

Chatham News + Record

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As Covid relief funds approach end, here's how Chatham County Schools is dealing with it

BY BEN RAPPAPORT
News + Record Staff

School systems across the nation were underfunded, understaffed and underprepared for the onslaught the Covid-19 pandemic had on education. Because of this major shift, the federal and state governments pumped more than \$67 billion into public education through emergency relief funds for public schools, also called Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER). The funding was designed to address the safe reopening and sustaining of operations of schools

and address the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on students.

Many of the deadlines for using those funds, though, are fast approaching with most ESSER funds set to expire by the beginning of 2024.

Put the money to work

Chatham County Schools has a total ESSER allotment of more than \$21 million. Funds can be used to prevent, reduce or respond to Covid-19 in the classroom. To date CCS has spent \$18.4 million of those ESSER funds, leaving \$3 million to be spent by June 30, 2024. Districts across the state have left bil-

ions in funding on the table, and if the money isn't spent by the 2023 or 2024 deadlines, it reverts back to the government. In Chatham, however, there's a clear methodology for how the district is using the funds.

ESSER funds have been used in CCS to bring in a variety of innovations. Those include software platforms that provide interventions and personalized learning paths to help with learning needs and improved summer school programming.

The funds have also been used to hire a variety of positions throughout the district. This includes dropout preven-

tion specialists, staff for the district's Excellence and Equity (E3) team, additional social workers and more. All told, the district hired for more than 50 employees — a combination of vacancies and new positions — using ESSER funds.

The money also helped with underemployment issues by supporting retention and recruitment bonuses through CCS's 4Rs program — recruitment, retention, recognition and reward. The program included bonuses of \$3,750 for retaining employment

See **FUNDS**, page A3



CN+R file photo by Bett Wilson Foley

On Thursday, March 25, 2010, a fire nearly destroyed the Chatham County Courthouse in Pittsboro. The Chatham County Historical Association hosted an event Sunday which included a presentation on work done to rebuild the historic building.

Architects reflect on anniversary of rebuild

BY TAYLOR HEEDEN
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — The first Sunday in April wasn't an unusual one in Pittsboro: the sun was shining, the town's "First Sunday" event drew crowds to downtown and Chatham's historic courthouse, as it has for so long, stood guard at the south end of Hillsboro Street.

Ten years ago this month, though, residents here were celebrating the completion of the rebuilding of that courthouse after the devastating March 25, 2010, fire that nearly destroyed it. And on Sunday, within the ground floor

of the courthouse, the Chatham County Historical Association (CCHA) marked the occasion by hosting an educational program about the fire — and what it took to rebuild what many consider symbol of Chatham County.

The father-son architect duo Grimsley and Taylor Hobbs, of Pittsboro's Hobbs Architects, were two of the people who facilitated the reconstruction of the courthouse; they were Sunday's featured presenters.

"A part of this work is to document and preserve, and make efforts to protect and preserve existing buildings," Grimsley Hobbs

said. "This is a very important thing that this community did. It marks these buildings as having historic significance, and there's still a lot more that we have to do."

Around 4:30 p.m. on that early spring day in 2010, fire alarms rang throughout the courthouse, urging those inside to evacuate. The attic became engulfed in flames; people outside the courthouse could see smoke billowing out of its tower.

The courthouse was surrounded in scaffolding when the fire broke out because of ongoing restoration

See **EVENT**, page A7

IN SILER CITY



Staff photo by Bill Horner III

Jenny Clark's new position in the Siler City Parks & Recreation Department has her overseeing all athletic programs.

Parks & Rec gets 2 new staffers

BY TAYLOR HEEDEN
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — Two recent hires within the town's Parks & Recreation Department will provide additional support in expanding programs and recreational facilities as Siler City grows.

Tylr Stinson and Jenny Clark have joined the department as the recreation coordinator and athletic programming supervisor, respectively.

Clark began working for the town just over a year ago as SCP&R's administrative assistant. While working there, the athletic programming supervisor position became available.

"My background is largely in administrative work, but specifically, facilitating youth sports for quite a number of years," Clark said. "And I thought that [new position] would be a good fit for me."

Clark previously worked as a volunteer coach and commissioner for the youth soccer league in Holly Springs. She oversaw scheduling games and assigning referees, and also co-founded the Holly Springs Football Club. While there, Clark worked closely with the Holly Springs Parks & Recreation Department.

"Once you start volunteer coaching, it just

See **EMPLOYEES**, page A7

JOLITZY FERNANDEZ ARZATE

From humble beginnings to prestigious scholarships

BY BEN RAPPAPORT
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — *No presumir.* That's what Jolitzzy Fernandez Arzate's dad reminded her every day before sending her off to school. The Spanish phrase directly translates to don't brag or show off, but to Jolitzzy it means much more than that.

"No presumir" is a life motto to remind Jolitzzy of her humble beginnings. A way of remembering the opportuni-

ties she's been afforded in her 17 years of life, and the importance of capitalizing on those opportunities.

The philosophy certainly paid off as she was recently awarded the Richard and Susan Allison Assured Admit Scholarship. The merit-based scholarship was created to attract top North Carolina students of exceptional scholastic aptitude, strength of character and demonstrated leadership potential to both UNC-Chapel Hill and Kenan-Flagler Busi-

ness School.

The scholarship is worth \$25,000 per year for four years and assures early admittance to the Kenan-Flagler Business School at UNC-Chapel Hill. Jolitzzy will begin her first year at UNC in the fall after graduating from Jordan-Matthews High School.

Team player

Receiving the scholarship required an interview along with an application review process. Jolitzzy said the interview was

far from ordinary.

"It was supposed to last one hour, but our conversation lasted an hour and 30 minutes," she said. "And they were asking me non-traditional questions like 'What makes you cry?' or 'Who's your best friend?'"

A week later, she got the call that she was awarded the honor. She'll be the first person in her family to attend college.

Originally, UNC wasn't



Staff photo by Ben Rappaport

Jolitzzy Fernandez Arzate

See **SCHOLARSHIPS**, page A6

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

ON THE AGENDA

- The **Pittsboro Board of Commissioners** will meet at 7 p.m. on Monday, April 10, at the Chatham County Agriculture & Conference Center. The meeting will be livestreamed onto the town's YouTube channel.
- The **Chatham Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors** will meet at 7 p.m. on Thursday, April 13, at the Chatham County Agriculture & Conference Center (west side entrance) conference room. All meetings are open to the public. To be added to the agenda or for more information, please call 919-545-8440.

OTHER

- **Chatham Community Library** will host a **Second Bloom Meet & Greet** in recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) in April, with the staff, advocates, and volunteers of Second Bloom of Chatham. This program is free and open to the public, Wednesday, April 12, noon to 3 p.m. in the Holmes Family Meeting Room. Second Bloom of Chatham is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to providing person-centered support and resources for survivors of domestic violence and/or sexual assault in Chatham County. A 24-hour helpline is available at 919-545-0055. Attendees will have the opportunity to learn more about the mission of Second Bloom and ways to get involved with the organization. Coffee and dessert will be served.
- **Chatham Community Library**, in recognition of Earth Day, will host: **Discovering Your Own Backyard**, a brief guide into "North Carolina's Natural World," presented by PhD student Alexis Longmire. This event is free and open to the public, Thursday, April 13, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in the Holmes Family Meeting Room
- The **Goldston Public Library** is excited to announce the Goldston Book Club, Monday, April 10, and every 2nd Monday of each month, from 2 to 3 p.m. Individuals who are interested in joining a book club can stop by the Goldston Public Library. For the month of April, the Club is reading *Dreamland* by Nicholas Sparks. For more information about the Goldston and other Chatham County Book Clubs, visit the following link: <https://www.chathamcountync.gov/government/departments-programs-i-z/library/adult-services/book-clubs-book-club-kits>. --- **Chatham Community Library** is offering free in-person classes on Microsoft PowerPoint and Facebook in April. Class descriptions and a registration link can be found at www.chathamcountync.gov/ComputerClasses. Call 919-545-8086 or email reference@chathamlibraries.org for more information. --- Microsoft PowerPoint Basics, Part 1: April 13, Thursday, 3:00 p.m. Learn how to create presentations and slide shows in Microsoft PowerPoint. This class is designed for the beginner. --- Microsoft PowerPoint Basics, Part 2: April 20, Thursday, 3:00 pm. Build on the concepts learned in Part 1. Create charts and tables, add video and audio, work with transitions and animations, and more. Participants should have prior basic experience with PowerPoint. --- Intro to Facebook: April 24, Monday, 3:00 pm. Learn about the world's most popular social network. We will be focusing on individual (personal) accounts in this class. --- Goldston Public Library Learn About Food at Your Library: **Raising Good Eaters**, Thursday, April 20, 11:00 a.m. - noon. Registered Dietitian, Tara Gregory, from N.C. Cooperative Extension - Chatham County Center, will lead the presentation --- Goldston Public Library Earth Day Celebration, Friday, April 21st, 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Goldston Public Library will host a series of activities in celebration of Earth Day. Families with children are welcome to participate in story time, followed by crafts, and a gardening session. The gardening session will be held in the patio area of the library. Flowers and plants are provided by Mr. Hart's Agricultural Classes at Chatham Central High.
- The **Teen Advisory Board (TAB)** of the **Chatham Community Library** announces a Teen Poetry Contest. Local teens in grades 6-12 are encouraged to submit an original poem using any poetic form. Submissions will be accepted through April 15. Participants should email their submission to Kathleen Pierce, Youth Services Library Assistant and TAB advisor. TAB members will judge the submissions. Three \$25 gift cards to McIntyre's Books in Pittsboro will be awarded. Prizes for the Teen Poetry Contest are sponsored by the Friends of the Chatham Community Library. For more information, individuals may visit the Chatham County Public Libraries website www.chathamlibraries.org, or contact Youth Services at youth.services@chathamlibraries.org.
- The **League of Women Voters of Orange, Durham, and Chatham Counties** invites the community to join us on Wednesday, April 19 at 6:30 p.m. for online discussion; **How the Court System Works: Hear from Local Judges** about how the courts work, the kinds of cases they hear, how cases may have changed over the years, and more. Three distinguished guests will join us: Judge Allen Baddour of the Chatham and Orange Counties' Superior Court, Judge Samantha Cabe of the Chatham and Orange Counties District Court and Judge Shamiaka Rhinehart of the Durham Superior Court. This online event is free and open to the public. Registration is required. Register here to join us on Wednesday, April 19, or register via our online calendar: <https://my.lwv.org/north-carolina/orange-durham-and-chatham-counties-inc/calendar>.
- **Chatham County Public Libraries** will offer two free sessions for community members to learn about Medicare. "Medicare 101: Helping Medicare-Eligible Customers Understand Their Options" is presented by LaTonya Nicholson, who is a Medicare consultant with BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina. These educational sessions will help answer questions about Medicare plans. Medicare 101 at Chatham Community Library on Tuesday, April 18, from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. in the Holmes Family Meeting Room. Chatham Community Library is located at 197 NC-87, Pittsboro. Residents may contact the library at (919) 545-8084 or rita.vanduin@chathamlibraries.org for more information on this and other events and programs. Then, Medicare 101 at Goldston Public Library on Monday, April 24, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. in the E. M. Harris Jr. Conference Room. Goldston Public Library is located at 9235 Pittsboro-Goldston Road. Residents may contact the library at (919) 898-4522 or goldston.library@chathamlibraries.org for more information on this and other events and programs.
- Applications available for **Horton High School Alumni Association** Scholarship for the 2023-2024 academic year. Descendants of a Horton High School alumnus or attendee of Horton High School are eligible to apply. High school graduates, college students and graduate students are encouraged to apply. Application is on our website: hortonhighalumni.com Click: Scholarship - Deadline for application is June 1, 2023 - Text Helen Dark at 919-548-4578 with your questions.
- **Community Meals: St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church** in Pittsboro distributes two meals each week for the benefit of the community. From 12 to 1 p.m. each Thursday, the Pittsboro Community Lunch (in its 15th year!) provides healthy, ready-to-eat meals to all who come. Just arrive hungry! Then from 4:30 to 6 p.m. each Tuesday, the Chatham Chuckwagon provides cooked/frozen entrees that are ideal for quick dinners. These meals are provided at no cost (although donations are welcomed!). Our volunteers invite you to join our efforts to preserve a caring and sharing community spirit. The church is located at 204 W. Salisbury St., Pittsboro. For more information, call 919-542-5679.
- The **Chatham County Historical Association** conducts field trips of the museum and Historical Courthouse at 9 Hillsborough St., Pittsboro, for all Chatham County fourth-

grade students. The public may help by making donations to go to the printing of the field trip workbook or by donating time as a field trip volunteer. For more information, call 919-542-6222.

• **The Chatham Historical Museum's permanent exhibits** cover all aspects of Chatham's unique history and are appropriate for adults and children. The museum is open Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. There is no admission fee. The museum is located in the historic Chatham County Courthouse in the Circle, 9 Hillsboro St., Pittsboro. We follow state/local mask and distancing guidelines. More info at chatham-history.org.

• The Chatham Arts Council has put together a relief effort specifically for artists and arts-workers called **CAARE: Chatham Artist and Arts-Worker Relief Effort**. For more information on CAARE, or to donate, visit ChathamArtsCouncil.org.

• **Second Bloom's** hours are from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. Tuesday until Saturday. We are now accepting spring and summer usedclothes, jewelry and accessories, in good and clean condition. Credit cards are accepted. We are located at 630 E. Street, Pittsboro, in the Food Lion shopping center. All proceeds provide support for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and promote community education in collaboration with Chatham County.

• **Foster and/or adoptive informa-**

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

- **Alcoholics Anonymous** — North Carolina District 33, call the Help Line at 866-640-0180 for the meeting schedule for this area.
- **Motorcycle Association** — The Motorcycle Association for Chatham, Western Wake, Lee, Orange and Alamance counties meets in Pittsboro and is open to all riders. For information, call 919-392-3939 or visit www.chathamCBA.com.
- **Narcotics Anonymous** — For drug problems in the family, Narcotics Anonymous helps. Call 1-800-721-8225 for listing of local meetings.
- **Al-Anon Meeting** — Pittsboro Serenity Seekers Al-Anon Family Group meets at 7 p.m. Mondays at Chatham Community Church, in the lower level of Chatham Mill.

SCOUT NEWS

- **Boy Scout Troop 93** in Pittsboro meets at 7 p.m. Wednesdays at the Harold Boone Scout Park on Hwy 64W, just past CCCC. Open to boys, ages 11-17. Visit www.bstroop93.org for more information.
- **Pack 924** of Siler City First U.M.C. meets from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. on Tuesdays for boys, grades 1 through 5. Come join the Cub Scouts.
- **Pack 900** in Bear Creek meets at 7 p.m. Tuesdays at Meroney's U.M.C., following the school calendar. See <http://pack900.com> for more information.

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CURRENTLY UNDER CONTRACT

<p>Residential</p> <p>47 McLaurin Rd (Siler City) 2 Bdrm, 1 Bath \$500,000</p> <p>321 Miles Branch Rd (Pittsboro) 4 Bdrm, 3.5 Bath \$600,000</p> <p>Land</p> <p>800 Southwind Rd (Siler City) 10.511 acres \$200,000</p> <p>373 J C Corner Rd (Pittsboro) 7.382 acres \$275,000</p> <p>58 Mint Springs Rd (Pittsboro) 5.400 acres \$279,900</p> <p>147 Oldham Estate Dr Lot 4 (Chapel Hill) 4.000 acres \$350,000</p>	<p>Tract 2 Thomas Kelly Rd (Sanford) 32.360 acres \$400,000</p> <p>1406 Jessie Bridges Rd (Siler City) 25.500 acres \$400,000</p> <p>147 Oldham Estate Dr (Chapel Hill) 12.591 acres \$499,000</p> <p>0 Hamlets Chapel Rd (Pittsboro) 42.804 acres \$1,200,000</p> <p>12190 E US 64 Hwy (Apex) 15.158 acres \$1,894,750</p> <p>0 Olives Chapel Rd (Apex) 75.430 acres \$9,051,600</p> <p>Commercial Unimproved</p> <p>10681 E US 64 Hwy (Apex) 3.97 acres \$1,500,000</p>
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Mistakes Buyers Make While Under Contract (Real Estate)

<https://www.youtube.com/c/ericandrewsrealtor>



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THE CN+R Q&A | EMILY SUTTON

Why a Sanford wastewater permit renewal matters

Haw's Riverkeeper explains harmful impact of lax requirements, testing

The city of Sanford's Big Buffalo Wastewater Treatment Facility, located adjacent to the Deep River, was the subject of a recent public hearing held by the N.C. Dept. of Environmental Quality's Division of Water Resources.

Sanford is requesting a renewal of its National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Wastewater Discharge Permit, which allows it to discharge treated municipal and industrial wastewater to the Deep River in the Cape Fear River Basin.

With the town of Pittsboro and the city of Sanford collaborating on an agreement that would ultimately provide Pittsboro with water from the Deep River, the hearing was important to Chatham residents. The Haw River Assembly's Emily Sutton, who attended and spoke at the hearing, spoke to the News + Record about its importance.

Haw River Assembly in 2016, managing citizen science projects to watchdog against sediment pollution and monitor the tributaries and main stem of the Haw River. As Riverkeeper, she is now leading the fight against pollution in the Haw River on many fronts, including emerging contaminants, Jordan Lake nutrients, and sediment pollution.

The N.C. Division of Environmental Quality's Division of Water Resources recently held a public hearing regarding the renewal of the City of Sanford's Big Buffalo Wastewater Treatment Facility, which treats wastewater from the Deep River. Why was that hearing important, and what's the relevancy for people in Chatham County?

Sanford's drinking water facility is unique in that the discharge for the wastewater treatment plant, which has historically discharged extremely high levels of PFAS



Courtesy of Haw River Assembly

Emily Sutton is the Haw Riverkeeper for the Haw River Assembly.

and 1,4 dioxane, is actually upstream. Sanford is poised to become a regional drinking water supplier. They will be selling drinking water to their own communities in Sanford, along with much of Chatham County, including Pittsboro, Fuquay-Varina, and Holly Springs.

This discharge permit has

no numeric limits for PFAS or 1,4 dioxane. Left unregulated, these toxins will flow the 15 miles downstream into the drinking water intake, threatening the health of these impacted communities.

Some of the discussion and concerns raised at that March 7

public hearing revolved around the legal responsibility of the state — and of the City of Sanford — in terms of holding polluters accountable. What's your perspective on that?

The Clean Water Act mandates that any discharge into public waterways must be disclosed. This is the responsibility of the polluting industry. Small communities downstream of these industrial corporations should not be left with the responsibility to treat and pay for that treatment while upstream polluters face no consequences.

What in-place protocols need to change?

North Carolina's Department of Environmental Quality is responsible for setting limits and enforcing those limits on discharge permits in order to protect the health of our environment. Currently, the discharge permits contain no numeric limits for PFAS, and no numeric limits for 1,4-dioxane. 1,4-dioxane

See **PERMIT**, page A12

FUNDS

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and referral bonuses of \$300 for employees who recruit new people to join the district. The 4Rs program brought more than 50 staff to the district since it began prior to the 2022-2023 school year.

Approaching the cliff

Now, however, CCS sees the funding cliff ap-

proaching. Many of those programs and positions funded by ESSER are at risk of facing budget cuts or being slashed altogether. And some of those pains are coming early.

Last month, CCS announced it was closing its K-8 Virtual Academy at the end of the school year because of budget constraints. The ESSER funds used to support the K-8 Virtual Academy are ending this June. Without

those funds, CCS won't have the budget to keep the academy open.

Twenty-one million dollars may sound like a great deal for CCS, but managing the funds has been a constant struggle, according to Dr. Amanda Moran, assistant superintendent for academic services and instructional support.

"While it is a large sum of funding, it was not free to assign to anything we

wanted," Moran told the News + Record. "Many of the pockets of funding had specific requirements for how they had to be used."

She said because deadlines have varied for different pockets of funding, the money hasn't been as flexible as the district anticipated.

For example, Moran said there was a desire to use the funds to replace HVAC at schools. Due to the cost of replacing HVAC systems and spending requirements, however, only one to two schools would have qualified.

"What sounds like a large sum of funding quickly gets used when you consider we have over 1,200 employees and 20 schools," she said.

Deadlines near

ESSER funds received by CCS came in three separate waves, each with its own deadline. The first was ESSER I, signed into law in March 2020 and obligated by September 2022 and spent by January 2023. CCS met those deadlines.

The second was ESSER II, which was signed in December 2020, and must be obligated by September 2023 and spent by January 2024.

The third was ARP ESSER, also known as ESSER III. These funds came from the American Rescue Plan Act, which was signed March 2021. The act provided

Approaching ESSER funding deadlines

- ESSER II: must be spent by Jan. 29, 2024
- ARP ESSER (ESSER III): must be spent by Jan. 28, 2025
- GEER II: must be spent by Jan. 29, 2024

more than \$122 billion in additional ESSER funds across the country. These funds must be obligated by September 2024 and spent by January 2025.

CCS also received funds through the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER), which obligated \$3 billion to states and was allocated based on population. These funds came in two waves. The first was GEER I signed in March 2020; the funds had to be obligated by September 2022 and spent by January 2023. CCS met those deadlines.

The second, GEER II, was signed December 2020. These funds must be obligated by September 2023 and spent by January 2024.

Moran said she still holds weekly meetings with budget staff and Chief Financial Officer Tony Messer to update the status of various funding deadlines and obligations.

Chopping block

The Virtual Academy won't be the only thing to get cut when ESSER funds expire. Moran said, however, CCS has a plan for reviewing which

programs stay and which ones go.

The district plans to assess which programs are of the greatest need. This includes examining usage reports for softwares and exploring growth data to see what programs will help guide the district in the present and the future.

Moran also assured that CCS will retain staff positions added for student support in areas such as ESL (English as a Second Language), Exceptional Children, social workers, nurses, etc., since those needs still exist.

Some positions funded by ESSER, however, won't be retained. This includes interventionists, dropout prevention positions and additional instructional assistants, according to Moran. Many of these positions were hired by specific schools rather than the district at large.

This doesn't mean that those employees suddenly lose their jobs in CCS. Positions funded with ESSER funds are sunseting this year and employees will be placed in vacant positions.

"No staff will lose jobs as a result of ESSER funding," Moran said.

One of the major hits the end of ESSER funds will cause is a reduction in summer school and summer programming. While required programs will continue using state funding, CCS was able to use ESSER to supplement additional programs and camps for students to reduce summer learning loss.

Without the increased aid from federal funding, CCS will be reliant on Chatham County Commissioners to supplement gaps. Commissioners and the school board have long touted their mutual relationship, and Moran said the district will lean heavily on them as growth in the county grows while dollars dwindle.

"Investing in employees to serve Chatham County Students will be the biggest challenge for Chatham in the next coming couple of years," she said.

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

VIEWPOINTS

GUEST EDITORIAL | REV. EVAN HARRISON

Church or not, don't miss Easter



REV. EVAN HARRISON

Churches have come a long way. Onlookers rejoice instead of glaring if toddlers scurry or wail throughout a worship service. Spry 80-year-olds no longer perform lunging ankle grabs if visitors sneak out during the last hymn without having provided any contact information. You can even get your pick of the best of the 1990s "contemporary" Christian music or Billboard's top hits from the 1790s to break up the boring, er, meaningful liturgies and sermons.

On a serious note, many churches around here no longer overtly oppress entire groups of people. But still the fact remains: if 90% of people attended church this Easter (or at least ate a chocolate bunny at precisely 11:04 a.m. on April 9th while streaming worship on their phone) that in and of itself would not make Easter happen.

Why? Easter is about more

than chocolate and churchiness. The story of Jesus riding donkeys, getting killed, and coming back to life is the climax of a much larger story in which God constantly offers humankind abundant life. Easter isn't about getting Jesus but realizing that Jesus has us in his loving hands. When humankind realizes they are already loved and feel empowered to deal with the world's joys and problems instead of ignoring them, the world begins to heal. The resurrected (alive again) Jesus envisioned interconnected clumps of community where people would learn how to truly live.

Fr. Richard Rohr, using Ken Wilber's terms, denotes four main tasks in life: "cleaning up, growing up, waking up and showing up." If you're looking for an imperfect but loving community with whom to grow ... check out some churches near you. But, even if your community is a neighborhood or network of friends, consider this Easter as an invitation to explore one of these four things.

Clean Up: Our devotion goes

to whatever we attend to the most. Humanity has always been tempted to give unhealthy devotion to things like food, drink, escapism, materialism, or other distractions when life feels overwhelming. Throughout antiquity and even today, many people fast leading up to Easter, as Jesus did early in his ministry. This isn't about denying good stuff. It's about not letting things master us, so we can enjoy even better stuff. Easter invites us to clean up our life, seeking help from a larger power, support groups, neighbors, churches, or others.

Grow Up: Even the "good" patterns and motivations we have adopted wear out their usefulness. Our way of doing things truly helped most of us through our teens, 20s and 30s ... but it eventually feels a bit mechanical, tiresome & compulsive. We've been trying to help, succeed, stand out, remain secure ... etc. ... out of fear of what might happen if we don't. Encountering Jesus after his death startled his closest disciples, and they slowly realized the rules of life had

changed. Jesus hadn't wanted them to become churchy, but free. The only way to do the right thing for the right reason is to truly take in the fact that we irrevocably are loved, secure and belong. Is it time to grow up to this truth? Different life experiences, relationships, and spiritual practices like reflection and solitude in nature can help.

Wake Up: Finally, the good stuff. When we feel valuable and loved, unquestionably, we wake up to the fact that heaven and earth are more connected than we ever imagined. This Easter could be your chance to notice these Easter-egg-like paradoxes and mysteries that are hidden in plain sight. Delight in the beautiful truth nestled within them.

Showing up: Showing up combines "getting out there" and "expressing yourself." While all the other tasks in life help us to better show up ... showing up can also inspire us to do the other tasks. April 16th marks 50 years since Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King wrote his famous "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." Rev. Shontea

Smith (Mt. Sinai AME) will lead local pastors in reading and reflecting on what has changed in 50 years. Those who worked with King were taught to clean up, grow up and wake up so that only love and courage could be seen when they showed up.

But at the end of the day, King wished more of the absent Christians had just shown up and learned on their feet. Jesus showed up for people just as they were ... empowering them before they were even close to being perfect. We don't have to be perfect to solve the problems of the world. Often the first thing we need to do is show up. Earth Day is right after Easter, too. Again ... we don't have to be perfect, but we have the opportunity to show up in our lifestyles and policies to bless future generations.

So, church or not, don't forget to show up this Easter!

The Rev. Evan Harrison is pastor of Pittsboro Presbyterian Church. Find out more about the church at <https://pittsboropres.org/>.

Easter now



ANDREW TAYLOR-TROUTMAN
Hope Matters

A friend of mine recently emailed a New York Times article lamenting, "Anybody who knew the old Chapel Hill knows that now it's gone to hell." The writer's complaints included the traffic, construction and crowds. This article was written in 1972.

There is tension inherent in the idea of progress. In many ways, success is measured by growth. Yet, while acknowledging the benefits of growth, many of us also long for a simpler past, a bygone era we may exaggerate in our minds as "the golden years."

And not only that, there are people who would say that not just Chapel Hill but the entire world has gone to hell.

The truth is that climate change imperils all of life as never before. The constant threat of nuclear war threatens our annihilation.

At the same time, medical and technological advances have increased life expectancy for billions of people, and now the smallest percentage of the human population lives in poverty than ever before in human history.

It is truly the best of times and the worst of times.

As for you, gentle reader, you may be celebrating a new child or grandchild. You may be mourning the loss of a loved one. You may be experiencing both new life and loss in large and small ways. The brutal and beautiful are part of our everyday experience.

For Christians, this is the holiest week of the year when we remember the last days of Jesus' life. Easter does remember the past, but it also points to the future. Jesus' resurrection from the dead expresses a belief that "death shall be swallowed up in victory." Belief holds that there shall come a time when there is no more pain, suffering or tears.

Paradoxically, Easter is also about the present — the light that shines here and now in this world.

When I read the biblical accounts of his last week, I find Jesus focusing on this present moment. Jesus chose to share a meal with those closest to him and asked for a group of those same folks to stay awake and pray with him — to live in the moment. To live in the moment does not mean that there is no suffering or pain.

But it can give hope. Easter is now.

I imagine that you, like me, were horrified last week at the news of yet another school shooting. I happened to be with my youngest child when I saw the breaking news update on my phone. My 5-year-old had just gotten out of the hotel pool and, though the water was heated, there was a chill in the air. I put my phone down and wrapped her in a towel.

Light and love were in that moment. It does not mean that I should ignore the problems elsewhere. But appreciating such moments can inspire me to work for change in the world.

As my daughter climbed onto my lap, I breathed in deeply and exhaled slowly while feeling the soft touch of her towel and a strand of her long hair tickling my cheek. The sunlight streamed upon other kids playing in the pool, and my daughter snuggled into my chest. Easter now.



Cookie time ... and what a blessing



JAN HUTTON
This Being Human Thing

This is how it began.

September 2 is my mother's birthday. Although she's been gone for over 25 years, I'm still hyper-aware of September 2 whenever it rolls around. Last year, on that day, I received a Facebook message from a childhood neighbor with whom I'd recently re-connected. She asked if another childhood neighbor could have my cell number. Admittedly, I was a bit puzzled. I'd not been in contact with Mark since he was about 7 years old and I was 12. (I've aged a tad since last we met.) Mark's older sister was my friend and the person through whom I knew Mark and his family.

Sure, why not share my cell number with Mark? I'm a curious sort.

Later that day, I received a call from Mark. In my mind's eye, the Mark I remember is an adorable child, with bangs, running up and down the hall in his family's home. While talking, I was astounded to learn that Mark recalled my mother's birthday because it was one day after his own late mother's birthday. Ergo, his call to me after so many years. (Also astounded that the young child, who I can still see so vividly in my mind's eye, is the father of three grown sons!)

Mark's mother was someone I adored. Children who entered her home were not just friends of her two kids, but people in their own right, young people with whom she would sit at the kitchen table and chat about their lives. It was very hard not to feel cared about while in the presence of Cookie, Mark's mother.

Eventually, Mark's family moved to a new neighborhood, and I lost touch with him and his sister, but my mother maintained a relationship with both his parents until their respective deaths. However, I also continued a relationship with Mark's mother, even after going away to college. It's difficult to pass up emotional catnip when someone seems truly interested in your life.

Around 1974, Cookie was diagnosed with cancer while in her early 40s. I was in town, visiting my mother, and drove over to see her. She was bed-bound and, naive youngster that I was, our discussion centered on

me, once again. She died soon thereafter.

As mentioned above, my mother had an ongoing friendship with Mark's dad, until, he too, died of a heart attack in his early 60s. After that, I had little current knowledge regarding Mark and his sister. Until his call ... when I finally had the opportunity to share with him the power of his mother's presence, still vitally alive for me after so many years.

Retrospectively, I recall that Cookie did not work, but believed her role was to care for her family. But family seemed to be an elastic concept in Cookie's world. I have no doubt I'm among the many young people of that time, friends of her children, who felt included in the embrace of her caring.

Taking a different tack for a moment.

As a longtime obituary reader, I'm consistently struck by the listing of external accomplishments frequently accompanying descriptions of the departed. Often, many, many. And we, in the world, are generally better off as a result. Yet, I worry. I worry that the open hearts of the departed, more subjective and difficult to describe, receive much less visibility in comparison with our culture's emphasis on concrete and visible accomplishments. But, hey, that's our culture; we are production-oriented, are we not?

In the Jewish tradition, the phrase "May her memory be a blessing" is often shared when speaking of the departed. "May her memory be a blessing." I love its universality, its inclusiveness. The full kaleidoscope of a person's life is captured and blessed. ALL of it — heart, as well as worldly accomplishments.

And Cookie's heart was a blessing. Herewith, a friend of her children still recalls being bathed in Cookie's light and made to feel special, even so many decades later. As impacts go, pretty damn impressive.

P.S. Mark and I continue to periodically text each other. I apologize for embarrassing you, Mark, but your heart seems to be as open and inviting as your mother's. (But I still can't shake my memory of the little boy, with bangs, charging up and down the hall. Working on it ...)

Jan Hutton is a retired hospice/hospital social worker who believes in living life with heart and humor. She has happily lived in Chatham for 20 years.

What's on your mind?

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

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

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

To submit a letter: Mail it to the News + Record at P.O. Box 290, Siler City, N.C. 27344; or email to bhorne3@chathamnr.com; or drop by our office at 303 West Raleigh Street in Siler City.

VIEWPOINTS

LETTERS

Founding Fathers could be at risk in Tennessee

TO THE EDITOR:

Recently my wife and I visited Colonial Williamsburg to celebrate our anniversary. It was wonderful to experience our nation's early history.

During walks around Colonial Williamsburg, we enjoyed watching interactions of character employees assuming the personae of early leaders like George Washington, Patrick Henry and the Marquis de Lafayette. With their wigs and powdered faces, we couldn't help but wonder if our Founding Fathers might be at criminal risk in Tennessee where "adult cabaret performances" are restricted in public.

Tennessee is making headlines on many fronts. In March, Gov. Bill Lee also signed legislation prohibiting gender-affirming care for minors. One transgender Dartmouth College senior expressed the view of many: "I grew up in Tennessee. I don't feel like I want to return there. They've made it abundantly clear that they do not want trans people in the state."

Sadly, it appears that one transgender person, the Nashville shooter, reacted differently, violently. Armed with three guns, including a semi-automatic rifle, the shooter killed three children and three adults.

While it's impossible to know the shooter's state of mind, it is noteworthy that Tennessee ranks near the bottom nationally in terms of mental health resources. According to January data, there's one mental health provider for every 590 people in Tennessee; the national average is one per 350 people. The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth reports the state ranks 41st for youth mental health.

One would think that before enacting laws against individuals and their health, the state would take actions to safeguard their well-being. With North Carolina finally passing a law to expand Medicaid, Tennessee remains one of the few that hasn't done so.

It's really not a surprise that the shooter could have so many weapons to kill — having "legally" bought seven. Tennessee has few restrictions. A September 2022 article in *The Tennessean* re-

ported that "Tennessee fares far worse than many other states, ranking 11th in overall gun violence. Between 2011-2020, gun deaths skyrocketed 48% in Tennessee, homicides increased 103% and suicides increased 20%."

The author concluded: "Outside of the horrific emotional toll, gun violence costs Tennesseans \$9 billion dollars a year. Tennessee has few laws which keep guns out of the wrong hands, and keep children and families safe."

Draconian laws, inadequate mental health care, and ready access to weapons of war may well explain the Covenant School shooting. The question remains, though, why elected officials can't do the right thing when it comes to governing. Even if our Founding Fathers would not be at personal risk in Tennessee today because of their attire, I imagine they would be disappointed with what they would find.

Dennis W. Streets
Pittsboro

Thoughts on Ukraine from a veteran

TO THE EDITOR:

Considering the massive na-

tional treasure diverted from our domestic needs, even local news media have reason to look closely at the Ukraine war. Thanks for publishing cautionary comments from a Chatham veteran.

While there has been a blizzard of misleading details in that tragic conflict, when you search online for independent military analysis there is a lot to discover. The destruction of Iraq we know as a grave example of misinformation foisted on us by mainstream media. Such campaigns have gotten even "better" at justifying military solutions to political problems.

I've seen my comments on American historian Heather Cox Richardson's daily report censored when I quoted Veterans for Peace. Yet the most direct challenges to the official narrative are found in readily accessed YouTube discussions by U.S. Marine intelligence officer Scott Ritter and Col. Douglas Macgregor. Ray McGovern, former CIA White House briefer and head of the Soviet analysis division of CIA, brings over 50 years of experience to his warnings over Washington's actions that extend the loss of life in

favor of arms sales.

The latest escalation is Britain's decision to send uranium weapons, despite their deployment in Kosovo and Iraq having caused increased cancer rates and monstrous birth defects. Anyone who has anticipated the birth of a child can know the horror this still delivers to families in targeted areas. We are encouraged to imagine moral superiority, but such posturing is preventing the negotiations that must succeed in ending the war.

As for Ukraine winning against their much larger, nuclear armed neighbor, check out former Pentagon and White House advisor Col. Douglas Macgregor's current analyses based on serious numbers.

Human judgment has declined to launch a terminal nuclear exchange in the past. We have enough experience with goofy "auto-correct" to know artificial intelligence or simple accidents can turn nuclear brinkmanship into nuclear disaster affecting us all, and we have an obligation to reject this course.

Jerry Markatos
Pittsboro

Where's the job market headed?



MIKE WALDEN
You Decide

Jobs are a crucial part — some would say "the" crucial part — of the economy. People take jobs to earn money. They spend the money on products and services to support their living. Businesses create jobs to make the products and services people buy.

One important feature of the job market is that it never stands still. As the economy changes, and the products and services people buy change, so, too, do jobs. Jobs that exist today may not be around tomorrow. At the same time, jobs that don't exist today could be part of tomorrow's economy.

Developments in technology are a key reason why jobs are both created and destroyed. A good example is farming. When tractors replaced mules used for plowing, the number of acres a farmer could cultivate soared. As a result, farm jobs declined, but jobs in manufacturing tractors rose.

In the 21st century, there have been big advances in technology, such as computers, cell phones and data storage. Consequently, there have been ongoing changes in jobs.

About a decade ago two British economists predicted almost half of the jobs would be gone by midcentury. This conclusion came after a detailed analysis of how emerging technology would change the nature of jobs, allowing technologies like digital programs and robots to handle more

tasks.

With the economy changing so rapidly — especially after the pandemic — can we still use predictions made even a few years earlier? Indeed, robots are becoming more capable, and a new technology, artificial intelligence, is just starting to be used.

Fortunately, last year the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) released a new analysis of how jobs might change in the future — especially which jobs are expected to significantly decline. Before examining the new forecasts, let me review how much the job market has changed in just the last decade. BLS calculates that between 1999 and 2018, 15% of all occupations experienced job declines of 25% or more.

Looking ahead to the decade of 2019 to 2029, BLS expects several occupations to lose jobs. Included are housekeepers, tax preparers, reporters, cashiers, customer service reps, travel agents and computer programmers.

Interestingly, these are occupations with different salary levels. So, what do they have in common?

Most are occupations where the tasks now done by humans can likely be accomplished in the future by technology. Much of housekeepers' work can be — and already is in some cases — performed by robots. Tax forms can now be prepared by online computer programs. In supermarkets, cashiers are being replaced by scanners. Customer service reps, travel agents and even reporters, while still including "real" people, are having more of their work provided by online

Most are occupations where the tasks now done by humans can likely be accomplished in the future by technology. Much of housekeepers' work can be — and already is in some cases — performed by robots. Tax forms can now be prepared by online computer programs. In supermarkets, cashiers are being replaced by scanners. Customer service reps, travel agents and even reporters, while still including "real" people, are having more of their work provided by online websites.

websites.

But — you might ask — why are computer programming jobs projected to decline? Aren't STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) professions expected to be fast-growing?

In general, more STEM jobs are projected to be added through the end of the decade. BLS estimates STEM occupations will increase by 8% from 2019 to 2029. Computer-aided software and artificial intelligence technology are forecast to replace many computer programmers.

Overall, total jobs are expected to increase by 4% for the 10 years from 2019 to 2029. Notice that the starting year of 2019 is prior to the pandemic, so some of this increase reflects the rebound in jobs after the COVID-19 recession of 2020.

Which occupations will have the largest increases this decade? At the top of the list are nurses, renewable energy technicians, cooks, statistical and data scientists, and physical therapists. A look at this list reveals two driving forces: our aging population (nurses and physical therapists) and technology (renewable energy technicians and statistical and data

scientists). Cooks are among the top categories probably because people are eating out more frequently, and we like good meals. All of these categories are expected to have job growth rates at least five times faster than the increase in total jobs.

Although they are not among the expected fastest-growing occupations, it is important to mention another occupational category: the "skilled trades" like carpenters, electricians, plumbers and bricklayers. Many of the tasks performed by the skilled trades are not suitable for technology. The problem is that retiring workers in the skilled trades are not being completely replaced by younger workers. To meet the 4% growth rate expected in the skilled trades during the current decade, more effort will be needed to attract qualified workers.

In the years ahead, look for substantial "job churning," meaning some jobs will almost disappear while others surge in numbers. Will we be ready to accommodate the shifts? You decide.

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

Democrats face headwinds on top issues



JOHN HOOD
John Locke Foundation

North Carolina remains a political battleground. Although Republicans have won most recent statewide contests and retained

majorities in legislative seats and county commissions, they usually lose gubernatorial races. Moreover, many of the GOP's statewide wins were by small margins.

Based on electoral outcomes, I think a fair way to describe us is a competitive state with a reddish lean. Other data point in a similar direction. North Carolinians are more likely than the average state to describe themselves as politically conservative, for example, but aren't nearly as likely as Mississippians or Alabamians to do so.

Republicans are hoping to build on their track record of success in 2024. Democrats are hoping for a reversal of fortunes. Although there are many unknown variables right

That's why you'll still find a significant share of Democratic-leaning voters who are moderate or even conservative on such matters as abortion or LGBT rights. They may agree with their Republican neighbors on social issues but place a higher priority on, say, access to health care and trust Democrats more to provide it.

now — and as 2022 results in other states demonstrated, the GOP is perfectly capable of blowing winnable races by nominating weak candidates — I think Democrats are in a tough spot.

No, it isn't just because of unfair redistricting. Nor is it a lack of resources. North Carolina Democrats have raised and spent lots of money on races they still ended up losing. What I mean is that, on many of the public's top concerns, Democrats lack credibility with the swing voters they need to prevail.

Consider a recent survey from High Point University. Its polling team presented 793 registered North Carolina voters with a list of 20 issues that are relevant to state government. Respondents were asked to classify each issue as "very im-

portant, somewhat important, not very important," or "not at all important" for state policymakers in Raleigh to address.

Here were the 10 top issues, ranked in descending order according to how many North Carolina voters attached the "very important" label to them: school safety, inflation, education, health care, law enforcement, supporting veterans, opioids, job creation, voting integrity, and taxes.

Next, the poll asked the respondents whether they thought Democrats or Republicans would "do a better job dealing" with each issue. Lots of voters — approaching half in some cases — declined to pick a side. As for those who did, respondents split their party preferences fairly evenly on seven issues, including education and voting integrity.

Still, there were some electorally important patterns. Of the 13 issues where the partisan preference was statistically significant, Democrats enjoyed the advantage on four. The margin of Democratic preference was +17 percentage points on climate change, +13 on civil rights, +7 on health care and +6 on abortion. On nine issues, Republicans were favored: +13 on inflation and veterans, +10 on opioids, +9 on law enforcement and job creation, +8 on taxes, +6 on agriculture, and +5 on immigration and guns.

Now compare the two lists. Among the 10 issues North Carolinians are most worried about, Republicans have an edge on six. The two parties are essentially tied on three. Democrats have the advantage on just one, health care.

Do issues matter? Some political pros and cynics — perhaps that's redundant — say no. I disagree. Although the personalities and leadership qualities of candidates are clearly important, some voters really do make up their minds on the basis of whom they trust to address the problems they care about the most.

That's why you'll still find a significant share of Democratic-leaning voters who are moderate or even conservative on such matters as abortion or LGBT rights. They may agree with their Republican neighbors on social issues but place a higher priority on, say, access to health care and trust Democrats more to provide it. Similarly, you'll find clumps of voters who support Republicans despite the party's views on social issues — because they like the GOP's position on public safety or taxes — as well as voters who support Republicans because of the party's views on social issues.

Right now, the problem for Democrats is that their ideological brand is misaligned. They crush Republicans among North Carolinians whose top priority is climate change, for instance. But that slice of the electorate is extremely narrow.

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

Northwood's Matthews to compete in DECA international competition

Organization focuses on entrepreneurship, marketing skills for high school students

BY BEN RAPPAPORT
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — Savannah Matthews has always been an entrepreneur.

At 6 years old she was outside Bynum Front Porch selling lemonade and cookies to anyone who would stop and buy. She's kept up that entrepreneurial spirit through high school, and now has an opportunity to show off her skills to people from across the world.

Savannah will be in Orlando, Florida, from April 22-25 to compete in the 2023 DECA International Career Development Conference. DECA prepares high school and college students who are identified as emerging leaders and entrepreneurs for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality and management around the globe, according to its website.

In Chatham, the organization has chapters at Northwood and Jordan-Matthews high schools. Savannah will be the only student from Chatham County Schools to attend the conference, which typically draws more than 20,000 students from around the world.

Steady rise

During freshman year, Savannah was thrown into the deep end of the DECA waters. She didn't compete in the district competition, so her first time competing was at the state level.

Her assigned event included taking a 100-question test and multiple role-play activities in front of judges about how to better sell a children's meal. As daunting as that may sound to some, Savannah was instantly hooked.

The thrill she felt from that competition led her to apply to be an officer

in the school chapter her sophomore year. That year, she placed 10th in the state competition.

Last year as a junior is when, in her words, "it really took off" for Savannah. She won first place in the district competition and third in the state, including a top-20 score in the country for her event. The finish was good enough to land her a spot in last year's national competition.

Now, as a senior at Northwood High School, Savannah, 18, is the president of the school's DECA chapter. She said she enjoys bringing people into the chapter and watching them grow throughout their time in DECA.

"For some people, I've seen a huge change in their personality since they joined," she said. "Once you start competing you see how you can apply things to other aspects of your life and break out of your shell."

And her fellow members aren't alone in that transformation — it happened for Savannah, too.

Back when she first walked into the classroom where the DECA meeting was being held, the shy freshman was in awe of the leaders who stood boldly in front of the room and talked eloquently about competing and showing off their marketing skills.

"Oh my gosh, I don't know anyone here and this is so intimidating," she recalls thinking. "I would rather crawl in a hole than present in front of that many people."

Now, Savannah is the person leading those meetings.

She's helped the chapter recover to 35 members from its dip in membership due to Covid-19 and gotten them



Submitted photo

Savannah Matthews, a senior at Northwood High School, will travel to Orlando, Florida, at the end of April to compete in a national competition for DECA.

more involved in the community through clothing and food drives.

Putting in the work

At the national competition, Savannah will compete in Quick Serve Restaurant Management Series (QSRM), the same event she's done since freshman year. The event includes the 100-question test and the role-playing exercises. She said she'll be leaning on her previous experiences as she prepares for the big stage.

"It's a big, big opportunity and commitment," Savannah said. "And I don't want to let anyone down by not doing well."

But that previous experience in this event, and her previous trip to nationals, comes with a pressure to do well this time around. While she's honored by the opportunity, this time she's coming to win.

Savannah will be competing against the top six finishers in the QSRM event from each state along with several competitors from other countries — meaning

she could be competing against more than 300 people.

"I'm feeling really nervous, but I've put in a lot of work and practice," she said.

This year, Chatham County Schools purchased access to DECA+, a software with previous tests and example prompts, which Savannah has been using to practice for nationals. The software also provides feedback and tips along with performance indicators on the prompts.

Thanks to fundraising efforts by the school, district, local businesses, several organizations and a GoFundMe set up by Lesley Landis, who is a board member with Chatham Arts Council, Savannah will be able to take the trip to Orlando. The GoFund-

Me raised more than \$1,400 toward travel expenses and other needs.

"Savannah is a truly remarkable young woman," Landis said. "That's why I decided to help fund-raise for her trip."

Just persevere

Beyond DECA, Savannah is also a stellar student. She is a member of the Northwood Spanish Honor Society, senior-class president of the student council, and on the Homecoming Court. She is also a member of the varsity swim team, and this year is the team's co-captain. Outside of school, she has also been a Girl Scout for 12 years and volunteered with Sen. Natalie Murdock's (D-Dist. 20) campaign prior to her election in November.

"It involves a lot of planning," Savannah said of her schedule. "I don't have a ton of free time, but what makes me happy is doing a bunch of stuff — getting involved and being productive."

When she encounters challenges or pressure from her overwhelming schedule, she turns to her personal motto: just persevere.

The phrase started as a cheesy joke between her and her friends, but now it's a phrase her peers associate with her hard work and dedication.

"Even if it sucks, you just gotta keep on working," she said. "And eventually you're going to get to a better point than where you are."

Savannah hopes to

pursue a future career in marketing after receiving a degree from a four-year university, using the skills she learned in DECA to succeed beyond her academic career. She said the business world "just makes sense" to her.

"I like seeing how society is able to function with the macro- and micro-economics sectors," she said. "There's all these interactions of companies and people in the government. It's just kind of like a fun triangle that you get to see."

Those interactions, along with her enjoyment of being in charge are skills she sees as serving her well in the future.

Anyone who meets Savannah would also say it's evident she's a people person, something her mom said she's had ever since those lemonade sales at Bynum all those years ago.

"Anyone that knows her from age 3 to age 95 and they would all say the same thing," her mother, Lesley Matthews said. "She goes above any or everything to improve our county and eventually our world."

People and leadership skills in hand, Savannah hopes to take home a medal for Northwood and Chatham County at the end of April.

"I want to prove I can succeed," she said. "And show other people they can succeed too."

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

SCHOLARSHIP

Continued from page A1

the top choice for Jolitzky. She had her eyes set on becoming a Mountaineer at Appalachian State. But after seeing the scholarship offers and consulting with mentors, she decided to don the Carolina blue.

When asked what made her a strong applicant, it was difficult for the humble Jolitzky to boast about herself. She said, however, she's always been a strong team player — something that would serve her well in the business world.

"Sometimes I know that somebody else has better ideas," she said. "Or they can be a better leader than me. So I step aside."

Jolitzky also received the Dell Scholarship, a \$20,000 award to be used to help with financial challenges for students. It's given to students who qualify for Pell Grants in the first year of college and demonstrate a need for financial assistance. She was one of six to receive the award from J-M.

Outside of the classroom, Jolitzky is involved in JMArts, where she's fresh off her role of Alice in Wonderland in "Shrek The Musical." She also volunteers with Siler City Community Meal youth committee, which provides monthly free meals to local residents, DECA, Leo Club and is a member of the varsity girls tennis and swim teams. When she isn't doing all those things she also works as a temporary receptionist at H&R Block.

Carrying the lessons

The chaotic and busy schedule Jolitzky takes on is also part of the "no presumir" attitude — taking advantage of all that's available to her. It's also a way of embracing her love of Siler City. "There's relationships that are everywhere," she said. "There's a real sense of community where everyone knows you."

Going from a close-knit rural town to a campus of more than 30,000 students is something Jolitzky believes will be a challenge in her first year in Chapel Hill. But she says she'll take the lessons she learned in Chatham County with her throughout her life: be open-minded, don't assume people's circumstances and find common core values. Many of those lessons were also

learned from the stories her father would tell her about growing up in Mexico City. At just 6 years old he was selling candy in the streets, or doing other odd jobs to help make ends meet for his family. Coming to the U.S. meant many of those socioeconomic challenges weren't as steep for his children.

"I'm very fortunate that things are easier for me than they were for him growing up," Jolitzky said.

Those fortunes, however, also come with pressure to succeed. As a first-generation college student and the daughter of immigrants, Jolitzky said there's often an internal voice telling her to push herself to repay her parents for the sacrifices they once made on her behalf.

"One of the reasons I want to go to college is so that I can make enough money to buy a house for [my parents]," she said. "Going to college is my experience, but it's also shared with them. It's not only me graduating college, it'll be them, too."

Jolitzky said she hopes to share all her accomplishments with her family because she feels like they gave her everything.

'Set your own path'

As a direct admit into the business school, Jolitzky said she hopes to pursue a career in international business. Her inspiration to enter business came from her older sister, Jhoana, who operates Brothers Tire Shop in Siler City. Seeing her sister make her own schedule and interact with customers made Jolitzky realize the impact business could have.

The international side of her goals comes from a desire to travel and see the world. Aside from one trip to Mexico in 2015, Jolitzky has rarely traveled outside the county.

"I want to learn about everywhere," she said. "I really want to get out there and see beyond North Carolina."

While many of Jolitzky's aspirations may seem distant, she has confidence they're possible because of the lessons she learned from the community, and her family.

"You don't have to fit into the stereotypes set for you," she said. "You can grow beyond that and set your own path."

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

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EMPLOYEES

Continued from page A1

kind of snowballs from there," she said. "We just enjoyed it, and it was just a great way to kind of get involved in our community and give back to our community."

Crossing over the county line, Clark said she is making it her mission to give back to the Siler City community. The department is working to develop a Parks & Recreation Master Plan, which will lay out a set of goals and plans for improvements and additions to the department.

One of Clark's main goals is to start what she started in Holly Springs: a town-sponsored soccer league.

"I hope I can get some support from this community to create a youth soccer program here at Siler City," she said. "I know there's a lot of interest here. I know with the amount of people that are coming into the area, I personally would love to see that."

Clark added the growth

coming creates a need for more recreational facilities and athletic programs for youth and adults.

"I think it's important to offer these types of programs to the community," she said. "Children need things to do — it's great community involvement, and there's just so many things that sports bring to the table. I think it's important that any town try to provide a robust set of options for their citizens."

Stinson works as the recreation coordinator, organizing the town's special events, maintaining the community pool and overseeing ongoing programs. He came to Siler City from Winston-Salem, where he'd worked as a recreational therapist at Salemtown Retirement Community. In his hometown of Level Cross, Stinson said he and his siblings helped their father with his business, Stinson Electric.

"We grew up helping our dad with his own business as an electrician and learned many skills,



Staff photo by Bill Horner III

Tylr Stinson, the recreation coordinator for the Siler City Parks and Recreation Department.

including the importance of a strong work ethic and having a passion for what we do for a career," Stinson said. "Ultimately, this led to me attending Randolph Community College to figure out what it is I truly wanted to do for a career, and strate-

gies for how I planned to get there."

Stinson graduated from RCC in 2019 with two associates' degrees, then transferred to UNC-Greensboro to finish his undergraduate degree — earning a bachelor's of science

in recreation and parks management in 2021 with a concentration in therapeutic recreation.

Originally, Stinson wanted a career in health-care, and after graduation, he got the job as a recreational therapist. But Covid-19 changed the way Stinson felt about the healthcare field.

"I truly enjoyed working with the geriatric population," he said. "However, with all the death that corresponded with working in geriatrics and the strict Covid-19 policies, it became too much to handle ... I was losing my passion for what I do as a career."

Around the same time, Stinson met former Siler City Parks & Recreation staff member Randall King. He said King told him about upcoming opportunities in Siler City, specifically within King's department.

"He (King) informed me about the opportunities Siler City had in store, and the much-anticipated growth expected to come to this small N.C. town," Stinson said. "This is where the

recreation coordinator position fell into my lap ... the only questions I had: Is this a sign? Could this be my passion?"

The decision to switch careers was a scary one for Stinson — he had just married his high school sweetheart, Kayla, and bought a new home. The couple ultimately decided that Stinson would pursue the Siler City-based job.

"I knew this was the choice for me," he said. "I've only been with the town a little over a month and can already tell this was a great choice. Not to mention how the whole town staff just welcomed me right in, as if I was a part of the family already."

Stinson has been busy planning the town's Easter Eggstravaganza (held last Saturday) and the Spring Chicken Festival (May 6).

"I may not know what's ahead," he said, "but I'm sure it's where I'm meant to be at this point in my life."

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

Free Document Shredding Event

WHERE

Chatham County Solid Waste & Recycling
28 County Services Road, Pittsboro

WHEN

Saturday, April 15
9:00 am-1:00pm

WHO

Residents can bring up to 3 boxes or bags of documents. No businesses.



More details: 919-542-5516 or www.chathamcountync.gov/recycle

EVENT

Continued from page A1

work. Taylor Hobbs said he and his father arrived at the scene as the blaze raged to assess the damage; Hobbs Architects was working on the restoration project at the time.

Firefighters stayed overnight to put out the fire, which was ruled accidental after the fire marshal's investigation attributed to a worker who was using a soldering iron to repair gutters on the building's exterior. The Hobbses eventually went to see what could be salvaged from the courthouse. Most of



CN+R file photo by Bett Wilson Foley

The view from Hillsboro Street shows the badly-damaged courthouse, surrounded by scaffolding from renovations that were under way when the fire erupted.

the stored documents, museum artifacts and court officials' belongings were destroyed that fateful Thursday, but the main walls were deemed structurally sound by an engineer the Hobbses brought in to make an assessment.

"In general, the walls were in good shape," Taylor Hobbs said. "These bearing walls on the first floor were in good shape. It was just wet."

Some documents could be saved, but only certain people were allowed in the courthouse to retrieve belongings.

"Once some of the stuff was taken out, people did get bricks, charred wood and things like that, but there wasn't a whole lot left," he said.

From there, a task force was created to decide how to move forward with rebuilding the courthouse. Both Grimsley and Taylor sat on that committee; Taylor said there were several ideas of what the rebuilt courthouse might look like.

"So, the question was, does it get rebuilt as a historic courthouse or as a multi-use, community space?" Taylor said. "That task force ... ultimately decided that it would be put back in his historic form. It can be used for court proceedings, but it's a permanent home of the county commissioners, so that's how

the building has been used."



Grimsley Hobbs

The reconstruction process was a long and tumultuous one, according to the Hobbses.

The original courthouse was built with wood, and the Hobbs duo was tasked with designing a rebuilt roof, courtroom, clock tower and attic using steel.

Grimsley Hobbs said one of the more challenging aspects of the project involved the columns at the front of the courthouse building.

"It appears to me that, in some way, they were made on site," he said. "So they made them up and then floated the wet concrete, but we didn't know how strong they were ... You didn't know where to start because they're all different."

Instead of supporting the clock tower with the columns, Grimsley said a decision was made to build a steel truss to support the tower, making the columns a decorative addition.

The courthouse project was completed and the courthouse re-opened on April 20, 2013. Although it has since been restored to its former glory, Taylor Hobbs said the community felt a sense of loss

during the three years it took to rebuild the symbol of the community.

"In the front around the construction fence a lot of people

put flowers out, even though no one died," he said. "I think everybody felt like they had lost the most visible symbol of the town and county ... it didn't feel like the same place. I think everybody had a sense of loss and some people expressed that through the flowers."

Taylor said what made the courthouse project unique for him was that the courthouse isn't just a home built to be sold — it was an important establishment for his community.

"A lot of the time when you finish a project, you hand the keys to the owner and that is sort of the end, but we get to keep using this," he said. "We have kind of a bond to this project ... It was a long ordeal, and it was a big deal. It took a long time to figure out all the things to get us back here ... and there are days when it just sort of seemed like a dream. It wasn't."

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

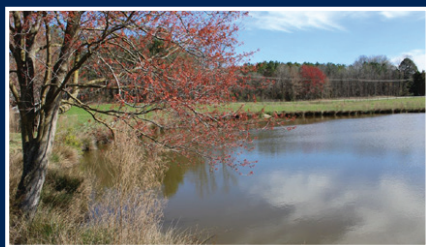
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CN+R file photo by Bett Wilson Foley

Firefighters from a number of area fire departments joined the effort to save the historic Chatham County Courthouse, working through the evening and into the next morning.

OBITUARIES

BRIAN CLARK ROBARDS

December 13, 1971 - March 25, 2023

Brian Clark Robards, age 51, passed away peacefully Saturday, March 25, 2023, at Tidelands Waccamaw Community Hospital in Murrells Inlet, S.C.

Formerly of Siler City, Brian was born in Jacksonville, N.C., the oldest son of Nancy S. Robards and the late James Urey Robards Jr. Brian loved spending time outdoors, the North Carolina Tar Heels, the Dallas Cowboys, listening to music and watching movies.

Survivors include his loving mother, Nancy Robards and his brother, James Bennett Robards.

A private service will be held at a later date.

Donations may be made in Brian's name to Defenders of Wildlife at www.defenders.org or to any wildlife/nature organization of your choice.

The family would like to express a special "thank you" to all of their family and friends as well as the doctors and staff at Tidelands Waccamaw Community Hospital for their loving care and support.

Burroughs Funeral Home & Cremation Services of Murrells Inlet, S.C. (843-651-1440) is assisting the family.

FRANCES CLAYTON WAKEFIELD MENDENHALL



May 30, 1926 ~ March 29, 2023
Frances Clayton Wakefield Mendenhall, 96, of Siler City, passed away Wednesday, March 29, 2023.

Mrs. Mendenhall was born in Greensboro on May 30, 1926, the only child of Thomas Henry and Mae McPherson Wakefield. She spent her childhood years living in Greensboro and Los Angeles. She moved to Siler City in 1942 and attended Siler City High School for one year before graduating. On January 25, 1947, she

married the love of her life, Ivan. She was an office manager at Chatham Grocery Company for over 30 years. Frances was a member of Piney Grove Methodist Church, where she held numerous offices. She was the oldest member, and a member of the adult Sunday School Class. She was responsible for the annual fried chicken supper. Quilting was one of Mrs. Mendenhall's passions, and she was a member of the N.C. Quilters Association. She was the creator of many quilts to be auctioned off at the yearly Harvest Auction at Piney Grove Methodist Church. She attended many quilting workshops and events, even going as far away as Houston, Texas. Her two favorite things in life were going Monday morning quilting with "the girls" and sitting on the front porch of her beach house on Oak Island.

In addition to her parents, Frances is preceded in death by her husband of 68 years, Ivan B. Mendenhall.

She is survived by her son, Larry Mendenhall and wife, Dottie of Greensboro; daughter, Cindy Mendenhall Davis of Siler City; grandchildren, Scott Mendenhall and wife Kelly of Greensboro, Mark Mendenhall and wife Beth of Wilmington, Mitchell Davis and Erin Poe of Siler City; great-grandchildren, Piper and Jack Thomas Mendenhall, Chloe and Keegan Mendenhall, and Adelyn and Ember Davis; and special neighbors, Fred and Janet Langley.

Frances laid in repose on Sunday, April 2, 2023, from 1 to 5 p.m. The funeral service was held on Monday, April 3, 2023, at 3 p.m. at Piney Grove Methodist Church, with Rev. Parker Coppock officiating. Burial followed in the church cemetery. The family received friends in the fellowship hall following the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Piney Grove Methodist Church.

Smith & Buckner Funeral Home assisted the Mendenhall family.

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

ANTHONY RAY GORE

January 24, 1962 - March 28, 2023

Anthony Ray Gore, 61, died Tuesday, March 28, 2023, at his home.

Per Ray's request, there are no services planned.

He was the son of the late Billy Joe Gore and Jean Williams Gore and he was pre-

ceded in death by his brother, Brad Gore. Ray retired from the Army National Guard after 20 years of service to our country and afterwards, he worked as a handyman.

Survivors include his sisters, Denna Graham and Sheri Cheek of Pittsboro.

Memorials can be made to the charity of your choice.

MATTHEW JAMES AIELLO



July 14, 1983 ~ March 24, 2023

Matthew James Aiello, 39, of Snow Camp passed away Friday, March 24, 2023, at his home.

Matthw was born in New Brunswick, New Jersey on July 14, 1983, son of Daniel and Laura Bodemer Aiello. Mr. Aiello received his undergraduate from Kean University, going on to receive his masters degree from Desalle University. Matthew enjoyed hockey, running, and fishing. He was a big animal lover and

enjoyed spending time with all of his family, particularly his nieces and nephews. Matthew was the owner and operator of Aiello Sanitation Company.

In addition to his parents, he is survived by his longtime partner, Casey Campbell; siblings, Stephanie Aiello (Jeff Clark), Daniel Aiello, Timothy Aiello (Andrea), and Michael Aiello (Tricia); nieces, Elisabeth Lee (Ashton Siler), Lacie Clark, Abigail Clark, and Gracie Aiello; nephews, Eoin Brown-Aiello, Jayson Siler, Nicholas Aiello, Jake Aiello, and Ryan Aiello; and numerous cousins, aunts, and uncles who loved him dearly.

A celebration of life was held at Southfork Friends Meeting on Saturday, April 1, 2023, at 4 p.m. with Andrew Needham officiating.

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

Smith & Buckner Funeral Home is serving the Aiello family.

CAROLYN LOUISE ANDREW COTNER

January 4, 1940 - March 31, 2023

Carolyn Louise Andrew Cotner, 83, of Siler City, passed away Friday, March 31, 2023.

Mrs. Cotner was born in Chatham County on January 4, 1940, daughter of A.J. and Ruby Willette Andrew. She was a member of Rocky River Friends. She worked for several years at Sears in the credit department, then went on to work for many more years as an insurance clerk at a local doctor's office. Couponing and selling the produce that her husband grew were her favorite hobbies. She loved her family dearly but especially her great grandchildren. In addition to her parents, Carolyn is preceded in death by her son, James Owen "Jimmy" Cotner.

She is survived by her loving husband of 64 years, Thomas Cotner; daughter, Debbie Chriscoe and husband, James of Siler City; grandchildren, Riley Culberson and wife, Candace of Siler City, Ricky Culberson and wife Rebecca of Goldston, and Janice Chriscoe of Siler City; great-grandchildren, Haley, Owen, and Lane Culberson; sisters, Kay Ellison and husband Jim of Asheboro, and Ruth Underwood of Burlington; and a sister-in-law, Mary Alice Cox of Siler City.

A graveside service was held on Monday, April 3, 2023 at 12 p.m. at Rocky River Friends Cemetery, with David Hobson officiating. The family received friends in the fellowship hall following the service.

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

Condolences can be made at www.donaldsonfunerals.com.

ELAINE CLARK MCBRYDE

August 5, 1946 - March 26, 2023

Elaine Clark McBryde, 76, passed away on Sunday, March 26, 2023, at The Siler City Center.

The graveside service was held on Saturday, April 1, 2023 at 11:00 a.m. at Bethlehem Methodist Church, where she was a member, with Pastor David Edington presiding.

She retired from Moen after 30 years of service. Elaine was preceded in death by her parents, Jesse Jordan Clark and Martha Morris Clark Maness; grandparents, Jordan T. Clark, Lessie Dowdy Clark, Mathew H.

Morris, Kate Causey Morris and a sister, Linda Clark Wright.

She is survived by her sister, Peggy Clark Sineath.

Condolences may be offered online at www.joycebrady-chapel.com.

JAMES RUSSELL CUMMINGS

October 23, 1964 ~ March 29, 2023

James Russell Cummings, 58, of Spring Lake passed away on Wednesday, March 29, 2023, at home.

A memorial service was held March 31, 2023, at the Sanford Free Will Holiness Church with the Reverend Pearl Castleberry and Susan Johnson officiating. He was preceded in death by his parents, Billy Woods Cummings Sr. and Mary Elizabeth Grant Cummings.

Survivors include his daughter, Alexandria Cummings of Florida; son, Steven Cummings of Pennsylvania; sisters, Rebecca Humphrey of Spring Lake, Janet Crain of West Virginia; brother, Billy Cummings Jr. of Spring Lake; step-daughters, Linda Coombs and Susan Johnson; two grandchildren, nine step-grandchildren and two step-great-grandchildren.

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

MELBA LEE STRICKLAND HALES

May 31, 1923 ~ March 29, 2023
Melba Lee Strickland Hales, 97, passed away on March 29, 2023.

Funeral services were held at Jonesboro United Methodist Church on Saturday, April 1,

2023, followed by a burial at Hollywood Cemetery, around 4 p.m.

Melba was the daughter of Marvin Lee Strickland and Terah Matthews Strickland. She earned a two-year degree at Campbell College, then finished at Furman University with a degree in English. She had been a teacher and a librarian. She was preceded in death by her husband, Roscoe Hales of 39 years.

Survivors include their children, Mary Lou Parker McClenny of Middlesex, Teresa Hales Peacock of Wilson, Elizabeth Hales Grossfuss of Sanford, and Nancy Hales Dimsdale of Reidsville; seven grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Donations may be sent in Melba's memory to Jonesboro United Methodist Church, 407 West Main Street, Sanford, N.C. 27332 or Gentiva Hospice, 1836 Doctors Drive, Sanford, N.C. 27330.

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

SARAH BRYSON COUNCIL

July 19, 1935 ~ March 28, 2023

Sarah Alice Bryson Council, 87, of Lillington, formerly of Green Level, passed away on Tuesday, March 28, 2023.

The family received friends on Tuesday, April 4, 2023, at Green Level Baptist Church. Funeral services were held at the church with Rev. Ben Pearce and Rev. Jeff Jones officiating. Burial followed in the church cemetery.

She was the daughter of the late John Hunter Bryson Sr. and Kathleen Yates Bryson. She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, Billy Wray Council, a son, Richard Council, a brother, John H. Bryson Jr. and one granddaughter. Sarah was a member of Green Level Baptist Church.

She is survived by her daughter, Lynette Edwards of Lillington; sisters, Hattie Jo Sears of Apex and Melba Bryson of Mississippi; and seven grandchildren.

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

KELLY DALTON ALBRIGHT

July 21, 1936 ~ April 1, 2023

Kelly Dalton Albright, 86, of Seagrove, passed away on Saturday, April 1, 2023.

The graveside service was held on Wednesday, April 5, 2023, at Needham's Grove Baptist Church with Rev. Steven Maness and Billy Ray Hussey presiding. Visitation was held Tuesday, April 4, 2023, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Joyce-Brady Chapel.

Kelly was the son of Elbert and Cora Chriscoe Albright. He was formerly employed as a line foreman at Mansion Homes. After his retirement, he worked as a security guard. Kelly participated in "Operation Robin Sage" for over 30 years. He worked with Boy Scout Troop #852, helping with many events and with building Pinewood Derby tracks. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife, Estelle Albright; son, Mike; and one grandson.

Kelly is survived by his children, Carolyn Oates of Bennett, Linda Davis and Teresa "Tinker" Chriscoe, both of Seagrove, Timmy Albright of Staley, Randall Albright, Greg Albright, and Toby Albright, all of Seagrove; brother, Donald Albright of Robbins; 11 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; numerous step-grandchildren and step-great grandchildren.

In addition to flowers, memorials may be made to FirstHealth Hospice, 251 Campground Road, West End, N.C. 27376.

Condolences may be offered online at www.joycebrady-chapel.com.

See OBITs, page A9

From our Family to yours, we wish everyone a
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JAMES 'EARL' WOMBLE



January 28, 1935 ~ March 31, 2023
James "Earl" Womble, who was known by everyone as Earl, 88, of Siler City, passed away Friday, March 31, 2023.

Mr. Womble was born in Chatham County on January 28, 1935, the son of James Alec and Nannie Hart Womble. He was a member of Pleasant Grove Christian Church. He served his country in the Army. Earl was a T.V. repairman, then later, he worked for and retired from Mastercraft in Siler City. He was a dedicated husband to his loving wife of 62 years, Louise Brown Womble. He was always making sure she had everything she needed such as her mints. He would happily deliver them to her at the Coventry House. His favorite hobby was spending time outside working in his yard. Earl also cherished every minute he spent with his beloved grandson Forrest. In addition to his parents, James is preceded in death by his brothers, Melvin and Bryant Womble; and his son-in-law, Tommy McNeill.

He is survived by his wife, Louise Brown Womble; daughter, Sandra McNeill of Asheboro; grandson, Forrest T. McNeill of Asheboro; brothers-in-law, Frank Brown and wife, Sylvia of Siler City, Richard Brown and wife Anne of Pittsboro, Bobby Brown and wife Sherry of Bennett and Jimmy Brown and wife Pam of Raleigh; sister-in-law, Rachel Womble of Siler City; and many nieces and nephews.

The family received friends on Monday, April 3, 2023, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Smith & Buckner Funeral Home. A funeral service was held on Tuesday, April 4, 2023 at 2 p.m. at Pleasant Grove Christian Church with Rev. Don Edwards officiating. Smith & Buckner Funeral Home assisted the Womble family. Online condolences may be made at www.smithbucknerfh.com.

Beane officiating. The family received friends in the fellowship hall following the service. Charles was born on April 28, 1931, to the late William Thomas Gatlin and Emma Rosa Deaton Gatlin. He was retired from Ram-Tex. In addition to his parents, Charles was preceded in death by his wife, Mary Joyce Purvis Gatlin; sisters, Clara Brewer, Pauline Bowman and Nellie Freeman; brothers, Ralph Gatlin, Frank-

lin Gatlin, Lester Gatlin, Lonnie Gatlin and Ernest Gatlin. Survivors include his sons, Delmar Gatlin and Jeffery Gatlin. Flowers are accepted or memorials may be made to Mt. Zion U.M.C. Cemetery Fund, 8616 Curtis Powers Road, Bennett, N.C. 27208. Condolences may be offered online at www.joycebrady-chapel.com.

DORIS DAVIS WILLETT

March 12, 1932 ~ April 2, 2023
Doris Davis Willett, 91, of Sanford, passed away Sunday, April 2, 2023, at Cambridge Hills Assisted Living of Pittsboro.

The family will receive friends at Bridges-Cameron Funeral Home in Sanford on Friday, April 7, 2023 from 10 until 10:50 a.m. The funeral service will follow at 11 a.m. with Rev. Barry Byrd, Rev. Michael Tannenbaum and Travis Corley officiating. Burial will be in Grace Chapel Cemetery.

Doris was the daughter of the late Jesse Stephen Davis and Sarah Fuquay Davis. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband of 52 years, James Louis Willett and one grandson. A member of Grace Chapel Church, she was a beautician from the age of 19 until she closed her shop at the age of 80.

She is survived by her sons, Mike Willett of Asheboro, Gary Willett of Sanford; a daughter, Annette Byrd of Monroe; eight grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, please consider contributing to one of these providers: Cambridge Hills Assisted Living of Pittsboro or Community Hospice of Sanford.

Arrangements are by Bridges-Cameron Funeral Home.

Condolences may be made at www.bridgescameronfuneralhome.com.

NANCY (DARK) ROGERS

October 23, 1949 ~ March 24, 2023

Nancy Dark Rogers, 73, of Siler City, passed away on Friday, March 24, 2023, at UNC Hospitals, Chapel Hill.

The funeral service was held Thursday, March 30, 2023, at Knotts Funeral Home in Pittsboro.

KEITH BURNETTE ARMSTRONG SR.

July 14, 1957 ~ March 25, 2023

Keith Burnette Armstrong Sr., 65, of Beaufort, passed away on Saturday, March 25, 2023, at Carolina East Medical Center in New Bern.

Professional services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home, Sanford.

JAMES LEWIS HILL JR.

May 19, 1952 ~ March 25, 2023

James Lewis Hill Jr., 70, of Sanford, passed away on Saturday, March 25, 2023, at SECU Jim & Betsy Bryan UNC Hospice Home.

Professional services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home.

LEIGH ANN (THROOP) WOODS

April 23, 1967 ~ March 19, 2023

Leigh Ann Woods, 55, of Cameron, passed away on Sunday, March 19, 2023, at Firsthealth Moore Regional

Hospital in Pinehurst.

The memorial service was held on Saturday, April 1, 2023, at Knotts Funeral Home.

THOMAS CECIL CRAVEN

June 30, 1938 ~ March 30, 2023

Thomas Cecil Craven, 84, of Pittsboro, passed away on Thursday, March 30, 2023, at UNC Hospitals in Chapel Hill.

Professional services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home.

SHERRI ERICA FEASTER

May 15, 1972 ~ March 27, 2023

Sherrri Erica Feaster, 50, of Sanford, passed away on Monday, March 27, 2023, at UNC Hospitals in Chapel Hill.

Professional services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home.

FREDDIE HARRISON REYNOLDS III

December 20, 1961 ~ March 31, 2023

Freddie Harrison Reynolds III, 61, of Sanford, passed away on Friday, March 31, 2023, at UNC Hospitals in Chapel Hill.

Professional services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home.

GEORGE WENDEL HARRIS JR.

August 22, 1963 ~ March 31, 2023

George Wendel Harris Jr., 59, of Spring Lake, passed away on Friday, March 31, 2023, at Cape Fear Valley Hospital in Fayetteville.

Professional services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home, Sanford.

OBITS

Continued from page A8

CHARLES GATLIN

April 28, 1931 ~ April 1, 2023

Charles Gatlin, 91, of Bennett, passed away on Saturday, April 1, 2023, at Genesis Healthcare-Siler City Center.

A graveside service was held on Tuesday, April 4, 2023 at Mt. Zion U.M.C., with Rev. Ted

County encouraging community involvement to prevent child abuse



Courtesy of Chatham County Government

Chatham County staff wore blue to work last Friday to raise awareness for Child Abuse Prevention Month.

From Chatham County Government

PITTSBORO — The Chatham County Board of Commissioners has proclaimed April as Child Abuse Prevention Month, and the county's Department of Social Services is calling attention to this issue that greatly impacts the lives of the county's most vulnerable residents — its children.

This year's statewide theme is "Nurturing Positive Childhoods Together: Prevention in Partnership."

"Every child has tremendous promise and is vital to the future of our community, so we must foster their healthy growth and development," Commissioner Chairperson Karen Howard said. "Preventing child abuse and neglect is a responsibility that everyone shares, and I hope all Chatham County residents will do their part to ensure that the children in our community have safe, stable and nurturing homes and environments to thrive in."

In 2022, the Chatham County Department of Social Services had 115 children in its care and

accepted 317 reports of child abuse and neglect.

At its March 20 meeting in Pittsboro, the Chatham County Board of Commissioners, along with staff, wore blue to raise awareness for Child Abuse Prevention Month and to encourage others to do the same on Friday, March 31. On that day, county staff, dressed in blue, gathered for a photo at the county's Justice Center.

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network and Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina both provide resources for families related to the impacts of child abuse and neglect. They recommend learning about, recognizing and reporting child maltreatment; they provide online trainings for parents and community members; and they share an affiliation of agencies that develop a strong support network.

"We know that providing a robust array of supports and services to families helps build resiliency and is an effective prevention strategy for child abuse and neglect," Chatham County Department of Social Services Director Jennie Kristiansen said.



Courtesy of Chatham County Government

At its March 20 meeting in Pittsboro, the Chatham County Board of Commissioners, along with staff, wore blue to raise awareness for Child Abuse Prevention Month and to encourage others to do the same on March 31.

"We encourage all Chatham community members to get involved by assisting families in need and those agencies that provide concrete supports such as housing, food

and childcare."

Individuals who are concerned about the safety of a child may contact the Chatham County Department of Social Services at 919-642-6988 or after

hours at 919-542-2911.

Everyone in North Carolina is mandated to report suspected child abuse or neglect, and all reporter information is confidential.

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LEGALS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY ALL PERSONS, firms and corporations having claims against **JOSEPH EDWARD KRESS** deceased, of Chatham County, N.C., are notified

to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before June 16, 2023, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This is the 9th day of March, 2023. Elizabeth Smith, Ancillary Administrator c/o Hopley, Wilms & Hanna, PLLC 2314 S. Miami Blvd., Suite 151 Durham, NC 27703. M16,M23,M30,A6,4tc

REQUEST FOR BIDS Central Piedmont Community Action, Inc. (CPCA) is opening its bid for HVAC, Electrical, and Plumbing contractors in Anson, Chatham, Orange, and Richmond counties. Bids will be received March 16, 2023, through April 15, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. RFP will also be available on our website through Sept. 15, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. If you are interested in becoming a contractor for Central Piedmont Community Action in any of our counties, please contact Doug Dixon at (919) 742-2277, ext. 105, M - TH, 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or via email at doug@cpcanc.org. M16,M23,M30,A6,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY FILE NO: 23 E 145 All persons having claims against **NINA PAULINE DODD**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 11th day of June, 2023, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 9th day of March, 2023. Randall C. Dodd, Co-Executor 108 Circadian Way Chapel Hill, NC 27516 Mark R. Dodd, Co-Executor 106 Keeneland Court Durham, NC 27713-7259 M16,M23,M30,A6,4tp

IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION FILE NO. 23-E-68 IN RE: ESTATE OF Grace Nifa Mathos The undersigned, having qualified as Personal Representative of the Estate of **GRACE NIFA MATHOS**, notifies all persons having claims against the estate to present them to the undersigned on or before the 23rd day of June, 2023, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned. This 16th day of March, 2023. Joseph Allen Mathos, Personal Representative c/o The Graham, Nuckolls Conner Law Firm P.O. Box 7384 Greenville, N.C. 27835-7384 M23,M30,A6,A13,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY FILE NO: 23 E 150 All persons having claims against **RUTH W. MORROW**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 25th day of June, 2023, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 21st day of March, 2023. Edward Lee Morrow, Sr., Co-Executor 3091 Moon Lindley Rd. Snow Camp, NC 27349 Ellen Long Morrow, Co-Executor 3091 Moon Lindley Rd Snow Camp, NC 27349 M23,M30,A6,A13,4tp

CREDITOR'S NOTICE NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY Having qualified on the 14th of March 2023, as Administrator CTA of the Estate of **EVA PEARL WILLIAMS**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the decedent to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 21st day of June 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 16th day of March 2023 W. Woods Doster, Administrator CTA of the Estate of Eva Pearl

Williams 206 Hawkins Avenue Sanford, NC 27330 Attorneys: Law Offices of W. Woods Doster, P.A. 206 Hawkins Avenue Sanford, NC 27330 M23,M30,A6,A13,4tc

IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE DISTRICT COURT DIVISION FILE NO. 19 Cvd 783 STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF CHATHAM Plaintiff, **NOTICE OF SERVICE PROCESS BY PUBLICATION** vs The HEIRS, ASSIGNS and DEVISEES of **MARY EFFIE BRADFFORD SMITH a/k/a EFFIE B. SMITH**, et al Defendants. TO: The HEIRS, ASSIGNS and DEVISEES of **MARY EFFIE BRADFFORD SMITH a/k/a EFFIE B. SMITH** and spouse, if any, or any other person or entity claiming thereunder A pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action and notice of service of process by publication began on March 23, 2023. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: Foreclosure on tax parcel(s) more completely described in the Complaint, to collect delinquent ad valorem taxes (assessments). Plaintiff seeks to extinguish any and all claim or interest that you may have in said property. You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than forty (40) days after the date of the first publication of notice stated above, exclusive of such date, being forty (40) days after March 23, 2023, or by May 2, 2023, and upon your failure to do so, the party seeking service of process by publication will apply to the Court for relief sought. This the 15th day of March, 2023. ZACCHAEUS LEGAL SERVICES By:

MARK D. BARDILL/MARK B. BARDILL Attorney for Plaintiff NC Bar #12852/56782 310 W. Jones St. P. O. Box 25 Trenton, North Carolina 28585 Telephone: (252) 448-4541 Melanie C. Galloway, NCCP Zacchaeus Legal Services P.O. Box 25 Trenton, NC 28585 Ph # (252) 448-4541 x110 M23,M30,A6,3tc

CREDITOR'S NOTICE NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY Having qualified on the 3rd day of March 2023, as Administrator of the Estate of **DONALD FRANKLIN EADS**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the decedent to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 21st day of June, 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 23rd day of March, 2023 Austin R. Eads, Administrator of the Estate of Donald F. Eads 1858 Lakewood Falls Rd. Goldston, NC 27252 Attorneys: Law Offices of W. Woods Doster, P.A. 206 Hawkins Avenue Sanford, NC 27330 M23,M30,A6,A13,4tc

ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY All persons having claims against the estate of **Jed Schipper** of Chatham County, NC, who died on the 14th of November 2022, are notified to present them on or before June 29th, 2023 to **Lisa Skumpija**, Administrator for the Estate, c/o Alexander, Miller, Schupp & Hamilton, P.L.L.C., P. O. Box 3200, Chapel Hill, NC 27515-3200, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Alexander, Miller, Schupp & Hamilton, P.L.L.C. P. O. Box 3200 Chapel Hill, NC 27515-3200 M23,M30,A6,A13,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY FILE NO: 23 E 160 All persons having claims against **THOMAS ALEXANDER BUCKNER**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North

Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 25th day of June, 2023, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 21st day of March, 2023. Evelyn Foard Shaw, Administrator 504 Highland Trail Chapel Hill, NC 27516 M23,M30,A6,A13,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS 23-E-22 NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY The undersigned, Euphalia Farrar, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of **RU-FUS V. HORTON JR.**, 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 28th day of June, 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 30th day of March, 2023. Euphalia Farrar, Executor c/o Marie H. Hopper Attorney for the Estate Hopper Cummings, PLLC Post Office Box 1455 Pittsboro, NC 27312 M30,A6,A13,A20,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY FILE NO: 23 E 136 All persons having claims against **SUSAN RUTH HAVENSTEIN LOWE**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 30th day of June, 2023, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 30th day of March, 2023. Greg Alan Havenstein, Administrator CTA 8238 Hydon Dawn Lane Cary NC 27518 M30,A6,A13,A20,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY The undersigned, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of **LYNETTE K. RUSSELL**, Deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate to exhibit them to the undersigned at the offices of Tillman, Whichard & Cagle, PLLC, 501 Eastowne Drive, Suite 130, Chapel Hill, NC 27514, on or before the 30th day of June, 2023, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the estate will please make immediate payment. This 30th day of March, 2023. Scott W. Russell, Executor Estate of Lynette K. Russell Tillman, Whichard & Cagle, PLLC 501 Eastowne Drive, Suite 130 Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514 M30,A6,A13,A20,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF CHATHAM Having qualified as Executor of the Estate of **HAROLD MCCAFFREY**, late of 708 Eldridge Loop, Cary, Chatham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned at: c/o H. Denton Worrell, Esq., Worrell Sides LLP, 128 E. Hargett Street, Ste 305, Raleigh, N.C. 27601, on or before the 30th day of June, 2023, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms, and corporations indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned. This the 30th day of March, 2023. Charles F. McCaffrey, Executor Estate of Harold McCaffrey c/o H. Denton Worrell, Esq. 128 E. Hargett Street, Suite 305 Raleigh, N.C. 27601 M30,A6,A13,A20,4tc

NOTICE OF HEARINGS TOWN OF SILER CITY The following item will be considered by the Siler City Planning Commission on Monday, April 10, 2023. The hearing will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the Siler City Court Room of the Siler City Town Hall at 311 N. 2nd Ave. The items will also be

heard by the Town Council for Siler City on April 17, 2023 at 6:30 pm in the Siler City Court Room of the Siler City Town Hall located at 311 N. 2nd Ave. **Legislative Hearings** R23-0401. Conditional Rezoning of two tracts from Agricultural-Residential (A-R) to Residential 3 (R-3) Conditional (R-3-C), tracts totaling 168.506 acres ±, addressed as 285 and unaddressed parcel George Brooks Drive (parcel number 13136 and 80302), and being the properties of Tim's Farm & Forestry II, LLC, represented by Barbara Todd of American Engineering, Inc. R23-0402. Conditional Rezoning of two tracts from Agricultural-Residential (A-R) to Planned Unit Development (B-1, R-6, R-10), tracts totaling 293.22 acres ±, unaddressed parcels Old US 421 South (79448 and 14529), and being the properties of Everest Park, LLC, represented by Bob Kopsky of Summit Design and Engineering, Inc. R23-0403. Rezoning of two tracts from Light Industrial (LI) to General Commercial (GC), tracts totaling 4.031 acres ±, addressed as 208 W. Second Street and unaddressed W.

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PERMIT

Continued from page A3

has a legal standard of 0.35ug/L in water supply watersheds, and yet, this limit has not been set or enforced on a discharge permit for fear of litigation from polluting industries. The only mention of PFAS in these permits is a requirement for quarterly monitoring, with no action required if those monitoring results exceed EPA's new limits.

Another critical change needed is the precautionary principle. Currently, chemicals and toxins can be discharged into the air, water, soil until it is proven to be harmful, which can take over a decade of research and human health monitoring to prove.

Other discussion at the hearing revolved around monitoring, specifically monitoring and reporting frequency. What's happening now when it comes to monitoring and reporting by the state and by local wastewater facilities, and what needs to change?

Most local wastewater facilities are not monitoring for PFAS compounds. As these permits come up for review, monitoring requirements can be added. However, we can't test only for the legacy PFOA and PFOS compounds. The shorter chain PFAS that have replaced those compounds in manufacturing processes are equally as harmful. We need to look at these toxins as a class, rather than monitoring and regulating one at a

time.

Quarterly monitoring is currently what is being required for these new permits. However, we have historically seen spikes in PFAS, and especially 1,4-dioxane, that would not be captured in quarterly monitoring. Additionally, monitoring alone does not incentivize polluters to reduce their PFAS discharges. For PFAS levels at a level of concern, weekly monitoring should be required until levels are reduced. We understand the costs of monitoring frequently is a burden, but this cost will act as an incentive to protect community health downstream.

Can you talk about that wastewater plant's filtration methods, and



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Emily Sutton is the Haw Riverkeeper for the Haw River Assembly.

share what you know about different methods and why they're important for all of us to be aware of?

The wastewater plant currently has no filtration methods for PFAS or 1,4-dioxane. Without the state requiring those toxins to be limited, Sanford has no motivation to install proper treatment. However, they have received \$35 million from state funds to expand their drinking water facility which is located downstream. This facility will have Granular Activated Carbon treatment, which has shown some success at removing PFAS, but no effectiveness for 1,4-dioxane.

Treating wastewater at the end of the effluent pipe is not the most effective method for treatment. Wastewater plants receive industrial waste from dozens of industrial users. Those users need to treat their wastewater streams before it ever reaches the wastewater plant. This can be mandated through a pretreatment permit, authorized by the wastewater treatment plant. Treatment at the industry level will target the treatment on less volume of discharge, and eliminate the source of toxins contaminated the biosolids, or sludge, that is later land applied on fields.

The Bharat Forge facility in Sanford, and the coming industrial facilities in Chatham — VinFast and Wolfspeed — are in various stages of permitting for the waste they'll produce. What has the Haw River Assembly determined so far, in terms of impact, that these facilities might have?

We are very concerned about PFAS and 1,4-dioxane discharges that would originate from VinFast and Wolfspeed. These industries have been fast tracked in the spirit of economic growth, and therefore, have had little oversight. We have already seen drastic sedimentation impacts resulting from

the VinFast development, and no permits have been obtained for this project yet. These industries must be required to minimize any loads of toxins in their manufacturing processes, and the only way to do that is for the state to set, and enforce, limits on their discharge permits.

Can you speak to the EPA's own health advisories about PFAS and 1,4-dioxane and other contaminants, and any updates and changes in acceptable levels and limits?

EPA has set new health guidelines of 0.004 ppt for PFOA, and 0.02ppt for PFOS. The previous guidance was 70ppt for the two combined. This is a clear example of why these toxins need to be regulated as a class. The more we know about these toxins, the more restricted they will become. The health impacts of these contaminants are lifelong, if not fatal, through cancers and renal failures, etc.

We've seen the same trend with lead, for example. The limit has gone from 100 to 3.5 ug/L, though the EPA and CDC agree that no level of lead is safe in a child's bloodstream. We need to set protective limits proactively to protect our communities.

Despite the rapid growth that's happened in Lee County and that's coming in Chatham and Chatham, we still have lots of farmland and agriculture. What should farmers — and those of us who consume what they produce — be concerned about these levels we've been discussing?

Biosolids are a major concern for soil and groundwater contamination. Sludge has been touted as "free fertilizer" from wastewater treatment plants, but until those wastewater treatment plants require their industrial users to eliminate the toxic levels of PFAS and 1,4-dioxane,

the sludge will also be contaminated. We've had documented cases of contaminated hay, dairies, organic produce, and other agricultural products with extremely high levels of these toxins. Sludge is the source of that contamination. Farmers should not be using land applied biosolids in their fields.

What role is the Southern Environmental Law Center playing?

SELC has led our litigation and settlement negotiations with polluters upstream. Haw River Assembly worked for years to trace the sources of pollution, document the harm, and propose solutions, but without the legal tools of SELC, we would not have made this level of progress. Together, we work to uphold the Clean Water Act and hold polluters accountable.

Why aren't polluters taking more responsibility?

Cost. In the case of wastewater treatment plants, they are protecting the interests of their customers, who are dumping industrial toxins into their wastestream without consequences. Their industrial users would pay a higher cost for PFAS alternatives, or pay to invest in treatment to prevent the toxins from reaching the wastewater plant. Without state standards to enforce these changes, the polluters will continue to prioritize profits over the health of our communities.

There was discussion at the hearing about those living downstream from Sanford's plant. We might not think too much about that population — we're naturally more concerned about our own backyard. Why should those living downstream from this particular wastewater facility be important to us?

In all cases, there is always someone downstream. We should always be concerned about their health as well. But if we are only focusing on our own individual health, we can think of it this way: we travel to the beach, we visit the restaurants, we buy products sourced from downstream. We eat seafood. We are all harmed by this toxic pollution.

Sanford's impact however, is directly personal. Sanford discharges upstream from its own drinking water intake, which will supply drinking water to communities all over the region — including Chatham County.

For more about the Haw River Assembly, go to hawriver.org.

Financial Tips for Blended Families

Becoming part of a blended family can certainly be rewarding. Of course, as is the case in all families, there will be challenges, one of which is financial. A blended family must deal with some specific financial issues, so it's a good idea to become familiar with them.

In particular, consider these areas:

• Separate or joint accounts? — Should your two family units combine all your finances or maintain separate accounts? There's no one correct answer for everyone, because this issue has emotional and psychological components to it, as well as financial considerations. But the nature of your new, blended family might guide you to a choice that makes sense for your situation.

So, for example, if you are remarrying at a later stage in life, and you and your new spouse have adult children, you might think the best move is to keep separate accounts. But if you are joining households with a spouse or partner with younger children, you may want to merge accounts to pay for household expenses and work toward your new, shared financial objectives. And it doesn't have to be an "either-or" approach — you might decide to blend some accounts and keep others separate.

• Debts and credit ratings — It's likely that you and your new spouse or partner, and perhaps even some children, will bring debts into your blended family. As these debts can affect your family's finances in several ways, including your ability to borrow and your credit ratings, you will want to know what everyone owes, and the amount of monthly payments needed to meet these obligations. After that, you may be able to find ways to consolidate debts or find other ways to reduce or eliminate them.

• Legal issues — When you establish a blended family, you may want to review, and possibly update, the beneficiary designations on your life insurance policy and retirement accounts, such as your IRA and 401(k). These designations can supersede instructions you may have left in your estate planning documents — including your last will and testament — so it's important to ensure they reflect your current wishes. And speaking of your estate plans, you may well need to revise them, too, in consultation with your attorney.

• Attitudes toward money — Attitudes toward money — yours and those of your new spouse or partner — should be addressed when starting a blended family. Is one of you more of a saver while the other spends more freely? As investors, does one of you favor taking more risk while the other is more conservative? It's important to reconcile these differences as best you can, especially if you plan on merging your finances. This means that you both may need to compromise somewhat, but you should strive to avoid having either of you feeling uncomfortable in your choices. In any case, open and honest communication is the first step in achieving a harmonious financial strategy.

These aren't the only financial considerations involved with blended families, but they should give you some things to think about — and the earlier you start thinking about them, the better.

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

Edward Jones, Member SIPC

Pittsboro
Chad Virgil, CFP®, ChFC®, CLU®
630 East St Suite 2
919-545-5669

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

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SPORTS NEWS & ENTERTAINMENT

APRIL 6 - 12, 2023 | chathamnewsrecord.com/sports | SECTION B

TRACK AND FIELD

Chatham Charter, Northwood and Seaforth athletes shine at county championships

BY JEREMY VERNON
News + Record Sports Editor

Last Saturday's Chatham County track and field championships at Northwood were the site of some huge individual performances, as six different athletes won multiple events.

Dominating the boys sprints was Chatham Charter junior Lucas Smith, who won the 100-, 200- and 400-meter dashes. Smith played baseball last spring, and this is his first season running with the track and field teams.

"Lucas has been phenomenal so far this season," Chatham Charter coach James Kiefer said.

See TRACK, page B4



Staff photo by James Kiefer

Northwood's Jackson Adams (left) hands a baton to his teammate during a relay race at Saturday's Chatham County track and field championships.



Staff photo by James Kiefer

Seaforth's Claire Morgan finished second in the girls pole vault Saturday at the Chatham County championships.

WRESTLING

Rogers finds confidence competing in Europe

VOLLEYBALL

Northwood alum Cera Powell transfers to UConn

BY JEREMY VERNON
News + Record Sports Editor

Former Northwood volleyball star Cera Powell has found a new home to continue her college career.

Last weekend, the Chargers' alumna announced she will transfer from Virginia Tech to the University of Connecticut for her fifth and final college season in 2023. The graduate senior spent the past four seasons with the Hokies, but the blanket waiver covering the 2020 Covid season means she can come back for a fifth year.

This past fall with Virginia Tech, Powell led the team in kills (283) and was named to the All-ACC Tournament team for the third time in her career. Powell — the older sister of Northwood junior basketball star Drake Powell — spoke with the News + Record back in September about her adjustment to the Covid year and how it affected her time in Blacksburg.

"All the years are running together," Powell said. "We didn't really have much time with our coaches before everybody was sent home. I think this past spring season (2022) really helped me understand what the coaches are looking for and really improve my game from their perspective and my own perspective. And it's paying off now."

Virginia Tech finished the 2022 season with an overall record of 11-18. The Hokies closed the year on a four-match losing streak and failed to make the NCAA Tournament. UConn, meanwhile, had a record of 17-14 overall and also didn't make the NCAA Tournament. Powell should fit in nicely into a lineup that graduates its top player in kills from the past season in Caylee Parker.

Cera is one of three Powell siblings who either plays or will play college sports. Drake, a junior, is committed to play basketball at UNC, while Dedric "Deuce" Powell, the middle child of the three, played basketball at Louisburg College in 2022-23.

Cera told the CN+R earlier in the year that she is excited to see what her younger brother can do when he finally hits the next level.

"Growing up we were all UNC fans," she said. "Both of our parents went there and it was the closest school nearby. We went to a lot of games growing up. It's so cool watching him be able to achieve one of his dreams. It's so cool. He worked so hard. Ever since he was a kid, he was always the hardest worker between himself, me and our other brother Deuce. We always knew he was going to do something big."

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



Powell



Photo courtesy of Brandi Rogers

Seaforth freshman Gabe Rogers took second place in the U15 Greco-Roman competition at last week's Tallinn Open in Estonia.

BY JEREMY VERNON
News + Record Sports Editor

After wrestling up a weight class for the entirety of his freshman high school season, Seaforth's Gabe Rogers only needed to travel 4,500 miles to finally find some even competition.

Last week, Rogers traveled with USA Wrestling to compete in the Tallinn Open — the largest wrestling competition annually held in Europe — in Tallinn, Estonia. Competing against some of the

top youth grapplers from around the world, the Seaforth freshman captured a silver medal in the U15 Greco-Roman competition at 44kg (97 lbs) and a third-place finish in the freestyle event. All told, USA wrestlers took home 54 total medals, including 20 golds, at the Tallinn Open.

Making his first-ever trip abroad, Rogers said it took him some time to adjust in Europe.

"It was a lot different over there. There were different building structures, people weren't the same ..." he said. "They wrestle

a little bit differently, too. In America, we're more focused on having good conditioning. In Europe, they're slower, but more technical. And if they get a lead, they're probably going to stall it out. They don't care how much they win by. They just want to win."

Rogers was able to enjoy some familiar comforts while competing, though. In a region where the main cuisine is considered "substantial, rich and robust," Rogers and many of his

See ROGERS, page B3



Photo courtesy of Brandi Rogers

Seaforth freshman Gabe Rogers traveled to Europe last week to compete in the Tallinn Open in Estonia.

BASEBALL

Chatham Charter is only undefeated team in county

BY JEREMY VERNON
News + Record Sports Editor

Entering Tuesday's game against Gray Stone Day (which occurred after press time), the Chatham Charter baseball is off to the best start in program history at 8-0.

The Knights came into the week averaging over 12 runs per game and outscoring their opponents by an average of 10.9 runs per game. Backed by a potent lineup of bats at the plate, head coach Bill Slaughter's team looks primed to challenge the school record for wins in a season

(18), which was set during the spring of 2018.

"It's just been a great bunch to work with," said head coach Bill Slaughter. "They're young, they're excited. They're having fun. And they've all played before. It's the first time I feel like I've had all baseball players since I've been at Chatham Charter."

Through the team's first eight games, Chatham Charter was hitting .466 as a team with 27 extra-base hits and an overall OPS (on-base percentage + slugging percentage) of 1.211. Four Knights had at least 10 hits in

the team's first eight games, led by sophomore Zach Cartrette (.481 average, 13 hits, 13 RBI). Also contributing in a big way at the plate were junior Jonah Ridgill (.500, 12 hits, seven RBI), sophomore Luke Johnson (.500, 11 hits, 10 RBI) and junior Aidan Allred (.455, 10 hits, 14 RBI).

On the mound, Cartrette entered the week with a 4-0 record and a 1.56 ERA and 24 strikeouts against four walks through 18 innings pitched. As a group, Chatham Charter's pitching staff had a team ERA of 1.17 and 62

See CHARTER, page B2

SCORES & SCHEDULES

SCORES

MONDAY, MARCH 27

Boys tennis

North Moore 6, Chatham Central 3

Girls lacrosse

East Chapel Hill 23, Seaforth 2

TUESDAY, MARCH 28

Boys tennis

Chatham Central 5, Chatham Charter 4
Seaforth 6, North Moore 0
Western Alamance 7, Northwood 2

Girls soccer

Leadership Academy 9, Chatham Charter 0

Softball

Bartlett Yancey 12, Seaforth 2
Chatham Central 6, Jordan-Matthews 3

Baseball

Chatham Central 31, Graham 0
Northwood 1, Person 0

Boys lacrosse

Northwood 15, Western Alamance 6
Seaforth 13, Williams 4

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29

Boys tennis

Seaforth 9, Graham 0
Northwood 7, Williams 2

Girls soccer

Seaforth 9, Cummings 0

Softball

Person 11, Northwood 0

Baseball

Clayton 4, Northwood 1
Trinity 12, Jordan-Matthews 2
Seaforth 9, Carrboro 3

Boys lacrosse

Northwood 18, Union Pines 7

Girls lacrosse

Northwood 20, Seaforth 8

THURSDAY, MARCH 30

Boys tennis

Chapel Hill 9, Northwood 0
North Moore 5, Chatham Charter 4

Boys lacrosse

Western Alamance 12, Seaforth 4

Softball

Jordan-Matthews 9, Northwood 0
Chatham Charter 12, Cornerstone Charter 6

Baseball

Jordan-Matthews 4, Seaforth 0

FRIDAY, MARCH 31

Boys tennis

Clover Garden 9, Chatham Charter 0

Boys lacrosse

Seaforth 16, Eastern Alamance 2

Girls soccer

Jordan-Matthews 1, Asheboro 1

Softball

Seaforth 20, Cummings 3 (Game 1)
Seaforth 16, Cummings (Game 2)
Chatham Central 15, Graham 0
Eastern Alamance 11, Northwood 0

Baseball

Chatham Charter 7, Southern Wake Academy 2
Chatham Central 14, Graham 0
Person 3, Northwood 2 (11)
Jordan-Matthews 2, Seaforth 0

SATURDAY, APRIL 1

Girls lacrosse

Croatan 15, Northwood 5

MONDAY, APRIL 3

Boys tennis

Franklin Academy 8, Seaforth 1

Girls lacrosse

Seaforth 25, Riverside 3
Northwood 17, Jordan 2

Boys lacrosse

Northwood 21, Jack Britt 6

Girls soccer

Riverside 1, Seaforth 0
Eastern Alamance 9, Northwood 0

Baseball

Southern Lee 4, Northwood 3

SCHEDULES

TUESDAY, APRIL 4

Boys golf

Chatham Central vs. Chatham Charter at Siler City Country Club (3:30 p.m.)

Girls soccer

Chatham Charter at Asheboro Hybrid Academy (4 p.m.)
Woods Charter vs. Uwharrie Charter (6 p.m.)

Track and field

Seaforth vs. Northwood vs. Chatham Charter vs. Woods Charter (4 p.m.)

Baseball

Seaforth vs. Cummings (double-header, 4:30 p.m.)
Chatham Charter vs. Gray Stone Day (6 p.m.)
Chatham Central at Bartlett Yancey (7 p.m.)

Boys tennis

Seaforth vs. River Mill (4:30 p.m.)
Jordan-Matthews vs. Chatham Central (4:30 p.m.)

Softball

Chatham Charter vs. Gray Stone Day (5 p.m.)
Northwood at Western Alamance (6 p.m.)

Boys lacrosse

Northwood vs. Cedar Ridge (6 p.m.)

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5

Boys golf

Chatham Charter vs. Cornerstone Charter at Grandover Resort (3 p.m.)

Track and field

Northwood in Central 3A meet at Eastern Alamance (4 p.m.)
Jordan-Matthews at Cummings (4:30 p.m.)

Boys tennis

Chatham Central vs. Chatham Charter (4 p.m.)
Northwood vs. Jordan (4:30 p.m.)
Seaforth at North Moore (4:30 p.m.)
Jordan-Matthews vs. Graham (4:30 p.m.)

Softball

Northwood at Williams (5 p.m.)
Seaforth at Cedar Ridge (6 p.m.)

Baseball

Jordan-Matthews vs. TBA at Wheatmore (4:30 p.m.)
Northwood vs. River Mill (5:30 p.m.)
Chatham Charter vs. Clover Garden

Girls soccer

Northwood at Western Alamance (6:45 p.m.)

Boys lacrosse

Northwood vs. Jack Britt (6 p.m.)

Girls lacrosse

Northwood at Riverside (7 p.m.)

THURSDAY, APRIL 6

Boys lacrosse

Seaforth vs. Northwood (6 p.m.)

Softball

Chatham Charter vs. River Mill (4:30 p.m.)
Chatham Central vs. Bartlett Yancey (6 p.m.)
Jordan-Matthews at Roxboro Community (6 p.m.)

Baseball

Northwood vs. Seaforth (6 p.m.)
Chatham Central vs. Bartlett Yancey (7 p.m.)
Jordan-Matthews vs. TBA at Providence Grove (7 p.m.)

Girls lacrosse

Seaforth at Chapel Hill (6 p.m.)

Girls soccer

Chatham Charter vs. N.C. Leadership Academy (6 p.m.)
Woods Charter vs. Northwood (6 p.m.)
Seaforth at Orange (6:45 p.m.)

FRIDAY, APRIL 7

Baseball

Jordan-Matthews vs. TBA at Eastern Randolph (4:30 p.m.)
Chatham Central vs. Western Guilford at Southern Guilford (5 p.m.)

MONDAY, APRIL 10

Boys golf

Jordan-Matthews vs. Chatham Central (4:30 p.m.)

Baseball

Northwood at East Chapel Hill (4:30 p.m.)

CHARTER

Continued from page B1

strikeouts against 12 walks. The Knights have also only allowed one extra-base hit to their opponents, as of publication.

With momentum firmly in their corner, the Knights hope they can make some real noise on the 1A scene this spring. Last year, Chatham Charter finished the regular season 11-4 overall before winning the Central Tar Heel Conference tournament title and making it to the second round of the 1A playoffs before falling to Bear Grass Charter. Chatham Charter has never made it past the second round of the playoffs.

But even if the Knights don't

Through their first eight games, Chatham Charter was hitting .466 as a team with 27 extra-base hits and an overall OPS (on-base percentage + slugging percentage) of 1.211. Four Knights had at least 10 hits in the team's first eight games, led by sophomore Zach Cartrette (.481 average, 13 hits, 13 RBI). Also contributing in a big way at the plate are junior Jonah Ridgill (.500, 12 hits, seven RBI), sophomore Luke Johnson (.500, 11 hits, 10 RBI) and junior Aidan Allred (.455, 10 hits, 14 RBI).

make a big postseason run, they should still be set up for success for the next several years. Slaughter's team only has one senior — Cameron Turner (.400, eight hits, nine RBI). All told, each of the team's top 10 hitters in terms of average and five of their top six pitchers will return to the field in 2024.

"It's a very exciting time. It re-

ally is," Slaughter said. "I coached for years at a rival school here in Chatham County, but this is the first time in my seven years at Chatham Charter where we're starting to become a little bit of a baseball school now. Everyone knows about our basketball programs. We're trying to get to a similar level."



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SOFTBALL

Central, J-M and Chatham Charter playing well

BY JEREMY VERNON
News + Record Sports Editor

Chatham County figures to have several teams qualify for the state softball playoffs. Heading into this week's

games, two teams held undefeated records, while another was five games above .500.

Continuing the title of the most dominant team in the area is Chatham Central, which is 11-0 entering Thursday's game

against Bartlett Yancey. The Bears have won their 11 games by an average of 10.9 runs per game, and they've only given up 19 runs total to their opponents.

The main reason for that latter stat is senior

Mary Gaines, who is having another fantastic season in the circle. So far in 2023, she has an undefeated record and 48 strikeouts against just five walks over 40 innings pitched. As a staff, the Bears have yet to give up an extra-base hit this season and have a team ERA of 0.52.

At the plate, senior Jaylee Williams is batting a ridiculous .636 with 21 hits and 12 RBI. Three other Bears — junior Cassie McKeithan (.429, 12 hits, 17 RBI), sophomore Emma Burke (.577, 15 hits, 15 RBI) and sophomore Caleigh Warf (.344, 11 hits, 15 RBI) — have at least 15 RBI.

A few games behind Central in the Mid-Carolina Conference standings is Jordan-Matthews, which have an 8-3 overall record and a 3-1 mark in league play entering

Thursday's road game at Roxboro Community. This is the best season for the Jets in quite a while; the last time they finished the year with a record above .500 was 2018 (15-8).

There's reason to believe this success will continue into the future, as head coach Holly Clark's team only has two seniors — Macy Beavers and Suesanna Lee. The Jets have contributions from all over their roster this season, including sophomore third baseman Sophia Murchison, sophomore pitcher/second baseman Marcy Clark, junior shortstop Logan Gunter and junior catcher Reagan Smith.

The third Chatham County team in the Mid-Carolina Conference, Seaforth, was 3-6 overall and 3-2 in league play coming into Wednesday's

road game against Cedar Ridge (after press time). Despite the slow start to the year, the Hawks came into the week on a two-game winning streak and look like they might turn things around over the next few weeks.

Seaforth has gotten big contributions from a pair of freshmen in Cami Brinkley (.722, 13 hits, 13 RBI) and Emma Strong (.522, 12 hits, nine RBI). Of the Hawks' 12-player roster, five are juniors, three are sophomores and four are freshmen.

Chatham Charter was the county's other undefeated team coming into the week, though the Knights' had played just three games entering Tuesday against Gray Stone Day. Chatham Charter also plays Thursday at home against

See **SOFTBALL**, page B4

Council on Aging Weekly Activities Calendar

Monday, April 10

Eastern Chatham Senior Center

- 8:15 a.m. - **Body Conditioning w/Jackie**
- 9 a.m. - **Chair Yoga w/Liz (at Chatham Grove Community Center and on Zoom)**
- 10 a.m. - **Arthritis Exercise w/Jackie; Choir to Siler City**
- 11 a.m. - **Sr. Games Practice w/Alan (Bocce, Cornhole, Horseshoes); Golf at Siler City Country Club**
- 2 p.m. - **Table Tennis; Senior Games Croquet Practice (Central Carolina Community College, Pittsboro)**

Western Chatham Senior Center

- 9 a.m. - **Strong & Fit w/Olivia**
- 10 a.m. - **Cornhole**
- 10:30 a.m. - **Gospel Choir**
- 12:15 p.m. - **Advisory Team Meeting**
- 2 p.m. - **Geri-Fit**
- 3 p.m. - **Caregiver Support Group**

Tuesday, April 11

Eastern Chatham Senior Center

- 9 a.m. - **3G's Men's Group**
- 10 a.m. - **Woodcarvers; Bingo w/Joe**
- 10:30 a.m. - **Gym Orientation**
- 11 a.m. - **Senior Games Practice - (Fun Walk, Bocce, Cornhole, Horseshoes)**
- 1 p.m. - **Rummikub**

Western Chatham Senior Center

- 9:45 a.m. - **Arthritis Exercises (in-person and Zoom)**
- 10:30 a.m. - **Ping Pong**
- 1 p.m. - **Rook/Phase 10/Rummikub; "Bring Your Own Project" Gathering**
- 2 p.m. - **Fitness Room Orientation**

Wednesday, April 12

Eastern Chatham Senior Center

- 8:15 a.m. - **Body Conditioning w/Jackie**
- 1 p.m. - **Open Art Studio (Bring Your Own Project)**
- 2 p.m. - **Team Activities w/Alan**

Western Chatham Senior Center

- 9 a.m. - **Strong & Fit w/Olivia**
- 10 a.m. - **Bible Study; Falls Prevention Health Clinic**
- 2 p.m. - **Crafting w/Kathryn**
- 3:30 p.m. - **Beginning Quilting**

Thursday, April 13

Eastern Chatham Senior Center

- 8:15 a.m. - **Body Conditioning w/Jackie**
- 10 a.m. - **Crafts & Chat; Chair Volleyball; Walmart Shopping Trip**
- 1 p.m. - **Games/Cards**
- 1:30 p.m. - **Line Dancing**
- 2 p.m. - **Bowling at Buffalo Lanes (RSVP Jackie)**
- 3 p.m. - **Gentle Yoga w/Liz**

Western Chatham Senior Center

- 9:00 a.m. - **Men's Coffee & Conversations**
- 9:45 a.m. - **Arthritis Exercises**
- 10 a.m. - **Bocce & Horseshoes; Music Jam Session**
- 2 p.m. - **Geri-Fit**
- 3 p.m. - **Thursday Social (Bingo)**

Friday, April 14

Eastern Chatham Senior Center

- 8:15 a.m. - **Body Conditioning w/Jackie**
- 9 a.m. - **Horseshoes/Bocce**
- 10 a.m. - **Arthritis Exercise w/Jackie**
- 11:15 a.m. - **Stories w/Neriah; Cornhole & Shuffleboard**
- 1 p.m. - **Games/Euchre**
- 1:30 p.m. - **Zumba Gold Intro (RSVP Jackie)**
- 3 p.m. - **Jukebox Live! (Live w/Larry & Erich on piano)**

Western Chatham Senior Center

- 9 a.m. - **Strong & Fit w/Olivia**
- 10 a.m. - **Shuffleboard, Beginning Quilting**
- 10:30 a.m. - **Stories with Neriah**
- 7 p.m. - **Friday Night Dance (fee required for participation)**



For more information on these and other programs, call our centers Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Eastern Chatham Senior Center
919-542-4512

Western Chatham Senior Center
919-742-3975

Visit our website at www.chathamcoa.org

ROGERS

Continued from page B1

American teammates found comfort wolfing down burgers and fries at Heshburger, a fast food chain which originated in Finland and has restaurants in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Bulgaria, Ukraine and Germany.

After the initial adjustment period, Rogers found his rhythm on the mat, too. During his time in Estonia, the freshman competed and trained with wrestlers from all over Northern Europe. The clash of styles allowed Rogers to pick up new tricks and try out new strategies he hopes will help him in the future.

"I definitely learned some new things," Rogers said. "I was able to be more patient with my setups and shots, so I'm able to get to better shots and finish quicker. The guys over there are very good, if you don't finish quick enough, at exposing your back for two points. I had to learn how to finish quicker but also be patient."

Rogers' performance at the Tallinn Open last week was the continuation of a wildly successful few months for the Seaforth freshman. In his first season of high school wrestling this winter, he made it all the way to the finals of the 2A individual championships at 106 pounds and ultimately captured a silver medal.

Hawks' head coach Ryan Armstrong said it took a lot of physical and mental strength for Rogers to compete at a heavier weight.

"He was wrestling kids six or seven pounds heavier at some points, and to watch him adjust his wrestling style

to counteract the weight advantage these other kids had was significant," Armstrong said. "It was huge for us to watch him compete at that high level to make it all the way to the state finals and still compete and do well."

Rogers said he was admittedly unhappy after his runner-up finish at the state championships. But this most recent opportunity in Estonia offered him a renewed sense of confidence as he continues his amateur career.

"I felt a little disappointed after my performance at states, so going to this tournament and performing well against some of the best kids in the world was a lot better," Rogers said. "I think it made a big difference, just being able to wrestle in the right weight class."

NCHSAA-sanctioned wrestling events do not feature a weight class smaller than 106 pounds, meaning Rogers will continue to wrestle up as long as he remains his current size.

Regardless of where Rogers lines up or who he faces, though, Armstrong has the utmost confidence the freshman will be one of the top grapplers in the state by the time his high school career comes to a close.

"I think Gabe is going to be a three-time state champion," Armstrong said. "There's no doubt in my mind. He's a unique kid. He sets his goals and he's passionate about his goals. Every day, he's constantly reevaluating what he can do differently to get the most impact out of what he's looking to get after."

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

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BOYS TENNIS

Seaforth falls for 1st time; Jets played Bears on Tuesday

BY JEREMY VERNON
News + Record Sports Editor

Playing at home against Franklin Academy on Monday afternoon, the Seaforth boys tennis team lost its first dual team match of the season, 8-1. The Hawks had entered Tuesday's match against River Mill with an overall record of 9-1 and a 7-0 mark in Mid-Carolina Conference play.

Head coach Peter Petrides' team is young and talented, but they were unable to best the Patriots on Monday. The Hawks were swept in doubles play, and their only point in the day came courtesy of a straight-sets win by junior Walker Magrinat at No. 1 singles.

Magrinat has been on a tear since losing his opening match of the season to Northwood senior Jio Sumogod. Coming into Tuesday's match against River Mill, the junior had won



Staff photo by James Kiefer

Seaforth junior Beckman Breen returns a volley in a doubles match Monday against Franklin Academy.

nine straight matches in singles play and held a 4-1 mark in doubles play.

Other notable performers

in Seaforth's lineup have been junior Felton Burleigh (6-1 singles), junior Owen Strom (7-1 singles) and sophomore Henry McFall (6-2 singles).

Jordan-Matthews has been the second-best team in the Mid-Carolina Conference this season with a 6-3 overall record and a 4-1 mark in league play. The Jets came into Tuesday's match against Chatham Central having won five or their past six dual team matches.

The top singles player for Jordan-Matthews this spring has been senior Paul Lujan, who was also a key player for the Jets' boys soccer team in the fall. Lujan had a 7-2 singles record coming into the week on top of a 4-2 doubles record.

Fellow seniors Ricardo Rocha Benitez and Angel Gonzalez Suarez were also 7-2 in singles play, and as a team in doubles they have a record of 6-3.

Chatham Central came into



Staff photo by James Kiefer

Seaforth junior Walker Magrinat was the only Hawk to win his singles match (6-3, 6-4) in his team's 8-1 loss to Franklin Academy on Monday.

Tuesday's match with the Jets with a 1-5 overall record, though they won their most recent match, 5-4, against Chatham Charter on March 28. In the win over the Knights, the Bears rallied to win three matches in third-set tiebreakers after dropping the doubles point.

Chatham Central and Chatham Charter also met Wednesday. The match occurred after press time.

Northwood, meanwhile, was 5-7 overall and 4-2 in league play coming into Wednesday's match against Jordan High

(Durham). The Chargers defeated Cedar Ridge, 5-4, on Monday and look like they've settled into a groove after a 2-5 start to the year.

The Chargers had two players with winning records in singles play entering the week — senior Matteus Butler (6-5) and senior Ragul Ramesh (7-5). In doubles play, Butler and Sumogod had a record of 6-4.

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

TRACK

Continued from page B1

tham Charter head coach Toby Holland said. "The way he takes coaching, the way he focuses on every single rep in practice — he really puts 100 percent effort into everything he does. It's been amazing to watch him develop into the runner he is now."

The other athlete to win multiple boys track events Saturday was Northwood senior Ethan Wilson, who won the 110-meter and the 300-meter hurdles with times of 15.44 and 43.83 seconds, respectively. Wilson also won both events at the county championships in 2022.

In the boys field events, Jordan-Matthews senior Ahmod McCrimmon claimed first in both the high jump and long jump. He was close to completing a clean sweep of the jumping events, but ultimately came up 1.4 feet short of Northwood senior Jack Nicholson (41.5 feet) in the triple jump. Nicholson also won the boys discus, finishing with a distance of just over 135 feet.

On the girls side, it was a big day for Seaforth sophomore Malana McLean, who won the 100- and 200-meter dashes and the long jump Saturday afternoon. McLean was the only athlete at the county championships to win both a track event and a field event.

Finally, Northwood junior Skylar Adams claimed first in both the high jump and triple jump on top of her third-place performance in the 400-meter dash. Adams was one of many multi-sport athletes competing Saturday. During the winter, she averaged 11.7 points, 4.4 rebounds and 3.4 assists per game for the Chargers' girls basketball team.

Speaking of basketball, Chatham Charter senior Tamaya Walden — the leading scorer in the his-



Staff photo by James Kiefer

Jordan-Matthews senior Ahmod McCrimmon won the high jump and the long jump at Saturday's county track championships.



Staff photo by James Kiefer

Jordan-Matthews' athletes huddle around each other during Saturday's Chatham County track and field championships.

tory of both Knights' basketball teams (1,866) — won the 400-meter dash with a time of 1:04.41 at Saturday's county championships.

"Tamaya's leadership and experience, the way her and Lucas understand technique and the technical aspects of the races we run, letting that kind of spill off onto the other runners had been instrumental for the younger runners getting faster and improving her times," Holland said. "Her leadership, specifically, has been great, and we wouldn't be where we are without her."

Holland said Walden and Smith's perfor-

mances Saturday were another example of how crucial it is for student-athletes to play multiple sports.

"There's no way you can be an elite athlete and not play multiple sports," he said. "Some trainers talk about 'muscle confusion,' and playing multiple sports helps with that muscle development. You can't develop without doing that. Playing multiple sports definitely helps both (Smith and Walden) in track."

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

CHATHAM'S ROLE IN AMERICA'S COMEBACK

Chatham officials reflect on Biden visit

BY TAYLOR HEEDEN
News + Record Staff

DURHAM — Siler City Town Manager Hank Raper walked into last Monday evening's budget workshop, gearing himself up for the start of the town's budget cycle.

Not long after sitting down to dig into the agenda, Raper was alerted to an email message.

It was from the CEO of Wolfspeed, Gregg Lowe. The subject: Lowe was inviting Raper to Wolfspeed's Durham campus the very next morning for a visit from a very special guest: President Joe Biden.

"I got a call from [EDC President] Michael Smith at 5 p.m. saying that this could happen, and I got an invitation at 6:36 p.m. during our budget work session, so I didn't have any advance notice of that either," Raper said. "So I knew (Biden) was coming last week to Durham, but I didn't think anything of it at the time."

Raper was among the few Chatham County officials there for Biden's visit to Wolfspeed, the president's first stop on his tour across the country to promote his administration's economic agenda. Biden is working to promote the CHIPS Act, designed to designate funding for

companies like Wolfspeed to invest in building industries across the United States.

Smith, representing the county's Economic Development Corporation, said the visit from Biden was "a great day for Chatham County."

"This will provide jobs and an opportunity for people here in the community that now must drive to other places for work," Smith said. "He (Biden) referred to our VinFast win also during his speech. We are grateful to have two transformational projects announced in our community."

Karen Howard, the chairperson of the Chatham County's Board of Commissioners, was also present. She said she received an invitation a few days prior to the event, and said she was more than ecstatic to be present for Biden's address.

"I felt honored to be

part of a small contingent representing Chatham County at the event," Howard said. "The message was uplifting and positive, pointing to a future of greater investment in the American people and our local communities."

Raper, Howard and Smith sat together during the speaking portion of the event. Several elected officials — including North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper — Lowe and Wolfspeed co-founder John Edmond spoke prior to the president's address last Tuesday.

Lowe said during his remarks that Biden's visit allowed for Wolfspeed to showcase its silicon carbide production, which he said will play a crucial role in the automotive industry.

"We're at an exciting time in the automobile industry as we move

See **BIDEN**, page B5

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SOFTBALL

Continued from page B3

River Mill.

Despite only playing three games, the Knights had three players — freshman Kynzie Jordan (.846, 11 hits, three RBI), sophomore Ella Ingle (.692, nine hits, two RBI) and junior Delana Loflin (.615, eight hits, six RBI) — with at least eight hits coming into the week.

Chatham Charter has won all three of its games by at least six runs. The Knights have finished

with a .500 record or better in each of the past three seasons, including an 11-9 mark last season under head coach Brittany Smith.

Playing in the Central 3A Conference, Northwood had an overall record of 5-10 and a conference record of 1-5 coming into Tuesday's game against Western Alamance. The Chargers came into the week on a four-game losing streak and have allowed 9.3 runs per game to their opponents this season.

Northwood's top

players at the plate this season have been junior Sarah Warford (.529, 18 hits, 11 RBI), senior Zoe Hatzidakis (.450, 18 hits, 11 RBI) and freshman Allison Bryant (.289, 11 hits, 14 RBI). On the mound, the Chargers' top option has been junior Caroline Garner, who had a 3-2 record with a 4.59 ERA and 24 strikeouts through 32 innings pitched entering this week.

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

NEWS BRIEFS

COA to hold falls prevention awareness event

The Chatham County Council on Aging will hold its spring Falls Prevention Awareness Event from 10 a.m. to noon on Wednesday, April 12, at the Western Chatham Senior Center in Siler City.

Co-hosted by UNC Health Chatham Rehabilitation Services, the event will feature a falls risk factor screening and suggestions on how to reduce your risk by a variety of healthcare professionals. While falls are the leading cause of injuries to older adults, they do not have to be an inevitable result of aging.

Space is limited and advance registration is required. For more information, contact the Western Chatham Senior Center at 919-742-3975.

Chatham County Public Libraries to host 'Medicare 101'

PITTSBORO — Chatham County Public Libraries will offer two free sessions for community members to learn about Medicare. "Medicare 101: Helping Medicare-Eligible Customers Understand Their Options" is presented by LaTonya Nicholson, a Medicare consultant with BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina.

These educational sessions will help answer questions about Medicare plans such as:

- What is Medicare and who pays for it?
- What are my options and how do I know which plan is best for me?
- What do I need to do to enroll in Medicare?

Medicare 101 at Chatham Community Library:

Chatham Community

Library will host Medicare 101 from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 18. The program will be held in the Holmes Family Meeting Room. Chatham Community Library is located at 197 N.C. Hwy. 87, Pittsboro. Residents may contact the library at 919-545-8084 or rita.vanduinen@chathamlibraries.org for more information on this and other events and programs.

Medicare 101 at Goldston Public Library:

Goldston Public Library will host Medicare 101 on from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Monday, April 24. The program will be held in the E.M. Harris Jr. Conference Room. Goldston Public Library is located at 9235 Pittsboro-Goldston Road, Goldston. Residents may contact the library at 919-898-4522 or goldston.library@chathamlibraries.org for more information on this and other events and programs.

Information about all Chatham County Library branches can be found at www.chathamlibraries.org.

Pistol permit law, at 110 years old, dies in gubernatorial veto override

North Carolina residents will no longer need permission from county sheriffs to purchase a pistol after lawmakers overrode Gov. Roy Cooper's veto last Wednesday to repeal the 110-year-old statute.

Members of the state House of Representatives voted 71-46 to reverse Cooper's veto of Senate Bill 41, following a 30-19 vote in the Senate on Tuesday to do the same. SB41 initially cleared the House with a veto-proof majority two weeks prior.

Cooper successfully vetoed the pistol permit repeal in 2021. The century old pistol permit process has been referred to as a Jim Crow law, a pejorative term for enforced segregation from the early 20th century.

In addition to repealing the pistol purchase permit effective July 1, SB41 allows concealed carry of firearms at religious services that share locations with private or charter schools, and launches a two-year firearm safe storage awareness initiative. The latter provisions are effective Dec. 1.

Democrats have argued SB41 would create a "giant loophole" that would allow individuals to obtain handguns through private sellers who are not required to conduct background checks.

Republicans clarified that the bill was debated at length in the current and previous sessions. It also went through committees in each chamber.

Veto overrides in North Carolina require three-fifths majority in each chamber. That's 30 votes in the Senate and 72 in the House. Republicans turned back 23 of the first 28 vetoes from Cooper between 2016 and the 2018 midterms.

- from *The Center Square*

Mountaire announces \$80,000 in scholarships

MILLSBORO, Delaware — Mountaire Farms, the country's fourth largest chicken processor, has dozens of \$2,500 scholarships available for the children and grandchildren of employees, poultry growers, and grain producers. The deadline to apply is June 5.

"This is another great benefit of working for or with Moun-

taire Farms," said Phillip Plylar, president of Mountaire Farms. "It's an honor to meet these families and see the commitment these students have to their education. We are blessed to be able to help them succeed."

To be eligible, a student's parent or grandparent must be employed by Mountaire Farms, or grow broilers, breeders, or grain (10,000-bushel minimum) for Mountaire. Applicants must enroll as a full-time college student carrying a minimum of 12 credits per semester in the current school year.

Successful applicants must be involved in extracurricular activities at school and in their community. Preference will be given to an industry-related course of study. A copy of the student's transcript must be attached to the application.

Students can apply online at www.mountaire.com/scholarships/annual-mountaire-scholarship-program.

The company will be announcing scholarship winners on July 3; winners will be invited to an event in August where they will be recognized.

Four spring wildlife encounters to prepare for

RALEIGH — With spring already underway, humans aren't the only ones that are taking advantage of the nicer weather. Here are some wildlife encounters you may experience and pro tips for handling each:

Unattended young rabbits, deer fawns, songbirds

Wild parents can't hire a babysitter and it is normal for many species to leave their young unattended for long periods. Never assume young

wildlife has been abandoned or orphaned just because you don't see a parent nearby. If your instinct is to stand guard until its parent returns, be aware that wild animals will avoid approaching if a potential predator (i.e., you!) is nearby, to avoid drawing attention to their young. Often the best way to help young wildlife is to leave them alone so their parents can return and care for them.

Young squirrels fall from their nest

Windy weather during the nesting season puts young squirrels at risk of falling out of their nests. Squirrels mothers don't abandon their young easily and will search the ground for missing young to carry back to the nest. If the whole nest falls out of the tree, a squirrel will build a new nest before retrieving her young, so it's important to give her the time and space to do so.

Foxes, skunks, raccoons or squirrels making themselves at home — in yours

In early spring, wild parents are looking for sheltered, out-of-the way spaces to raise their young for the season. Crawlspace under buildings can offer a safe and comfortable nursery for foxes and skunks while their newborn young are most vulnerable. Climbing species like raccoons and squirrels may try to access your attic. Even chimneys can become an entry point for flying species like bats and chimney swifts. To avoid having uninvited guests living under or above your building, now is a good time to make repairs to the exterior (e.g., vents, eaves, chimney caps) so wildlife can't find their way in.

BIDEN

Continued from page B4

from the internal combustion engine to the electric vehicle, and we're a core part of that because silicon carbide helps those electric vehicles go further with the same amount of battery but also charge faster," Lowe said.

Biden's remarks focused on America's economy, specifically in regard to its emerging electric vehicle market. He emphasized the importance of togetherness, especially when talking about America's "coming back."

"We're here to talk about what we're doing in America — to invest in North Carolina in build-

ing an economy from the middle out to the bottom up, not trickle down from the top, down," Biden told those in attendance. "We used to invest 2% of our GDP in research and development. In the last 35 years, it got down to 0.7%, but America is coming back. We're determined to lead the world in manufacturing semiconductors."

Biden's "from the middle" approach resonated with several individuals in the audience, including Howard. She said it's important to create avenues for all to have a well-providing career and a way out from generational poverty.

"We, as a community, have said that a path out of poverty should not require that a family go farther into debt or that an individual take on loans that will hinder their future financial success," she said. "I believe that is exactly what we are doing here in Chatham County by creating opportunities for individuals and families to access a more prosperous future. Investing in the people is investing in the middle."

Howard said Wolf-speed's and VinFast's announcements — and the \$9 billion in investment they're bringing to Chatham — will provide opportunities for Chatham County students



Courtesy of Hank Raper

Siler City Manager Hank Raper (right) and Chatham County Commissioner Karen Howard pose for a selfie with U.S. President Joe Biden.

to have well-paying jobs, as well as participate in the local economy. She also said programs through Central Carolina Community College are already in the works to train students for these new jobs.

"Together with our community college, Chatham County Schools is actively designing programming, degrees and certifications that will open up these future jobs to our kids right here in Chatham," Howard said. "[These are] Good-paying jobs with real prospects

for advancement in forward-looking technologies that will help guide, not just Chatham, but our region and our country toward a more sustainable future."

Wolfspeed coming to Siler City will help create wealth in a community that historically has had a lower median income, according to Raper. He said Siler City is a great example of the return of America Biden consistently mentioned in his remarks.

"If you got someone making \$80,000, that's at the income level where you're getting beyond necessities, and you actually get to have a higher standard of living ... to buy a home, to buy a car, to have a family," Raper said. "This has been an agricultural economy forever ... we're now building a broader, more diverse economy."

Raper said by having a wide range of different industries, Siler City's current and future residents will be able to have access to higher-income jobs and a better quality of life.

"There are going to be people who still want to work at Mountaire [Farms], there are going to be people who want to work at Wolfspeed," he said. "When you're appealing to potentially different demographics, you want to have as inclusive of an economy as you possibly can. I think that helps us diversify so that we have more employment opportunities for many different types of people who may want to be a part of Siler City."

2023

Chatham County
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with SilverArts

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April 28 — May 11, 2023

Early Bird Registration March 3 -17, 2023
Registration Deadline: March 31, 2023
Register Online: <http://torch.ncseniorgames.org>

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Liz Lahti, 919-542-4512 ext. 228
liz.lahti@chathamcountync.gov

Events Offered

April

- 18 Archery
- 24 SilverArts Intake
- 28 T-Shirt and Packet pickup
- 29 Track & Field

May

- 1 Golf
- 1 Basketball Shoot
- 1 Cornhole
- 2 SilverArts Open House & Reception
- 2 Swimming
- 2 Tennis—Women's Singles/Men's Doubles
- 3 Cycling
- 3 Tennis—Men's Singles/Women's Doubles
- 4 Women's Bocce
- 4 Horseshoes
- 4 Fun Walk
- 4 Tennis—Mixed Doubles
- 5 Disc Golf
- 5 Football/Softball Throw
- 5 Bowling
- 8 Croquet
- 9 Pickleball—M/W Singles, M/W Doubles
- 9 Table Tennis
- 10 Pickleball—Mixed Doubles
- 11 Men's Bocce

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POLICE REPORTS

ARREST BLOTTER

From Chatham County Sheriff's Office

On April 1, Austin Lynn Harris, 19, of 975 Thomas Road, Sanford, was arrested by Deputy Paul Durrazo for driving under the influence. He was issued a written promise and is

scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court on May 5.

On April 1, Dorothy Danielle Johnson, 38, of 2339 Mt. Vernon Springs Road, Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Rami Amer for simple assault. She is scheduled to appear in Cha-

tham County District Court on April 19.

On April 1, Anthony Jerome Peoples, 27, of 1205 W 3rd Street, Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Rami Amer for second degree forcible rape. He was issued a \$75,000 secured bond and is scheduled

to appear in Chatham County District Court on April 24.

On April 2, Kevone Aparcia Best, 36, of 86 Thompson Mobile Home Park, Pittsboro, was arrested by Deputy Matthew Mitchell for breaking and entering to terrorize/injure, felony larceny, assault on a

female and interfering with emergency communication.

He was issued a \$10,000 bond and GPS monitoring; once GPS is installed, the monetary bond will be unsecured. He is scheduled to appear in Orange County District Court on April 4.

Input sought on county transportation projects

From Chatham County Government

PITTSBORO — As Chatham County continues to grow, so does the need for an efficient transportation system that provides infrastructure where the community needs it most, and residents will have the opportunity to share their thoughts on where that need lies. Chatham County is requesting

public input on transportation improvements to submit for funding in the 2026-2035 N.C. State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP).

Every few years, the N.C. Dept. of Transportation (NCDOT) develops a new plan that selects all transportation projects to be funded and constructed over the next 10 years. The Strategic Transportation Prioritization (SPOT) process allows

jurisdictions to submit projects for consideration in the STIP. After submission, NCDOT scores the projects and selects which improvements receive funding. All major transportation improvements in Chatham County are funded through this process, so input from residents is vital to ensuring that the County submits projects most needed by the community.

The Chatham County

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) will meet virtually at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 5, to discuss transportation needs in the county and select projects for submission to NCDOT. The meeting will provide important information such as project criteria, timeline and available funding, and will have dedicated time for public input. Residents interested in the future of

transportation in Chatham County or residents who have ideas about potential projects are encouraged to attend. Participants should sign up for the virtual meeting or call in with phone number 914-614-3221 (pin: 211-245-117).

For community members unable to attend, they can still send in their project ideas, priorities or concerns via the Chatham County Trans-

portation Form.

Submissions can include highway, road, bike, pedestrian or transit projects. Explore the STIP Projects Map to see the improvements currently funded in Chatham County.

Individuals with questions may contact Brandon Dawson, transportation and conservation planner, at 919-545-8365 or brandon.dawson@chathamcountync.gov.

Sheriff's Office joins community effort to provide Easter meals

From the Chatham Sheriff's Office

SILER CITY — The Chatham County Sheriff's Office joined forces on Friday with Mountaire Farms in Siler City, along with 150 other volunteers, to package frozen chicken, canned goods, and other food items to ensure that those who might otherwise have gone without will enjoy an Easter meal.

The effort got underway in the parking lot of Mountaire Friday morning, where volunteers, working underneath a large tent, formed assembly lines to pack 5,000 boxes of food for distribution by churches and food banks to local families.

"Today, we've partnered with 93 organizations in Chatham County and the surrounding communities to help make a difference," said Sasha Duncan, Mountaire Farms' community relations manager. "Throughout the year, we host community service events like this, and it's a good way for our employees to give back to our communities."

The Friday morning effort was part of the company's Meals for Thousands program, which includes Thanksgiving for Thousands, Christmas for Thousands, and Easter for Thousands, during which community volunteers work with Mountaire to assemble boxes packed with everything a family of four needs to prepare and enjoy a holiday meal.



Courtesy of the Chatham Sheriff's Office
Sgt. Dotty Whitaker of the Chatham Sheriff's Office helps load boxes at Friday's 'Easter for Thousands' distribution at Mountaire Farms.

"This is our second annual Easter for Thousands event in Siler City," Duncan said, "Today, we're packing a total of 20,000 meals."

Each prepared box contained a Mountaire Farms roaster chicken, canned peas and carrots, canned corn, a box of Rice-a-Roni, a box of macaroni

and cheese, a jar of applesauce, and a box of brownie mix.

Alongside volunteers from other agencies — including Chatham Trades, the Chatham County Council on Aging, and the Boys and Girls Club of Central Carolina — staff from the Sheriff's Office worked until all the food was neatly boxed and



Courtesy of the Chatham Sheriff's Office

Among the Chatham Sheriff's Office volunteers at Mountaire Farms' Easter food distribution was Ssgt. Robert Mills (right), shown here helping load boxes of meals for those in need in Chatham County.

ready for distribution. Sheriff's Office personnel manned posts at every step of the well-coordinated group effort.

At the start of one assembly line, SSGt. Robert Miller was placing frozen chickens into the hands of another volunteer, who placed each into a box. From there, the boxes moved down the line where SSGt. Rischetta White, SSGt. Jessica White, and SSGt. Dotty Whitaker were busy placing cans of peas and carrots into each. A bit further down the line, Victim Assistant Tiara White ensured each box contained a jar of applesauce. And at the end of the line, Investigator Marcus Hart was among

those who stacked the completed boxes onto pallets, which were then taken to a loading area where Investigator Tyler Bridges was helped place them onto truck beds and trailers bound for distribution.

"It's a good turnout every year," said Bridges, who has volunteered at other Mountaire Meals for Thousands events. "It's definitely a worthwhile event."

While the work was fast paced, everyone seemed to enjoy the experience.

"This is an event our employees always look forward to," added Duncan. "It gets them out of the office and out of their facilities, working side by side with our community partners."



Courtesy of JMArts

Shrek The Musical

Donkey (Karsyn Vann), Lord Farquaad (Brady Andrew) and Shrek (Buck Thornton) in scenes from 'Shrek The Musical,' which had performances last week at Jordan-Matthews High School. Also shown is Jacqueline Basilio, who portrayed Fiona. The performance was produced by JMArts.



Shop Chatham

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

Meet Melissa Tatom



- She and her husband, Chad, are originally from Indiana and relocated to NC in 2021
- Has worked in the pharmaceutical industry for 25 years
- Studied Marketing at Marian University
- Has an adorable Corgi named Darby
- Enjoys traveling, boating, spending time outdoors as well as painting, crafting and repurposing furniture
- Completely new to Rotary



Pittsboro's Greg Stafford receives Main Street award



Staff photo by Matt Ramey

Greg Stafford, owner of SoCo in Pittsboro, has been awarded a Main Street Champion award.

Developer recognized for 'creating positive economic change'

BY TAYLOR HEEDEN
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — Greg Stafford is known around downtown Pittsboro for his SoCo development, which aims to deliver a lively food and social scene to downtown.

SoCo's not quite finished yet, but Stafford's work is already earning accolades. He's just been recognized by the N.C. Main Street program as the 2022 North Carolina Main Street Champion for his work in revitalizing downtown Pittsboro.

"While there's been much support for the revitalization efforts in downtown Pittsboro, there's one person that stands a bit taller than the massive momentum, and that is Greg Stafford," Pittsboro Downtown Development Director Theresa Thompson said during the commissioners' meeting last week. "He was recognized ... for his hard work over the years renovating several properties downtown and for his support of the Downtown Pittsboro program."

Over the last few years, Stafford and his wife, Paula, have

developed and leased out the space in the southern corner of the traffic circle surrounding the Chatham County Courthouse. The vision: to create a new, lively environment in the heart of historic downtown Pittsboro.

"We hope that corner would become really, really a neat place to be and keep downtown Pittsboro a neat place to be," Stafford previously told the News + Record. "They're [his tenants] putting a very significant investment in downtown Pittsboro and turning that corner into an even more inviting space ... it's going to be pretty cool."

Stafford has been involved in several organizations working with the same vision by serving as a member of the Main Street Pittsboro organization, the Downtown Advisory Board affiliated with the town and served as the Chairperson for the Economic Vitality Committee with the town.

Five properties total have been renovated by Stafford and his wife, and according to the resolution read by Mayor Cindy Perry and passed unanimously by the board of commissioners last Monday, the Staffords have created "positive economic change for the Pittsboro community," through their work in downtown.

"Gregory Stafford is well known by his cheerful, laid-back demeanor and his willingness to spare no effort to better

Downtown Pittsboro, helping to cultivate a vibrant and thriving community," the resolution states. "The town of Pittsboro recognizes his efforts, hard work and dedication, which have been instrumental in the revitalization of Downtown Pittsboro."

Stafford received his award at the 2023 Annual Main Street Conference in Statesville in last month, and he said the conference provided him the opportunity to learn how municipal workers view downtown revitalization.

"A lot of them (municipal workers) may not understand what it takes to make a business work, but at the same time ... to an extent I don't have a clue what they had to deal with," Stafford told the News + Record. "I was gaining an understanding of what they're trying to accomplish."

The annual conference mostly recognized various local government agencies and developers for revitalization projects. However, Stafford said he doesn't consider himself a developer — rather, he and others at the conference saw themselves as residents with a dream for the future.

"Almost all of us who were on the business side who received the award ... we're called developers, but it's kind of an overtop statement," Stafford said. "We're not developers — we're tiny business owners just trying to do

something."

Stafford said he's not the only person who deserves credit for the work around downtown Pittsboro — his wife also plays an instrumental role in the vision for a lively Pittsboro.

"Everyone gives me awards and kind of seems to overlook the fact that it's (Paula's) money, her plan, her design," he said.

During the board of commissioners' presentation recognizing Stafford, Perry also gave Paula Stafford a shoutout. Perry said she remembered when Stafford approached her and others working at Second Bloom of Chatham, a nonprofit aiming to provide resources to those impacted by domestic violence.

"I remember, Greg, when you came to us at the Second Bloom shop ... and said 'You're going to have to leave — we're going to tear this building down because Paula has a dream,'" Perry reminisced to the board. "Paula's dream is for it to be a gathering area

... a place where Pittsboro can come together and be the special community that it is. Paula, I think this award — in many respects — is your award as well."

So what's next for the Staffords?

According to Stafford, he and his wife are hard at work developing plans to renovate and use the space where the old hospital in Pittsboro used to stand. The use for the building hasn't been decided yet, but Stafford said he hopes to continue building the Pittsboro of his — and his wife's — dreams.

"If everything were to work out, we'd live on the upstairs floor of the hospital and get old there," Stafford said. "I want to be the old curmudgeon wandering downtown Pittsboro, doing nothing else but eating there and hanging out ... hopefully, it's super cool."

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

SILER CITY COMMISSIONERS

Board hears proposed road and pedestrian projects

BY TAYLOR HEEDEN
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — The town's board of commissioners discussed various road projects submitted to N.C. Dept. of Transportation (NCDOT) for prioritized scoring and funding at its meeting Monday.

Community Development Director Jack Meadows presented to the board a list of various projects the town wants NCDOT to help fund through its Prioritization 7.0 scoring system.

The list was categorized into projects such as highway or bike & pedestrian.

The highway projects proposed by Meadows and staff include creating a bypass for U.S. Hwy. 64, extending the current U.S. Hwy. 64 superstreet — an intersection designed to reduce vehicle conflicts — to reach Silk Hope Road, improving 2nd Avenue and making improvements to the intersections of Raleigh Street with 2nd Avenue and 6th Avenue.

Meadows told commissioners the bypass and the superstreet will be necessary in the coming years as Siler City continues to grow.

"The superstreet would extend the life of (U.S. Hwy.) 64, but at some point, 64 can't maintain traffic, and you'll have to have a bypass," Meadows told commissioners. "I think that's why this is being proposed for this future need."

The board also received a list of 17 projects in the bike and pedestrian category,

Meadows told commissioners the bypass and the superstreet will be necessary in the coming years as Siler City continues to grow.

most of which involved repairing, rebuilding and creating new sidewalks across town.

Meadows said NCDOT ranked the sidewalk projects using an established formula, which includes the following factors: safety, accessibility, demand and cost. From there, NCDOT will "score" each project in order to prioritize them by urgency and importance.

"This is a opportunity to go to ask DOT to fund some of these projects," Meadows said. "We're just prioritizing right now ... picking one or the other, which one's a higher priority."

No vote was taken on the item, and commissioners asked Meadows to proceed with submitting the proposed projects to NCDOT for grant funding.

Other business:

Commissioners voted unanimously to set a public hearing on April 17 regarding extending the mayor's term from two to four years. The board is expected to vote on an ordinance on May 1 to go on the ballot for November's election.

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



Staff photos by James Kiefer

Remembering Mary John Resch

A plaque in memory of former Chatham News + Record owner Mary John Little Resch, who died in 2022, adorns a piano donated to the N.C. Arts Incubator in her memory. Dozens of people attended a celebration at the nonprofit art galley March 25 to celebrate Resch's life and the piano she used to own.



CHURCH NEWS

EBENEZER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Ebenezer United Methodist Church will present "We Remember Calvary" in a Tenebrae service at 7 p.m. on Friday, April 7.

The blending of worship songs, traditional and contemporary hymns and narration paint a vivid and moving picture of Christ's last days and his journey to the cross.

Join us for this reflective worship service designed to recreate the emotional and spiritual aspects of the passion story.

The church is located at 724 Beaver Creek Rd., Apex.

SILER CITY FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Siler City First Baptist Church invites you to worship with us during our celebration of Easter, beginning on Friday, April 7, the Tenebrae Service with The Lord's Supper at 7 p.m. in the Church Sanctuary.

Sunday, April 9, the Sunrise Service will be held at the Cross beside the church at 8 a.m. At 8:30, breakfast will be held in the Fellowship Hall. Sunday School and the Children's Easter Egg Hunt will be held at 10 a.m., followed by the Easter Cantata, "When I Survey

the Wondrous Cross," and the worship service with Reverend Jason Brogan will begin at 11 a.m.

The church is located at 314 N. Second Ave., www.silercityfbc.org.

BROWN'S CHAPEL U.M.C.

Brown's Chapel United Methodist Church meets every Sunday at 11 a.m. for worship. Please come and join us. All are welcome!

Join us Easter Sunday when we celebrate Jesus' resurrection with a flowering cross and butterfly release. There will be no Sunday School on Easter Sunday.

We are located at 355 Chicken Bridge Rd., Pittsboro.

HOLLAND CHAPEL AMEZ CHURCH

Come Celebrate the Resurrection with us at Holland Chapel AMEZ Church at 10 a.m. on Easter Sunday, April 9. Children's Church will be held for the children and youth with special Easter activities for them.

The church is located at 360 Burgess Rd., Apex.

LOVES CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

On Easter Sunday, April 9, Loves

Creek Baptist Church will have a Son Rise Service at 8:30 a.m., followed by a fellowship breakfast at 9:15. The Easter worship service will begin at 10 a.m.

All are welcome to join these events.

SANDY BRANCH BAPTIST CHURCH

Everyone is invited to celebrate Easter with us at 715 Sandy Branch Church Rd., Bear Creek. No Wednesday night Bible Study, but we will have a Good Friday service at 7 p.m. on Friday, April 7.

On Sunday, April 9, we will begin with our Sunrise Service at 7 a.m. in the sanctuary. To commemorate our risen Savior, we will decorate the cross with flowers.

Following the service, we will have breakfast together in the Activities Building at 8 a.m.; Sunday School will follow at 9 a.m. That will conclude our services for the day.

GUM SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH

Come celebrate Easter at Gum Springs on Sunday, April 9. The 10 a.m. service will include a mini-cantata, "Hallelujah ... He Arose" and a message delivered by Rev. Al Marguerat.

The church is located at 227 Gum Spring Church Rd. in Moncure.

EDWARD HILL FRIENDS MEETING

There will be an Easter Egg Hunt and hot dog lunch at Edward Hill Friends Meeting from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, April 8. Bring your basket and have some fun.

On Sunday, April 9, a Sunrise Service will be held at 7 a.m. with finger foods to follow.

The church is located at 92 Ed Leonard Rd., off from Edward Hill Church Road.

RIVES CHAPEL BAPTIST CHURCH

At 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 8, the church will host an Easter Egg Hunt for the children at Rives Chapel Baptist Church, followed by the annual fish fry and auction. Auction proceeds go to the Annie Armstrong offering.

Then Sunday, April 9, the adult choir will present their Easter Cantata "I Will Rise" during the 11 a.m. worship service. Join us as we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus.

We are located at 4338 Rives Chapel Church Rd., Siler City.

The Plant to celebrate Earth Day with Rachel's Native Plants

CN+R Staff Report

PITTSBORO — The Plant in Pittsboro is celebrating Earth Day 2023 with the grand opening of Rachel's Native Plants at 5 p.m. on Friday, April 21.

North Carolina's First Lady Kristin Cooper, Pittsboro Mayor Cindy Perry and Chatham County Commissioner Katie Kenlan will be on hand to speak at the celebration.

Rachel's Native Plants is rising from the legendary Cure Nursery, which closed for retirement after decades in Chatham County.

"Until now, it has been hard for consumers to find a wide selection of native plants in one place," said Lyle Estill, the Plant's co-owner.

Cure Nursery owner Rachel Nelms said her new business provides a real opportunity "to be the place folks can purchase native plants for restoration projects, residential and commercial landscaping, in

mini-meadows or pocket prairies."

Nelms, a former Cure Nursery staff person, has grown, installed, and provided landscape design services to native plant enthusiasts for years.

"Through native plant seed propagation and partnerships with other local native plant nurseries who do the same, we can assist in replacing habitat loss caused by development and urban sprawl," she said.

The Plant is an eco-industrial park on the eastern edge of Pittsboro. It is home to dozens of resident businesses, ranging from sustainable agriculture to craft brewing and distillation. It is rapidly becoming known as a popular event venue.

Both Tami Schwerin, The Plant co-owner, and Estill hope that the advent of Rachel's Native Plants will help shape Chatham County and Pittsboro government policy regarding landscapes associated with new development in the area.



Submitted photo

Rachel's Native Plants owner Rachel Nelms will debut her business on Earth Day 2023 at The Plant in Pittsboro.

LOOKING TO SERVE?

County seeks potential members for Advisory Committees

PITTSBORO — Chatham County is seeking individuals to apply for several upcoming vacancies on its advisory committees. Service on committees is a great way for residents to have a voice on issues of interest and make a difference in the community. Individuals must be a resident of Chatham County to serve on advisory committees.

An online application to serve on the committees can be found at:

<https://chathamnc.seamlessdocs.com/f/CommitteeForm>. Applicants also may contact Lindsay Ray at lindsay.ray@chathamcountync.gov or 919-545-8302 to get a printed application.

Board of Equalization and Review (Tax Review Board):

The Chatham County Board of Equalization and Review (BoER) has two vacant alternate seats. The board's purpose is to hear and review property owners' valuation appeals of their real estate and personal property.

"The board has an important, complex role," Jenny Williams, Chatham County tax administrator said. "It is the second level of review. Staff-level reviews are the first level. The board must apply state laws in a consistent, uniform and non-discriminatory manner so that all property owners receive a fair and impartial hearing."

Applicants must meet the following require-

ments:

- Must be at least 18 years old;
- Have lived in Chatham County for at least two years prior to appointment;
- Own real estate property in the county;
- Be knowledgeable about real estate matters; and
- Have good moral character.

If appointed by the Chatham County Board of Commissioners, the person would serve until Dec. 31, 2025.

Members of the BoER receive a stipend of \$15 per hour for their service, but the number and length of the meetings vary depending on the number of appeals filed. New members are required to attend a training session to understand their roles under state law and the appeals process.

Except for revaluation years, most meetings of the BoER are held in the spring, but a few may be held in the fall to hear appeals related to personal property. Most of the meetings are during the day, but some may be held in the evenings to accommodate taxpayers' schedules, usually for revaluation appeals. On rare occasions, special meetings may be called on such issues as business personal property audit appeals or review of late applications for tax exemptions.

The deadline to apply is April 7, 2023. Questions may be directed to Jenny Williams at 919-545-8404.

If appointed by the Chatham County Board of Commissioners, the person would serve until Dec. 31, 2025. Members of the BoER receive a stipend of \$15 per hour for their service, but the number and length of the meetings vary depending on the number of appeals filed.

Appearance Commission:

The Chatham County Appearance Commission has vacant seats and seeks applicants for the open slots. They especially need members with expertise in architecture, planning and/or landscape architecture. Licensure is not required.

The Appearance Commission establishes and oversees programs to enhance the appearance of the county. The commission also reviews and comments on non-residential site plans for Business, Industrial, Conditional Zoning Districts and Conditional Use Permits. It typically meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month in Pittsboro at 6 p.m.

The individuals appointed by the Board of Commissioners to fill the vacancies would serve unexpired terms until June 30, 2025, but would be eligible for reappointment for a full three-year term.

The deadline to apply is April 14, 2023. Questions may be directed to Angie Plummer at angela.plummer@chathamcountync.gov.

Animal Appeals Board:

Chatham County is seeking residents who have an interest in legal processes and animal welfare to apply for a position on the Chatham County Animal Appeals Board. The Animal Appeals Board currently has one position available for a general community member (three-year term).

The Animal Appeals Board has hearings based upon request. These hearings typically last up to two hours. A package with case information is sent to Animal Appeal Board members in advance to prepare for hearings. Most cases heard by the board relate to reviewing determinations of a dog being classified as dangerous or potentially dangerous.

To apply for a seat on the Animal Appeals Board, individuals should complete and submit this form: <https://chathamnc.seamlessdocs.com/f/CommitteeForm>. At the top of the second page, applicants should select "Other" as the committee they are applying for and type in "Animal Appeals Board" next to Other.

The deadline to apply is April 14, 2023. Questions may be directed to Danielle White at 919-545-8391 or danielle.white@chathamcountync.gov.

Free document shredding event for Chatham County residents

Solid Waste & Recycling is hosting a free document shredding event from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, April 15, at the Solid Waste & Recycling Main Facility at 28 County Services Rd., Pittsboro.

Chatham County residents can bring up to three boxes or bags of documents from their household for free shredding. This service provides an opportunity for residents to safely destroy and recycle old tax records, credit card statements and other personal documents.

Residents are asked to remove papers from folders or files, as those items can go in your recycling bin and do not need to be shredded. Do not bring CDs, tapes, etc.; throw those items in the trash. This service is for residents only; businesses are not allowed, including home businesses (past or present).

Contact the Main Facility with questions about any of these events at 919-542-5516 from Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., or email us anytime at recycle@chathamcountync.gov.

During this event, backyard compost bins will also be for sale for \$45 and \$5 for a kitchen collector. Learn more about composting at www.chathamcountync.gov/composting.

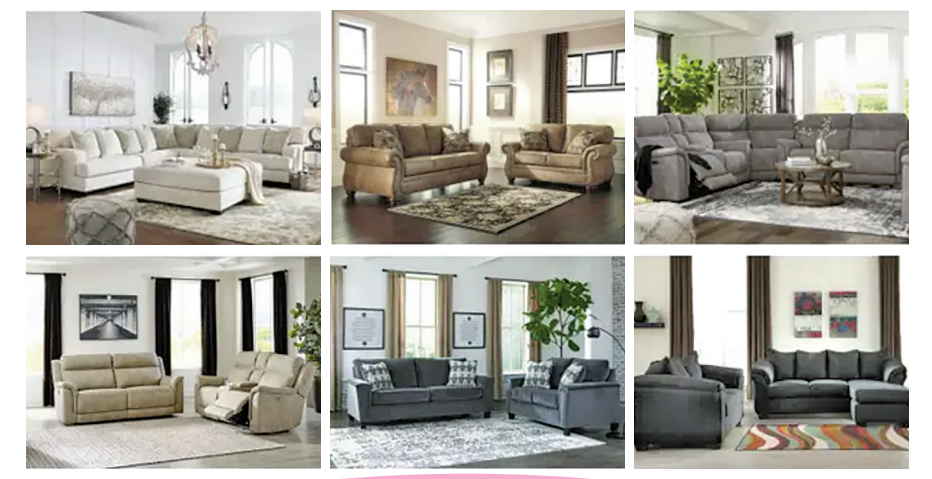
Solid Waste & Recycling tries to hosts two document shredding events each year. The next event is scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 18.

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

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

- | | | | |
|------------|------------|---------------|------------|
| Boots | Horseshoes | Pillows | Socks |
| Brake pads | Knees | Relationships | Tires |
| Gloves | Old jokes | Sandpaper | Toothbrush |
| Hip joints | Parents | Sneakers | |

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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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Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps

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GRIN and BEAR IT by Waqar

"Hmmm ... Miss Figby, bring me the industrial-strength tongue depressors."

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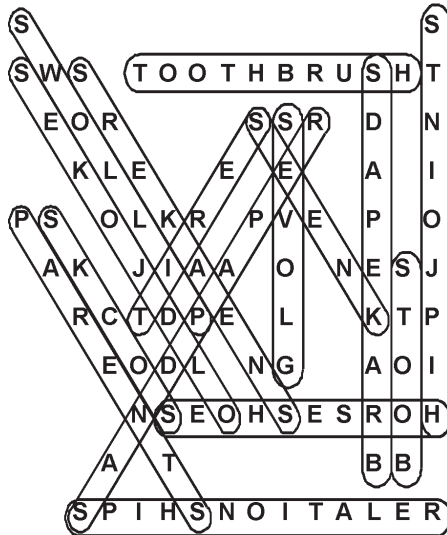
To-Do List:

- ✓ Carpentry
- ✓ Ceiling and Wall Repair
- ✓ Tile and Grout
- ✓ Cabinetry
- ✓ Doors and Windows
- ✓ Deck Maintenance
- ✓ Garage Organization
- ✓ Shelving and Storage

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THINGS THAT WEAR OUT



Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

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

I'm Chopped to pieces



DEBBIE MATTHEWS
The Curious Cook

Chopped is a show on Food Network. Four chefs are confronted by three baskets with four mystery foodstuffs in each. With them, they must cook an appetizer course, then main course, and finally dessert.

The time is limited, and the pressure is immense. After each round, one contestant is eliminated, so at the desert cook-off only two remain.

The Kid and I are big fans of the show, and do lots of back-seat cooking. "Really, hash? Out of ideas already?" "Noooo! Not the truffle oil!" "Don't put those greens on the hot food! They'll be completely wilted!"

So finally, to see how hard it really is, I decided to play Chopped with The Kid. Armed with my cash, my child picked up four items at the grocery store. I would be presented with the mystery foods, and cook a (hopefully) edible, and maybe even delicious meal. The rules would be a touch different. The ingredients had to include one protein (meat, or meat-like substitute). Only one course and I'd have no competition or time limit. And no seafood; I never cook it, so it would be an insurmountable curveball.

Finally, my very own mystery basket arrived with the four cryptic components:

1. Bison flank steak. I was kind of impressed with this one, exotic, but not totally out there. But I had a concern. Flank steak from a cow, which is much fattier is really easy to overcook. Bison is very, very lean. I would have to tread

Chef James' Grits

- 1 ½ Cups Stone Ground Grits
- 3 Cups Milk
- 1 ½ Cups Water
- ½ Pound Butter
- Salt and Pepper

First, soak the grits in cold water and skim away all the corn germ that floats to the top. Stir a few times and get as much of the germ skimmed away. Drain the cold water from the grits and use this water for the grits. In a heavy bottomed pot bring the water and milk to a simmer and slowly mix the grits into the hot liquid with a whisk so there are no lumps. Then let cook slowly for about an hour to an hour and a half stirring often. Once the grits are cooked and soft add in the butter and season with the salt and pepper. If grits become too thick then just add a little milk.

Mango Adobo Barbecue Sauce

- 1 mango, roughed chopped
- 1 shallot, peeled and rough chopped
- 1 tablespoon of the adobo sauce from a can of chipotle peppers (or more to taste)
- 2 cups ketchup
- ½ cup red wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons spicy brown mustard
- 1 ½ teaspoons Chinese Five Spice Powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper

Put all ingredients into a food processor or blender and blend until completely smooth. Put sauce into a saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce to simmer and cook until thickened into barbecue sauce consistency.

carefully.

2. Broccolini; an Asian hybrid of broccoli and kai-lan (I don't know what that is either). I've never eaten broccolini, but I'm curious.

3. Chipotle in adobo. This one is hilarious to me. The Kid hates this on principle. My little chef can't abide the product because of its trendiness. It's actually smoked jalapeno peppers in a tomato sauce.

4. Mango. This one is hilarious to my child. I've always hated mango. I think it tastes like baby food.

But my lot in life is to use it, so I shall. My plan was to make a barbecue sauce with the chipotles and mangos. I'd sear the steak in my cast iron, then paint on the barbecue

sauce, and finish it under the broiler. It would be served on a bed of my Anson Mills grits, cooked according to the directions of former Carolina Inn Executive Chef James Clark (good thing there's no time limit; they take at least an hour to cook).

As for the broccolini, I decided to make a slaw. I'd keep it raw, and dress it with an Asian/citrus kind of thing. No mayo, though; I want something light to balance the rich grits and red meat. On the big day I started by poaching some crushed garlic cloves in olive oil. I'd add this to the mango and chipotle.

When I asked The Kid how hot the chilis were, all I got was an evil smile, and "You'll



Courtesy of Debbie Matthews

The end product from a 'mystery basket' experiment turned out delicious.

have to taste for yourself." So I did. Yowza! That stuff is hot. An hour after a tiny, tentative sample, my mouth was still burning. Because of this I would only use the adobo; the spicy tomato sauce in which the smoked peppers were packed. With the mango and adobo sauce, I made a barbecue sauce. I tossed it with a dressing I made with lemon, Dijon mustard, olive oil, honey, a little peanut butter, and a couple drops of toasted sesame oil. I added salt and pepper and a pinch of five spice like the

BBQ sauce.

My mystery basket turned out pretty well. The steak wasn't overcooked, and the sauce wasn't too spicy. The slaw was a nice cool, crunchy counterpoint. But to be perfectly honest, the tastiest part of the plate was Chef James' awesome Anson Mill grits.

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

This column originally appeared in the April 15, 2021, News + Record.



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