce serve. Though unassumingly quiet, she was also a stealth competitor; no matter the game (physical or mental) anyone who played her experienced that spunk, drive and spirit. Her boldest and final adversary was herself, who wouldn't let her Wordle streak go unbroken until the last day. She made it to 143.

All who met her knew that Susan Joy — and the experience was recently described as a reaching in and wrapping lights around your heart.

Susan will be missed beyond measure and is survived by her devoted husband of 31 years, Robert "Bob" Suber of Pittsboro, and her children, son; Mark Ricker of New York City; daughter and son-in-law, Elizabeth Ricker and Peter Rich of Durham; and granddaughter, Isabel Ricker Rich. She is also survived by her 96-year-young father, Robert L. Gray; her sisters, Judy Shields, Beth Walker, Nancy Riggs and her brother Robert Gray; her cousins Karl, John and Mark Bente; Bob's son John and daughter-in-law Dee-Ann and grandson Brady; her nieces and nephews and all her faithful friends. Susan is predeceased by her mother, Elizabeth J. Gray who departed this life in 2009, and her two adopted Siamese cats, Jake and Carly, who she refused to split up and dearly loved.

A service will be held at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Pittsboro, N.C., on Saturday, January 28, 2023, at 2 p.m. An appropriately informal celebration of Susan's life will follow with spirits and memories.

Donations may be made to the ALS Association of NC Chapter, 4 Blount Street #200, Raleigh, NC 27601, or Chatham Outreach Alliance, P.O. Box 1326, Pittsboro, N.C. 27312.

Donaldson Funeral Home & Crematory is serving the Gray and Suber family. A fuller tribute to Susan's life may be viewed, and condolences received at www.donaldsonfunerals.com.

DOROTHY JEAN STEED WELCH HORNEY



March 14, 1927 - January 1, 2023

Dorothy Jean Steed Welch Horney, 95, of Siler City passed away peacefully on Sunday, January 1, 2023, at Universal Health Care, Ramseur.

Mrs. Horney was born on March 14, 1927, in Broadway, to William Penn Steed and Nora Tillman Thomas Steed. She spent her early life in Greensboro, before making Chatham County her home. She was preceded in death by her parents, her first husband, Clyde Welch, and her husband

of 52 years, Harry Lee Horney; daughter, Jeanne W. Stone; and her many brothers and sisters.

Jean was a member of Brush Creek Baptist Church for over 70 years. She served and led many of the church's committees, sang in the choir and taught Sunday School for decades. She worked alongside her husband, Harry Lee, and his brothers and wives to build Carolina Stockyard into one of the largest livestock auction companies in the southeast.

She is survived by her son, Mike Welch and wife Wanda of Carlsbad, N.M.; daughter, Patty Neinast and husband Mark of Gastonia; son-in-law, Jerry Stone of Siler City; grandchildren: Michael Welch and wife Deanna, Wendy Welch Chesser and husband Rev. Rody Chesser, John Gaddy, Jason Gaddy, Jessica Stone Roman and husband Junior Roman, Justin Stone, Will Neinast and wife, Kathryn Painter Neinast, and Dr. Claire Neinast Quinn and husband, Jake Quinn; 22 great-grandchildren and five great-great grandchildren.

The funeral service will be held on Saturday, January 7, 2023, at Brush Creek Baptist Church, at 2 p.m. with Dr. Patrick Fuller officiating. The family will receive friends following the service in the fellowship hall.

Memorials may be made to Brush Creek Baptist Church, 5345 Airport Rd., Bear Creek, N.C. 27207.

Donations will be used for the missions fund and the music fund, both of which were important to Mrs. Horney.

Smith and Buckner Funeral Home is assisting the Horney family.

MARY BRAFFORD PARRISH

May 24, 1944 ~ December 24, 2022

Mary Brafford Parrish, 78, of Sanford, passed away Saturday, December 24, 2022, at UNC Hospitals in Chapel Hill.

The family received friends Friday, December 30, from 1 to 2 p.m. at Bridges-Cameron Funeral Home with the memorial service following at 2 p.m. with Pastor Greg Davenport and

Parrish McLeod officiating. She was born to the late Annie Bell and Grady Brafford. She worked for many years at Magneti Marelli.

Mary is preceded in death by her husband, Preston "Pap" Parrish, and siblings, Aaron Brafford and Hazel Clarke. She is survived by her children, Wendy McLeod of Broadway, James Parrish and Chad Parrish, both of Sanford; three grandchildren; brothers, Jim-

ROBERT 'BOB' ELLIOTT FRICKEY JR.



Robert "Bob" Elliott Frickey Jr., 82, passed away at UNC Rex Hospital on December 30, 2022, of complications from Parkinson's disease, which he bravely fought for over 18 years.

Bob was predeceased by his mother, Mozelle McNiell and father Robert Frickey Sr., sister Jerry Peterson, and brother Glen Frickey.

Bob is survived by his wife of 46 years, Anne Frickey; sons, Robert Frickey III (Judy) of Sacramento, California, Jonathan Frickey of Greensboro,

Michael Frickey (Tiffany) of Raleigh; and five granddaughters, Elliott, Jacqueline, Margaret, Eleanor, and Charlotte.

Bob was born on Governors Island in New York City, but spent his early years on a tobacco farm in Harnett County, later moving to Siler City. He graduated from Jordan-Matthews High School in 1959 where he was President of the Student Council.

Bob graduated from Syracuse University with a degree in Mathematics. He was employed by General Electric and Lockheed Martin as deep space analyst at Piriñlik Air Base near Diyarbakir, Turkey. While working abroad, he met his wife Anne in Copenhagen, Denmark, where she was working as a tourism guide.

After retiring in 1997, Bob returned to Siler City, staying busy gardening, playing cards, especially bridge, and pursuing various small construction projects.

The family will receive friends from 6 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, January 5, at Smith & Buckner Funeral Home, 230 N. Second Ave, Siler City, N.C. 27344. The funeral service will be at 10 a.m. Friday, January 6, 2023, at First United Methodist Church, 1101 West Raleigh Street, Siler City, NC 27344 with Pastor William Sabiston officiating. Burial will follow at Oakwood Cemetery, 701 Oakwood Avenue, Raleigh, N.C. 27601.

Smith and Buckner Funeral Home is assisting the Frickey family.

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

ALLENE HARWARD HARMON

March 28, 1929 ~ December 25, 2022

Allene Harward Harmon, of Pittsboro, North Carolina, passed away peacefully on December 25, 2022, at UNC Hospital in Chapel Hill at the age of 93, after a brief stay following hip surgery.

She was born on March 28, 1929, in the Bells Community in Eastern Chatham County. She was a homemaker and worked at several stores in Pittsboro during her working years. After retiring and even in her later years, you would find her out in her beloved yard making sure that it was clean and pristine. She was known for being a very fine Southern cook and nothing brought her more joy than having people enjoy her food. She lived all her adult life in Pittsboro and was a member of Pittsboro United Methodist Church.

She was married to and preceded in death by her husband, William Obie Harmon; her parents, Louis Jefferson Harward and Elizabeth Mason Harward, and seven brothers and sisters. She was the last member of her generation.

She is survived by her two children, Diane Harmon McCarthy (Graham Ellis) of Bradenton, Florida and Jane Harmon Pendergrast and husband David Pendergrast of Chapel Hill; three grandchildren, Jennifer Pendergrast Wagner and husband Brent Wagner of Charlotte, Hannah Pendergrast Elliott and husband Darcus Elliott of Pittsboro, and Carly Ann McCarthy Teska and husband Philip Teska who are residing in Pordenone, Italy. She has three great-grandchildren, Avery Claire Wagner, Bennett Alexander Wagner, and Ava Jean Elliott. She is also survived by several nieces and nephews.

The funeral service will be held Friday, December 30, 2022, at 11a.m. at Pittsboro United Methodist Church with Rev. Bob Wachs and Rev. Lucas Nelson presiding. Burial will follow in the church cemetery. Immediately following the committal service, the family will receive friends in the Family Life Center.

In lieu of flowers the family asks that donations be made in Allene's memory to Pittsboro United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 716, Pittsboro, N.C. 27312.

Condolences may be made at www.donaldsonfunerals.com.

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

my Brafford, George Brafford, David Brafford; and sisters, Marjarie Holleman, Ann Price and Alma Dickerson..

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to UNC Health Foundation, Neurology Division, 123 W. Franklin St. Ste 510, Chapel Hill, NC 27516.

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

RALPH EDWARD 'ED' SPIVEY

May 5, 1943 ~ December 24, 2022

Ralph Edward "Ed" Spivey, 79, of Sanford, passed away Saturday, December 24, 2022, at his home.

The family received friends Friday, December 30, 2022, from 1 to 2 p.m. at Shallow Well Church with funeral following at 2 p.m. He was buried in the church cemetery.

He was born to the late William Ralph Spivey and Mary Frances Cole Spivey. He was also preceded in death by a sister, Barbara Spivey Finch Poole. Ed was the owner/operator of Spivey's Wholesale Bait and Tackle for many years. He was a member of Shallow Well Church and served his country in the National Guard.

Surviving is a sister, Brenda Spivey Marsh of Sanford.

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

EUGENE 'GENE' HUSTON ALVARADO

Eugene "Gene" Huston Alvarado, 83, of Sanford, passed away at home, on his birthday, December 26, 2022.

A graveside service was held Friday, December 30, 2022, at 11 a.m. at Lee Memory Gardens.

He was born in New Haven, Connecticut, to the late Eugene Huston Briner and Ruth Idella Coffin Alvarado. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife, Betty Smith Alvarado; step-daughter, Terry-Lynn Smith and step-son, Timothy Wayne Smith. Eugene served his country in the U.S. Army and was assigned to the Military Police Detachment. He retired from Fluor Daniels Construction. Gene and his wife, had owned and operated Mr. Hot Diggity Dog in Deep River.

Gene is survived by a son, Stephen Gray of Bear Creek; step-sons, Max Smith Jr. and Barry Smith, both of Sanford; brother, Richard Eugene Alvarado of Oklahoma; nine grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren.

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

JOHN EDWARD MYERS

September 22, 1944 ~ December 27, 2022

See **OBITS**, page A9

Pre-Planning Check List for the New Year!

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BOBBY JACKSON CLARK

October 15, 1937 ~ December 28, 2022
 Bobby Jackson Clark, 85, of Snow Camp, passed away Wednesday, December 28, 2022.
 Mr. Clark was born in Chatham County on October 15, 1937, the son of the late Robert and Maude York Clark. Bobby served in the United States National Guard. He spent his working years as a truck driver and farmer. He was an avid card player.
 He is survived by his children, Jeff Clark and wife Stephanie, Chad Clark and wife Jennifer, and Laurie Clark Branson and husband Ronnie, all of Snow Camp; sister, Carolyn Buckner of Siler City; nine grandchildren and numerous great grandchildren.
 The family would like to give a very special “thank you” to Donna Bare and family.
 Memorials may be made to the local Hospice of your choice.
 A Celebration of Life will be held at 3 p.m. on Monday, January 2, 2023, at Smith & Buckner Funeral Home, 230 N. Second Ave., Siler City, with Mike Thompson officiating. Burial will follow at Pleasant Hill Christian Church, 1712 Pleasant Hill-Liberty Road, Liberty, N.C. 27298.
 Smith & Buckner Funeral Home is assisting the Clark family.
 Online condolences may be made at www.smithbucknerfh.com.

in Sanford with the funeral service following at 2 p.m. with Rev. Robert Thomas officiating. Burial will follow in St. Andrews Presbyterian Church Cemetery.
 Pat was born in Sanford, the son of late 1SG Charlie P. and Annie E. Johnston. A graduate of Baker High School in Columbus, Georgia, he obtained a teaching degree from Campbell College in Buies Creek, and served as an educator in the Lee County School system until his retirement. In addition to his parents, he is preceded in death by his wife of 51 years, Nell; infant son, Larry; and sister, Gertrude Jones; brothers Richard Johnston, Junior Johnston, and Norbert Johnston.
 Survivors include his daughter, Ashley Jeffas of Wake Forest; his son, Charlie P. Johnston II of Sanford; and two grandsons.
 Arrangements by Bridges-Cameron Funeral Home, Inc.
 Condolences may be made at www.bridgescameronfuneralhome.com.

Lee Christian School Varsity Soccer Team on occasion.
 Brent is survived by his wife of 13 years, Teshia Fore Sloan; children, Brandon Michael Jones and Beckett Greyson Sloan, both of the home; parents, Allen and Debbye Sloan of Sanford; and a brother, Greg Sloan of Hampstead.
 In lieu of flowers, consider donations to Sanford Area Soccer League or SECU UNC Hospice House. #BRENT STRONG
 Arrangements by Bridges-Cameron Funeral Home, Inc.
 Condolences may be made at www.bridgescameronfuneralhome.com.

DEVOLAR MCLEAN
 March 24, 1947 ~ December 20, 2022
 Devolar McLean, 75, of Broadway, passed away on Tuesday, December 20, 2022, at her residence.
 The funeral service was held at 2 p.m. Saturday, December 31, 2022, at Knotts Funeral Service.

HATTIE MAE BROOKS
 Hattie Mae Brooks, 100, of Pittsboro, passed away on Monday, December 26, 2022.
 The funeral service was held at 1 p.m. Friday, December 30, 2022, at Mitchell Chapel AME Zion Church, with burial following in the church cemetery.

GALENTO CLAY SEYMOUR
 January 5, 1945 ~ January 1, 2023
 Galento Clay Seymour, 77, of Pittsboro, passed away on Sunday, January 1, 2023, at his residence.
 Professional services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home.

KENDRA LAWRENCE
 August 21, 1977 ~ December 31, 2022
 Kendra Lawrence, 45, of Athens, Georgia, formally of Pittsboro, passed away on Saturday, December 31, 2022, at Piedmont Athens Regional Medical Center.
 Professional services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home, Pittsboro.

RUFUS VASSIE HORTON JR.
 June 7, 1944 ~ December 31, 2022
 Rufus Vassie Horton, 78 of Pittsboro, passed away on Saturday, December 31, 2022, at his residence.
 Professional services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home.

OBITS

Continued from page A8

John Edward Myers, 78, of Sanford, passed away Tuesday, December 27, 2022, at his home.
 Funeral services were held on Sunday, January 1, 2023 at 3 p.m. at the Smith Funeral Home Chapel in Broadway with Rev. Garland Smith officiating.
 He was the son of the late George Leonard Myers and Elizabeth Haggerty Myers. He was preceded in death by his parents, and brothers, Dennis Myers and Tracy Myers. Surviving is his daughter, Vickie Knopps of Gulf; sisters, Georgiana Roberts of Sanford, Donna Golden of Texas, Sandy Yates of Kentucky and Shirley Caulder of Sanford; brother, George Myers Jr. of Texas; and three grandchildren. Online condolences can be made at www.smithfuneralhomebroadway.com.

Friday, December 23, 2022.
 Robert, known as “Paw Paw,” was the son of Dearlean R. Fox and Lewis C. Jones on June 5, 1958. He attended Chatham Central High School, and Rose Hill AME Zion Church. He was preceded in death by his parents, Dearlean R. Fox, mother, Lewis C. Jones, father, and his brother, Lewis C. Jones Jr.
 Surviving are his wife, Sherl V. Jones of Staley; son, Lashaun D. Jones of Pittsboro; daughters, Lakeisha R. Jones of Liberty, and Lateisha J. Matthews of Staley; eight grandchildren; a brother, David McLean of Lillington; and two sisters, Wanda Brower of Bear Creek, and Virginia Jones of Bonlee.
 The funeral service was held at 1 p.m. Tuesday, January 3, 2023, at Knotts Funeral Home.

LARRY PASCHAL ‘PAT’ JOHNSTON
 Larry Paschal “Pat” Johnston passed away Sunday, December 31, 2022.
 The family will receive friends on Sunday, January 8, 2023, from 1 to 2 p.m. at Bridges-Cameron Funeral Home

STEPHEN BRENT SLOAN
 July 10, 1976 ~ January 1, 2023
 Stephen Brent Sloan, 46, passed away Sunday, January 1, 2023.
 The family will receive friends on Thursday, January 5, 2023, from 5 to 8 p.m. at Bridges-Cameron Funeral Home. Per Brent’s request, a private family graveside service will be held on Friday, January 6, 2023, at Salem Presbyterian Church Cemetery with Pastor Julie Hughes officiating.
 Brent was born in Sanford to Allen McCormick Sloan and Debbye Wood Sloan. Brent was a graduate of Lee Senior High School and Appalachian State University. He was employed by Sanford Contractors where he served as the HR Director and Head of Safety. Brent was a head coach and assistant coach for SASL for many years and assisted with the

EVERETTE ELMER WORTHY
 Everette Elmer Worthy, 79, of Sanford passed away on Friday, December 16, 2022, at FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital in Pinehurst.
 The funeral service was held at 2 p.m. Thursday, December 29, 2022, at Poplar Springs AME Church. Burial followed in Lee Memory Garden.

FLORETTA YVONNE WOMBLE
 July 18, 1938 ~ December 24, 2022
 Floretta Yvonne Womble, 84, of Siler City, passed away Saturday, December 24, 2022, at her residence.
 Funeral service was held at 11 a.m. Saturday, December 31, 2022, at Reaves Chapel AME Zion Church with burial following in the church cemetery.

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.
 The funeral service will be held at 11 a.m. Wednesday, January 4, 2023, at New Zion Baptist Church.
 Entombment followed at Lee Memory Garden.

New Sir Pizza owners want to bring ‘family’ to the Siler City staple

BY TAYLOR HEEDEN
 News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — Deanna Edminsten and her husband, Todd, took their children and extended family for meals at Sir Pizza many times since its opening more than 30 years ago.
 They imagined — but couldn’t have known — owning the Siler City staple, and being able to carry on decades’ worth of labor and love.
 “At the time, we thought that sounded really cool, but we didn’t really think we were very serious about it,” Todd said. “But then as time went on, we talked about it some more ... and then some other things just

kind of fell into place.”
 Deanna and Todd were approached by Jeff Shaw and his wife Ann, who’ve co-owned the Siler City Sir Pizza since its opening on Mar. 29, 1990. Jeff and Ann already knew the Edminstens; Deanna and Todd’s son, Josh, even worked at Sir Pizza at one time.
 So when the Shaws were starting to think about selling the restaurant to start their retirement, Jeff said the first family he thought of when it came to selling the restaurant was the Edminstens.
 “He (Josh) had showed interest in ownership during that time as far as owning a franchise someday, and so when we

decided we wanted to sell, we approached them and started talking,” he told the News + Record.
 After Deanna and Todd were approached by the Shaws, they reached out to other family members, including Josh and his wife, Kelsey, and Josh’s aunts and uncles, Rodney and Leslie Cox and Jerry and Katie Cox.
 “Deanna and I kind of talked and decided that it would be a good idea or a fun idea to maybe include the whole family,” Todd said. “As a family, we’ve talked over the years about how fun it would be to come up with some kind of family business, and we’ve talked about a million different things. This kind of fell in our

lap, so we thought — you know what? Let’s try.”
 It took 45 days from start to finish for the Edminstens and Coxes to purchase Sir Pizza from the Shaws. The process entailed various measures, from contacting vendors to stocking up on pizza ingredients to filing papers with the state.
 The goal: the Edminstens would take over operation of Sir Pizza starting Jan. 1.
 “There was a lot of steps and ... you can’t do one thing until you get this other thing done,” Katie said. “And then having a deadline of Jan. 1, there’s been a lot going on in the last 30 to 45 days.”
 The Edminstens and Coxes became the owners on Dec. 30. When the restaurant opened its doors for the day two days later, the family was at Sir Pizza, introducing themselves to the community and working hands-on to learn about the restaurant business.
 “We need to get to know our customers, and they need to get to know us ... and then from our standpoint, we need to understand the business better,” Todd said. “Our involvement is important because it’s the right thing to do for our customers, but also for us to learn the business and how we can improve the business and make it successful and make it better, etc.”
 While the reins of Sir Pizza have changed, staffing and the dining experience will remain the same. Shaw said the general manager he hired, Kristin Oldham, is going to stay on staff and help the Edminstens and Coxes learn the ropes.
 “Nothing’s going to change for Sir Pizza as



Courtesy of Deanna Edminsten
Former Sir Pizza owners Jeff and Ann Shaw (back and front center) standing with members of the Edminsten and Cox families, the restaurant’s new owners.

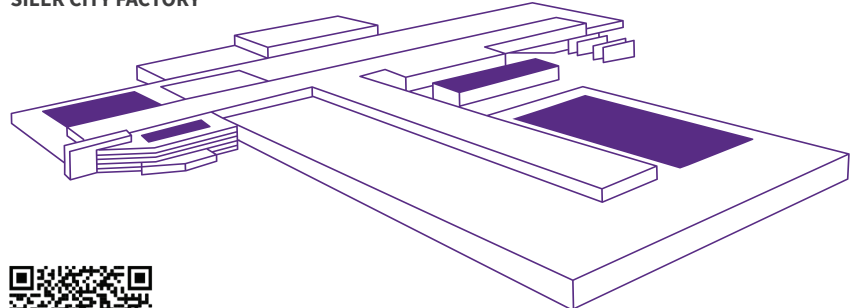
far as the new ownership goes ... She [Kristen] will be remaining as the GM — she’s the backbone of our business, and she keeps daily operations going,” Shaw said. “We hand selected who we wanted to sell to and during our negotiations and talks and everything, they reassured us and we reassured them ... the business stays the same, maintaining the same quality of standards that we’ve given.”
 Shaw said he was thankful for the support the Siler City community has given him and his wife over the last three decades as the owners of Sir Pizza, and encouraged those long-time supporters in the community to embrace the new owners and continue to enjoy Sir Pizza the same way.
 In addition, Shaw said he wants Sir Pizza to continue to give back to the community, which is something the Edminstens and the Coxes assured him would continue under their leadership.
 “We really became part

of the community and service oriented,” Shaw said. “We always felt that way, we felt like we were here as a purpose for Siler City. They really gave back to us, and we always want to support them and all the activities and organizations. It was important to us.”
 The Edminstens and Coxes plan to continue the legacy of Sir Pizza’s service to the community, but they also want to bring their own values to the restaurant.
 The most important thing they want those in the community to experience when they dine at Sir Pizza is simple: they want you to feel like family.
 “I want them to feel like an extended part of the family,” Katie said. “We want them to, you know, get to know us and get to know our families, we want our families to be involved in that ... I want it to be something that families want to come to and think about when they think of, ‘Hey, where can we all go? Sir Pizza.’”

WOLFSPEED IS HARNESSING THE POWER OF SILICON CARBIDE TO PROVIDE A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR ALL.

Join us at Wolfspeed's Supplier Day at the Chatham County Agriculture & Conference Center on January 18 to learn more about the various opportunities for your business at our new Siler City Factory.

SILER CITY FACTORY



For registration, please scan the QR code



REVIEW

Continued from page A1

Council on American-Islamic Relations — weighed in, condemning the incident and calling on Chatham County Schools to respond.

“Racist acts of bullying and intimidation cannot be tolerated in schools,” said National Communications Coordinator Ismail Allison in a statement released on CAIR’s website. “We urge the school district to offer anti-racist curriculum to students to help ensure these kinds of alleged hate incidents do not continue to occur.”

CCS Superintendent Dr. Anthony Jackson and the board of education condemned the incident at a meeting the following week. Jackson also laid out several action steps to focus the district on equity to ensure incidents like the “slave auction” did not occur in the future. Recommendations included staff trainings, improved resources for students and staff and revisions to the Student Code of Conduct.

3. LGBTQ+ students express concern over ‘Parents’ Bill of Rights’

North Carolina Republican legislators proposed House Bill 755, known as the “Parent’s Bill of Rights,” in June. The bill would ban teaching about gender or sexuality in kindergarten through 3rd grade and could force school employees to “out” LGBTQ+ students to their parents. The bill would also require that if students in any grade tell teachers or counselors about issues related to their gender or sexuality — or about anything else related to their “mental, emotional or physical health or well-being” — then school employees would be prohibited from keeping that a secret if the parents asked.

Reporter Ben Rappaport discussed the bill with members of Northwood High School’s Pride Club, which advocates and educates students about LGBTQ+ issues.

“When I was younger, I had an unsupportive parent,” Aiden Vigus, who identifies as non-binary, said. “The fact this bill allows for the disclosure of counseling notes of students with regards to orientation is scary to me.”

N.C. House Dist. 54 Robert Reives II, who represents Chatham County in the N.C. General Assembly, also expressed concern over the bill. He said it creates unnecessary controversy.

“I am concerned that we are villainizing educators and creating another culture war — as we did with HB2 — around our classrooms, where there is none,” Reives told the News + Record. “Anyone who has watched the news over the past few weeks can see that there are far more pressing issues for public schools, the safety of our children in classrooms being the first.”

If HB 755 became law, teachers could face lawsuits if they violate provisions requiring them to report students to parents.

“This whole bill gets people arguing about something that shouldn’t be controversial in the first place,” Northwood student Ray Brock said. “My right to exist and go to school as a queer person is not controversial, nor should it ever be.”

The bill has not yet passed the Senate, nor do Republicans have the necessary votes to override a veto from Gov. Roy Cooper.

4. Northwood mourns the death of three students

Three Northwood High School students — Christian Poteat Jr., Tony Keck and Cassandra Sibrian — died in separate accidents within the span of a week in June, Ben Rappaport reported.

“Northwood has experienced several difficult days with the deaths of three students in the past week,” read a statement released by Chatham County Schools. “Last Thursday (June 16), Christian Poteat, a 2022 graduate, died in an accidental drowning. On Tuesday (June 21), Cassandra Sibrian, a sophomore, was killed in a car accident and (Thursday, June 23) night, Tony Keck, a freshman, was hit by a car and died while riding his ATV.”

“These three students, and the two we lost in the fall, have left a huge hole in the North-

wood family,” said Superintendent Dr. Anthony Jackson said in a statement. “We mourn the loss of bright futures, friendships and family that these students had. Please reach out for help if you need it during this sorrowful time.”

5. CCS scores show promise, despite pandemic decline

Chatham County Schools administrators characterized year-over-year student performance gains as “substantial,” lauding the growth and performance shown in statewide standardized test scores released in September, Ben Rappaport reported.

Chatham County saw many of its public schools improve in some key measurements from recent years, despite academic challenges created by the pandemic. For the 2021-22 academic year, CCS saw 18 of 20 schools meet or exceed growth; statewide, only about 70% achieved the feat.

The district also did well on School Performance Grades (SPG). Seventy-four percent of the schools in the district also earned a grade of “C” or better. Grades of D or lower are considered “low-performing” schools; CCS had five such schools: Bonlee School, Chatham Middle, Jordan-Matthews High School, Siler City Elementary and Virginia Cross Elementary.

CCS schools also did better than most of the state in reading, writing and math end-of-grade (EOG) tests. CCS saw sharp composite EOG increases, with gains ranging from 10 to 20 percentage points per school.

“Generally, a performance composite gain of three to five points is considered good. When you see gains of 10 and higher, it is substantial,” said Dr. Amanda Moran, CCS assistant superintendent of Academic Services & Instructional Support. “We are extremely proud of how well these schools did, and want to celebrate the work students and staff members put in to achieve this.”

6. Parents lash out at school board after claims of religious discrimination circulate

In a fiery school board meeting, eight community members spoke out after they claimed a student at Bonlee School was bullied for her faith, Ben Rappaport reported in September.

More than 70 people came to the meeting at Chatham Grove Elementary School, after reports surfaced online the prior week of a student being “bullied” by a teacher because of her love for the Bible.

Ryne Smith claimed his daughter was participating in an assignment where the students were asked to list their favorite things. Smith said his daughter listed art, basketball and the Bible. Smith claims the teacher of the class, Wes Lail, took exception to her comments and explained to her “what atheism is and why God is not real.”

At the packed school board meeting, Smith claimed the entire school board was unfit for office and should step down for failing to do their jobs.

“I do not see how this board has the audacity to sit and let teachers bully and indoctrinate our kids,” Smith said during the public comment period. “All y’all are good for is telling people what they want to hear by sweeping it under the rug. There’s too much going on in schools that we don’t know about. Do us all a favor, stop wasting our tax dollars and just step down so we can advocate for our children and their rights.”

Smith ultimately pulled his daughter from the public school system after refusing to meet with school officials about the incident.

7. Is CRT taught in Chatham County Schools? Spoiler alert: School system says it’s not

A collection of documents from a recent training program for teachers and administrators in Chatham County Schools made the rounds on social media in 2022.

Ben Rappaport reported on the controversy in September, saying that CRT training, held in August, was meant to help teachers understand equity and race as part of improving inclusivity efforts in the classroom. Instead, it sparked claims that CCS is teaching CRT, or Critical Race Theory,



Submitted photo

The new ‘Parents’ Bill of Rights’ would make it so teachers would have to ‘out’ LGBTQ+ identifying students to their parents.

A selection of documents, published in an opinion piece on the online “Chatham Journal,” on Sept. 1 showed outlines of diversity training materials. The article’s inaccurate claims, which purported to illustrate how the system was engaged in CRT teaching, quickly drew outrage from some parents and community members who lambasted CCS administration and board members.

CCS teachers told the News + Record that looking at the documents, it’s hard to see these trainings as problematic or out of the ordinary. The outlines discuss helping teachers identify white privilege, understand unconscious bias and point out the ways race and class play systemic roles in determining educational outcomes.

Elections

Between a primary and local election in May and the mid-term in November, 2022 may have felt like one long political ad to many in Chatham. The May elections saw a group of four Siler City newcomers running for office with big promises for revitalizing the town and rooting out racism under the “Unity 2022” ticket. The four each lost their races after major red flags about their motives were raised in the community.

Then in November, Chatham showed it still bleeds blue with Democrats sweeping each contested race on the ballot. The Dems victories came despite fiery election controversies in the school board races and a slew of negative mailed ads in the race between Rep. Robert Reives II and Walter Petty. Let’s look back at this year’s two election seasons:

8. ‘Unity’ bloc pledges prosperity, but raises red flags for some

Bill Horner III reported in May about four newcomers to Siler City, running as a bloc, making sometimes outlandish charges against the town’s current board of commissioners. They also made audacious pledges to bring prosperity to the town, including a \$100 million privately funded affordable housing loan, a promise to cap costs for residents who rent apartments or homes, and a plan to revitalize health care here by bringing two urgent care centers to Siler City and “seven or eight” clinics from Duke University Health Systems.

And that was even before the online revelation — on the candidates’ “Unity 2022” website, at unity2022.org — of a list of more than 70 additional proposals addressing community prosperity, inclusivity, sustainability, public safety and housing access for Siler City.

The group — mayoral candidate Nick Gallardo and town commissioner candidates Dean Picot II, Jared Picot and Samuel Williams, all new to Siler City — each registered to vote in Chatham County only over this winter of 2021-22. They never said how they’d pay for the proposals nor provided much detail on how they’ll execute them, and their sudden appearance, bold pronouncements and vague hints about malfeasance occurring within the town’s board have raised red flags with locals. Each of the four finished last in their respective elections but continue to make various promises and pronouncements through their social media accounts.

9. Primary winners featured plenty of new faces

More than 16,000 Chatham residents — 27.5% of the county’s registered voters — voted in May’s primary election, giving newcomers key wins and some familiar faces political promotions, the News + Record’s Taylor Heeden and Ben Rappaport reported after the May primary.

The mid-term primary set the table for a few intriguing local and statewide November races and established the makeup of Siler City’s board of commissioners in a vote that was originally scheduled for last fall.

No incumbents lost seats, and Siler City gained a new mayor, Thomas “Chip” Price, who’d been serving as a town commissioner.

The election sent a message about the trust in Siler City Commissioners and set the stage for the N.C. House and county commissioner battles in November.

10. Amid concerns about partisan poll watchers N.C. group connected to election deniers trains poll observers ahead of midterms

As the November election approached, News + Record Reporter Maydha Devarajan wrote in August that elections officials in Chatham County and across North Carolina were preparing to deal with the growing presence of partisan poll watchers, including some trained by a group with ties to 2020 election conspiracies.

The North Carolina State Board of Elections had unanimously approved temporary rule changes for poll observers and precinct officials in response to reports of conduct violations during the May primaries, but another state agency rejected the changes in August.

Among the opponents to the amendments was Jim Womack, chairperson of the Lee County Republican Party. Womack also serves as a president of an organization called North Carolina Election Integrity Team, which has been holding summits this summer to train and recruit poll observers.

Though Womack described NCEIT a nonpartisan organization at a training summit held last week in Sanford, he also said the group is directly affiliated with the Conservative Partnership Institute of Washington and is partnered with the N.C. GOP and Republican National Committee.

With the midterms looming and as groups with connections to election deniers implement trainings of their own, bolstered with terminology like “election integrity,” conduct of poll observers remained a concern.

11. Petty, Reives denounce negative ads

The race for the Dist. 54 seat N.C. House of Representatives turned personal, as Maydha Devarajan and Ben Rappaport reported in early October, with both candidates decrying mailers sent to constituents containing what they believe are inappropriate and unfair attacks.

Incumbent Rep. Robert Reives II, who holds the Dist. 54 seat — which includes all of Chatham and a portion of Randolph County — took to Twitter in a video directly appealing to his opponent, former Chatham County Commissioner Walter Petty, to refrain from “dragging (his) family” into the

political campaign.

Petty and his Republican colleagues have also claimed the ads attacking him are both quantitatively false and weaponize a nonpolitical issue. One mailer claims Petty missed one-third of Chatham County Board of Commissioners’ meetings in 2019, but public records from the Chatham County Clerk of Commissioners show Petty missed a total of 36 meetings, 17% of the 210 total meetings scheduled during his three-year term. In 2019, the year the ad calls him out for missing one-third of meetings, Petty missed five meetings out of 16 total before his April resignation. Petty resigned during a period of rapid growth for his business, Atlantic Power Solutions.

12. Winger challenges Turner in Dist. 3 race, bringing attention, outside cash — and drama

Chatham County School Board Dist. 3 incumbent Del Turner, who had been on the board since 2010, faced a challenge from Jessica Winger, a Chatham County Schools parent and substitute teacher calling for more transparency from the board. Ben Rappaport reported on the race in October.

The race brought sharp focus on issues such as Critical Race Theory, parent oversight in curriculum and school safety to the local stage. Bigger-than-usual donations, advertisements and social media posts have also swirled around the election, which turned contentious.

School board seats in Chatham County are technically nonpartisan, but Turner has frequently affiliated with and attended events with the Chatham County Democratic Party, while Winger has done the same with Chatham County Republicans. And as candidates, the two have differing opinions when it comes to what they believe is best for the students and stakeholders of Chatham County Schools. Turner ultimately prevailed in the close race.

13. Roberson, Globuschutz vying for top law enforcement position in county

The choice for Chatham County Sheriff was between an incumbent law enforcement veteran who viewed himself as a steady, unifying presence in the county and a challenger who saw himself as a necessary disruptor to an office which has suffered under failed leadership.

Their approach was reflected in their campaigning, Bill Horner III reported in October. That challenger, Marcus Globuschutz, a Republican, used social media to portray Sheriff Mike Roberson, a Democrat, as someone who uses “smoke and mirrors” to create an image that the former describes, in a series of Facebook posts, as “fake.”

Globuschutz’s online campaign has been unrelenting, calling Roberson “irresponsible and careless,” saying he’s been wasteful with county resources, ignored the county’s drug trade, and has even taken authority away from deputies trying to prosecute crimes. Roberson has used social media to show the activity of his staff and office but not directly addressed Globuschutz’s charges on those platforms.

14. The results are in: Democrats take Chatham

November’s election day saw Democrats win each of the contested partisan races in Chatham, despite the state giving the N.C. General Assembly a Republican majority. Chatham bucked the trend through strong strategy from its local Democratic Party, led by new party chairperson Liz Guinan and vice chairperson Bill DeLano.

At the state level, Natalie Murdock won the race for Senate and Robert Reives II retained his seat in the House of Representatives.

At a local level, Sheriff Mike Roberson won his re-election bid, while Democratic Chatham Commissioners Katie Kenlan, David Delaney and Franklin Gomez Flores (incumbent) won their bids for office.

On the school board, each of the three incumbents — Del Turner, Gary Leonard and Jane Allen Wilson — won another year. See **REVIEW**, page A11

REVIEW

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other term in office together. The only Republican to win in November was U.S. Rep. Richard Hudson. Hudson won the Dist. 9 U.S. House of Representatives seat despite 56.68% of Chatham County voting for his opponent, Ben Clark.

Business and economic development

With two megasites and plenty of rural charm — and the lack of large employers — Chatham has been ripe for business development. In 2022, the county became the hotbed of economic development in a year full of jobs announcements — setting a record for largest project in the state, then breaking that record just a few months later.

15. VinFast, state make it official: Vietnamese automaker bringing 7,500 jobs to Chatham with \$4 billion announcement

What had been rumored and speculated about — and hoped for — was made official on March 29, when VinFast, a Vietnamese electric vehicle manufacturer, was officially introduced as the first tenant at Triangle Innovation Point, the Chatham County’s huge megasite near Moncure.

The announcement, made by Gov. Roy Cooper at the Raleigh Convention Center in downtown Raleigh, was record-setting: VinFast plans a manufacturing facility that will produce a line of premium battery-powered SUVs and the batteries to power them — creating 7,500 jobs with a projected investment of at least \$4 billion.

The average wage at VinFast is projected to be about \$51,100 annually.

It’s North Carolina’s first automobile manufacturing plant — after a long line of “misses” — with construction starting in 2023, and the first EVs (electric vehicles) scheduled to roll off the assembly line in mid-2024.

Dozens of Chatham County officials and business leaders, along with state leaders, attended the announcement ceremony.

“North Carolina is quickly becoming the center of our country’s emerging, clean energy economy,” Cooper said. “VinFast’s transformative project will bring many good jobs to our state, along with a healthier environment as more electric vehicles take to the road to help us reduce greenhouse gas emissions.”

VinFast wants to eventually build 250,000 premium electric SUVs per year at the site, with production output initially starting at 150,000 annually. The private automotive startup, founded by billionaire Pham Nhat Vuong, will produce both electric batteries and vehicles at the site.

The TIP site’s proximity to rail, U.S. 1, the I-540 loop, Research Triangle Park and airports — it’s just six miles from Sanford’s Raleigh Executive Jetport and about 30 minutes from RDU — has made the site, with its 47 building locations and the capacity for more than 12 million square feet of space, an attractive potential new home for business and industry.

The project — which was codenamed “Project Blue” by Chatham EDC officials — will bring lots of green to Chatham and the state: VinFast’s project is estimated to grow the state’s economy by at least \$71.59 billion over 32 years, the time period when state grants could be active, and increase the region’s payroll by \$383 million annually.

“This announcement is the culmination of decades of hard work by current and former EDC staff, Chatham County staff, our elected officials, local and regional partners, and support from local citizens,” Greg Lewis, chairperson of the Chatham EDC’s board of directors, told the News + Record. “Welcoming a major employer like VinFast to Chatham County will transform the area, positively impacting the tax base and will retain and draw people to the area for years to come. This has always been the vision for Chatham County, and we are very excited to witness it come to fruition with this project.”

Triangle Innovation Point is one of two megasites in



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Wolfspeed President and CEO Gregg Lowe announced a historic investment in Chatham County at the Governor’s Mansion in Raleigh in September. The company will invest \$5 billion and create 1,800 jobs at the Chatham-Siler City Advanced Manufacturing Site.

Chatham County. Both it and the Chatham Advanced Manufacturing site in Siler City have seen a flurry of activity and interest in the last year or so — “unprecedented” was the word used both by Lewis and Michael Smith, the EDC’s president.

“Having two megasites is such a benefit to this county and this county’s future,” Lewis said.

VinFast, founded in 2017 as a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Vietnamese conglomerate Vingroup, is a global producer of premium automobiles. Headquartered in Hanoi, Vietnam, it has a state-of-the-art vehicle production facility in Hai Phong, Vietnam, that has the capacity to produce 950,000 vehicles per year by 2026.

VinFast’s rapid growth has seen it establish global operations in the U.S., Canada, Germany, France and the Netherlands. VinFast currently provides an ecosystem of EV products in its home country of Vietnam, including e-scooters, electric buses and electric cars, charging station system and green energy solutions.

16. Wolfspeed announces historic economic development in Chatham County

In September Ben Rappaport reported from the lawn of the Governor’s Mansion, where North Carolina politicians and Wolfspeed executives made official what had been anticipated for weeks: the Durham-based semiconductor and chip manufacturing company is coming to Siler City’s Chatham Advanced Manufacturing site.

The company’s project, a facility to produce silicon carbide chips for industrial and commercial uses, set another a new record for the largest economic development win in state history — bringing an expected \$5 billion investment, along with 1,800 jobs over the next five years paying an average annual wage of \$77,753. It comes less than six months after Vietnamese electric vehicle manufacturer VinFast’s then-record-setting \$4 billion announcement to build a production facility at Chatham’s other megasite, Moncure’s Triangle Innovation Point.

Wolfspeed, formerly known as Cree, is a global leader in silicon carbide technology providing power and radio frequency (RF) semiconductors. Its chips are used in electric vehicles, 4G and 5G mobile development, and several emerging industries.

“The jobs that Wolfspeed is bringing will pay 87% more than our current average wage. That is a huge win for Siler City, Chatham County and the region,” said Chatham County Board of Commissioners Chairperson Karen Howard. “I am so proud of Chatham and the town of Siler City for their tenacity.”

Chatham community

Also making news in 2022 were stories of perseverance and triumph, of tragedy, and of people from Chatham County working together to make the community better.

17. County unveils historical marker to recognize lynching victims

Along Moore Springs Bridge on what was once Raleigh Road, there’s a tree that holds memory. Its limbs cracked from bearing the weight, its soil forever stained by the blood of a lynching victim.

It is the tree where Eugene Daniel was lynched in Chatham County in 1921.

Trees across the county hold dark memories in their roots, too — in the names of Jerry Finch, Harriet Finch, John Pattishall, Lee Tyson and Henry Jones.

This was the premise of a poem by North Carolina Poet Laureate Jaki Shelton Green entitled “I Wanted to Ask the Trees.” She performed in September, at the unveiling of a historical marker donated by the Community Remembrance Coalition-Chatham and the Equal Justice Initiative between Chatham County’s old Agricultural Building and Justice Center, not far south of the old county courthouse.

Ben Rappaport reported on the marker unveiling and the community organizing effort it took to erect the memorial.

The legacy of Daniel, along with the other lynching victims in Chatham County, is now permanently etched into the county’s landscape. The vibrant blue marker with yellow lettering erected Saturday marks a dark history of injustice and intolerance.

After the cover was lifted to reveal the marker, Karen Howard, chairperson of the Chatham Board of Commissioners, formally accepted the gift from the CRC-C and EJI. She said it was a momentous occasion for the community.

“The thing that touches me most about this day is the faces in the crowd,” Howard said. “I know it is absolutely essential that we change institutional practices, but more than that we need to be changing the hearts and minds of people.”

She said the marker is a small step in healing and taking action toward a more anti-racist community. While reconciliation of the past is never a finished process, Howard said it begins with taking ownership of all aspects of our shared history.

18. Despite threats, Merry Oaks community persists

After several months of attending services and interviewing church members, Ben Rappaport and Anna Connors reported on the historic N.C. church facing an uncertain future due to roadway plans from NCDOT for an upcoming VinFast facility.

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

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

VinFast, the Vietnamese electric car manufacturer, has promised to invest \$4 billion and bring 7,500 jobs to Chatham

County over the next decade in the second-largest economic development project in state history — surpassed only by Wolfspeed, which will build in western Chatham County near Siler City. VinFast is planning a 1,765-acre facility in near-by Moncure at the Triangle Innovation Point (TIP) site. The roadway plans from NCDOT into the facility include taking 27 homes, five businesses — and Merry Oaks Baptist Church.

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

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

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

19. The Opioid Crisis in Chatham

The opioid epidemic is rampant across the county, and Chatham was no exception, according to reporting by Taylor Heeden.

In a News + Record exclusive two-part series, local law enforcement agencies and various organizations provided their perspective on the rise in overdoses in Chatham County, and what they’re doing to help combat opioid overdoses in the community.

In the first part of this series, the Chatham Sheriff’s Office and municipal departments provided insight on what they were seeing on the front lines.

Chatham County Sheriff Mike Roberson believed the drastic uptick in overdose calls correlates with the pandemic and quarantines. The isolation associated with COVID-19, he says, has led to more people becoming susceptible to overdosing on various substances. Siler City Police Chief Mike Wagner added he believed mental health plays a huge role in drug abuse and addiction. If there were no stigma around drug addiction, he said, maybe those who suffer from substance abuse would be more willing to seek treatment. We learned about Chatham Recovery, an opioid treatment program providing medication-assisted therapy to help combat symptoms such as drug withdrawal and cravings, and Chatham Drug Free, an organization aiming to curb the use of opioids, marijuana, alcohol and other substances among Chatham County’s younger population, and is a part of a “prevention coalition” working with local law enforcement agencies, the county school system and more, including promoting “the safe storage and disposal of medications.”

20. Local hemp business owners sound the alarm on SB 711

This year featured a lot of conversation surrounding the N.C. General Assembly’s Senate Bill 711, which would’ve legalized the medical use of marijuana. Taylor Heeden reported

on how local hemp business owners in Chatham about how SB 711 may not be the best answer for medicinal cannabis legalization.

Aaron Puryear has been one of the co-owners of Oak City Hemp — located at The Plant in Pittsboro — since the company’s inception in 2018, when hemp-derived products were federally legalized across the United States.

Some legal hemp-derived products, though, offer psychoactive effects similar to marijuana, according to Puryear. The two main forms of hemp on the market in North Carolina are CBD — which does not have psychoactive properties — and Delta-8 THC, which provides users with a similar “high” the THC found in marijuana, known as Delta-9 THC, gives.

“Legally, I have access to every cannabinoid the cannabis plant has to offer with hemp, and there’s over 100 known cannabinoids,” Puryear said. “I tell people all the time legalization is here — it’s just in a different form than most people expected.”

Environment

21. 1,4-Dioxane, PFAS and how Pittsboro has answered the threat

The fight for clean water in Chatham County, most specifically Pittsboro, took a turn in 2022.

The town’s board of commissioners unanimously approved a motion to investigate and pursue litigation against industries or others responsible for repeated discharges of PFAS and 1,4-Dioxane — two families of compounds which have been deemed likely human carcinogens — into the Haw River, Pittsboro’s source of drinking water.

While the town’s legal team continued to investigate pollutants, the Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) Filtration System was installed at Pittsboro’s Water Treatment Plant. The GAC system filters 1,4-Dioxane to almost non detectable levels, giving residents better access to cleaner water.

Sports

In 2022, one team and several individuals won state championships in their respective sports. Starting with the winter sports championships in February and leading through the last few weeks of December, local high school athletes displayed why Chatham County is an area on the rise in the state athletic scene.

22. Chatham athletes bring home multiple state championships

The only Chatham County team to win a state championship in 2022 was the Northwood girls basketball team, which defeated Enka, 70-42, in the 3A state finals in Raleigh on March 12, with former sports editor Victor Hensley in attendance.

The win marked the first team championship for the Chargers since Northwood opened back in 1970. The Chargers were led by senior Olivia Porter, who totaled 18 points on 7-of-11 shooting.

After the game, Porter — who transferred to Pittsboro from Auburn High in Alabama ahead of the season — said she felt like she was playing for two teams at once.

“It feels amazing,” Porter said. I feel like I won for two cities ... I was kind of representing two teams, essentially, because I knew my old coach was going to be watching this game, so I knew I had to make him proud, as well as my teammates and coaches here. It just means a lot that I finally reached this point, and I’m the first in my family, so that proves I’m the most athletic one.”

There were other champions in 2022. Before moving on to the college ranks, 2022 Northwood grad Caroline Murrell had a historic senior season with the Chargers.

After winning the 3,200-meter race at the 3A indoor championships in February, Murrell — now a member of the N.C. State cross country and track and field teams — won both the 3,200- and 1,600-meter races at the outdoor championships in May.

And after a long season competing in a team setting, Chatham Central seniors Olivia Brooks and Ellie Phillips paired up for the 1A doubles state tournament, and eventually came out on top to claim a title.

NEED TO KNOW

Here's the lowdown on measles, chickenpox

MEASLES

The Disease
Measles is a respiratory disease caused by a virus. The disease of measles and the virus that causes it share the same name. The disease is also called rubeola. Measles virus normally grows in the cells that line the back of the throat and lungs.

The Vaccine
Measles vaccine is administered through the combination MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) or by the MMRV (measles, mumps, rubella and varicella) vaccine.

Who Should Get Vaccinated?
Children should be given the first dose of MMR vaccine soon after the first birthday (12 to 15 months of age). The second dose is recommended before the start of the kindergarten.

N.C. Requirements
Two doses at least 28 days apart. One dose on or after 12 months of age and before 16 months of age, and a second dose before entering school for the first time. The requirement for a second dose does not apply to individuals who entered school, college or university for the first time before July 1, 1994.

A person who has been diagnosed prior to January 1, 1994, by a physician (or designee such as a nurse practitioner or physician's assistant) as having measles (rubeola) or an individual who has been documented by serological testing to have a protective antibody titer against measles is not required to receive measles vaccine. Individuals born before 1957 are not required to receive measles vaccine except in measles outbreak situations.

MMR vaccine is very effective at protecting people against measles, mumps, and rubella, and preventing the complications caused by these diseases. People who receive MMR vaccination according to the U.S. vaccination schedule are usually considered protected for life against measles and rubella. While MMR provides effective protection against mumps for most people, immunity against mumps may decrease over time and some people may no longer be protected against mumps later in life. An additional dose may be needed if you are at risk because of a mumps outbreak. One dose of MMR vaccine is 93%

effective against measles, 78% effective against mumps, and 97% effective against rubella.

Two doses of MMR vaccine are 97% effective against measles and 88% effective against mumps.

VARICELLA (CHICKENPOX)

The Disease
Chickenpox is caused by infection with the varicella zoster virus, which causes fever and an itchy rash. It is spread by coughing and sneezing (highly contagious), by direct contact, and by aerosolization of virus from skin lesions.

The Vaccine
The chickenpox vaccine can prevent this disease. Currently, two doses of vaccine are recommended for children, adolescents and adults.

Who Should Get Vaccinated?
All children and adults without evidence of immunity should receive the chickenpox vaccine. Children should receive one dose of chickenpox vaccine at 12 to 15 months of age and a second dose at 4 to 6 years of age.

N.C. Requirements
Two doses administered at least 28 days apart. One dose on or after 12 months of age and before age 19 months, and a second dose before entering school for the first time.

An individual with laboratory confirmation of varicella disease immunity or has been documented by serological testing to have a protective antibody titer against varicella is not required to receive varicella vaccine. An individual who has documentation from a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant verifying history of varicella disease is not required to receive varicella vaccine. The documentation shall include the name of the individual with a history of varicella disease, the approximate date or age of infection, and a health care provider signature. Individuals born before April 1, 2001, are not required to receive varicella vaccine. The requirement for the second dose of varicella vaccine shall not apply to individuals who enter Kindergarten or 1st grade for the first time before July 1, 2015.

Sources: Johnsie Hubble, RN, MPH, CIC, infection preventionist/employee health director, Chatham Hospital; CDC.gov; N.C. Dept. of Health & Human Services; North Carolina Immunization Branch.

VIRAL

Continued from page A1

water in several states, including Michigan and Pennsylvania," she said. "The hesitancy more Americans seem to have now to vaccination is believed to be causing these outbreaks. Lack of vaccines leads to more outbreaks and illnesses that can cause disability and death, especially among children."

In Chatham County, 90% of all children ages 2 to 3 received required vaccinations in 2020, including the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) and varicella (chicken pox) vaccines — compared to 73% statewide, said Zachary Horner, the public information specialist for the Chatham County Public Health Department. A year later, those numbers had fallen to 86% in Chatham County and 72% statewide, a number Horner attributed in part to delays in vaccination appointments related to the pandemic.

"We're so grateful to the Chatham County parents and guardians who have gotten their children and young ones vaccinated on time and thoroughly," Horner said. "This consistently-high uptake rate — we've been at 86% or better for at least the last 10 years — is likely one of the reasons why we've been able to avoid the outbreaks we're seeing in other places."

Still, he said, the CCPHD shares the same concerns other public health departments and medical experts have expressed over increasing vaccine hesitancy and

skepticism. "There's no doubt mis- and dis-information about COVID vaccines have spread to other vaccines as well, especially childhood ones," Horner said. "We've seen mis- and dis-information before in public health, but social media broadens the reach of those messages and leaves many people vulnerable to bad actors spreading false information."

Horner said the facts "clearly state" childhood vaccines, including the MMR, varicella, and combined MMRV shots, keep children from contracting those illnesses, which can become serious.

"We could cite a lot of data, but perhaps one of the best places to look is how these diseases have, for the most part, nearly evaporated in the United States," he said. "The U.S. began a chickenpox vaccination program in 1995. At the time, there were more than 4 million cases, more than 10,000 hospitalizations, and up to 150 deaths a year from chickenpox."

As of 2020, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control, there were fewer than 150,000 cases, less than 1,400 hospitalizations, and less than 30 deaths from the disease, he said.

"It's that simple," Horner said. "Vaccination saves lives."

The CCPHD offers the MMR and varicella vaccines at its Siler City clinic every weekday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. If your child has not yet received these important vaccines, he said, "we urge you to act now."

For more information, call 919-742-5641.



Courtesy of Pixabay

Some parents have been reluctant to have their children receive recommended immunizations since the start of the pandemic.



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SPORTS NEWS & ENTERTAINMENT

JANUARY 5 - 11, 2023 | chathamnewsrecord.com/sports | SECTION B

BOYS BASKETBALL

Northwood falls to Camden, top recruits Wagner, Bradshaw

BY JEREMY VERNON
News + Record Sports Editor



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Northwood junior Drake Powell (32) averaged 18 points and 11 rebounds in two games at the John Wall Holiday Invitational last week.

RALEIGH — A battle between some of the top boys basketball recruits in the country, including one from Chatham County, took center stage at the John Wall Invitational at Broughton High in Raleigh last Wednesday night. Playing in its second game of the holiday showcase, the Northwood boys basketball team faced off against Camden High (N.J.), the No. 5 team in the country, according to Max-Preps' rankings. The Panthers boast a roster filled with Division I talent, including guard D.J. Wagner — a Kentucky commit who is ranked as the No. 1 senior in the entire country — and fellow senior center Aaron Bradshaw, the No. 6 player in the class who is also committed to the Wildcats.

Led by junior Drake Powell, a UNC commit ranked as the No. 50 national prospect in the Class of 2024, Northwood cruised to a 77-57 win in its tournament-opener against Seventy-First on Tuesday. The Chargers couldn't find the same magic against Camden however, falling 60-36 in front of a raucous crowd.

"We're disappointed in the outcome, obviously, but we're

blessed to be in the situation we're in, being asked back to the John Wall for the second year in a row," said Northwood head coach Matt Brown. "We're going to get better because of it. You have to give Camden credit. They're a heck of a team ... I thought our guys competed for four quarters and held with them. We kind of showed what Northwood was about. Our guys fought hard, and I'm super proud of my guys."

Northwood held tough in the game's opening quarter, battling to a 9-7 lead behind six points from Powell, who finished with a team-high 20 points. But after taking the opening punch from the Chargers, Camden locked in and completely flipped the momentum of the game. After the first quarter, Camden held Northwood to 9-of-29 (31.0%) shooting from the field over the final three periods. Outside of Powell's 20, the Charger with the most points was Fred Whitaker, who had six points on 3-of-11 shooting to go with five rebounds.

See **HOOPS**, page B2



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Northwood sophomore Isaiah Blair attempts a layup in the Chargers' 77-57 win over Seventy-First last Tuesday.

HOLIDAY HOOPS

Hawks, Chargers, Knights each win holiday tournaments



Photo courtesy of Seaforth Athletics

The Seaforth girls basketball team won the 2022 Devil Tournament, hosted by Swain County High, last week.

BY JEREMY VERNON
News + Record Sports Editor

Unlike many other local athletes, several Chatham County basketball players were busy the week after Christmas competing in holiday tournaments.

Among the team's who showcased their talents last week was the Seaforth girls basketball team, which won all three of its games to take the

title at the 2022 Devil Classic, hosted by Swain County High.

The Hawks (9-1) opened the tournament with a 68-51 victory over North Stokes. Seaforth then handled Owen High before taking down Mitchell High in the final game of the showcase.

Through 10 games, head coach Charles Byrd led Seaforth to a 9-1 record in just its second season as a program. Last year, the Hawks were

6-4 in their first 10 games before rallying to go undefeated in conference play and win 13 of their final 17 games.

Seaforth has been really locked in defensively. The Hawks are only allowing 33.2 points per game to their opponents, compared to 38.1 points per game allowed a season ago.

Seaforth returned to the court

See **WINS**, page B4

Panthers need an offensive-minded coach



JEREMY VERNON
Sports Editor

After keeping their playoff hopes alive for an absurdly long time, the Carolina Panthers were officially eliminated from postseason contention with a 30-24 loss to Tampa Bay on the road Sunday afternoon.

Sitting at 6-10 entering the final week of the regular season, the Panthers are anticipating an offseason full of change. One decision Carolina will have to make quickly is whether to retain interim head coach Steve Wilks or bring in someone new for the position.

Wilks deserves his fair share of credit for helping turn things around this season. At the time of Matt Rhule's firing, the Panthers were 1-4 and had one of the most inept offenses in the entire league. When Wilks took over the head job, he focused on establishing the run and creating a smash-mouth identity for his team. The Panthers rank 12th in the NFL in rushing yards per game (127.4), and most of that production has come after trading All-Pro Christian McCaffrey to the 49ers midway through the season.

Couple that with his knowledge of defensive schemes and his likable personality, and Wilks was exactly the right man for the job. But is he the right choice going forward?

I don't think so.

To complete their turnaround, the Panthers need to bring in an offensive coach to maximize the talent already on the roster

See **PANTHERS**, page B5

Which Chatham County teams could win state titles in 2023?

BY JEREMY VERNON
News + Record Sports Editor

In 2022, only one Chatham County high school team — Northwood's girls basketball team — won a state championship.

How many could lift trophies over the next 12 months?

To celebrate the new year, the News + Record is highlighting several teams which could have what it takes to win state championships in 2023. The county has several talented teams in

several different sports, including some which figure to be among the final teams standing at the end of their respective seasons.

Here's a breakdown of the squad's to watch in the new year:

Basketball

The sport in Chatham County with the most potential for success in 2023 figures to be basketball.

See **2023**, page B2



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Woods Charter junior Leyla Noronha scored a team-high 50 goals for the Wolves during the 2022 spring season.

SCORES AND SCHEDULES

SCORES	Chatham Charter 65, West Stanly 34	WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4	Chatham Charter vs. Research Triangle (6 p.m.) Woods Charter vs. North Moore (6 p.m.)
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27	FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30	Wrestling	
Boys basketball	Girls basketball	Northwood at Orange (6 p.m.) Seaforth at Cummings (6 p.m.) Chatham Central vs. Bartlett Yancey (6 p.m.)	Boys basketball
Northwood 77, Seventy-First 57 Richland Northeast 63, Seaforth 34	Seaforth 65, Mitchell 35 Northwood 45, Chapel Hill 31 Chatham Charter 50, South Guilford Home School 37		Seaforth at Jordan-Matthews (7:30 p.m.) Chatham Charter vs. Research Triangle (7:30 p.m.) Woods Charter vs. North Moore (7:30 p.m.)
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28		THURSDAY, JANUARY 5	
Girls basketball	Boys basketball	Swimming	Wrestling
Seaforth 68, North Stokes 51 Northwood 74, Hoke County 22	Chatham Charter 55, South Stanly 19	Northwood vs. Cedar Ridge at Triangle Sportsplex (8 p.m.)	Northwood/Chatham Charter vs. Eastern Alamance (6 p.m.)
	SCHEDULES		
Boys basketball	TUESDAY, JANUARY 3	Girls basketball	Swimming
Camden 60, Northwood 36 Cardinal Newman 83, Seaforth 55 Chatham Charter 84, Albemarle 43	Girls basketball	Seaforth vs. Grace Christian School (6 p.m.) Chatham Central vs. Harnett Central (6 p.m.)	Seaforth vs. Jordan-Matthews at Asheboro YMCA (6 p.m.)
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29	Northwood vs. Person (6 p.m.) Seaforth vs. Chatham Central (6 p.m.) Woods Charter at Eno River (6 p.m.)	Boys basketball	SATURDAY, JANUARY 7
Girls basketball	Boys basketball	Chatham Central vs. Harnett Central (7:30 p.m.)	Indoor track
Northwood 57, Southern Alamance 32 Chatham Charter 39, South Guilford Home School 27	Northwood vs. Person (7:30 p.m.) Seaforth vs. Chatham Central (7:30 p.m.) Woods Charter at Eno River (7:30 p.m.)	FRIDAY, JANUARY 6	Northwood in Just Don't Lose Classic at JDL Fast Track in Winston-Salem (8 a.m.)
Boys basketball		Girls basketball	
		Seaforth at Jordan-Matthews (6 p.m.)	

2023

Continued from page B1

Right now, two area boys teams — Northwood and Chatham Charter — are among the best in their respective classifications. The Chargers (10-2) are ranked by Max-Preps as the No. 1 team in the 3A East region, while the Knights (15-0) are ranked as the third team in the 1A East behind Bertie and Washington County.

Both teams have plenty of experience playing in big games. Northwood has made at least the fourth round of the playoffs in each of the past three seasons. Chatham Charter, meanwhile, made it to the finals of the 1A state tournament last year before falling to Hayesville in overtime.

The Knights are 15-0 for the first time in program history. They are led in scoring by senior Adam Harvey (15.9 points per game), while his little brother Beau leads

the team in assists (5.1) and steals (4.8) per game.

Northwood, meanwhile, enters the new year with a 10-2 record and looks ready to dominate the Central 3A Conference despite losing its final game of 2022 to powerful Camden (N.J.) at the John Wall Invitational. The Chargers have been the class of the league over the past several seasons, boasting a 38-3 record against conference opponents since the beginning of 2019-20.

Girls soccer

Once the spring athletic season begins, one of the top squads in the county will be the Woods Charter girls soccer team.

The Wolves are coming off a historic season that saw them go 19-1-2 overall and give up just 13 goals across 22 games. Head coach Graeme Stewart's team made it all the way to last season's 1A state final before losing to Christ the King, 3-0.

Woods only had two seniors

on last year's team, meaning the Wolves will welcome back the majority of their talent this spring. Leading the way will be junior forward Leyla Noronha, who had 50 goals and 14 assists as a sophomore last season.

The Wolves will also bring back senior midfielders Lucy Miller and Chloe Richard, who combined for 45 goals and 24 assists last spring. Junior midfielder Caroline Mitchell (14 goals, 14 assists in 2021) returns, too.

After falling in the state final last June, Stewart shared his confidence in the future of his team, including his squad for 2023.

"We've got some players coming up and we've got a junior class that is going to be a year older," Stewart said. "I told them to go play club, go learn from other coaches and get more experience ... Next year starts now."

One loss Woods will have to address is that of goalkeeper Jana Matthews, who played the majority of the

minutes in net for the Wolves in 2022. The keeper with the most experience on the current roster is senior Maddie Sparrow, who played 345 minutes last year.

Girls tennis

One of the big surprises of this past year was the success of the Seaforth girls tennis team, which went 11-1 during the regular season and 8-0 in conference play. Despite falling in the first round of the state playoffs to N.C. Science & Math, the Hawks entered the state tournament as the No. 1 seed in the 2A east region.

Like many Seaforth teams, the girls tennis team will benefit from a lack of turnover when they return to the court this fall. The Hawks are expected to return each of their top six players — junior Evelyn Atkins, sophomores Bailey Shadoan and Lillian McFall, junior Lauren Keeley and sophomores Makenzy Lehw and Caroline Bowman.

Atkins had a 7-4 record at No. 1 singles this fall, while Keeley and Lehw combined for a 12-1 singles record and an 8-1 record as a doubles pair.

Head coach Peter Petrides has built a solid foundation in just two years with the Hawks, but he's always remained focused on the future.

"I tell them all the time, 'This is a multi-year commitment that, if you get on the ground floor, we're going to be here for a while and we're going to be able to see our progress together,'" Petrides told the News + Record in October. "They've all seen how we've gotten better as a team, and each player has seen their games get so much better. To be honest, it makes my job so much easier that they already buy in. They want to be here. They listen. It's great. It's been very easy to sell to the kids and to the parents."

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

HOOPS

Continued from page B1

Wagner, for his part, scored a game-high 22 points on 8-of-17 shooting, which included a 4-of-9 mark from 3-point range. Often tasked with guarding the 6-foot-3 combo guard, Powell said after the game that the match-up against Wagner was one he relished coming into the game.

"I respect D.J. Wagner a lot," Powell said. "Playing against him in an atmosphere like this was pretty crazy. I take pride in playing defense, and playing a great offensive player like him was pretty surreal."

One of the biggest differences in Wednesday's game was Camden's dominance in the post. The Panthers grabbed 19 offensive rebounds, including seven by senior Cornelius Robinson, which led to 13 second-chance points. Camden also scored 39 points in the paint, compared to 16 for the Chargers.

In total, Camden out-rebounded Northwood, 46-25, in the matchup. Bradshaw — who stands at 7-foot-0 — grabbed 10 boards, including eight on the defensive end. The Chargers' tallest players, 6-foot-11 senior Kenan Parrish and 6-foot-8 senior Max Frazier, were held to just six combined rebounds.

"(Camden) just wanted it more than we did," Whitaker said.

Despite his team's second-half performance, Brown said playing in the John Wall Invitational should prepare his team for the hostile envi-

ronments and raucous crowds they'll likely encounter in the state playoffs.

"I told these guys, 'There are no moral victories,'" Brown said Wednesday. "We came out strong, and it just wasn't our night. This atmosphere was like a Final Four atmosphere. I've never been anything like this since our Final Four year in Fayetteville against Westover. It was that type of crowd. These guys got a taste of it, and it's going to make them hungry and also prepare them for the playoffs."

As teams prepare to return from holiday break, Northwood boasts a 10-2

record through its first 12 games. The Chargers have been among the most consistent teams in the entire state over the past several years, amassing a 65-10 record since the start of 2019-20 and reaching at least the fourth round of the playoffs in each of the past three seasons.

This year's Northwood team is averaging 69.1 points per game, way up from the 60.5 points the Chargers averaged in 2021-22. Conversely, Brown's team is allowing an average of 54.3 points per game, which is up from last season's average of 41.9 points per game allowed.

Powell leads the

Chargers in both points (20.6) and rebounds (7.8) per game this season while also dishing out 3.4 assists. Four other players — Parrish (9.8), junior Jake Leighton (9.2), Whitaker (8.6) and Frazier (8.5) — are averaging at least eight points per game this season.

Northwood returns to the court Tuesday night for a conference game against Person High. The Chargers won all three of their games against the Rockets — who are 11-1 this season — last winter.

News + Record correspondent Evan Rogers contributed to this story.



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Northwood junior Fred Whitaker is averaging 8.6 points and 3.8 assists per game for the Chargers this season.



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CLIPBOARD Q&A | JASON MESSIER

Messier: Knights are hungry, but won't let quest for redemption 'consume them'

BY JEREMY VERNON
News + Record Sports Editor

The only undefeated high school basketball team left in Chatham County is the Chatham Charter boys team, which is 15-0 after a pair of wins at the Comet Christmas Classic last week. The Knights are com-

ing off a 2021-22 season that saw them finish with a 33-2 record after a loss in the 1A state championship game to Hayesville. Chatham Charter has had a winning record in each of the last six seasons under Jason Messier — who has led the Knights to a 119-11 record since the start of the 2018-19 season.

This year, Chatham Charter seems to have hit a new gear on both ends of the floor. The Knights are averaging 71.4 points per game this winter, up from 66.1 points per game last season. They're also allowing just 32.4 points per game to their opponents, down from 35.1 in 2021-22.

Leading the team in

scoring through 15 games is senior Adam Harvey, who is averaging 15.9 points per game to go with 3.3 assists and 3.2 steals. The only other player averaging over 10 points per game is sophomore Brennan Oldham (11.8), while fellow sophomore Beau Harvey is averaging 9.9 points and a team-high 5.1 assists and 4.8 steals per game.

Ahead of his team's return to the court, Messier caught up with the News + Record to discuss his feelings about the team so far, his thoughts on his impact sophomores and his expectations for the rest of the season.

Your team won both of its game at its holiday tournament last week. How do you feel about where the team is at this point in the season?

JASON MESSIER: We enjoyed our time at the Comet Christmas Classic, hosted by North Stanly. We got a chance to play at Pfeiffer University, a bigger gym. It was a different environment. We're in a really good spot right now I think. I think offensively, we're sharing the ball, as we've been doing all year. But I think defensively is where we've picked it up a notch. We've been guarding well with our team defense, and as we saw in the tournament we played in, it caused a lot of problems for the opposing team.

Your team is giving up less than 35 points per game. What are the things you've been trying to emphasize in practice to get the guys locked in defensively, both technically and mentally?

On a daily basis at practice we're working on the fundamentals, especially the fundamentals on the defensive end. We're just trying to get the guys to understand that — as I think I've mentioned to you before — we made a nice run last year and we're not going to surprise anybody. We're going to get everybody's best shot every time we play, it doesn't matter who the opponent is. We just need to clean up some things defensively that we've been able to get away



Photo courtesy of Chatham Charter

Chatham Charter boys basketball coach Jason Messier has an overall record of 119-11 since the start of the 2018-19 season.

with against some of our opponents. But when we start making that playoff run, we can't have those lackadaisical defensive mistakes that could cost us a game.

You're led by senior Adam Harvey, but two players who have had a huge impact so far have been sophomores Beau Harvey and Brennan Oldham. What has it been like watching the two of them grow as players from where they were last year?

Beau has been our point guard. The ball has been in his hands. He's grown a lot as a leader on the team, where we can trust him to make the right call when it comes to the offensive side.

Defensively, he can guard at a high level. I think they've both matured at both aspects of the game.

Brennan was the MVP of the Comet Christmas Classic we were just in. He's really developing that confidence to be able to score from anywhere on the floor. Defensively he's also been getting after it. I know in our second game he had 10 rebounds. He didn't have a double-double. I think he ended up with nine points. But then in the championship game he was just a force out there. I think they both have that maturity, and they're buying what we've been selling as coaches. They're part of that.

You're about to enter the heart of conference play. What sort of improvements do you want to see your team make before the start of the postseason?

I still think it's about where we are defensively. I know I said we've been

playing at a high level defensively, but there is plenty of room to improve, especially in our man-to-man defense. I want them to continue to challenge themselves, find those little intrinsic motivations that you need to have to be successful and figure out what each of their roles are going to be as the season progresses.

You're coming off the trip to the state final last year. It didn't end the way you wanted it to, obviously. Can you see the hunger in your players and that desire to get back to that stage?

I can definitely sense it. But we don't let it consume us. We know that opportunity was there. We know what we need to do to be successful, and we challenge them every day at practice to do those things. We can go back to defense, but I just feel like we have another level in us. I think it's really going to impact a lot of teams, especially those stronger teams, when you get in the playoffs.

Any worry that your conference schedule isn't giving you the challenge you need before entering the playoffs?

It's a thing a lot of people talk about, but I just really believe that we're doing things the right way, teaching things the right way and playing things the right way, it doesn't matter who the opponent is. Instead of winning by 20 or 30, we might have a closer game against tougher opponents. We continue to challenge them to do things the right way, and I think that's going to bode well for us as far as success in the playoffs. We have an MLK game against Eastern Alamance and we still have Seaforth as our last regular season game, as well. So those will be two different types of challenges for us, and we'll be able to see if we need to adjust anything or continue doing what we're doing.

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



Council on Aging Activities Calendar

January 2nd through January 6th

Monday, January 2

Council on Aging Closed

Tuesday, January 3

Eastern Chatham Senior Center

- 8:15 a.m. - **Body Conditioning w/Jackie**
- 9 a.m. - **3G's Men's Group**
- 10 a.m. - **Woodcarvers; Bingo w/Joe & Coffee**
- 1 p.m. - **Rummikub**

Western Chatham Senior Center

- 9:45 a.m. - **Chair Exercises w/Olivia for Beginners (in-person & Zoom)**
- 10:30 - **Ping Pong**
- 1 p.m. - **Rook, Phase 10 & Rummikub; "Bring Your Own Project" Gathering**

Wednesday, January 4

Eastern Chatham Senior Center

- 10 a.m. - **Chair Yoga w/Liz (in-person and Zoom); Coffee & Games w/Chatham County Sheriff's Office**
 - 1 p.m. - **Open Art Studio; Board Games/Cards**
- Western Chatham Senior Center
- 8 a.m. - **Veterans Benefit Assistance (Appointment Required to Michael Daniels 919-545-8334)**
 - 9 a.m. - **Strong & Fit w/Olivia**
 - 10 a.m. - **Bible Study**
 - 10:30 a.m. - **Science w/Alan**
 - 1 p.m. - **Cornhole**

Thursday, January 5

Eastern Chatham Senior Center

- 8:15 a.m. - **Body Conditioning w/Jackie**
- 9:30 a.m. - **Blood Pressure Screening**
- 10 a.m. - **Crafts & Conversation**
- 11 a.m. - **Nutrition Education by Ann Clark**
- 1 p.m. - **Bridge**
- 1:30 p.m. - **Line Dancing**
- 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**
- 10:30 a.m. - **Mental Health w/Tammy Curry.**

Therapeutic Alternatives

- 1 p.m. - **Book Club**
- 2 p.m. - **Tai Chi**
- 3 p.m. - **Movie: The Narnia Chronicles: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe**

Friday, January 6

Eastern Chatham Senior Center

- 8:15 a.m. - **Body Conditioning w/Jackie**
 - 10 a.m. - **Advanced Geri-Fit w/Jackie**
 - 11:15 a.m. - **Chair Volleyball**
 - 1 p.m. - **Card Games/Euchre**
 - 3 p.m. - **Jukebox Live! (Music to Get You Movin')**
- Western Chatham Senior Center
- 9 a.m. - **Strong & Fit w/Olivia**
 - 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.

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PHOTOS OF THE YEAR



Staff photo by James Kiefer

Jordan-Matthews sophomore Dwight Headen competes in the 4x200 relay at the 2A mid-east track and field championships on May 14.



Staff photo by James Kiefer

Northwood 220-pounder Jake Dunning screams after pinning Orange's Elijah Acosta during the 3A mid-east regionals in February.



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Two Northwood players celebrate after the Chargers win the 3A state championship with a 70-42 victory over Enka on Dec. 12.



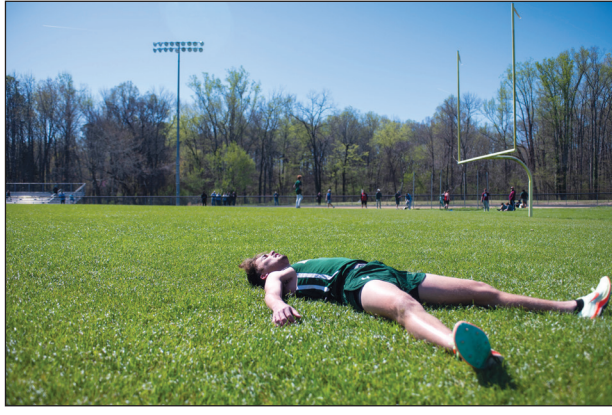
Staff photo by James Kiefer

Chatham Central sophomore Landry Allen clears a hurdle during a 100-meter hurdle prelim at the 1A mid-east regionals on May 14.



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Chatham Charter sophomore Zach Cartrette pitches during the Knights' win over KIPP Pride in the first round of the 1A state playoffs on May 10.



Staff photo by James Kiefer

Northwood senior Colin Henry lays in the grass following a relay event at the Chatham County Invationals on April 2.



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Woods Charter battles Hobpton under the sunset during the fourth round of the 1A state playoffs on May 31.



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Northwood senior Drew Entekin waits for a kick under a cloudy sky during the Chargers' 36-34 loss to Person on Sept. 29.



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Seaforth junior Kooper Jones (4) throws down a dunk as fellow junior Lamar Murray (10) cheers him on in the Hawks' win over Southern Lee on Dec. 1.



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

The Chatham Central football team takes the field ahead of its game against Trinity on Aug. 19

WINS

Continued from page B1

Tuesday for a Mid-Carolina Conference game against Chatham Central (after press time). The Hawks play again Thursday night at home vs. Grace Christian at 5 p.m.

The other local girls team to play in a holiday tournament last week was Northwood, which hosted and won the 2022 First Bank Charger Classic. The Chargers knocked off Hoke County in their showcase-opener last Wednesday before defeating Southern Alamance and Chapel Hill, respectively, in the semifinals and finals.

Northwood was led during the tournament by seniors Te'Keyah Bland and Gianna McManaman, who combined for 35 points in the Chargers' first game of the tournament. McManaman was ultimately

named MVP of the showcase, while Bland and junior Skylar Adams both made the all-tournament team.

The Chargers have turned things around after a rough start to the season. Head coach Kerri Snipes' team began the year 0-3, but Northwood stood at 8-4 through 12 games entering Tuesday's game against Person (after press time).

On the boys side, one of three Chatham County teams active last week was Chatham Charter, which won the Comet Christmas Classic, held at Pfeiffer University in Misenheimer.

The Knights had few problems handling their tournament opponents. In the first round, Charter dominated Albemarle, 84-43. The Knights won their semifinal game over West Stanly before demolishing the South Stanly, 55-19, in the showcase's title game. The MVP of the tour-

nament for Chatham Charter was sophomore Brennan Oldham, who averaged 14.0 points and six rebounds per game over the three games played. He also had five blocks in the tournament final.

Entering the new year, the Knights are the only undefeated team in Chatham County at 15-0. The Knights are currently the top boys team in the county both in points per game scored (71.4) and points per game allowed (32.4).

Chatham Charter returns to the court Friday night at home against Research Triangle at 7:30 p.m.

Outside of Chatham Charter and Northwood, the only other boys team to compete in a holiday tournament last week was Seaforth, which lost both games it played at the Chick-fil-A Classic in Lexington, S.C.

See **WINS**, page B5



Mark your calendar!

The Rotary Club of Pittsboro is excited to announce our first guest speaker of 2023, Melinda Walker from **Wolfspeed**. You won't want to miss hearing what she has to say about what's coming to Chatham County! Talk to your Rotary friends about attending or join us as a guest on **JANUARY 11** at noon at Pittsboro's own, Postal Fish Company.



Chatham Land Team: Rotarians
Lonnie E. West & Julie Boone Cummins



NEWS BRIEFS

Council on Aging host open house in Pittsboro

The Eastern Chatham Senior Center, 365 Hwy. 87 North, Pittsboro, will hold an open house from 2 to 4 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 18.

Renovated and re-opened to the public in August 2022, the public is invited to learn about the offerings of the Chatham County Council on Aging, including its exercise,

fitness and educational programming. For more information, contact Eastern Center manager Liz Lahti at 919-542-4512 or email liz.lahti@chathamcountync.gov.

Deadline is Jan. 31 to apply for RISE Program

SANFORD — Are you thinking about starting a new business? Or have

you been in business less than two years?

The RISE (Real Investment in Sanford Entrepreneurs) Program introduces entrepreneurs and existing business owners to the concepts and practices that will give interested individuals the tools necessary for business success.

This eight-class program begins Feb. 27 and ends March 29, with classes from 6 to 9 p.m. on Mondays and Wednes-

days at the Dennis A. Wicker Civic & Conference Center in Sanford.

At the end of the program, each participant should have produced a basic small business plan, and will have the opportunity to present their plan and business concept to a team of business professionals.

All attendees must apply online. Classes are free, but participants must be pre-registered and approved to be guaranteed a space. The deadline to apply is Jan. 31. Class size is limited to 12 individuals.

The RISE Program is an entrepreneur-development program presented by the Central Carolina Community College Small Business Center, Downtown Sanford, Inc., and the Sanford Area Growth Alliance Chamber of Commerce.

Learn more and register at www.leesbc.com/rise/. Or, for more information, call the CCCC Small Business Center at

919-718-7544.

Church to host Citizens In Action event

SILER CITY — Holy Trinity United Holy Church will host the Citizens In Action program celebrating the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The event is scheduled for 3 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 15, at the church, located at 309 Trinity St.

The Rev. Corine Mack, president of Charlotte-Mecklenburg County NAACP branch, will be the featured speaker.

New License Plate Agency to open in Stanly County

The N.C. Division of Motor Vehicles opened a new license plate agency in Stanly County on Wednesday.

The agency is located at 814 N.C. Hwy. 24-27 Bypass East, Unit 1, in Albemarle at the Albemarle Crossing Shopping Center and is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on state holidays. The agency will be operated by Kim Love.

The new agency replaces a previous agency in Albemarle that closed in February.

In North Carolina, NCDMV oversees LPAs, but the agencies are managed by private businesses or local governments.

LPAs offer vehicle registration services and title transactions, as well as vehicle license plate renewals, replacement tags, handicap placards and duplicate registrations. There are currently 126 license plate agencies operating across North Carolina.

Services such as property tax payments and registration renewals can also be completed online at www.MyNCDMV.gov.

Time For New Year's Financial Resolutions

It's that time of year when many of us promise ourselves we'll go to the gym more, or learn a new language, or take up a musical instrument, or any number of other worthy goals. But this year, when making New Year's resolutions, why not also consider some financial ones?

Here are a few to consider:

• *Don't let inflation derail your investment strategy.* As you know, inflation was the big financial story of 2022, hitting a 40-year high. And while it may moderate somewhat this year, it will likely still be higher than what we experienced the past decade or so. Even so, it's a good idea to try not to let today's inflation harm your investment strategy for the future. That happened last year: More than half of American workers either reduced their contributions to their 401(k)s and other retirement plans or stopped contributing completely during the third quarter of 2022, according to a survey by Allianz Life Insurance of North America. Of course, focusing on your cash flow needs today is certainly understandable, but are there other ways you can free up some money, such as possibly lowering your spending, so you can continue contributing to your retirement accounts? It's worth the effort because you could spend two or three decades as a retiree.

• *Control your debts.* Inflation can also be a factor in debt management. For example, your credit card debt could rise due to rising prices and variable credit card interest rate increases. By paying your bill each month, you can avoid the effects of rising interest rates. If you do carry a balance, you might be able to transfer it to a lower-rate card, depending on your credit score. And if you're

carrying multiple credit cards, you might benefit by getting a fixed-rate debt consolidation loan. In any case, the lower your debt payments, the more you can invest for your long-term goals.

• *Review your investment portfolio.* At least once a year, you should review your investment portfolio to determine if it's still appropriate for your goals, risk tolerance and time horizon. But be careful not to make changes just because you feel your recent performance is not what it should have been. When the financial markets are down, as was the case for most of 2022, even quality investments, such as stocks of companies with solid business fundamentals and strong prospects, can see declines in value. But if these investments are still suitable for your portfolio, you may want to keep them.

• *Prepare for the unexpected.* If you encountered a large unexpected expense, such as the need for a major home repair, how would you pay for it? If you didn't have the money readily available, you might be forced to dip into your long-term investments or retirement accounts. To prevent this, you should build an emergency fund containing three to six months' worth of living expenses — or a year's worth, if you're retired — with the money kept in a low-risk, liquid account.

These resolutions can be useful — so try to put them to work in 2023.

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

Edward Jones, Member SIPC

PANTHERS

Continued from page B1

and mentor a new starting quarterback who can become the face of the franchise.

The Panthers have never really had an offensive-minded head coach, per se. After playing under defensive guru John Fox from 2002 to 2010, Carolina hired defensive coordinator Ron Rivera to become its next head coach. Both Fox and Rivera had varying levels of success, each coaching the Panthers to a Super Bowl appearance, but even the best team's they coached — including the one led by 2015 MVP Cam Newton — always leaned on their defense to set the tone.

The introduction of new concepts and rules into the NFL over the past decade have undoubtedly benefited offenses, but Carolina always seems a step behind the pack in terms of having a schematic edge over their opponent.

What Carolina needs is an offensive mind, and at the top of my wish list for the team is Buffalo offensive coordinator Ken Dorsey.

A former starting quarterback at the University of Miami, Dorsey already has experience working in Charlotte. After starting as a scouting intern in 2011-12, he officially joined the Panthers staff as their quarterbacks coach in 2013. During his

time with the Panthers, he helped develop Cam Newton into one of the top dual-threat quarterbacks in the entire NFL.

After a one-year hiatus in 2018, Dorsey returned to coaching in 2019 as the quarterbacks coach in Buffalo under former Panthers defensive coordinator Sean McDermott. Over the past several seasons, Dorsey has been partly responsible from turning Josh Allen from an inaccurate gunslinger to a perennial MVP candidate.

This year's Bills rank fourth in the league in total offense (381.4 yards per game) and ninth in passing offense (243.3). Despite Allen dealing with an elbow injury, Dorsey has constructed an offense that has been able to withstand any adversity that has come their way.

If the Panthers are able to convince Dorsey to return, the next step in completing their rebuild will be finding a new quarterback. For as solid as Sam Darnold has been the last month of the season, he is not a difference-maker at the position, and in today's NFL, you either have a guy you can depend on in the playoffs, or you're actively searching for that guy.

If Carolina loses in Week 18 to the Saints, they'll lock in a top-10 pick in the 2023 NFL Draft. Whatever happens over these next few months, the Panthers

need to put themselves in position to take one of the top players available at quarterback in this year's class.

While Alabama's Bryce Young is the current favorite to go No. 1 overall, several other teams slated inside the top five — Arizona, Seattle and Detroit — aren't in desperate need of a new quarterback, and might be willing to trade down with the Panthers to acquire more draft capital.

If I'm Carolina, I'm doing everything I can to draft C.J. Stroud, the Ohio State quarterback who will likely be the No. 2 ranked prospect at the position come draft time.

Stroud has had his ups and downs this year, but he ended the season on an extreme high note with a 348-yard, four touchdown performance in a losing effort against No. 1 Georgia in the College Football Playoff Semifinals on New Year's Eve.

If the Panthers can somehow bag both Dorsey and Stroud, it will assuredly do wonders to team's rebuilding effort, as well as appease fans who have been clamoring for a bit of good news after several seasons wallowing in mediocrity.

Fans like me. Please.

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

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Sharon A Dickens, AAMS®
50101 Governors Dr Suite 118
919-967-9968

Pittsboro
Lee Shanklin, AAMS®
120 Lowes Drive Suite 107
919-545-0125

Penguin Place
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114 Russet Run Suite 120
919-542-3020

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Edward Jones
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

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CHATHAM IS BOLD!

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BOLD
CONSTRUCTION

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WINS

Continued from page B4

The Hawks opened the showcase with a 29-point loss to Richland Southeast (S.C.) before falling to Cardinal Newman (S.C.), 83-55, in their final game.

Leading the charge for Seaforth was junior center Jarin Stevenson, who averaged 23.0 points and 8.0 rebounds over the course of the tournament and totaled 29 in the Hawks' second game against Cardinal Newman. For the season, Stevenson — the No. 1 player in N.C. in the Class of 2024, according to 247Sports — is averaging 20.9 points, 10.9 rebounds and 3.0 blocks per game.

Entering Tuesday night's game against Chatham Central (after press time), the Hawks were 7-4 overall. Last year — Seaforth's first as a program — they began the year 6-5 in their first 11 games before finishing the year 12-10 overall.

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

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AUCTIONS

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HELP WANTED

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

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 22nd day of December, 2022.

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

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 Lambie, PLLC
Post Office Box 51549fDurham,
North Carolina 27717
D15,D22,D29,J5,4tc

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 them to the undersigned on or before the 22nd day of March, 2023, 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

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
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

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
ALL PERSONS, firms and corporations holding claims against **PAMELA ANN LOPEZ**, deceased, of Chatham County, NC are notified to exhibit same to the undersigned on or before April 3, 2023, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This 29th day of December, 2022.

Joseph Lopez, Exec. c/o Clarity Legal Group
PO BOX 2207
Chapel Hill, NC 27515
D29,J5,J12,J19,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY FILE # 22 E 636
The undersigned, having qualified as Executrix for the Estate of **RYNOLD CONWAY FOX**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate to present such claims to the undersigned Executrix c/o Ralph A. Evans, Attorney At Law, at P.O. Box 1145, Liberty, North Carolina 27298 on or before March 29, 2023 or this Notice will be plead in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the estate will please make immediate payment. This the 21st day of December, 2022.

Joe Ann Foxx, Executrix
45 Crestview Rd.
Siler City, NC 27344
c/o Ralph A. Evans
Attorney At Law
P.O. Box 1145
Liberty, NC 27298
(336) 622-5320
D29,J5,J12,J19,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS 22-E-698 NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
The undersigned, Frederick W. Miller, having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of **BRIAN PHILLIP MOORE**, deceased, late of Chatham County, this is to notify all persons having claims against said estate to present them to the undersigned on or before the day of March 29th, 2023, or this notice will be plead in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment.

Frederick W. Miller, Administrator
c/o Marie H. Hopper, Attorney for the Estate
Hopper Cummings, PLLC
Post Office Box 1455
Pittsboro, NC 27312
D29,J5,J12,J19,4tc

The Town of Siler City as an Equal Opportunity Employer, invites the submission of proposals from minority and women-owned firms and certified Section 3 business concerns if the contract is over \$100,000 for non-construction contracts. The Town of Siler City will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that disabled persons are provided the same accommodations, such as sign language interpreters, but are not limited to, providing interpreters for the deaf, providing taped cassettes of materials for the blind, or assuring a barrier-free location for the proceedings. This information is available in Spanish or any other language upon request. Please contact Tammy Wicker at 919-726-8625, 311 North Second Avenue, Siler City, North Carolina 27344, or twicker@silercity.org for accommodations for this request. Esta información está disponible en español o en cualquier otro idioma bajo petición. Por favor, póngase en contacto con Tammy Wicker al twicker@silercity.org o 919-726-8625 o en 311 North Second Avenue, Siler City, North Carolina 27344 de alojamiento para esta solicitud. J5,J12,2tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 22-E-680
All persons having claims against **JOHN COOPER**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 29th 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 27th day of December, 2022.

David Samuel Cooper, Executor
PO Box 1824
Pittsboro, NC 27312
D29,J5,J12,J19,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
ALL PERSONS, firms and corporations having claims against **MICHAEL WAYNE LEMMOND**, deceased, of Chatham County, N.C., are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before March 29, 2023, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 29th of December, 2022.

Monica Elizabeth Lemmon, Executor of the Estate of Michael Wayne Lemmond
c/o Paul A. Yokabitus, Attorney
1033 Wade Avenue, Suite 104
Raleigh, NC 27605.
D29,J5,J12,J19,4tc

TOWN OF SILER CITY, LEGISLATIVE HEARING NOTICE
The Board of Commissioners will conduct a **legislative hearing on Jan. 17, 2023 at 6:30pm in the in the multipurpose room of the Wren Memorial Library located at 500 N. 2nd Ave.** Legislative hearing and Board discussion will be conducted on the following requests:
1. Jacqueline Headen & Christian Lenoir request to rezone 1.270 acres from Residential-10 (R-10) to General-Commercial-Conditional (G-C-C). The proposed use is a restaurant (including carry out, delivery service, consumption outside enclosed structure). The subject property is located at 1111 Alston Bridge Rd. and is identified as parcel # 70152.
2. Mark Clark request to rezone 2.85 acres from Agriculture-Residential (A-R) to Highway-Commercial-Conditional (H-C-C). The proposed use is sale and manufacture (of goods, merchandise, equipment) and motor vehicle (sales, rental, repair, maintenance). The subject property is located at 11330 US 64 W. and is identified as parcel # 11756, 72008.
3. Mid-State Development Center LLC request to rezone 96.44 acres from Agricultural-Residential (A-R) to Heavy-Industrial (H-I). The subject property is located along the Stockyard Rd., Bish Rd. and railroad and is identified as parcel # 12876, 12716, 12726, 12722, 12885, 12720, 81045, 12878, 69027, 73262, 12880.
4. Siler City Pentecostal Holiness Church request to rezone 9.056 acres from Agricultural-Residential (A-R) to Highway-Commercial (H-C-C). The subject property is located at 17475 US 64 W. and is identified as parcel # 62747, 62772, 62749.
The proposed item is available for review by contacting Jack Meadows at jmeadows@silercity.org or 919-742-2323. All persons interested in the outcome of the item are invited to attend the legislative hearing and present comments, testimony, and exhibits on the above referenced item. The Planning Board will meet on Jan. 9 @ 6:30 pm to consider a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners.

ment to the undersigned. This the 29th of December, 2022.
Frederick W. Miller, Administrator
c/o Marie H. Hopper, Attorney for the Estate
Hopper Cummings, PLLC
Post Office Box 1455
Pittsboro, NC 27312
D29,J5,J12,J19,4tc

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
A public hearing will be held by the **Chatham County Board of Commissioners on Tuesday, January 17, 2023, beginning at 6:00 p.m. The hearing will be held at the Chatham County Agriculture and Conference Center, 1192 US 64W Business,**

CLASSIFIED INFORMATION
Line ad deadline Tuesday — Noon
Display ad deadline Monday — 5 p.m.
Rates and payment Minimum charge of \$5 for each classified advertisement of 25 words or less per week. For each additional word, no matter how many insertions, add 20¢ per word. Payable in advance.
Blind ads No information will be given out by this office to the identity of person placing "keyed" or "blind" ads.
Errors In advertisements that run more than one week, we are responsible for errors appearing in the first week only. If you find an error in your ad, report it immediately.

Pittsboro NC 27312. Additional information is available at the Chatham County Planning Department office. Speakers are requested to sign up at the meeting prior to the hearing. You may also sign up on the county website prior to the meeting at www.chatham-countync.gov by selecting the heading County Government, then Commissioner Meetings, then Public Input/Hearing Sign Up. The public hearing may be

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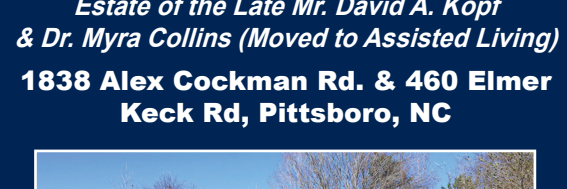

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BOLD Foundation brings joy to local children in need with annual Holiday Cheer program

From the BOLD Foundation

CHAPEL HILL — BOLD Foundation is pleased to announce its Holiday Cheer charitable program has successfully delivered stuffed animals, toys, clothes, coats, blankets, games, bikes and smiles to underserved children in the local community.

This year, the program was able to provide gifts for more than 220 children, marking another record number.

The Holiday Cheer program is something everyone at BOLD Foundation looks forward to every year. The organization first became involved with the program when the founders learned the local school only had enough donors to purchase gifts for 30 of the 117 children in need. That year, BOLD Foundation purchased gifts for the remaining 87 children — determined to ensure that no child in the school would go without gifts during the holiday season.

Since then, BOLD Foundation has taken on the management of the program in addition to purchasing all of the gifts. This is made possible through the support of their affiliate companies, BOLD Real Estate and BOLD Construction, who make a donation to the Foundation with every home sale and construction project. The organization also partners with Governors Club Country Club and its Santa Open Golf Tournament, which helps raise additional funds for the program.

Through BOLD's partner-



Submitted photo

The BOLD Foundation's Holiday Cheer program provided Christmas gifts for more than 220 local children. Employees and family members from Bold Real Estate and Governors Club Realty helped provide the gifts.

ship with Chatham County Schools, the school counselor obtains wish lists from families in need, which often include items such as winter coats, blankets, warm clothing, toys and outdoor recreational equipment.

"Our team loves shopping for gifts for these children," Chris Ehrenfeld, owner of BOLD Companies, said. "The thought of all the kids smiling faces on Christmas morning makes this truly special for our team." Ehrenfeld is a partner in

Chatham Media Group LLC, which owns the News + Record.

He said the BOLD Foundation is grateful for the opportunity to bring holiday cheer to underserved children and their families in the community and

looks forward to continuing the mission of giving in the new year.

For more information on BOLD Foundation and how you can get involved, please visit their website at <https://www.beboldnc.org/>.

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BEST OF CHATHAM 2022 READERS' FAVORITE

Out on a Limb by Gary Kopervas

LET'S GO HUNT!
LET'S GO GATHER!
LET'S DO NEITHER! INSTEAD LET'S ROLL STONES IN FRONT TO PROTECT OURSELVES FROM WHAT I COULD SEE IS SEVERE WEATHER HEADED THIS WAY.
THE THING I DON'T LIKE ABOUT UGRAH IS THAT HE ALWAYS HAS TO BE THE SMARTEST PERSON IN THE CAVE.

R.F.D. by Mike Marland

I NO LONGER GET THAT NEW YEAR'S OPTIMISM THAT I USED TO, SIM.
I STILL GET OVERLY OPTIMISTIC, MAY YOU SHOULD TAKE SOME OF MINE.
YOU COULD FEEL OPTIMISM AGAIN AND I COULD AVOID THE RUDE AWAKENING I EVENTUALLY ALWAYS GET.

Please Note; R.F.D. will retire on 1/30/23

The Spats by Jeff Pickering

LOVE IS A LONG SWEET DREAM
...MARRIAGE IS THE ALARM CLOCK!!

Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps

I'M GUESSING THAT KICKER WAS NOT SUPPOSED TO MISS THAT FIELD GOAL?

GRIN TO BEAR IT by Waqar

"Your money is going through a slight downsizing."

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo

JANUARY 1 FUN

ACROSS

- 1 Drag race vehicle
- 8 Schuss, e.g.
- 11 Stinging filer
- 15 Contributed
- 19 Halloween mask feature
- 20 Hoodwink
- 21 Falco of TV
- 22 Leave off
- 23 Tendency toward chaos
- 24 Fido's noise
- 25 * Star of the 1950s TV series "China Smith"
- 27 BLT seller
- 28 Naval forces
- 30 — Field (Mr. Met's home)
- 31 * Getting tired
- 34 Baby bird
- 38 Evergreen with red arils
- 39 Actress Polo
- 40 Stephen of "V for Vendetta"
- 42 Young moray, e.g.
- 43 Cowl wearer
- 45 * Hope when the situation is desperate
- 51 Mosque official
- 54 Scrooge portrayer
- 55 Minerals in thin sheets
- 56 * "Vanity Fair" novelist
- 61 "One World" musician John
- 65 Holders of frozen cubes
- 66 Girl in the fam
- 67 "Insecure" actress
- 69 — Hawkins dance
- 70 Astonishment
- 73 E'en if
- 75 Actor Bridges
- 76 Fathers
- 79 Auditing gp.
- 81 Was disgusting to
- 84 Deep desires
- 85 * Period superseded by automobiles
- 89 Ragtime pianist Blake
- 90 Aficionado
- 91 Large cut
- 92 * Three-part novel by Gertrude Stein
- 98 Green-light
- 102 Removal of restrictions, for short
- 103 RV refuge org.
- 104 Six-legged marchers
- 107 Suffix with Carol
- 108 How Alaska is populated
- 111 * Town crier's cry
- 116 Cab cost
- 117 "It takes two" dances
- 118 Agents, in brief
- 119 * "The Price Is Right" host
- 123 Happy dance
- 124 Net, as earnings
- 127 Ames' state
- 128 Saturate
- 129 Bullfight yell
- 130 Dissimilar
- 131 Legal equal
- 132 Brontë's Jane
- 133 Despite this
- 134 What the last four letters of eight key answers in this puzzle might be considered, cryptically
- DOWN**
- 1 Honorarium
- 2 Writer Rand
- 3 Lay in place
- 4 Tossed
- 5 "Relax!"
- 6 Of Swiss mountains
- 7 Playa del —
- 8 Climb up
- 9 Divided
- 10 Get by logic
- 11 Joins closely
- 12 Org. for cavity fixers
- 13 Thereafter
- 14 Counterparts of manis
- 15 Cousin of a chimpanzee
- 16 Poehler of "Baby Mama"
- 17 Fight (for)
- 18 Zeta follower
- 26 Pronounces
- 28 "Just my opinion," in a text
- 29 Supermodel Banks
- 31 Fitness locale
- 32 Early auto
- 33 Award for U2
- 34 All-time low
- 73 Globe
- 77 Ergo
- 78 Japanese noodle type
- 80 In no danger
- 82 Playwright O'Neill
- 83 Links letters
- 86 Dangerous
- 87 Vetoing vote
- 48 Sierra, Yukon and Acadia
- 49 Trendy berry
- 50 Shells out
- 52 Boggy areas
- 53 Motorists' gp.
- 56 Very thin, as clouds
- 57 "It matters to me"
- 58 Escorted from outside
- 59 Org. with bag screeners
- 60 The whole — and caboodle
- 61 Fox-sighting cry
- 62 Jagged, as a leaf's edge
- 63 "When I Need You" singer Leo
- 64 Hopper of old gossip
- 68 Fake coins
- 71 Not fooled by
- 72 Previous to
- 74 Globe
- 77 Ergo
- 78 Japanese noodle type
- 80 In no danger
- 82 Playwright O'Neill
- 83 Links letters
- 86 Dangerous
- 87 Vetoing vote
- 88 Genetic stuff
- 89 Spider's hatching pouch
- 92 NFL goals
- 93 With it, in old slang
- 94 Lyricist Gershwin
- 95 Battle with spongy balls
- 96 "So funny!"
- 97 Light beams
- 99 Actress Alley
- 100 Even a single
- 101 "— haw!"
- 105 Regal seat
- 106 Playground fixture
- 109 Wipe clean
- 110 "Bad, Bad — Brown"
- 112 Delight in
- 113 Nimble
- 114 Big name in thesauruses
- 115 In a fitting manner
- 117 Small kid
- 119 Chip topper
- 120 Fish spawn
- 121 She-sheep
- 122 Mug handle
- 124 Bit of word wit
- 125 Rap sheet abbr.
- 126 Boomer's kid

Solution for the puzzle in last week's edition.

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

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

	8		2			9		
2				1			8	
		4		6	5			3
1					8	6	2	
		5		9		3		
	9		3		4			1
	6				2			5
8			7			1		
		7		3			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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MAGIC MAZE ● LAST NIGHT'S PARTY

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

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

- | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Cab ride | Countdown | Friends | Music |
| Champagne | Dancing | Hats | Streamers |
| Cheering | Festive | Midnight | Toasts |
| Confetti | Fireworks | Mistletoe | |

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



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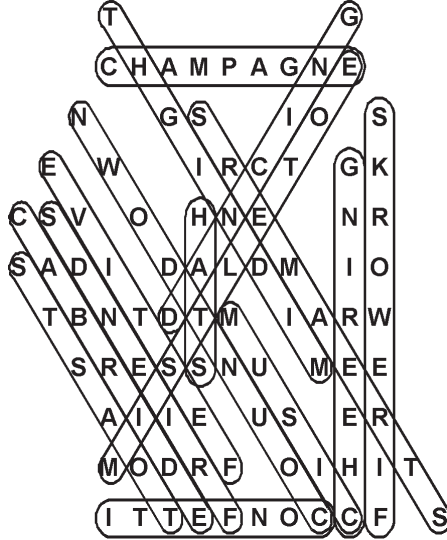


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LAST NIGHT'S PARTY



Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

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

My, how fun



Courtesy of Debbie Matthews

Chicken Mei Fun

8 ounces rice vermicelli

Lay into a pot of very hot water, and soak for 20 minutes. After soaking, pour into a colander in which you've placed the spinach. This will wilt the spinach and get it ready to toss into the stir fry.

Protein:

3 cups shredded rotisserie chicken
3 eggs, well beaten
2 tablespoons chives, chopped
2 teaspoons vegetable oil
Make an omelet with the eggs and chives. Cut into 1/2-inch strips and set aside for assembly.

Vegetables:

2 carrots, julienned
1/2 yellow onion, sliced thinly
8 ounces mushrooms
1 tablespoon vegetable oil

Aromatics:

*Stir frying goes crazy fast once it gets started, so get all of your prep done before turning on the burner.

To cook:

If you don't have a wok, get a very large, very heavy pot almost smoking hot. Add 1 tablespoon oil to the pan. Put in the carrots and mushrooms. Cook for a couple of minutes, and when all the liquid has released and cooked out, add onions. Cook for 30 seconds.

Stir in aromatics then immediately add the proteins. Pour in sauce and toss. When coated, pour in noodles, spinach, and thawed peas. Gently mix to coat.

Serves 6-8.

I've eaten this from a few Chinese restaurants. But the more popular recipe is called Singapore Mei Fun. It's a reflection of the Indian population living in Singapore, and this version has curry. As you can guess, because of my affliction, I do not have a good relationship with curry.

But if you would like, you are welcome to Singapore up this recipe with the addition of 1 1/2 tablespoons curry powder and 3 dried bird's eye chilis. Bon Appetite, intrepid soul.

3 cloves garlic, minced
2 tablespoons grated ginger
1 large shallot, diced

Sauce:
Whisk together:
3/4 cup soy sauce
2 tablespoons toasted sesame oil
1 tablespoon brown sugar
1 tablespoon cider vinegar
1 tablespoon Sherry

Finishing:

2 cups raw spinach
1 cup frozen peas, thawed

Finished mei fun.



DEBBIE MATTHEWS
The Curious Cook

I was born with what I believe is a legitimate congenital defect.

The technical, Latin nomenclature for this is (or should be) *Lingua Infans*, or "Baby Tongue."

Regardless of appetites or desires, the ingestion of

fiery, spicy foods results in pain and distress for me. As a result, I can eat almost no Indian food, and Jamaican food scares the pants off me. Even a heavy-handed use of black pepper can overwhelm.

I gotta tell you, Gentle Reader, for a food writer, it's more than a little embarrassing some times.

Many people make fun of this flaw, and inform me that it's a matter of will; that if I want to be a grown-up

and eat spicy foods, I should just put on my big girl panties, and do it. Not true. I'd love to be able to tuck into a plate of tikka masala, or some spicy nachos, but I am physically unable to do it.

But what I also don't do is make a big deal out of it. It's my habaÑero-covered cross to bear, no one else's. So when eating out I've become very good at avoiding suspect menu items.

I think that's one reason why I love Chinese food so much. While

there are dishes with enough heat to really hurt me, they don't comprise the bulk of the menu. Other Asian cuisine, most notably Thai, are not so safe.

This week's recipe is my home version of Chicken Mei Fun — pronounced "my fun." It's very similar to fried rice, but instead of rice grains, angel hair pasta made from rice is used (find it in Asian markets and some grocery stores).

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



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



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(919) 663-6712