

Bring on the vibes with our summer playlist, B6

Chatham News & Record

THE CHATHAM COUNTY EDITION OF THE NORTH STATE JOURNAL



MATT RAMEY | CHATHAM NEWS + RECORD

Splashing into summer

Pools across Chatham County opened on Memorial Day weekend. Residents from across Siler City gathered at Bray Park in Siler City to go for a dip. Earlier this month, Siler City reported a local lifeguard shortage which could have impacted Bray Park operations. Since the News + Record reported that story, however, Siler City Town Manager Hank Raper said the town has hired more than a dozen lifeguards to support local operations. More pictures of Memorial Day splashes on PAGE B6.



CREDIT: COURTESY OF CANDICE BEAL

Painting ceramic trees is one of the activities offered through Candice Beal's Heart Studio summer craft courses for kids in Chatham.

Crafter's HeART Studio hosts summer craft time sessions

By Taylor Heeden
Chatham News + Record

BONLEE — Candace Beal shared a love for arts and crafts with her daughter, Caroline. Now, Beal wants to share that passion with Bonlee's children through weekly crafting sessions this summer, which will take place at Crafter's HeART Studio.

"This is the first time I've done art classes for children ... I will do a different thing every day with them," Beal told the News + Record.

Beal opened the studio a couple of years ago in honor of her deceased daughter, who died in Jackson, Mississippi, under mysterious circumstances in 2017 when she was 24 years old.

"She was the sweetest girl," Beal said. "She just was so energetic and loving. She just loved people."

Beal decided turn her grief into action when she bought the properties at 14 and 16 Bonlee Bennett Road and created the craft studio and the Bonlee Trading Post. Both establishments are Beal's way to leave her mark on the community and honor her daughter.

"I always say that she [Caroline] is the heart in Crafter's HeART," Beal said. "This is all done in her memory."

Various crafting classes have been held at the Crafter's HeART Studio since its opening in 2021. With summer approaching and the school year

coming to a close, Beal wanted to provide an opportunity for Chatham County's children to express themselves.

Thus, Summer Craft Time was born — four, week-long crafting classes will be held for Chatham County youth. Parents can sign their young ones up for a week of arts and crafts fun for \$100, or if there's only one craft a child is interested in, they can do the single class day for \$25.

Beal said teaching people how to craft has become a passion of hers, and it's something she never realized could have such a large impact.

"These are more heirloom kind of projects ... to pass from generation to generation," Beal said. "It's not just the canvas that they worked on that one night ... but it's something they can really keep. It's really personal."

Some of the crafts that will be offered over the summer include:

- Barn quilts
- Ceramic trees, pumpkins, and a wide variety of lighted items
- Wreaths
- Bows
- Door hangers

The Summer Craft Time weeks are spread over two months, with two sessions taking place in June and the other

See CRATE, page A6

Balancing act: community plan looks to weigh future needs with current concerns

By Ben Rappaport
Chatham News + Record

MONCURE — Don Brown, like many in Moncure, can trace his lineage to the community back several generations.

Nowadays, he's in sound financial standing and says he could move elsewhere if he wanted. But he doesn't. Moncure is the community that raised him and showed him what mattered in life, which is why he's still around. Likewise, he doesn't want to see his close-knit rural town lose its unique qualities.

"Areas like this (Moncure) are fast becoming extinct," Brown said. "I used to see dirt roads everywhere and say 'dang I hope this gets paved.' Now, I look at those dirt roads and say 'gosh I hope that dirt road stays.'"

Brown also acknowledges, however, that change is on the horizon for Moncure. With VinFast, FedEx and other industrial development opportunities on the way, there's a need to balance the opportunities of the future with the desires of existing residents.

The industrial growth could

also lead to a new grocery store or community center nearby. Currently, Moncure residents have to travel nearly 30 minutes to the closest grocery store in Pittsboro. Perhaps the growth is a way to get some of those things closer to home.

But some residents don't want change. As Brown said, "It's hard to have your cake and eat it too."

"I could've lived in many places, but I decided many years ago that I'm just fine here," Brown said. "Wherever

See MONCURE, page A7

On the move: Hispanic Liaison and Communities In Schools both moving to new locations

The longtime neighbors in downtown Siler City will have new offices opening soon

By Ben Rappaport
Chatham News + Record

SILER CITY — A stroll around downtown Siler City may look a bit different today than it did several years ago. New businesses are taking over or changing hands seemingly every month and development in the area has become the talk of the town.

That change is also afoot for two organizations that became staples of downtown Siler City by providing valuable services to families in need across the county. Both Hispanic Liaison and Communities In Schools of Chatham County are moving from their respective offices downtown to new locations.

The lease on the building the two shared on North Chatham Avenue, across from The Chatham Rabbit, was expiring and they jointly decided it was time to make a change.

For the Hispanic Liaison — which aims to foster intercultural understanding and empower Latinxs to overcome the challenges they face and make their voices heard in the community — the new office will be a permanent home. The organization bought its new building on 404 N. Holly Ave., the former office of Ward and Foust. After a brief closure from June 2 to 18 to move in, Hispanic Liaison will officially open its new office on Tuesday, June 20.

"This is a huge step to ensure our sustainability," said Ilana Dubester, Hispanic Liaison executive director, in an email message to members. "We can now comfortably accommodate our community and team members."

Communities In Schools, which works to surround students with a network of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life, has moved to Siler City Business Park at 108 Village Lake Road. The new office, next to the Western Chatham Senior Center, is already officially open.

Hispanic Liaison

Dubester said negotiations and preparing for the move took up the bulk of her winter

months this year. Since the decision to move was made in January, the organization did not have time to facilitate a capital campaign for the new building.

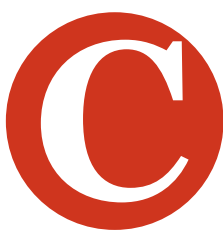
"It's a lot more space than we have now," Dubester said of the new office. "Our office has been too small for a long time."

Hispanic Liaison was housed on North Chatham Avenue for 26 years, so the change feels monumental. But Dubester said it was a necessary time for a switch because the cramped office space was preventing the organization from expanding.

See LIAISON, page A12



THURSDAY
6.1.23



“Join the
conversation”

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CHURCH NEWS

Mt. Vernon Springs Presbyterian Church

The annual Homecoming
service and luncheon will
be held Sunday, June 4 at 11
a.m. at Mt. Vernon Springs
Presbyterian Church, located
at 1225 Mt. Vernon Springs
Road, Siler City.
You are invited.

Hickory Mt. Chapel

Join us June 4, 2023 for our
annual homecoming services.
Worship begins at 11 a.m. with
a covered dish lunch following.
Come enjoy worshiping
our Lord and the friendly
fellowship with everyone
here at 201 Hadley Mill Road,
Pittsboro.

Cameron Grove Ame Zion Church

The Women's Conference
will be held Friday, June 2, at 7:
p.m. and Saturday, June 3, at 6:
p.m. The Friday speaker will be
Reverend Stacy Bell McAllister
of Chestnut AME Zion Church,
and Saturday's speaker will
be Pastor Pansy Green of Try
Jesus Ministries, Sanford.
Cameron Grove Church is
located at 309 Vernon St,
Broadway.
Vendors will be on site.

Wolfspeed: New Siler City factory may not qualify for federal incentives

By Ben Rappaport
Chatham News + Record

SILER CITY — Call it semantics, or call it nuance. Either way, it may be costing Wolfspeed billions in federal incentive funding.

The current wording of the U.S. CHIPS and Science Act may mean Wolfspeed's proposed Siler City factory, with an estimated \$5 billion in economic investment and 1,800 new jobs, would lose out on the major incentive package.

The CHIPS Act was signed into law by the President Joe Biden Administration last August, and it aims to provide funding to boost American-made silicon carbide chips. Specifically, the funding is directed to advanced manufacturing facilities centered on semiconductor production.

Executives at top chip manufacturers and other industry experts have long predicted

the demand for silicon carbide chips would exceed the current supply. According to The Wall Street Journal, China accounts for a third of global chip sales. This act was meant to remedy the supply issue and incentivize chip production in the U.S.

A lawyer from Wolfspeed, Bradley Kohn, told the IRS in a letter this month that under the definition of advanced manufacturing provided by the CHIPS Act, Wolfspeed's new factory would not qualify.

The definition "excludes essential semiconductor-grade material production facilities," Kohn's letter said. The Chatham County facility is slated to be a material production facility for the company's silicon carbide chips.

The exclusion of the Siler City plant under the current language of the act is especially surprising given the recent visit to the area by President Biden in March. During his stop in

Durham, he specifically touted Wolfspeed as a key benefactor of the CHIPS Act and praised its \$5 billion economic investment, the largest in North Carolina history.

The company isn't alone in criticizing how CHIPS Act funding distribution. Chip-makers, including Wolfspeed, say putting limits on the grant program could make it more difficult for U.S. companies to compete and access funds, according to Triangle Business Journal.

Wolfspeed says its incoming facility, located at the Chatham Advanced Manufacturing (CAM) site, would be a 10-fold increase in the company's output. The facility received more \$160 million in statewide incentives and an additional \$615 million in local incentives from Chatham County and Siler City to seal the deal on its new N.C. facility, which was announced last September.

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4377 N Old US 421 (Siler City) 4 Bdrm, 2 Bath
\$530,000
5714 Old Stony Way (Durham) 3 Bdrm, 3 Bath
\$700,000
2035 Long Point Trail (Sanford) 5 Bdrm, 2.5 Bath
\$785,000

Land

170 Cherokee Dr (Chapel Hill) 1.150 acres
\$125,000
188 Cherokee Dr (Chapel Hill) 1.150 acres
\$125,000
1388 Henry Oldham Rd (Bear Creek) 4.840 acres
\$150,000
108 Spring St (Apex) 3.670 acres \$150,000
955 Alton King Rd (Goldston) 11.566 acres
\$185,000
1277 Alton King Rd (Goldston) 12.550 acres
\$195,000
1049 Alton King Rd (Goldston) 11.548 acres
\$200,000
1223 Alton King Rd (Goldston) 12.737 acres
\$225,000
1544 Roberts Chapel Rd (Chapel Hill) 17.632 acres
\$225,000

1710 Roberts Chapel Rd (Goldston) 17.643 acres
\$225,000
37 E Cotton Rd (Pittsboro) 0.996 acres \$300,000
351 Blufftonwood Dr (Pittsboro) 7.618 acres
\$300,000
5663 NC 751 Hwy (Apex) 1.771 acres \$325,000
893 Alton King Rd (Goldston) 24.938 acres
\$325,000
00 Thomas Kelly Rd (Sanford) 36.000 acres
\$350,000
0 Hal Clark Rd (Siler City) 29.730 acres \$360,000
Tract 3 Thomas Kelly Rd (Sanford) 32.360 acres
\$400,000
5645 NC 751 Hwy (Apex) 3.584 acres \$625,000
00 Alton King Rd (Goldston) 87.169 acres
\$1,179,900
7587 Siler City Snow Camp Rd (Siler City)
50.000 acres \$1,200,000
499 Olives Chapel Rd (Apex) 12.619 acres
\$1,500,000
00 Olives Chapel Rd (Apex) 33.662 acres
\$3,366,200
Commercial Unimproved
58 Buffalo Lake Rd (Sanford) 6.70 acres Auction

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466 Old Chestnut Xing (Moncure) 3 Bdrm, 2.5 Bath
\$582,750
4301 Amberwood Rd (Haw River) 4 Bdrm, 3 Bath
\$600,000
1907 Bobolink Ln (Charlotte) 4 Bdrm, 3 Bath
\$750,000

Land

821 Alton King Rd (Goldston) 11.438 acres
\$180,000

267 Marshall Rd (Pittsboro) 10.049 acres \$250,000
373 JC Corner Rd (Pittsboro) 7.382 acres \$275,000
0 Hamlets Chapel Rd (Pittsboro) 42.804 acres
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COMMUNITY GUIDE

Notice Of Hearings, Town Of Siler City

The following item will be considered by the Siler City Town Council as a public hearing. The hearing will be conducted during the Town Council's regular meeting on June 5, 2023 beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the Siler City Court Room of the Siler City Town Hall at 311 N. 2nd Ave.

The Chatham County Historical Association Museum will be open from noon to 4 p.m. for Pittsboro's First Sunday on June 4. Visit the Chatham Geology Exhibit to learn about the bedrock, landscape, soils, groundwater, mining and energy resources of Chatham County. The museum is located in the Historical Courthouse, 9 Hillsboro St., Pittsboro, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Friday. Admission is free. We follow state and local directives regarding masks and distancing. 919-542-6222.

Chatham Community Library to Host, "Sounds of Freedom, From Slavery to Civil Rights"

In recognition of Juneteenth, the Library will host, "The Sounds of Freedom, From Slavery to Civil Rights" with gospel singer and historian Mary D. Williams on Saturday, June 10, from 2 to 3 p.m. This program is free and open to the public, at Holmes Family Meeting Room, Chatham Community Library, 197 NC-87, Pittsboro.

The Siler City Lion's Club

meetings for June at Dry Dock Seafood Restaurant, will be June 13 and 27 at 6 p.m. Join the Club, and see that you can make a difference in the world and your local community. We meet the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. Together we serve!

The Goldston Public Library

announces the Goldston Book Club, 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.

The Chatham County Council on Aging

will host a "Grandparents Raising Grandchildren" support group the first Tuesday of each month at 1 p.m. at the Western Chatham Senior Center, Siler City. This group is geared toward older adults who are primary caregivers and providers for their grandchildren. For more information, contact William Riggsbee at 919-742-3975 ext. 223 or email william.riggsbee@chathamcountync.gov.

The Chatham County Council on Aging

hosts a Caregiver Support Group each Monday. The group meets the first and third Mondays of the month at 3 p.m. at the Eastern Chatham Senior Center, in Pittsboro, and the second Monday at 3 p.m. at the Western Chatham Senior Center, in Siler City. The fourth Monday of each month is a virtual meeting via the Zoom platform starting at 6 p.m. This group is geared toward family members who are currently providing short- or long-term care to loved ones. For more information or to obtain virtual meeting login information, contact William Riggsbee, family caregiver specialist, at 919-742-3975 ext. 223 or email william.riggsbee@chathamcountync.gov.

COMMUNITY MEALS:

St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Pittsboro distributes two meals each week for the benefit of the community. From noon 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.

Second Bloom's hours are from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. Tuesday until Saturday. Credit cards are accepted. We are located in the Food Lion shopping center, Pittsboro. All proceeds provide support for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and promote community education in collaboration with Chatham County.

Get in touch!



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Thales Academy Holly Springs Campus expanding with new junior/high school building as it prepares for full K-12 campus

Thales Academy

HOLLY SPRINGS — Thales Academy, a college preparatory network of K-12 independent schools based in North Carolina, is expanding its campus in Holly Springs to build a new junior high/high school building and a standalone gymnasium building as it prepares to become a full K-12 campus.

The new buildings are slated to open for the 2024-2025 school year. Serving grades Pre-K through 7th grade this school year, the campus is adding 8th grade for the 2023-2024 school year.

It will continue to add grades through 12 grade in the future, contingent on adequate interest and enrollment for staffing.

“Holly Springs and Southern Wake County at large are experiencing tremendous growth, and we have had strong demand for our Thales Academy Holly Springs campus,” said Bob Luddy, founder and chairman of Thales Academy. “I am so happy to announce the expansion of this campus to allow for us to accommodate more students and more grades and offer additional buildings and amenities to

enhance their learning environment.”

Mirroring the new construction taking place at the recently announced Thales Academy at Flowers Plantation campus expansion in Clayton, North Carolina, Thales Academy Holly Springs will add two new buildings to its campus: A second two-story school academic building similar in style to the existing building but with enhanced columns and features, as well as a standalone gymnasium.

Both buildings will reflect a modern, yet classical, aesthetic modeled after beauty and order, and will offer large floor-to-ceiling glass windows that provide an abundance of natural light.

The expansion will add new campus facilities and amenities as well: a chemistry lab, a STEM/robotics/vocational arts lab, a weight room, and indoor volleyball and basketball courts. All facilities will boast a beautiful, secure design outfitted with the latest safety and security features, including controlled-access doors, security cameras, and background check systems for all visitors, as well as advanced HVAC units that provide



COURTESY OF THALES ACADEMY

Thales Academy, a college preparatory network of K-12 independent schools based in North Carolina, is expanding its campus in Holly Springs to build a new junior high/high school building and a standalone gymnasium building as it prepares to become a full K-12 campus.

up to 100% outdoor air for superior indoor air quality.

“I have worked at Thales Academy Holly Springs since its founding when much of our inaugural year of classes was held at another campus while we waited for our own campus building to be completed,” remarks Molly Thomas, Administrator, Thales Academy Holly Springs. “So to see our Thales Academy Holly Springs campus experiencing such wonderful growth and ex-

pansion just a handful of years later is so exciting.”

The Junior High and High School programs at Thales Academy follow a classical curriculum — A systematic, rigorous program that develops a student’s ability to think critically and deeply. Students in grades 6 through 12 benefit from the regular incorporation of the Socratic method of dialogue and discussion in the classroom, which encourages engagement beyond

a traditional teacher-delivered lecture.

The classical curriculum includes an emphasis on humanities, science and math, foreign language (including Latin), grammar/logic/rhetoric, and a strong focus on character and virtue along with a personalized, high-caliber college advising program.

This curriculum creates a firm foundation for Thales Academy graduates who move on to attend top colleges and universities, often receiving generous scholarships, and serve in various professions.

This year, Thales Academy is particularly proud to celebrate a 2023 Truman Scholar honor amongst its recent graduates.

Tuition at Thales Academy Holly Springs for 2023-2024 is currently \$5,300-\$6,300 per year (varying by grade level). Scholarships, a Full Pay Discount, and payment plans are available. Limited spaces are still open in 4th, 5th, and 7th grades for the coming school year, and applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis.

Interested families can learn more and apply online at: www.ThalesAcademy.org.

Congratulations, Catherine!



Rotary Club of Pittsboro recently honored Northwood Senior, Catherine Hall, with a Service Above Self Award & Scholarship. During the pandemic, she organized the largest student supported position to take lunch outdoors at Northwood. Catherine will be attending UNC this fall with the intent to double major & pursue her goal of becoming an entertainment lawyer. She is a talented instrumentalist, singer, and actress.

We wish you all the best, Catherine!



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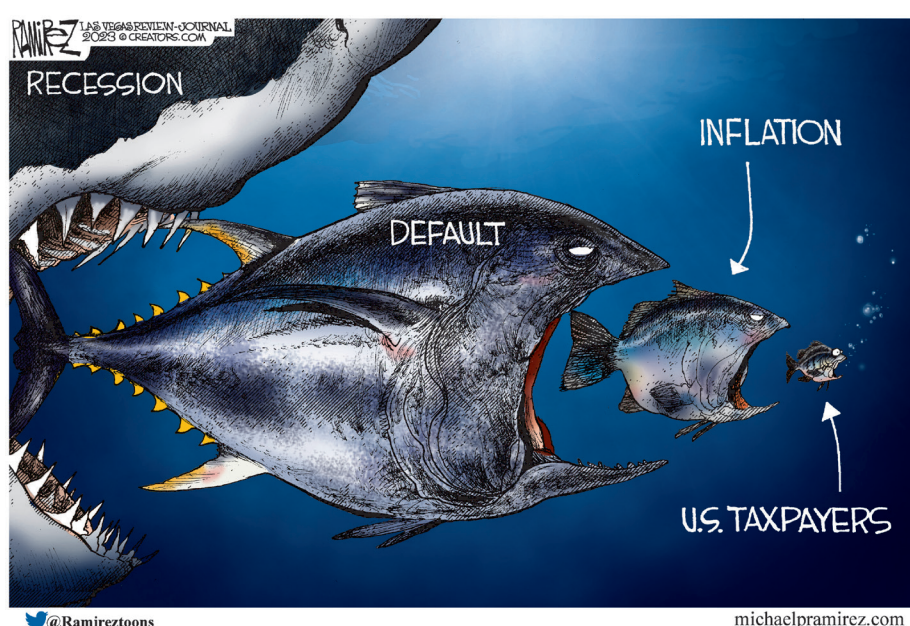
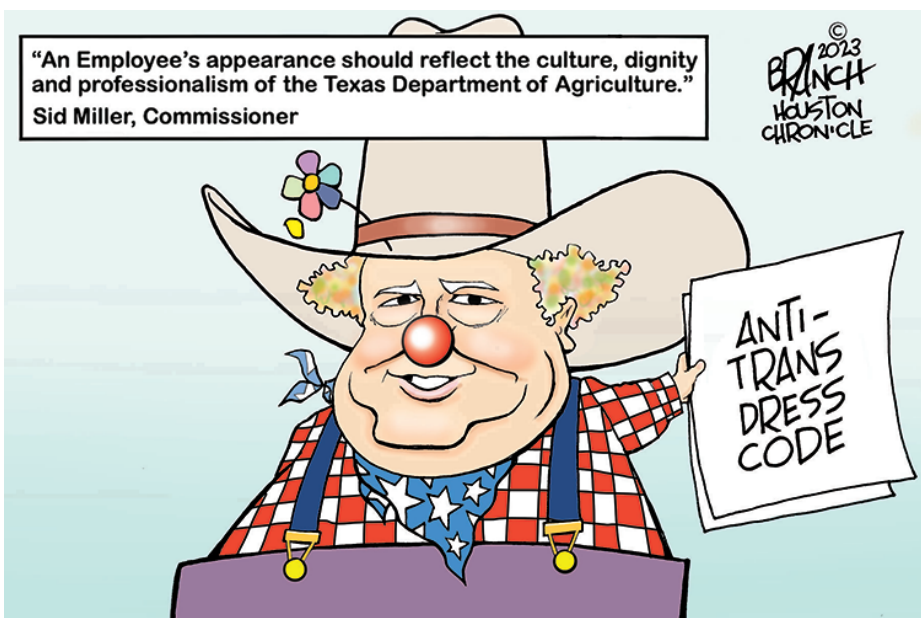


OPINION



Neal Robbins, publisher | Frank Hill, senior opinion editor

VISUAL VOICES



COLUMN | REV. ANDREW TAYLOR-TROUTMAN

A donut Eucharist



My earliest memories of donuts are connected to religious traditions, specifically Easter.

THE FIRST FRIDAY in June is Nation Donut Day — let us celebrate! The day is holier than you might suspect.

I know there are plenty of jokes about donuts and overweight cops. Homer Simpson has contributed to the stereotype of a donut-eating slob.

But donuts were distributed by volunteers of the Salvation Army to soldiers on the frontlines of World War I. These “donut lassies” would fry the dough in a soldier’s upside-down helmet! National Donut Day was established in 1938 to remember these volunteers as well as the troops. Donuts were about boosting morale, sharing food in difficult, even life-threatening situations.

The earliest Christian traditions claim that Jesus had broken bread with his disciples on the night he was betrayed and handed over to be crucified. To be sure, he didn’t pass out donuts. The bread was unleavened, that is, without yeast, for Jesus was celebrating the Jewish Passover — a ritual meal in remembrance of the Israelites exodus from slavery in Egypt. The slaves had to flee so quickly that they didn’t even have time for the bread to rise.

Donuts are designed for ease of eating. You can grab one on the go, whether rushing out the door to work or back to your desk from the office break room. You can eat them with one hand, conversing for a minute or two with a colleague or with a member of your faith community.

My earliest memories of donuts are connected to religious traditions, specifically Easter. My family would rise before dawn for worship at the Easter sunrise service. We gathered in a cemetery to mark Jesus’s resurrection from the dead. On the way home, we would stop for a treat at the local Krispy Kreme. On other Sundays,

there was a box of powdered-sugar donut holes in the fellowship hall after service. But that Easter morning, melt-in-your-mouth glazed donut was extra special.

Now, I’m a pastor and I make my own kids go to church. Being confined to a sanctuary for an hour once a week is not exactly the same as slavery in Egypt, but when liberated from church, my kids race from the fellowship hall with donuts in their hands, free to play on the playground with their friends, sugar coursing through their veins. I watch and smile.

There was a time in college when I had lost my way. I began drinking too much, then taking drugs to stay up later and drink even more. It was a vicious cycle. I sought help at a dirty brick building behind a church on Tuesday evenings. A half-dozen, grisly-faced older men with bags under their eyes would smoke cigarettes outside the door. A Black man with a wide smile ushered me inside that first visit. In the corner of the small room, a card table had been hastily setup with a coffee pot and a box of donuts. Apologizing for not having any sugar or cream, Kevin said that I could sweeten my coffee this way — he broke a donut in half and swirled it around his Styrofoam cup. He handed me the other half and, as I took the donut and dipped it into my cup, it became holy communion.

Not all resurrections are sudden and glorious. Sometimes, all you need is a donut.

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

COLUMN | NEWT GINGRICH

Where are Woodward and Bernstein when we need them



The signal had been sent that protecting the left would itself be protected.

THE CONSPIRACY BETWEEN a corrupt set of bureaucracies (including the Justice Department, the IRS, and the intelligence community) and an equally corrupt and enabling elite media is astonishing. The Durham Report is just one more confirmation of the devastating level of dishonesty and manipulation which have characterized the last few years.

Some analysts believe the open corruption can be traced back to Lois Lerner and the IRS scandal, in which she clearly stonewalled conservative organizations from getting tax status. When she was found to be in contempt of Congress, the Obama Justice Department spent two years ignoring the congressional contempt charge and then decided not to prosecute her.

As Congressman Jim Jordan said at the time, US Attorney Ronald Machen was “us[ing] his power as a political weapon to undermine the rule of law.” Jordan went on “Mr. Machen ... unilaterally decided to ignore the will of the House of Representatives. He and the Justice Department have given Lois Lerner cover for her failure to account for her actions at the IRS.”

The signal had been sent that protecting the left would itself be protected.

This lesson was reinforced in the cover up about the terrorist attack at Benghazi. The Obama administration was worried that the killing of an American ambassador — despite his consistent appeals to the State Department for more security — would hurt the president’s reelection campaign. So, the administration adopted a strategy of simply lying to the American people.

This began the week of the attack when the administration did everything it could to avoid responsibility for a terrorist killing of Ambassador Christopher Stevens. In fact, the Obama White House immediately sent former United Nations Ambassador Susan Rice on five network shows to blame an American-made anti-Muslim video for causing the supposed unrest. It was exactly what Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick had warned against in her famous “Blame America First” description of liberals. We now know that the entire story was a falsehood, and no one in Benghazi was motivated by a film they had never seen.

When then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton testified before Congress, she dismissed the whole question of responsibility for the failure to protect Stevens. She even failed to be honest about his murder famously saying: “With all due respect, the fact is we had four dead Americans. Was it because of a protest or was it because of guys out for a walk one night who decided that they’d they go kill some Americans? What difference at this point does it make?”

The leftists in the national bureaucracies learned a big lesson from Lerner and Clinton. Whatever you need to do to defeat the right or protect the left is OK. You can get away with it. There is no responsibility for your actions if you are protecting the corrupt

system.

That lesson was publicly driven home in late June 2016, when former President Bill Clinton walked uninvited onto the airplane of Attorney General Loretta Lynch at the Phoenix airport. The FBI was investigating the former president’s wife (and Democratic presidential candidate) for a variety of charges including deleting more than 33,000 government emails and having staff destroy computer hard drives with a hammer.

It is hard to imagine anything more inappropriate than a former president visiting an attorney general while his wife (and presidential candidate) was being actively investigated by the FBI.

As then-candidate Donald Trump described in a tweet “Take a look at what happened w/ Bill Clinton. The system is totally rigged. Does anybody really believe that meeting was just a coincidence?”

We now know from the Durham Report — and the reports from Chairman James Comer and the House Oversight Committee — that candidate and then-President Trump has been consistently smeared and defamed by corrupt elements of the Washington bureaucracy on a scale which makes Watergate look trivial.

At the same time, the corrupt system was working overtime to protect Joe Biden and his family. The stunning dual nature of the corruption makes the present moment so dangerous for the future of the rule of law — and the entire constitutional process which has protected American freedom for more than 200 years.

As deeply and persuasively corrupt as the bureaucracy has become, the other great decay since Watergate has been the corruption of the elite media.

The New York Post, Fox News, and a few others have attempted some sense of honest coverage. Smaller conservative publications, podcasts, and social media have called out the big media systems for being active allies of the corrupt bureaucracy. Still, when needed, the elite corporate media have eagerly smeared President Trump and enthusiastically lied to protect the Bidens.

There are no Bob Woodwards or Carl Bernsteins courageously working to uncover the truth and get it published. (Indeed, Woodward has reinvented himself into a chief Trump smear-monger.)

There are no courageous editors like Ben Bradley backing up the reporters.

There are no fearless publishers like Katharine Graham willing to risk lawsuits and withstand the anger of the government.

Today, there is only a corrupt media protecting a corrupt establishment. The challenge to the American people to get at the truth is far more difficult than it was when Richard Nixon was under attack.

The establishment rot threatens our survival as a free people, and it is increasingly difficult to uproot. Where are the Woodwards and Bernsteins when we need them most?

COLUMN | JAN HUTTON

That country twang...



Almost imperceptibly, like water dripping on a rock, my drawl and colloquialism judgments just seemed to wear away.

“HEY, TED!”

Walked back into my house from an errand and greeted a neighbor who was kindly being a handyman. Ted was on the deck and only vaguely heard me. Stepping back inside, he asked that I repeat myself. “Hey.” Easy-peasy. Done.

Not. Not done at all. I stopped in my tracks, asking myself if I’d really just said “Hey!” (It’s not as if I haven’t said it 10,000 times before.) You ever have those mini-secs when a door opens from your past and a hazy memory mists its way into your consciousness? “Hey,” such an ordinary word a minute ago was now in freeze frame, my past and present realities in such contrast. I felt a bit time-drunk since my past aversive feelings regarding “Hey” pulled me in a very different direction than my current feelings.

That’s the rabbit hole I went down. And all because I said “Hey.”

I’ve lived in North Carolina for 28 years, a “say hey” Southern state, with many other renowned colloquialisms as well. However, I wasn’t raised to use “Hey” as a greeting. Not at all. It was proper to say “Hello” or “Hi,” but “Hey” — nope. Somehow, my early exposure to “Hey” left me believing it was a country rube term. Using “Hey” was country and ignorant. I wince while writing this... I’m glad my memory is still functional at this age but am sometimes aghast at the things I do recall.

So let’s just clean out that closet of my “country rube” judgments. I was a big-city-raised Houston girl. Southern, but kind of not. Somewhere along the cultural path of my growing-up years, I became a bit of a despotic grammarian — correcting people’s language in my head as they talked. Can’t really pin

down the source of my country rube-itis, but it matters not at this late date. What matters were my ongoing stringent judgments regarding the intelligence of folks whose deep Southern drawls and colloquialisms I had difficulty understanding. Wincing again. (The trials of being human, replete with my own sometimes-challenged views of humanity.)

In my early North Carolina years, colloquialism-wise, my judgments included:

Might could;
Mash that button;
Hey, honey (Jeez, I was a feminist!);
Pop top (No, no, it’s a can of soda!)

However, living with and experiencing real people in my adoptive state took over. Almost imperceptibly, like water dripping on a rock, my drawl and colloquialism judgments just seemed to wear away. And, my despotic grammarian took early retirement! (Bless her heart). Granted, she does pay a visit every now and then, but the visits seem to get shorter and shorter. Whew!

Am I still afflicted with an attitude of country rube-itis? Probably a tiny bit. Not an excuse, but a reality I want to strategically manage, just as I try to be mindful of other prejudiced thoughts that still, unexpectedly, pop up in my head. However, the gift of sharing this conundrum with you has allowed me to reclaim my comfort and wholeness with “Hey,” an informal word that better suits who I am now than “Hi” or “Hello.” So, wholeheartedly, I can say “Hey, y’all.”

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.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR
JOY HEWETT

Please don’t override his veto

TO OUR NC LEGISLATORS: Please improve our public schools instead of giving away our taxpayers’ hard-earned dollars for private school vouchers. We need a well-funded public school system where every child in North Carolina is given the opportunity to learn with well-paid teachers. Founding Father Thomas Jefferson believed a well-educated public was needed to sustain democracy. Only a well-educated citizenry could make self-government succeed. He proposed a system of broad, free, public education for men and women alike. Don’t you think our democracy is important enough to provide that right by protecting our public school system? Weakening our public schools and promoting unaccountable private schools is a dangerous idea.

I received a wonderful public school education and taught 34 years in community colleges. So I want future generations to get a great public school education like I did. I am truly disturbed by the attempt to destroy public education that is in the new budget — Each child who goes to private school is money lost to our public school system. Plus, the millions of dollars to private schools could be used for improving the grammar schools across the state so every child leaving 3rd grade is successful at reading at 3rd-grade level and will have a more positive experience with school to become a productive and well-adjusted adult.

I received a wonderful public school education and taught 34 years in community colleges. So I want future generations to get a great public school education like I did.

Every child in North Carolina deserves to learn to read, and have a good vocabulary to think and articulate ideas. Our society needs well-adjusted, educated young people who can live up to their potential through the system Thomas Jefferson proposed for America.

Please don’t waste our tax dollars on vouchers for people with money to pay for private schools.

Now this awful bill is part of the proposed budget. When the governor vetoes it, please don’t override his veto.

**Joy Hewett
Pittsboro**

FILE PHOTO

COLUMN | BOB WACHS

Lessons in, of life take years to learn

At one time, I thought I’d retire. Now I know there’s not enough time to do that.

A SIGNIFICANT EVENT came my way this week.

No, it wasn’t the lottery or last house payment or even a note from old girlfriend Katherine (Kitty) Litter saying she finally realized she missed the boat all those years ago.

Instead, it was the annual celebration of some of my mama’s finest work, notably the day she brought me into the world.

I won’t mention the year this event came about or how many years it’s been but simply say it was before Ike came into the White House. But I’ll go on record, however, as saying I can’t believe how quickly it got here.

It’s been a while coming and there has been a fair amount of water over the dam and under the bridge. But I’m also glad the water continues flowing and I hope it will for some time. Looking back over those years, it doesn’t seem so long ago. People, places and events come to mind, and I wonder where they all are now.

Our little family came to Pittsboro when I was a wee, handsome — well, at least wee — little lad of five. My dad had changed careers and Chatham County was home to him and Mama anyway. Had that not happened, I would have grown up in Apex and never gotten acquainted with Bonlee or Harpers Crossroads or Rufus’ Restaurant and hundreds of wonderful folks.

My school days would have been spent in Wake County instead of the halls of Pittsboro High School, where I managed to get thrown out of school assembly my senior year when I was student body president and fouled out of a junior varsity basketball game during the warmups when I was in the 9th grade.

I think back on those growing-up days, remembering who dated who, who had what car, the words to every rock and roll song WKIX played, and many other important pieces of information. However, I could not then — and still cannot now — tell you the words to the French national anthem, how many bones a frog has in its body or how to find the square root of 147, all of which various teachers deemed essential at the time.

Instead, I think of the 20 or so classmates who are now precious memories. Ditto for the class ahead of and behind me.

The same thing happened with my college career, the one where I managed to cram a four-year course of study into seven years. I knew I was going to Chapel Hill to get an education; I just didn’t think it would all be on campus. And it wasn’t.

These days I remember the guys in my dorm — Chester “Chuck” Conner, who combined brains, books and looks into one great all-

around guy; Sam “Froggy” Greathouse, who got us into trouble with the dean because we hung out the second-story windows making pig-grunt noises at the female students as they walked by and is now one of those aforementioned memories; Ronald and Donald Green, the twins from Carthage who I never could tell apart and still couldn’t a few years ago when I bumped into them at a funeral service I conducted for a family member of a mutual friend, and numerous others whose faces come to mind but don’t bring names with them.

There are other highlights, many, in fact: A career in community journalism which led me to meet my better — much better — half when we worked beside each other in adjoining buildings in Pittsboro one summer; the wonderful days of courtship when I stopped running so she could catch me; the years since then with our two 40-somethings who at one time were teenagers who lived at my house and who now have produced their own set of humans, some of whom are teenagers and others who will soon be and who live at their houses, but for right now are without doubt the most wonderful grandchildren the world has ever seen.

And there are others — a job once that let me work with farmers and rural folks all over the two Carolinas, a seminary course of study that produced a change in careers and the subsequent places of service, and even an opportunity to combine journalism and ministry as a life’s work for several years.

At one time, I thought I’d retire. Now I know there’s not enough time to do that.

And maybe that’s the best lesson that has come from these yearly celebrations. I know I’m not the only person who has such momentous occasions.

My hope through the years of turning out these columns is that maybe once in a while (if you’re brave enough to read them) we all share the human condition known as life and that birthdays are another opportunity to get on with living it.

Hope yours is happy and prosperous ... whenever it is and however many there are.

Bob Wachs is a native of Chatham County and retired long-time managing editor of the Chatham News/Chatham Record, having written a weekly column for more than 30 years. During most of his time with the newspapers, he was also a bi-vocational pastor and today serves Bear Creek Baptist Church for the second time as pastor.

2023 TORCH RUN

From Chatham County Sheriff's Office

PITTSBORO — Chatham County Sheriff's Office members laced up their running shoes and hit the streets last Thursday and Friday mornings. They joined fellow law enforcement officers from across North Carolina to participate in the Special Olympics Torch Run. This event is part of the Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR), which is the largest year-round campaign for Special Olympics, aiming to raise public awareness and funds.

On Thursday morning, May 25, Sheriff's Office personnel and other supporters ran alongside students from Jordan-Matthews and Chatham Central high schools, carrying the torch approximately one mile from the N.C. Highway Patrol Station in Siler City to the Siler City Police Dept. Along their N. Second Ave. route, runners were motivated by the music of Bon Jovi and Survivor pulsating from speakers in the lead Sheriff's Office vehicle. Runners waved at appreciative bystanders who cheered them on from the sidelines.

The torch's journey continued Friday morning, May 26, with Sheriff's Office personnel, accompanied by students from Northwood and Seaforth high schools, carrying the flame about a mile from North Chatham Fire Department's Station 19 to the Seaforth Recreation Boat Ramp at Jordan Lake. During the spirited event, all runners took turns carrying the ceremonial torch and leading the pack of runners.



PHOTO BY ANNETTE ROBERSON

The Chatham County Sheriff's Office participated in the annual Law Enforcement Torch Run in support of Special Olympics of North Carolina. The Torch started in Wilmington and will end in Raleigh on June 2nd with the lighting of the cauldron at the start of the Summer Games. 'The excitement was palpable,' said Sheriff Mike Roberson in a Facebook post. 'Thank you to all the staff that planned, setup, and organized the event.'

ners.

Prior to each relay, Sheriff Mike Roberson offered his encouragement and appreciation to everyone helping bolster the important work of Special Olympics.

"I'm excited that you're here," Sheriff Roberson said, addressing the runners. "Thank you for running with us. We've got the fire department here, the Highway Patrol, and our deputies. This is a group effort and I

want to thank all of you for being part of this."

Roberson offered a special thanks to the students from each of the high schools who joined the effort. "I'm so proud of the students who are here, the leaders in our schools who are involved in this inclusion," the Sheriff said. "What you are doing is magical stuff for your community and you're making a big difference in other people's lives."

The Chatham County torch relays were part of a broader statewide endeavor involving more than 2,000 law enforcement officers covering more than 2,000 miles, culminating on June 2 with the Circle of Honor and lighting of the cauldron at the 2023 Special Olympics N.C. Summer Games Opening Ceremony in Raleigh. The united effort champions the cause and raises awareness of the important work done by

Special Olympics for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

In North Carolina alone, nearly 2,000 law enforcement personnel annually contribute their support to the LETR for Special Olympics. Since its inception in 1981, the LETR has raised approximately \$900 million globally, with more than \$30 million benefiting Special Olympics North Carolina.

CRAFT from page A1

two in July. Children ages six to 17 can participate, with six to 10-year-olds working from 10 a.m. to noon and ages 11 to 17 working from 1 to 4 p.m.

Beal said she's developed a following in Bonlee, but wants to extend an invitation to the rest of the county to come to her crafting studio.

Art is often an escape for people, including Beal. In fact, Beal is working to become a certified art therapist, and she hopes to be able to use her passion for arts and crafts to bring positivity into the lives of her

neighbors.

"Their mind is just focused on the colors and the project and not so much the outside world," Beal said. "It's remarkable to watch them pick the colors, pick their brushes, sit down, prepare and then just go off into this world of creativity."

The studio and the trading post also play a crucial role in Beal's dreams and aspirations — she wants to rebuild Bonlee to be a place the old and young can be proud of. In a previous interview with the News + Record, Beal explained how downtown Bonlee became unrecognizable to her.

Overgrown grass overtook yards and perimeters of sidewalks. Buildings were vandalized and abandoned.

When Beal first bought the block the buildings were on, the windows were shattered and the storefront was painted a blue-green color she felt did not suit her ideas for her businesses. Since then, Beal had the windows and doors replaced, as well as completely repainted and renovated the inside and outside of the buildings.

"I was digging through my pictures, and I can't believe all of this used to look like that," she said. "We can now go back

to the buildings, and now, our children can have memories in those buildings."

Every craft or art piece is done in honor of Beal's daughter, Caroline. Caroline's presence can be felt around the studio, with her pictures spread throughout the space and the logo includes a paintbrush drawn by Caroline.

"I think she would just be right in there with me ... just because that's something that she loves so much," Beal said. "She would just be so thrilled to be here every morning. I wish she was here with me doing it in person, but I feel like her spirit is there."

For Beal, she wants to share her daughter's memory and help others share their passion for arts and crafts through the Summer Craft Time sessions. She said she hopes people in the community not only leave with Caroline's memories, but also leave knowing they are capable of completing projects from their wildest imaginations.

"People come in and say, 'I have no crafting ability whatsoever,' and they leave with the most beautiful projects," Beal said. "It lifts them up and they have this beautiful thing to take home with them. I love to see the happy when they go home."

VinFast cars recalled after software issue

All of its U.S. vehicles had a glitch that caused crash concerns

By Ben Rappaport
Chatham News + Record

WHEN IT RAINS, it pours. And for VinFast's launch on North American shores, it's been a hurricane.

The Vietnamese electric car manufacturer was forced to

recall all 999 of its cars delivered to the U.S. after software concerns were raised by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). According to an NHTSA recall report filed May 18, software issues on the display screen of the VF8, referred to as the multifunction head unit, cause communication errors in the car and the screen goes blank.

This is especially concerning because the VF8 has only one

display screen in the vehicle, which controls several different functions in the car.

Of VinFast's 264 U.S. vehicles in customers' hands or in fleet service, the company is aware of 18 reported occurrences on 14 separate vehicles. Eight of these occurrences were while the vehicle was in park, five occurred while the vehicle was not in park, the other five are unknown, according to the report. NHTSA said the remaining 735

vehicles are still in VinFast's custody.

"VinFast is not aware of any field reports of incidents. The company is issuing this recall out of an abundance of caution," a VinFast spokesperson said.

This is the second recall involving the VF8 after the automaker recalled more than 2,700 vehicles in Vietnam with a front brake issue, according to Inside EVs.

Prior to the recall, VinFast received a string of poor reviews on the VF8 from auto critics. They said the car was not up to par with other electric vehicles

on the market, with some calling it "unbearable." Top sales executives also left the company and its stock prices were falling in recent months.

The company still intends to open its more than 1,700-acre facility in Moncure by 2025. The facility is part of the second-largest economic development project in state history with an estimated \$4 billion in investment and 7,500 new jobs over the next two decades.

Officials have allotted more than \$1.25 billion in state and local financial incentives for the project.

Teachers, get your applications in for a Bright Ideas education grant!

Teachers, are you looking for new opportunities to fund projects for your classroom? Central Electric is awarding up to \$15,000 in Bright Ideas education grants to local educators in K-12 classrooms for the 2023-2024 school year.

The final deadline for all grant applications is Sept. 15, but don't wait to apply. Applications submitted prior to the early-bird deadline on Aug. 15 will be entered to win one of five \$100 Visa gift cards. Scan the QR code or visit NCBrightIdeas.com for more information or to apply!



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Juvenile petitions sought on five for making threat of violence at Chatham Middle School

From Chatham County Sheriff's Office

SILER CITY — On May 14, the Chatham County Sheriff's Office was alerted to a threatening message circulating on social media, targeting Chatham Middle School in Siler City with a potential act of violence.

An immediate investigation was launched by author-

ities to address the potential threat, which the social media post said would be carried out against students and teachers on May 15.

With the assistance of Student Resource Officers, school administration, teachers and federal agencies, investigators successfully traced the origin of the threat. Investigators believe after interviewing the juveniles charged that the threat was a

prank the juveniles never actually intended to carry out.

One juvenile was charged with threat of mass violence on educational property, while four other underage individuals were charged with conspiring to carry out an act of mass violence on educational property.

Three of the juveniles charged are students at Chatham Middle School.

"I cannot stress enough the

seriousness of making threats of a school shooting," Sheriff Mike Roberson said. "Public safety is our utmost priority, and any act — even if it's a prank — that undermines that security is a serious matter. Not only does it create fear and panic among students, parents and teachers, but it is a criminal offense that carries severe consequences. Maintaining a secure learning environment is a collective effort that requires collaboration with everyone involved. By working hand in hand with educators, parents and students, we can foster a safe environment where our children can thrive and grow.

Our partnership is built on trust, communication, and a shared dedication to the welfare of our students."

"Chatham County Schools continues to work with the Sheriff's Office and other agencies to support them throughout this process," the school system said in a statement. "The district and school administration agree school safety is one of our main concerns, and we promote any and all efforts to help keep our students and staff safe while on campus. It is also critically important that all CCS stakeholders continue to exercise good judgment regarding the use of social media."

MONCURE from page A1

that happy medium is, that's to be determined."

'Elephant with butterfly ears' In an attempt to find that midpoint, Moncure residents, including Brown, gathered at Moncure School last Wednesday for the third community meeting around the small area plan, Plan Moncure.

The purpose of last week's meeting was for consultants on the project to present plans for future development and conservation in Moncure. The presented scenarios were based on public input received through community stakeholder sessions in community meetings and survey responses collected between January and April.

Matt Noonkester, one of the lead consultants for Plan Moncure, explained four scenarios to the crowd of about 50 residents. None of the four scenarios were absolute options, rather they were meant to determine what sorts of things residents wanted to see in the future.

"Our end result is probably going to be something like an elephant with butterfly ears,"

Noonkester told the crowd. "These four options each represent extremes in some respect, so the final product will likely be some mix of each."

Scenario A was designed with current zoning regulations, and no changes to existing regulations. In previous meetings, Moncure residents expressed a desire to keep things the same and with minimal changes. Current codes, however, show the area is not building as densely as the zoning allows. This scenario shows how dense things in Moncure could become if the rules go unchanged.

"A lot of folks have told us they want to keep Moncure rural," Tyson Smith, a lead consultant on the project, told residents. "But what could build out under current zoning plans is much more dense and intense than people realize."

Scenario B showed what would happen if Moncure adhered strictly to the 2017 Unified Development Ordinance, Plan Chatham. The county is currently in the process of updating its UDO, which is expected to be completed later this year. Notably, the same con-

sultant group — White & Smith LLC — is assisting the county on Plan Moncure and the UDO update.

This scenario, however, adheres to the old document. B results in limited growth for Moncure, but does include the development of several "village centers," or areas with grocery stores, shopping, local businesses, etc. In this plan, much of the development is industrial rather than residential because the 2017 UDO was designed with the mega sites of Chatham County in mind.

"What you'll see in this plan is things that want to be around a VinFast or other major business sites," Noonkester said. "There's also a lot more green on this map because the areas between concentrated development would be agricultural or rural."

Under B, development would be concentrated in smaller areas than in other scenarios.

Scenario C aims to slow down growth as much as possible. In A and B, the plans work under the assumption of one-acre plots of land for housing units. Scenario C increases that to five-acre plots per unit. This means that

while there is heavy growth expected for Moncure, most of those people would commute inward from neighboring counties — like Durham, Harnett, Lee, Orange, Randolph or Wake — to work in Moncure. This means less property tax revenue for the county, and that housing is much less dense than in other scenarios. This plan would also lead to the lowest infrastructure needs because there is minimal growth.

Scenario D aims to accommodate all expected growth in the area. This plan aims to meet the demand by increasing the supply of housing. This would lead to more multi family homes, denser development and increased population. While D has the largest footprint and highest impact of any of the plans, it represents a more urbanized and connected vision for Moncure with enough housing and nearby amenities for people to live, shop and work in the area.

"We understand there are aspects about each of these plans that may make people uncomfortable," Noonkester said. "But that's why we're here tonight —

to test ideas and push boundaries."

Next steps After each plan was presented, residents talked with consultants and county staff about their likes and dislikes for each plan. These responses were documented on paper at the meeting, and collected via survey. The consultants will aggregate these responses and make a preliminary presentation of a "preferred hybrid scenario" for Plan Moncure to the Chatham County Board of Commissioners on Monday, June 5, at the Chatham County Agriculture & Conference Center in Pittsboro.

The recommendations by consultants, if approved by commissioners, will then be adopted into the UDO. The UDO document shapes land use policy throughout the county as developments occur.

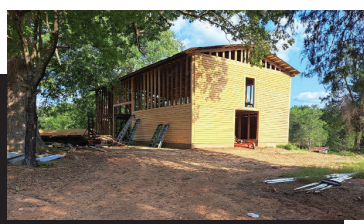
"We just want to honestly tell the story in both directions," Noonkester told the News + Record. "In some ways, we want to look out the windshield for what to do, in other ways we have to look out the rearview mirror and ask what did we previously decide."

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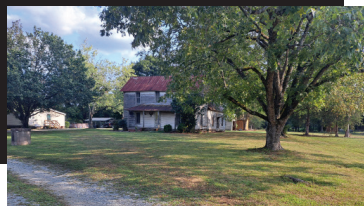
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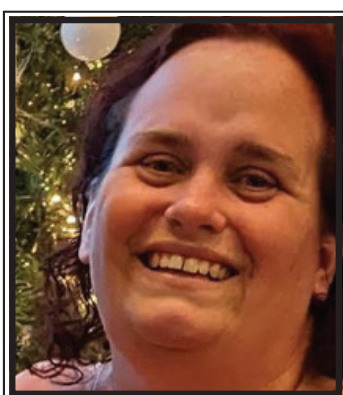
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OBITUARIES



Julia Johnson Baker

June 9, 1986 - May 26, 2023

Julia Lutrell Johnson Baker ascended from Earth Friday, May 26, 2023. She was born June 9, 1986, at Rex Hospital in Raleigh to Pam and Steve Johnson. Julia lived life always seeing the glass half full. As a cradle member of St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Pittsboro, Julia was involved in a variety of local, state, and national church activities. She was a nursery attendee and helper, a volunteer, acolyte, Lay Eucharist Minister (LEM), vestry member, vacation Bible school leader, member of the Diocesan Youth Committee, and attended national youth events to represent the Episcopal Diocese of NC.

Julia attended Pittsboro Elementary School, Chatham Charter School, Chatham Central High School and received her Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certification from Central Carolina Community College. Julia took her love for those among us with mental and/or physical differences and crafted a profession as an aide with Triangle Disability and Autism Services (formerly Arc of the Triangle). Julia respected the dignity of every human being.

Julia is preceded in ascension by her maternal grandparents, Julia Brooks Hinson Smith of Rocky Mount and Dr. John LeRoy Parker, Jr. of Mechanicsville, Va.; paternal grandfather, Ira Johnson of Wilson and paternal step-grandfather, Irvine Hayes of Nashville, N.C.

Julia is survived by her parents, Steve and Pam Johnson; son, Stephen Lee Baker and aunt, Julia Lee Parker, all of the home; grandmother, Weedie Lutrell Hyde Hayes of Nashville, N.C.; uncle, Jeff Parker (Missy) of Mt. Pleasant S.C., and cousins Barton and Laura Parker; aunt, Kathy Shepard (Wayne) of Justin, Tx., and cousins Teresa Shepard, Sarah Eubanks, and Chris Shepard; great aunt and great uncle Henry and Lucy Hinson of Rocky Mount, N.C.; great aunt Faye Farmer (Pete) of Rocky Mount N.C.; great aunt Helen Davis of Spring Hope, N.C.; step-grandmother, Betty Parker and many other aunts, uncles, and cousins, fairy godmothers and godfathers; and special friends, Scott Mayfield and Matthew Howard.

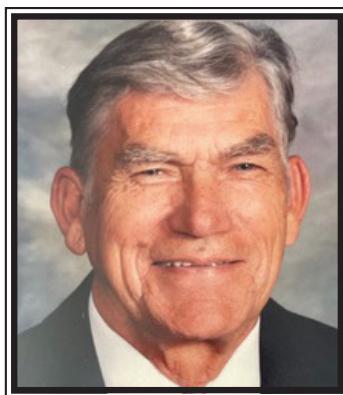
In lieu of flowers, the family requests a donation to your favorite charity. Suggested family charities are: Hill Learning Center/3200 Pickett Road/Durham, N.C. 27705 (<https://www.hillcenter.org>); Appendix Cancer Pseudomyxoma Peritonei Research Foundation, 491 Baltimore Pike #177, Springfield, Pa. 19064-3810 (<https://acmp.org>); Triangle Disability & Autism Services, An affiliated chapter of The Arc, 5003 Southpark Drive, Suite 140, Durham, N.C. 27713 (<https://www.arctriangle.org>); and Communities In Schools (CIS) of Chatham County, PO Box 903, Siler City, N.C. 27344 (<https://www.cisatham.org>).

A celebratory memorial service will be held at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Pittsboro, on Friday, June 9 at one o'clock in the afternoon. Casual attire is requested.

Show your love for the people you love with love.

Donaldson Funeral Home & Crematory are honored to serve the Baker / Johnson family.

Please visit www.donaldsonfunerals.com to leave memorial tributes and messages.



Kenneth Franklin Jeffries

June 6, 1936 - May 21, 2023

Kenneth Franklin Jeffries, 86, of Moncure, passed peacefully, surrounded by his family on Sunday, May 21, 2023.

Born in Holly Springs on June 6, 1936, he was the son of the late William Oliver and Ruth Elizabeth Williams Jeffries. In addition to his parents, Kenneth was predeceased by his sisters Lois Womble, Peggy Carter, and brother Charles Jeffries.

Kenneth was the loving husband of Charlene Swindell Jeffries. He was the father of Cheryl Littleton (Bryan), Kenny Jeffries, Jr., Jimmy Jeffries (Dana), and Kevin Jeffries (Kelli); step-father of Kevin Burrus (Cathy), Sabrina Parker, Charles Burrus (Karen) and John Burrus (Lisa). He is survived by his 21 grandchildren: Heather, Nick, Steven, Amanda, Brianna, Jessica, Jason, Jannah, Jeremiah, Jordyn, Joshua, Jon, Kenneth "Cole", Abigail, Addison, Brandon, Tyler, Jack, Allison, Brooke, and Korbin. He is also survived by 20 great-grandchildren and many loving nieces and nephews.

Ken exuded Jesus in every aspect of his life. Every day was a testimony and Christian example. His devotion and love to his wife, children (in-laws and step) grandkids, friends and community was beyond measure. Slow to anger, first to forgive, always showing grace, deserved or not. His heart's desire was to make others laugh and smile. He was a proud Korean war Army veteran, Alumni of N.C. State University, and retired Region 2 Forester for the state of N.C. Ken was also a long-time board member of the Moncure Fire Department. He quickly made friends with strangers, no matter where he traveled.

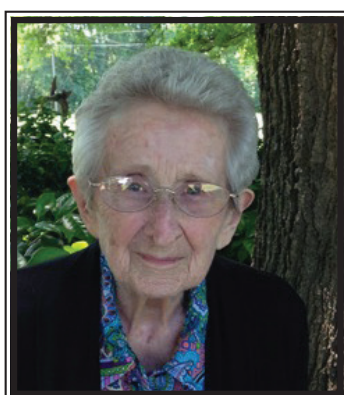
The life of the party, author of the corniest jokes, but also a lighthouse, steady, firm and calm in the storm. When you were in his presence, you were at peace. Because of his life, we have an amazing example, we have hope.

Visitation was held Thursday, May 25th from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Miller - Boles Funeral Home, 1150 Fire Tower Road, Sanford. A memorial service was held Friday, May 26, at 11:00 a.m. at the Moncure United Methodist Church, 16 Post Office Road, Moncure. Burial took place at Buckhorn Methodist Church, 2438 NC-42, Moncure.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

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

Services are entrusted to Miller - Boles Funeral Home of Sanford.



Mary Kate Brooks Gunter

July 16, 1923 - May 24, 2023

Mary Kate Brooks Gunter, of Siler City, entered into the presence of her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, on May 24, 2023, at the age of 99. She was born in Chatham County, on July 16, 1923. Born the fourth of eight children to her parents Herbert and Laudis Brooks. Mary graduated from Bonlee High School in 1941. In 1943, Mary wed Edmond "Buck" Gunter and became a housewife. The couple was blessed with their daughter, Brenda a few years later. Chicken farming paid their bills for several decades and Mary provided for her family and neighbors with her gardening and subsequent canning, freezing, cooking and baking. She enjoyed reading and visiting friends, family and neighbors. Her sense of humor was a delight.

Mary Kate was preceded in death by her parents, seven siblings and their spouses, as well as her husband of 67 years. She is survived by her daughter, Brenda Gunter Gay; son-in-law, Simeon Gay; two granddaughters, Sherry and Julie Gay; sister-in-law, Frances Gaines and several nephews and nieces.

Mary Kate was a born-again Christian who believed in Jesus Christ for salvation from sin and her only way to heaven. She was a member of Fellowship Baptist Church and often attended services at Pittsboro Bible Assembly with her family. Her testimony of steadfast faith in the Lord was a blessing to many and will live on in the memories of those who love her.

A visitation was held on Saturday, May 27, 2023 at Fellowship Baptist Church, from 10 to 11 a.m. The funeral service followed at 11 a.m. with Rev. Jason Golden officiating. Burial followed in the church cemetery.

Smith & Buckner Funeral Home is serving the Gunter family.

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

Friends and Family of Alicia Stout

Her Celebration of Life will be June 3rd at 4pm at the Chatham County Wildlife Club located at 379 Wildlife Road, Bear Creek, NC 27027.

Immediately following the service, a BBQ dinner will be served along with Live Music. Please, if you can...

1. Wear Carolina Blue
2. Bring a Lawn Chair
3. Bring a Picture or Pictures of your favorite memory with Alicia & write that memory on the back of the picture as a keepsake for family.
4. Tea & Water will be served with Dinner but you're welcome to BYOB.



Celebration of Life for Ms. Alice F. Williams

Sunrise:
6-6-1947

Sunset:
2-6-2023



JUNE 3, 2023

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Chatham Community Library to host, "Sounds of Freedom, From Slavery to Civil Rights"

Chatham County Government

PITTSBORO — In recognition of Juneteenth, Chatham Community Library will host, "The Sounds of Freedom, From Slavery to Civil Rights" with gospel singer and historian Mary D. Williams from 2 to 3 p.m on Saturday, June 10, in the Holmes Family Meeting Room at the Chatham Community Library. This program is free and open to the public.

WHAT: "The Sounds of Freedom, From Slavery to Civil Rights"

WHEN: Saturday, June 10, 2023, 2 to 3 p.m

WHERE: Holmes Family Meeting Room at the Chatham Community Library 197 NC-87 Pittsboro, N.C. 27312

WHO: There is something about music that seems to bring people closer to each other, often connecting them as a com-

munity. This is true today, and it is true historically, even throughout

some of the most difficult periods of the past. With a look (and listen!) to a combination of

spiritual and protest songs, vocalist Williams will help people understand the role music played from enslavement through the Civil Rights Movement, illustrating how music provides an effective entry point for uniting people as history is examined.

Funding for this program is made possible with the generous support of the Friends of the Chatham Community Library.

Residents may visit the libraries' website www.chatham-libraries.org, or contact the Library at 919-545-8084 for more information on this and other events and programs.

The Sounds of Freedom, From Slavery to Civil Rights

presented by Mary D. Williams

June 10, 2-3pm at CCL in the Holmes Family Meeting Room



COURTESY OF CHATHAM COUNTY COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Chatham Community Library will host, "The Sounds of Freedom, From Slavery to Civil Rights" with gospel singer and historian Mary D. Williams on Saturday, June 10 at 2pm.

CLASS REUNION | CHATHAM CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL



CLASS OF 1973 — 50 Years

The class of 1973 from Chatham Central High School held its 50th year reunion Saturday, May 20, 2023 at The Family Life Center at Tyson's Creek Baptist Church. Those attending were: Kenneth Beal, Cathy Phillips Brewer, Farrell Brown, Jenny Jones Burns, Sarah Caviness, Michael Cotton, Keith Dixon, Rita Sharpe Ellis, Regina Jenkins Emerson, Charles Fields, Bryan Goldston, Cherry Bright Jordan, Patricia Burns Lowman, John Marsh, Lynn Dowdy Meyers, Sandy Fesmire Oldham, Gary Phillips, Audrey Poe, James Poe, Deborah Oldham Seawell, Rex Scott, Samuel Testerman, Deborah K. Tyson, Phil Wilson, Randy Baldwin, Debbie Jones Beavers, Cheryl Brewer, Sandy Scott Brown, Jane Brady Caviness, Sheryl Lambert Davis, Verna Ellis, Buddy Fields, Bobby Garner, Dianne Pilkington Hicks, Gerald Hussey, Johnnie Jones, Jr, Shelia Bynum Lewis, Marjorie Jones Maness, Sherree Baxter Menius, Marty Oldham, Ruth Ann Taylor Peterson, Gordon Phillips, Carolyn Beal Seawell, Janette Wright Scott, Dawn Stumpf, Sharon Phillips Trotter, and Gaylene Harper Wilson. Also attending were teachers, Mrs. Betty Caviness and Jerry Pike.



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Mountaire Cares joins forces with Chatham Habitat for Humanity

Volunteers from the Siler City Chicken Plant sponsored Chatham Habitat's Women Build Event

Chatham News + Record

SILER CITY — On Thursday of last week, eleven Mountaire Farms employees put on their work boots and participated in Chatham Habitat for Humanity's Women Build Day in Siler City. The group spent the day working on Chatham Habitat's 152nd house, which will be sold this month. The volunteers did landscaping, painting and a final clean-up of the home. They were joined by the future owner of the home, Dora Zabala.

In addition to providing volunteer support, Moun-



COURTESY OF MOUNTAIRE FARMS

Volunteers from Mountaire Farms aided Chatham County Habitat for Humanity in a recent women build event.

taire Cares was one of Women Build's title financial sponsors. Women Build is a nationwide Habitat for Humanity event

that brings women of all walks of life together to build stronger, safer communities.

"We are thrilled to have

Mountaire Farms join us for Women Build this year," said Anna Tuell, Chatham Habitat's development and finance director. "I love bringing people together to invest in their community, and these women should be proud of their contribution to Chatham Habitat's mission."

Mountaire, the fourth largest chicken processing company in the country, has operations in Siler City. Through their Mountaire Cares program, the company is dedicated to giving back to the community, including their annual Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter for Thousands program, which provides meal boxes to families during the holidays.

They also support numerous non-profit and charitable organizations with financial gifts and/or volunteer opportunities throughout the year.

"We were so lucky to have been included in the Women's Build this year and our team really enjoyed giving back," said Elizabeth Mauney, community relations manager for

Mountaire in Chatham County. Chatham Habitat for Humanity is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization that works to build strength, stability and self-reliance through shelter. Since 1989, Chatham Habitat has worked to build safe, healthy, affordable homes, which are then sold at zero percent interest to Chatham County families.

Chatham Habitat for Humanity believes that everyone deserves a safe place to call home.

Mountaire® is a registered trademark of Mountaire Corporation. Mountaire Corporation and its affiliates, Mountaire Farms Inc. and Mountaire Farms of Delaware, Inc. (collectively, "Mountaire"), are agricultural food production and processing companies providing work for almost 10,000 people at facilities in Arkansas, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina.

For more information about Chatham Habitat for Humanity's work, visit www.chatham-habitat.org.

George Moses Horton Middle School ranks first nationwide in the 20th Annual Capitol Hill Challenge

Chatham News + Record

PITTSBORO — The Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association (SIFMA) and the SIFMA Foundation today announced the winning teams and congratulated the 6,500 students competing in the 2023 Capitol Hill Challenge (CHC), a national financial education program underwritten by the Charles Schwab Foundation.

SIFMA and the SIFMA Foundation will host the 10 top-performing CHC teams at a reception in the U.S. Capitol on June 14. The students will also have the opportunity to meet with their members of Congress.

These five students from George Moses Horton Middle School in Pittsboro (Asher Savage,

Colton Adams, Hayden Ellis, Nicholas Armstrong and Rowan Fisher), along with advisors Mrs.

Ellen Crayton and Mrs. Tracy Miller, finished as the highest middle school nationwide, and ranked fourth overall in this year's Challenge. They were the only North Carolina school in the

Top 10 (see the full Top 10 below). They made over \$9,800 in 14 weeks of trading.

Middle and high school students representing public schools in every U.S. congressional district

were matched with their Member of Congress.

Teams learned the fundamentals of capital markets and investing, then put theory into practice by managing diversified portfolios of stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and cash. They improved their knowledge of



COURTESY OF CHATHAM COUNTY SCHOOLS

These five students from George Moses Horton Middle School in Pittsboro (Asher Savage, Colton Adams, Hayden Ellis, Nicholas Armstrong, Rowan Fisher), along with advisors Mrs. Ellen Crayton and Mrs. Tracy Miller, finished as the highest middle school nationwide, and ranked fourth overall in this year's Capitol Hill Challenge.

math, economics and personal finance.

Dynamic market conditions made for an exciting competition as teams vied to produce the top-performing investment portfolio among participating schools nationwide.

2023 Capitol Hill Challenge — Top 10 Schools:

1. North Little Rock High School, AR-2, Rep. French Hill
2. Cleveland Hill High School, NY-26, Rep. Brian Higgins
3. Carlynton Junior Senior High School, PA-17, Rep. Chris Deluzio
4. George Moses Horton Middle School, NC-9, Rep. Richard Hudson
5. Orville H. Platt High School, CT-5, Rep. Jahana Hayes
6. Rappahannock High

School, VA-1, Rep. Robert Wittman

7. Porum High School, OK, Senator Markwayne Mullin

8. Collins-Maxwell Elementary/Middle School, IA, Senator Joni Ernst

9. Rainbow Lake Middle School, SC-5, Rep. Ralph Norman

10. Oakcrest High School, NJ-2, Rep. Jefferson Van Drew

"I want to congratulate all the students and schools that participated in this year's Capitol Hill Challenge," said Kenneth E. Bentsen Jr., SIFMA president and CEO. "Our industry is

committed to helping young people learn the importance of saving and investing, while also providing them a solid foundation to achieve their future financial goals. Along with the

SIFMA

Foundation, SIFMA is proud to partner with the Charles Schwab Foundation, and we commend

all Members of Congress who visited their local schools virtually and in-person to engage with

students on financial education."

The 14-week competition reaches public middle and high school students in every congressional district and teaches them the importance of saving and investing, while promoting a better understanding of civics and fiscal policy.

Teams manage a hypothetical \$100,000 online portfolio of stocks, bonds, mutual funds, ESG investments, and cash, gaining a deeper understanding of personal finance and economics through a standards-based curriculum that teaches them the value of the capital markets.

Since its inception in 2004, CHC has made over 7,500 matches of U.S. Senators and Members

of Congress with schools, reaching more than 170,000 youth. Public middle and high school

students from all 50 states and Guam participated in this year's challenge.

"Too many teens and young adults start out life on their own without knowing how to manage

their money, and that can have lifelong implications," Kristine Dixon, managing director at Charles Schwab, said. "Programs like Capitol Hill Challenge teach middle and high school students how investing can help them build wealth over time. Our commitment to this

program stems from Schwab's inherent belief in the power of financial education to help people achieve their goals in life."

Melanie Mortimer, president of the SIFMA Foundation, said, "I congratulate all of the participants of the Capitol Hill Challenge and thank the Charles Schwab Foundation and every Member of Congress who worked on this initiative.

Through public-private collaborations like the Capitol Hill Challenge, we can bring financial capability to public schools nationwide. Together we are

ensuring young people across America experience the capital markets, gain insights that lead to

long-term success, open the door for asset-building and improve their financial life outcomes."

The SIFMA Foundation offers the nation's most powerful, widely used and validated in-school

investor education programs, educating individuals about the global economy and the role of the

financial markets in increasing prosperity and opportunity.

Programming enables teachers to simulate the real world of investing, incorporate hands-on learning, and facilitate the application and practice of newly acquired knowledge.

As a result, teachers extend the benefits of financial capability and an understanding of capital markets to millions of students they collectively reach. They also take a more active role in their own personal financial lives.

The Capitol Hill Challenge is just one component of the SIFMA Foundation's Stock Market

Game, which operates in all 50 U.S. states and has reached more than 22 million students since 1977. To learn more about the program, visit <https://www.stockmarketgame.org/capitol-hill-challenge.html>.

Community Forum

Town of Siler City Commissioner District 3

The Town of Siler City Board of Commissioners recently adopted a Strategic Plan.

One of the strategic priorities is to enhance community engagement.

The Town of Siler City is inviting the public to attend an informal community forum to share community projects, questions, comments, and concerns.

Forum Date:
Thursday, June 1, 2023

Forum Time:
6:00pm

Forum Location:
Siler City Presbyterian Church
(Fellowship Hall)
720 West Third Street

Since this is a public meeting, a quorum of the Board of Commissioners may be present, but no town business will be conducted.

If you have any questions, please contact Jack Meadows
Community Development Director @
919-726-8627 or
jmeadows@silercity.org

ARREST BLOTTER

From Chatham County Sheriff's Office

ON MAY 24, Lamont Hakeem Dark, 33, of 31 Hot Shots Drive, Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Chris Scales for failure to appear/child support. He was issued a \$10,000 secured bond/\$500 cash purge payment and was scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on May 26.

On May 24, Kaylee Lynn Haithcox, 22, of 31 Hot Shots Drive, Siler City, was arrested by SSgt. Ashley Ellington for possession of methamphetamine and possession of drug paraphernalia. She was issued a \$1,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on June 12.

On May 25, Kendall Weston, 50, of 1201 E. Main St., Durham, was arrested by Deputy Conner Lee for failure to appear — driving while impaired. He was issued a \$200 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District

Court in Siler City on July 11.

On May 25, Clifton James Farrell, 32, of 4191 Chatham Church Road, Sanford, was arrested by Deputy Reid Kirkman, for pre-trial release violations. He was issued a secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on June 29.

On May 27, Victor Rafael Henriquez, 26, of 25 Lystra Hills Lane, #A, Chapel Hill, was arrested by Deputy John Lacy for breaking and/or entering, larceny after breaking and/or entering, and possession of stolen goods/property. He was issued a written promise to appear and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court on June 12.

On May 28, Juan Carlos Ponce Zagada, 34, of 203 S. Evergreen Ave., Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Jonathan Frazier for criminal contempt for failure to pay child support. He was issued a \$10,000 secured bond or \$309.83 purge payment. He is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on June 8.

Owusu, EMBRACe receive honors from Chatham County Board of Health for Outstanding Public Health Work in FY23

Chatham County Public Health Department

PITTSBORO — The Chatham County Board of Health announced its annual award winners on Monday, May 22, 2023, honoring both an employee and community partner who excelled in improving and contributing to the county's public health in the past fiscal year.

Samantha Owusu, MSW, LCSW, was chosen as the Chatham County Public Health Department (CCPHD) Employee of the Year. Owusu has worked with the department since July 2020, first as a care manager with the Care Management for At-Risk Children (CMARC) program and then as a public health social worker.

She was recently promoted to the position of community health and social work services supervisor.

Along with her work focused on substance use prevention and harm reduction, injury and violence prevention, mental health systems of care, and centering equity, Owusu has led and been involved with many projects and helped advance the agency's community-based services, such as the Child Passenger Safety Program.

The letter nominating Owusu for this award stated that she is a "proven leader" who "is the embodiment of public health, public service, and selflessness."

Equity for Moms and Babies Realized Across Chatham (EMBRACe) received the Board of Health's Community Partner of the Year Award.

EMBRACe is a collaborative grant-funded project dedicated to achieving equitable birth outcomes in Chatham County through community-led systems change. It is a partnership of several community organizations, including the Chatham County Public Health Department, Piedmont Health Services, Chatham Hospital, Chatham Organizing for Racial Equity (CORE), Chatham County Department of Social Services, UNC Health and Family Medicine, and the Chatham Health Alliance.

The nomination letter for EMBRACe referenced the group's efforts to rally community support for the Chatham Hospital Maternity Care Center and its recent community retreat focused on equity in birthing in Chatham County. The award was received at the meeting by EMBRACe Coordinating Committee members Casey Hil-



Samantha Owusu, right, receives the 2022-23 Chatham County Board of Health Employee of the Year Award from Dr. Karen Barbee, Chair of the Chatham County Board of Health, on May 22, 2023, in Pittsboro.

COURTESY OF CHATHAM COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPT.

liard, Jen Medearis Costello, Alisha Bailey, Karinda Roebuck, LeAnn McKoy, Alicia Doran, Samantha Owusu and Theresa Buchanan.

"I am so proud of this year's Chatham County Board of Health award recipients," said Dr. Karen Barbee, chair of the Chatham County Board of Health. "They exemplify the important work that impacts the health of all Chatham County citizens. Congratulations again

to Samantha Owusu and EMBRACe."

"We are so proud of these deserving recipients," said Mike Zelek, Chatham County public health director. "Sam is an incredibly well-respected public health professional, social worker, and community leader who embodies public service. EMBRACe highlights the importance of partnership, coordination, community, and equity to address our greatest public

health challenges."

For previous Board of Health award winners, visit <https://www.chathamcountync.gov/government/departments-programs-i-z/public-health/board-of-health/board-of-health-awards>.

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

10th annual Hispanic Heritage Fiesta returns to downtown Siler City

By Ben Rappaport
Chatham News + Record

SILER CITY — Folklorico dresses of red, yellow and blue wave in the streets, the smell of pupusas wafts across downtown and smiles spread across the faces of hundreds of residents.

The unique combination of joy and culture is part of what makes the Hispanic Heritage Fiesta so special. The cultural festival returns to downtown Siler City for its 10th edition from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 16. The Fiesta will cover four street blocks in downtown beginning at 200 N. Chatham Ave., across from The Chatham Rabbit.

Fiesta is hosted by the Hispanic Liaison. Last week, the organization announced it was moving its office from downtown to 404 N. Holly Ave, which will officially open Tuesday, June 20. Despite the move, Executive Director Ilana Dubester said it was important to host Fiesta in a central loca-

tion that was visible and accessible to residents.

Activities at this year's Fiesta include:

Live Latin music

Taco trucks and other Latin and Hispanic Food

Folkloric dance groups

Booths from businesses, agencies and arts and craft vendors

Games for all ages

Parade of quinceañeras & traditional Latin-American outfits

Art exhibits

Raffle and more

The event is expected to draw more than 5,000 people to Siler City. Sponsorship opportunities are still available and registration for the event is open until July 21

LIAISON from page A1

ing. She says in the downtown office she was unable to hire people because of the cramped space.

Originally, Hispanic Liaison was searching for a place to rent, but struggled to find a proper fit. When they saw the old Ward and Foust building was for sale, however, Dubester said it felt like the right space. She soon got to work to convince her board, banks and other donors that the move was justified.

The new office has roughly 1,000 square feet more space than the downtown office, including a full lobby. It's also on a half-acre lot instead of on a downtown block so there's room for a backyard and more parking. The building was also recently renovated, meaning it was move-in ready.

"It seemed like the right time," Dubester said. "Knowing the kind of growth that's coming to Siler City, and that in a few years from now, we probably couldn't even fathom being able to buy a building."

The growth coming to the town was also part of Dubester's pitch. The work they're doing is invaluable, she says, which is why they need a permanent space with security for the future and unaffected by rent hikes.

While Dubester said there

will not be any immediate operational changes to the work of the Hispanic Liaison, she hopes they will soon be able to hire additional staff and host larger community events in the new building.

"It's going to be sweet to be able to take care of our own place in the way we want it," Dubester said. "We're investing in the organization and its future, not in somebody else's building."

Communities In Schools of Chatham County

While the Hispanic Liaison still needs to pack and unpack in its new space, CISCC has already endured the arduous task. Tych Cowdin, executive director of CISCC, said the move from the downtown home of 13 years was "an all hands on deck effort" from the staff.

The organization's new space officially opened May 24, and Cowdin said the increased space is a good fit for the needs of employees and clients. The decision to move for CISCC came in consultation with Hispanic Liaison because the two were next-door neighbors in the downtown office. He said both organizations ultimately decided growing needs were not going to be met in the current space.

"Both our organizations have

grown in the past two to three years," Cowdin said. "There's been an increased need for the social services both our agencies provide in the wake of the pandemic."

To accommodate those needs, CISCC signed a five-year lease at the Siler City Business Park. Cowdin says long-term the organization would also like to own its own space, but it wasn't feasible at this time.

"We're really looking to the future and hoping to build on some of this momentum," Cowdin said. "We want a reliable space to continue to grow our capacity to serve more and more students."

The methods and operations of CISCC will stay the same in the new building, with the added bonus of more square footage. Cowdin said the organization is viewing the change as a fresh start and a chance to reinvigorate its efforts in schools across the county.

"We want to foster that same feeling when you come into the new space," he said. "Where our staff feels valued, and the families that we serve feel seen, safe and supported."

As for the friendship between the two organizations now that they're no longer wall buddies? They both say they'll continue to partner and collaborate on important projects to meet the needs of families across Chatham County.

Advocacy is focal point for local Meals on Wheels volunteer

By Jimmy Lewis
Chatham County Council on Aging

WHEN CLAYTON RODGERS knocks on a door in the Bennett community of Chatham County, he brings more than the daily sustenance and encouraging word associated with the Meals on Wheels program. To be under the watchful eye of Rodgers, in this small, unincorporated area of 386, is to have access to a friendly face and ceaseless advocacy.

"With all of them, one of the common threads has been contact with the outside world," Rodgers said. "They enjoy the contact time, I know that."

Each Monday morning, Rodgers leaves his home in Pittsboro and makes the roughly half-hour trek to Routh's Grocery in Bennett. Once there, he awaits the arrival of a Golden Corral van, which delivers the meals for the day. On this route, a total of six meals are delivered to four households containing two cou-

ples and a pair of individuals.

While these meals are the cornerstone of every interaction, Rodgers constantly takes mental stock of the needs of his clients. Are they safe? Are there any new health concerns that require the attention of Chatham County Council on Aging staff?

Council staff has come to expect weekly emailed reports from Rodgers aptly titled "Report from Bennett." Any needs, such as incontinence supplies, are noted in these comments as well as general observations about the well-being of clients.

For Rodgers, the impetus for becoming a Meals on Wheels volunteer was the concept of paying it forward. In time, Rodgers anticipates he will have his own need for Meals on Wheels services. Certainly, Rodgers has fielded queries from clients as to why he takes four hours out of each Monday to ensure Bennett seniors in need have access to a meal and hearty conversation.

"I'm doing this to earn credits, so that somebody will watch over me in 10 years or whenever!" he said. "And we all laugh and they say, 'Well, we understand that.'"



COURTESY OF CHATHAM COUNTY COUNCIL ON AGING

The four hours of time Rodgers banks each week to carry out his volunteer tasks are intentional. At most of his stops, the client will invite Rodgers inside for an extended period of chatting. He's happy to oblige, sitting on the porch of James and Rebecca Jones while music serenades a peaceful scene in the backyard. James and Re-

becca sit on their porch swing, reminiscing about days gone by and what brought them to this area of Chatham County. Their 9-year-old chihuahua, Dingo, inspects all visitors before finding the best place to absorb the sun's rays on the porch deck.

At the home of Lucy Wallace, a remodeling project is underway in her kitchen. As Rodgers brings the day's meal, he passes a mailbox on the porch that has been specifically set up for Wal-

lace to receive her mail instead of having to venture all the way to the road. Like the Jones', the presence of Rodgers provides an opportunity for Wallace to catch up on current events and receive assurance that a smiling volunteer stands at the ready to advocate for her needs. It is impossible to leave the Wallace household without being offered a piece of chocolate.

Once the route is completed, Rodgers makes trek back to Routh's, returns the meal bags to a corner of the store for safekeeping and promises to return the following Monday — but not before purchasing a bag of chips and Coca-Cola for the drive home. Other faithful drivers will ensure that Bennett residents are served for the remainder of the week.

As for Rodgers, he'll be back in this sleepy area of Chatham County in seven days' time, ready to invest in the needs of today's Meals on Wheels recipients in the hopes that one day, a knock will ring out at his own home.



JAMES KIEFER | CHATHAM NEWS + RECORD

Woods Charter freshman Amelia Cherry (left) leads the Wolves in goals this season with 41. The Wolves played Hobbton at home Tuesday in the 1A state semifinals.

Woods Charter played in 1A state semifinals Tuesday

By **Jeremy Vernon**
Chatham News + Record

CHAPEL HILL — Coming into the week, there was only one high school team still playing in Chatham County. And that would be the Woods Charter girls soccer team, which

faced off against Hobbton in the 1A state semifinals at home Tuesday night (game occurred after press time).

This was the second straight year the Wolves competed as one of the final four teams remaining in the 1A bracket. Last spring, they also played

Hobbton in the state semis and came out on top by a 5-0 margin before losing to Christ the King, 3-0, in the tournament finals. Christ the King was part of the other 1A semifinal Tuesday and played Union Academy at home, meaning a rematch of last year's championship game

was still a possibility entering the week.

Woods Charter head coach Graeme Stewart said he thought about the opportunity to play the Crusaders again, but mostly as a reminder to his players: They need to stay hungry.

"The word redemption has been used a lot, and that's something I don't use, because that suggests we have some sort of right to something, which we do not," Stewart said. "I do think about (Christ the King), but the

See **GIRLS SOCCER**, page B2

"The word redemption has been used a lot, and that's something I don't use, because that suggests we have some sort of right to something, which we do not."

Woods Charter head coach Graeme Stewart

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Seaforth's White competes at USA U16 national team trials

By **Jeremy Vernon**
Chatham News + Record

THE 2022-23 girls basketball season in Chatham County featured a breakout campaign by Seaforth sophomore Gabby White, who helped lead her team all the way to the 2A state championship game. And in the months since the season ended, the 5-foot-10 guard has stayed busy in her pursuit of personal improvement.

Beginning last Thursday, White participated in the 2023 USA women's U16 national Team Trials in Colorado Springs along with 51 other athletes from around the country. On Tuesday (after press time), coaches selected their final 12 players to roster their team at the FIBA U16 Women's Americas Championship from June 13-19 in Mérida, Mexico.

This was White's first event with USA Basketball. After returning from Colorado on Monday, White told the News + Record that the experience was unique, and one she was grateful to have a chance to compete in.

"I definitely learned a lot about myself, but I also learned about the environment and about different players and how different players react and the things that they do," White said. "I think it was a very cool experience. It's an honor to get to play at that level with some of the highest-ranked girls and best coaches there to help me out along the way."

The window for college coaches to start contacting White begins this summer, and there should be plenty of activity when it comes to

See **WHITE**, page B3

823

number of points Gabby White has scored for Seaforth in 52 career games

Seaforth multi-sport athlete O'Neill wraps up busy freshman season

O'Neill runs track for the Hawks and plays soccer for the NC Courage Academy

By **Jeremy Vernon**
Chatham News + Record

CALI O'NEILL always keeps a busy schedule.

This week, the Seaforth freshman was in Somerset, N.J., competing at an Elite Clubs National League (ECNL) event with her club team alongside some of the best youth soccer players in the country. While she spent most of her time playing with the Courage GU15 team, she played up an age group with the GU16 team on the last day of the competition.

All this comes less than a month after O'Neill wrapped up the spring track season with a third-place finish for Seaforth in the girls 800-meter race at the 2A state championships in Greensboro. She also competed in track and field during the winter, on top of all of her responsibilities to her club soccer team.

It can seem overwhelming at times, but O'Neill has developed strategies to make sure she stays on top of all her athletic duties, as well as her school work.

"Some days are more challenging than others, but I feel that I have become used to balancing school work and sports the best I can," she said. "Sometimes it means I bring my laptop in the car on the way to training and sometimes it means I start my school work at 10 at night. That's not ideal, but sometimes that's how I have to get it all done."

In her first year of athletic competition at the high school level, O'Neill has already had a tremendous amount of success. After com-



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAN LOUGHLIN/MILESPLIT

Seaforth freshman Cali O'Neill (left) finished third in the 800-meter race at the 2A track and field championships, less than half a second behind the first-place finisher.

peting in track for the first time this winter, she finished sixth in the 1,000-meter race at the 1A/2A indoor championships with a time of 3:22.02.

In the spring season, O'Neill hit her stride in the middle-distance events. At the 2A mid-east regionals in Franklinton on May 12, the freshman won the 800-meter race in 2:26.19. And one week later in the same event at the state championships, she came within a half-second of first with a new personal-best time of 2:23.61, which was good for third.

"I was feeling really good, but nervous knowing that I had to run about four seconds faster than my personal best to have a shot at winning," O'Neill said. "I had run the 4x800 relay earlier and knew the 800 individual was going to be a

tough race both mentally and physically."

As for her goals for next track season, O'Neill made it clear that her goal is to win a state championship.

But while O'Neill has made a name for herself on the track circuit this school year, her future will undoubtedly be in soccer. The freshman's club team, the N.C. Courage Academy, is one of the top youth programs in the southeast. She also has experience competing at the national team level.

Back in October, O'Neill was one of 24 players selected to attend the U-15 U.S. Women's National Team's training camp at the Nike headquarters in Portland, O.R. Since then, she was invited back to the national team's regional training camp

See **O'NEILL**, page B3

Chatham County sports

Here are some of our best photographs showcasing Chatham County sports during the 2022-23 school year. Over the next several weeks, we'll share more photos out photographers captured from three seasons full of high-level competition.



TANNER BUBECK | CHATHAM NEWS + RECORD



SIMON BARBRE | CHATHAM NEWS + RECORD



JAMES KIEFER | CHATHAM NEWS + RECORD

Woods Charter players, from left to right: junior Leyla Noronha, freshman Amelia Cherry, senior Megan Nowack and junior Sienna Gray.



JAMES KIEFER | CHATHAM NEWS + RECORD

GIRLS SOCCER from page 1

way I think about them is as the level we need to get to. When I said after the game last year, 'Next year starts now,' that's what I meant. We knew what they were going to look like this year. They aren't going to come to us. We have to go find them. If we get to play them, we know exactly what they're going to be like."

Woods Charter entered Tuesday's semifinal game with an overall record of 19-1-3. Over the course of the regular season, the Wolves drew three times against Northwood, Carrboro and Cornerstone Charter. Their 1-0 defeat on the road at Franklin Academy on April 11 was their only loss of the season.

Stewart's team entered the state playoffs as the No. 1 seed in the 1A east and won their first three playoff games heading into Tuesday night's semi by a combined score of 24-1. He said he feels better about this year's team than he did about last year's at this same point.

"We've used last year as a sort of trigger point to come into this year, and we knew the things that we needed to work on," Stewart said. "We've really challenged ourselves. As a team, I think we're better than we were last year. We have great balance. We have good scoring across the team. We just found a good path of play. There's nothing about this game that should be new to them. They know how to play in those games. That's the other part of learning last year. Sometimes you have to be there to see it and feel it."

Entering Tuesday's game, Woods Charter's leading scorers this season were freshman Amelia Cherry (41 goals, five assists) and junior Sienna Gray (37 goals, 23 assists). The team's leading scorer in 2022 — Leyla Noronha (50 goals last season) — has contributed 27 goals and a team-high 24 assists.

Acting as a facilitator in the midfield, Noronha has been crucial in finding her teammates on attacking runs and laying off passes in the box while also showing off her scoring boots once in a while.

"What Amelia and Sienna have done is change the way we played from last year," Stewart said. "That's one of the reasons why I think we've improved. Sienna is insatiable up top and Amelia is a brush of quality on the outside. We have good balance. It has taken some of the pressure for goal-scoring off Leyla. She still wants to score, there are runs that she can find, and invariably she finds them."

While Woods Charter's ultimate goal this season is to win a state championship, this likely won't be the last season the Wolves are among the top teams in the 1A classification. This year's team features five seniors, but six of the Wolves' top eight goal-scorers will be back for the team again in 2024.

Since starting at Woods Charter in 2014, Stewart has led the Wolves to an overall record of 134-49-8. The 19 wins this season coming into Tuesday night matched the most for the Wolves in a single season in program history, which they set last year.



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

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- Sanford 3:00-3:45 @ Carolina Town & Country

Wednesday, June 14

- Graham 11:30-12:15 @ Graham Feed
- Chapel Hill 3:15-4:00 @ Piedmont Feed

Thursday, June 15

- Pittsboro 8:00-8:45 @ Pittsboro Feed
- Siler City 9:15-10:00 @ Southern States
- Asheboro 10:45-11:30 @ Southern States

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Council on Aging Weekly Activities Calendar

Monday, May 29

COA Offices Closed for Memorial Day

Tuesday, May 30

Eastern Chatham Senior Center

- 8:15 a.m. - **Body Conditioning w/Jackie**
- 9 a.m. - **3G's Men's Group**
- 10 a.m. - **Woodcarvers; Choir To Siler City; Cardio Drumming**
- 10:30 a.m. - **Gym Orientation**
- 11 a.m. - **Activity w/Alan**
- 1 p.m. - **Rummikub**
- 2 p.m. - **Zumba Gold Intro**

Western Chatham Senior Center

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

Wednesday, May 31

Eastern Chatham Senior Center

- 10 a.m. - **Chair Yoga w/Liz (in-person and Zoom)**
- 1 p.m. - **Open Art Studio (Bring Your Own Project)**
- 2 p.m. - **Intro to Photoshop Class for Seniors (RSVP Alan Russo)**

Western Chatham Senior Center

- 9 a.m. - **Strong & Fit w/Olivia**
- 10:00 a.m. - **Bible Study**
- 10:30 a.m. - **NC Senior Tar Heel Legislature 30th Anniversary Celebration**
- 2 p.m. - **Crafting w/Kathryn**

Thursday, June 1

Eastern Chatham Senior Center

- 8:15 a.m. - **Body Conditioning w/Jackie**
- 10 a.m. - **Bingo**
- 11 a.m. - **Nutrition Education w/Ann Clark**
- 1 p.m. - **Games/Cards; Bridge**
- 1:30 p.m. - **Line Dancing**
- 3 p.m. - **Gentle Yoga w/Liz**

Western Chatham Senior Center

- 9 a.m. - **Men's Coffee & Conversations**
- 10 a.m. - **Bocce & Horseshoes; Music Jam Session; Mental Health w/Tammy Curry**

- 1 p.m. - **Book Club**
- 3 p.m. - **Thursday Social - Movie**

Friday, June 2

Eastern Chatham Senior Center

- 8:15 a.m. - **Body Conditioning w/Jackie**
- 10 a.m. - **Strong & Fit w/Jackie**
- 11:15 a.m. - **Cornhole**
- 1 p.m. - **Games/Euchre**
- 3 p.m. - **Jukebox Live! (Dance Music)**

Western Chatham Senior Center

- 9 a.m. - **Strong & Fit w/Olivia**
- 10 a.m. - **Grief Support Group; Beginning Quilting**
- 10:30 a.m. - **Drawing w/Lacy**
- 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

O'NEILL from page 1

in Richmond this spring. She has also competed in showcases across several states with her club team, and her squad won the Jefferson Cup — one of the top youth soccer tournaments in the country — in her age group back in April.

"I'm always working to improve my game, but two main opportunities have given me the ability to improve this season," O'Neill said. "One being the daily training after school, before soccer training, with my high school track team, which has helped with my endurance, fitness and speed. And the second is being invited to play up in elite soccer games, SuperCups and tournaments with an elite, older group of players that challenge and push me."

This type of environment leaves little room for many other extra-curriculars, and O'Neill didn't compete for

the Seaforth girls soccer team this spring because her schedule was already too demanding.

O'Neill is admittedly a little frustrated that she can't play for the Hawks. She watched intently this spring as Seaforth made its run in the state playoffs and rooted for them the entire way. She knows that while it would be nice to compete with her peers at the high school level, she has bigger things in her future, and her current schedule is allowing her to build toward those goals.

"I have to remind myself that I am on a team that is helping me get one step closer to my goals of playing D-1 college soccer continuing to do U.S. Soccer training," O'Neill said. "I have been grateful for the opportunities that have been presented to me with my current team but, that doesn't mean I don't wish I could also play for my high school team too."

WHITE from page 1

scholarship offers. As a fit at either guard spot, White's biggest strength is her playmaking on offense. She's just as likely to make a tough shot as she is to throw a pinpoint skip pass to a teammate for an open look.

This past winter, White averaged 15.5 points, 10.0 rebounds, 3.7 assists and 3.2 steals per game for Seaforth and scored at least 10 points in all 25 games she played in. She said she looks forward to speaking with coaches and the rest of the process once her recruiting window officially opens.

"I'm really excited and honored for the chance to make new relationships," White said. "Regardless of what happens, I'm just going to come into it with a positive mindset."

While she hasn't had any contact with college coaches yet, White does have a pretty good feeling for what's expected at the next level and how it differs from high school. Her mom, Joanne Aluka-White, has been an assistant coach for the UNC women's basketball team since 2019, and before that she spent seven years at Charlotte.

White has tagged along to several practices over the

years, and she said the USA trials offered a similar type of environment to what she'll encounter at the next level.

"There were a lot of similarities," White said. "Like having your own responsibilities, whether it was getting your laundry in on time or going to bed on time. You had to depend a lot on yourself and your teammates. I think it was a step toward the look of what I think college will be like. The places we stayed were also dorms, so that was similar. There were a lot of similarities."

When she returns to the court next year for Seaforth, White will be a junior and arguably the top returning player in all of Chatham County. In her first two seasons with the Hawks, she has totaled 823 points, 528 rebounds, 197 assists and 184 steals.

White told the News + Record that she still has plenty of room to improve.

"I'm really aggressive (on offense), so I really want to stick to that," she said. "I also want to expand my range when it comes to shooting. And my leadership role, I really want to work on that so we can have freshmen coming in or players coming back that can really depend on me to help them with whatever they need."

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NBA Finals preview: The best team vs. the best coach



Jeremy Vernon, and N+R Sports Editor

AFTER MONDAY night's beatdown of the Celtics by the Heat in Boston in Game 7 of the Eastern Conference Finals, the NBA Finals are finally set.

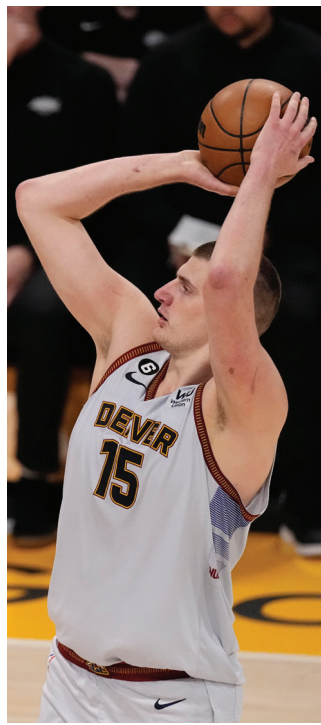
Starting at 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, the Miami Heat will face the Denver Nuggets in the final series of the NBA season. This year's Finals might seem lopsided in favor of the Nuggets, but the Heat have shown over the past few rounds that they take pride in being giant-killers.

Miami will face its biggest giant to date in the finals, though, in Denver center Nikola Jokic. The two-time NBA MVP might have been robbed of a third individual accolade this season, but he hasn't let it affect his playoff performance.

In 15 postseason games so far in 2023, the Joker is averaging 29.9 points, 13.3 rebounds and 10.3 assists per game. He is the third player ever, joining Wilt Chamberlain (1967) and Magic Johnson (1982), to enter the NBA Finals averaging a triple-double, and his eight triple-doubles this playoffs are already the most by a single player in a single postseason.

Jokic is the unique player who can affect a basketball game in every conceivable way. His big frame allows him to bully smaller defenders and get open looks in the post. He can knock down mid-range and 3-point jumpers. He's a maniac on the offensive glass. And he's the best passing big man in NBA history, regularly dropping ludicrous dimes to his teammates.

Jokic is the engine that makes Denver go, but the Nuggets are not a one-man circus. Denver's second-best player during the postseason has been Jamal Murray, who is finally returning to form after tearing his ACL back in April 2021. The guard is averaging 27.7 points, 5.5



MATT KELLEY | AP PHOTO

Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokic, right, shoots over Los Angeles Lakers forward Rui Hachimura (28) in the second half of Game 4 of the NBA basketball Western Conference Final series Monday, May 22, 2023, in Los Angeles.

rebounds and 6.1 assists per game in the postseason while shooting 39.8% from 3-point range, and he's scored at least 35 points in a game on four separate occasions.

On top of Jokic and Murray, Denver has other offensive options like Michael Porter Jr. (14.6 ppg), Aaron Gordon (13.0), Bruce Brown (12.2) and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope (11.7) than can carry the burden for a few minutes while one of the top two is on the bench.

Miami, on the other hand, is by no means a flame-throwing offense. The Heat have one and a half stars in small forward Jimmy Butler and center Bam Adebayo, and the latter was frustratingly

passive on offense in the series win over the Celtics. Stepping up in a big way for the Heat in the playoffs this spring have been their role players — namely Caleb Martin and Gabe Vincent — who are averaging 14.1 and 13.1 points per game, respectively, this postseason.

Where the Heat do have an advantage over the Nuggets is in coaching. Michael Malone is a fine leader, but he doesn't hold a candle to Miami's Erik Spoelstra. Starting as a video assistant for the team back in 1997, Spoelstra has been the Heat's coach since 2008 and has won two NBA championships back in 2012 and 2013. This is his sixth Finals appearance as a head coach, his most recent coming during the NBA Bubble back in 2020.

During the Eastern Conference Finals, Spoelstra put on a coaching clinic against Boston's Joe Mazzula. In the final two games of the series, the Heat coach employed a zone that confused the Celtics and caused them to make just 16-of-77 (20.8%) of their 3-pointers.

Spoelstra will have his hands full with trying to slow down Jokic and the rest of Denver's high-powered offense in this series, but if there's anyone I trust to figure out a viable strategy, it's him.

Still, it's going to take more than preparation to beat the Nuggets. Executing under the bright lights is a whole other story. Personally, I think it will be tough for Miami to keep pace with Denver.

Jokic is the best player in the NBA right now and is rising up the list of best all-time big men by the day. Beating the Heat and winning his first NBA championship this season would go a long way toward bolstering his legacy, one which is still growing at just 28 years old.

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Should You Consider 401(K) Loans or Withdrawals?

At some point, you may have more money in your 401(k) than in any other investment. And even though your 401(k) is intended for your retirement, you may one day think you have to tap into your account early — but should you? And if you do, how should you go about it?

If it's possible to avoid taking money from your 401(k) before you retire, you probably should do so. You could spend 25 or more years in retirement, and you'll need to pay for those years, so you may want to look for alternatives to your 401(k). If you've built an emergency fund containing several months' worth of living expenses in cash or cash equivalents, you could use some of this money. If you have a Health Savings Account (HSA), you could use it to pay for qualified medical expenses. Or you could sell some of your taxable investments, rather than going into your tax-deferred 401(k).

But if you have determined that you must look at your 401(k) plan to meet a short-term funding need, you'll want to carefully consider how to go about it. You typically have two main choices: loans or withdrawals.

For plans that allow loans, employees can generally borrow up to 50% of the vested amount of their 401(k)s, up to a maximum of \$50,000 within a 12-month period. Administrative fees may apply, and Interest will be charged, but it will be added back to the 401(k) account as part of the loan repayments. Except when they're used for a home purchase, loans must be repaid within five years, with equal payments made at least quarterly, unless payments are allowed to be paused temporarily. If you leave the company or don't repay the loan according to the agreement, the loan balance will likely be treated as a taxable distribution.

Now, let's consider withdrawals. For 401(k) plans that allow current employees to make withdrawals, the withdrawal requests are usually considered either hardship or non-hardship. To qualify for a hardship withdrawal, you must demonstrate an immediate and heavy financial need to pay for certain expenses, including a home purchase, college, a medical issue or other specified costs, and your withdrawal is limited to the amount necessary to meet the need. Non-hardship withdrawals can typically be taken for any purpose but usually are not granted until you're 59½ or older.

Unlike with a loan, a hardship withdrawal can't be repaid, while a non-hardship withdrawal can usually only be repaid by rolling over the amount to an IRA within 60 days. But the bigger issue may be taxes. If you withdraw funds from your 401(k), any previously untaxed money is generally taxed as ordinary income and a 10% penalty will apply if you're younger than 59½, unless you qualify for an exception. Plus, your 401(k) plan typically must withhold 20% of the withdrawal for taxes, so you'd have to take an even larger withdrawal to meet your needs.

Before embarking on a 401(k) loan or withdrawal, you may want to consult with a financial professional and your tax advisor. Taking money from your 401(k) is a big move, so make sure you know everything that's involved.

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

Edward Jones, Member SIPC

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CLIPBOARD Q&A: SEAFORTH BOYS GOLF COACH BOBBY STEWART

Hawks plan to use state runner-up finish as fuel for the future

By **Jeremy Vernon**
Chatham News + Record

COMPETING at the 2A boys golf state championships at Longleaf Golf Club in Southern Pines last Monday and Tuesday, Seaforth finished second in the team competition with a total score of +56, 44 strokes behind first-place finisher East Surry and three strokes ahead of third-place Bandys.

Leading the way for the Hawks over the two-day tournament was junior Griffin Ching, who shot +7 overall, including a +1 in Round 2. Freshman Ty Willoughby shot +11, while sophomore Gray Stewart and freshman Campbell Meador shot +15 and +23, respectively. Seaforth's runner-up finish came one week after the Hawks won the 2A mid-east regional tournament.

Earlier this week, Seaforth head coach Bobby Stewart spoke with the News + Record about his team's success at the state championships, his players' progress across the season and his expectations for the future.

CN+R: You finished second at the state championships behind a really good East Surry team. Walk me through the two days of competition and what it felt like to see your team put together such a good finish.

Bobby Stewart: First of all, East Surry was incredible. We came out on Day 1 and we were a bit nervous. We teed off on the front nine both days. The front day was the harder of the two nines, considerably. The first hole, we got off to a slow start. I think we had two of four hit the ball out of bounds on the first tee the first day. But we fought back. Everyone kind of steadied



PJ WARD-BROWN | NORTH STATE JOURNAL

Staff photo by P.J. Ward Brown — Seaforth junior Griffin Ching shot +7 over two rounds, good for 12th place at the 2A boys golf championships. The Hawks finished second overall as a team.

and we had one of our players, Gray Stewart, shot under par on the back nine. At the end of the first day, we thought we had played pretty well and were in decent shape, except East Surry was lightyears ahead of everyone else.

The night between the two rounds, I talked to the team at length about going out there and really competing to finish as runner-up. The kids did the same thing on Day 2. They got off to a rough start on hole No. 1, all four of them, and so they had to steady themselves again. When we made the turn on Day 2, we felt like we needed to put together a solid back nine across the board, and that's what they did. Griffin Ching went under par. Ty Willoughby shot even par on the back. Gray Stewart and Campbell Meador shot a 41 and a 40. There were still three teams to come in, two of which were in that same grouping competing for runner-up, so we watched those guys finish up. As we were sitting there and scores began to get posted, the realization set in and the guys realized they were more than likely going to finish

runner-up. They just got super excited. They were so tired and so excited after the round. It was a tremendous feeling.

Three of your four golfers who competed at the state championships, aside from Griffin, did so for the first time. What has it been like to see the growth of the whole team and seeing them tie a bow on a nice season the way they did?

Early on in the year, I think they started to realize they could probably do something special. But actually going out there and doing something special is a bit different. As the year went on, they became a stronger team. They were very connected to one another and focused on each other's success. Individually, they were able to steady themselves, even in the most nerve-wracking scenarios. When all of them played a poor nine at the state championships at some point, they were able to let that nine go and steady themselves and perform at a higher level. It was just exciting to watch the

maturity, not only the team, but each individual player. To be able for them to recognize that, "Hey, I might have played a bad couple of holes, but I have the ability to be better than this, and that's what I'm going to work towards." To be able to watch them do that on Day 2 of the state championships was incredible. That's what it took on that back nine. They all had to perform better to have a chance, and they put themselves in position.

You have made a ton of progress in just two years. What next steps do you want to see your team make over the offseason to make sure they continue to compete at a high level?

We talked immediately after the championships and after the excitement had worn down a little bit. We talked about three things. One, the kids as a team — and this is one through nine, not one through four — all staying together and playing together as much as they can in the offseason. They've already started to do that. Two, the top four need to keep working individually on strengthening their games. What we saw with East Surry was that it really helps to have a couple of players who can shoot really low scores. I know all of our top four have that ability, but to be able to do that consistently and in a pressure situation, that's their ultimate goal. And beyond that, our four through nine guys need to keep working on their game. The key to our success this year, honestly, is that we were really deep. Any of our top four, or top six, on any given day could play really well. We'd like to build on that, so that our number five, six, seven players and beyond maintain that depth and that commitment so that if one of

our top four struggles on a given day, someone can step in and produce a score and keep us well-positioned as a team.

And they need to continue to commit to the team environment. They just had so much fun playing with each other. It's interesting, someone at the state championships asked me what the most interesting part of the season was, and what I said was practice, at the end of the day. At practice, we were very competitive amongst ourselves, but it was always light-hearted. It was encouraging. The kids were trying to help each other get better. Sometimes I just found myself enjoying the banter amongst the teammates about golf and what's going on in practice that day. As long as we're able to maintain that culture and build off that culture, I think we'll continue to make pretty significant strides year after year.

Looking ahead, do you know of any incoming freshmen who you expect to contribute next spring?

I've heard that there are a couple who are slated to end up at Seaforth. I haven't talked to any of them and I don't know who they are, but I've heard about them through the grapevine. At this time last year, after the season wrapped up, there was already some chatter about a couple of kids coming in, and that ended up to be Ty Willoughby and Campbell Meador, and they were instrumental. I'm hopeful there are one or two out there who can come in, compete and push us forward.

And I'm excited about another thing too. After this year's regional, which was just outside Raleigh, they put next year's regional location up for bid. We worked immediately with The Preserve at Jordan Lake to be able to do that. So we're going to be hosting the regional championships in Chatham County this upcoming year. I think that puts us in a great position. To be able to play on our home course will be quite an advantage, I think.

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features & entertainment

Summer days, drifting away

CN+R Staff shares their anthems for the summer

BRIGHT, SUNNY DAYS are on the horizon as summer approaches. While the season of summer won't officially start until June 21, the warm weather and good vibes start at the end of May, often accompanied by the end of the school year and Memorial Day weekend.

The News + Record staff have created a collection of our favorite songs to bring in the long, warm and sunny days of summer. Join us in channeling the salty sea air and the calm of those summer nights.

'Cruel Summer' by Taylor Swift

Picked by Taylor Heeden, reporter and web editor

"Cruel Summer" by Taylor Swift has been a staple in every summer or roadtrip playlist I have created since its release in 2019.

The song takes us through a one-sided summer romance, one where Taylor pours her heart and soul to her partner, while he wants to keep their relationship from surfacing.

"I don't wanna keep secrets just to keep you/ And I snuck in through the garden gate/ Every night that summer just to seal my fate," she pleads to her love. "And I scream 'For whatever it's worth/ I love you, ain't that the worst thing you ever heard?'"

"Cruel Summer" has the ability to not only reach into the hearts of all of us who've experienced those summer flings and heartbreak, but it also manages to entice audiences with its lively melody and catchy chorus and bridge.

So when you're in the mood to scream a song on the way to the beach with your gals because you're heartbroken over someone who screwed you over, "Cruel Summer" is the song for you!

'Stole from Heaven' by Ally London

Picked by Taylor Heeden, reporter and web editor

Ally London is a young, up-and-coming artist from Nashville, T.N., and is about to graduate from the Royal Academy of Music in London with her master's degree in vocal performance. Her debut album, *Kaleidoscopes*, came out last year, and she's bringing all of that energy into her new single, "Stole from Heaven."

"Stole from Heaven" is a catchy summer ballad, filled with images of blue skies and love from the heavens. The guitar riffs will transport you to those summer roadtrips with friends and will have you humming the tune all day long.

I met Ally during my time at UNC-Chapel Hill as she was one of the people on my fiancée's study abroad group. She's a very talented and kind-hearted person who puts all of her passion into her work. If you're looking for a new face to add to your music rotation, look no further!

'Snapback' by Old Dominion

Picked by Matt Mercer, editor-in-chief

A summer song is about the vibes. That's my take and the way "Snapback" eases into a classic three minute, thirty-second classic country music window gets you through the first verse before you barely know it.

This song, like most everyone's, takes on a personal meaning. For me, this song was always on it seemed like when my now-wife and I started dating. It was on rotation for our Saturday night dance parties (ah, young love).

I saw them perform it when they filled a 3,000 seat amphitheater in 2017 and then two years later when they sold out the Spectrum Center in Charlotte. When those initial chords and "woah oh oh oh" start I get that same tingling feeling I did



MATT RAMEY | CHATHAM NEWS + RECORD

A lifeguard at Bray Park's Aquatic Facility oversees swimmers having a fun time on Memorial Day.

MATT RAMEY | CHATHAM NEWS + RECORD

A boy snorkels in the Bray Park pool on Memorial Day. The pool opened its gates over the weekend for the first time this summer season.

over seven years ago.

'Your Love' by The Outfield

Picked by Matt Mercer, editor-in-chief

Far from easing in, I dare you not to sing along when you hear: "Josie's on a vacation far away/ Come around talk it over/ So many things that I wanna say/ You know I like my girls a little bit older."

"Your Love" is an earworm whether you're listening to the song, a cover band, or someone with enough liquid courage to sing it at a karaoke night.

'Yo No Sé Mañana' by Luis Enrique

Picked by Valeria Cloës, intern

Starting with soft vocalizations by Nicaraguan singer Luis Enrique, the song builds momentum to the chorus, the singer bursting with energy as he sings "Yo no sé mañana, yo no sé mañana (I don't know tomorrow/ Si estaremos juntos, si se acaba el mundo (If we'll be together, if the world will end)."

This love song transports the listener into the unknown, emphasizing that since nothing is promised and don't know what tomorrow brings, we must enjoy the present to the fullest.

This particular sentiment — one of staying present — is one of my personal life mottos that has helped me overcome my anxiety.

And that mixed with other hopelessly romantic song lyrics, resonates with my lover-girl personality. The lyrics and salsa beat will surely make for a dance-filled summer.

'Vivir Mi Vida' by Marc Anthony

Picked by Valeria Cloës, intern

This song needs little to no introduction. Known around the world by Spanish-speakers and non-spanish speakers alike, "Vivir Mi Vida" will — hopefully — resonate with everyone, and get everyone up and out of their chairs.

Personally, Marc Anthony's iconic song brings me back to summer 2022, when I was on a two-week trip around Italy, which I can proudly say I worked for over three years to pay for.

I was having dinner in a family-owned restaurant in Monterosso al Mare, having a delicious traditional dessert of the region, when my best friend Camila and I suddenly started hearing the tune through the speaker.

Without any hesitation, she and I started dancing and singing in the middle of the restaurant. The owner sees us, turns the music louder, shouts "I love Marc Anthony" and starts singing with us as he cleans the restaurant.

I hope you can have a similar moment listening to this song this summer: living your life to the fullest and soaking in every second of it, with no worries of what others will think.

'Cast Iron Kettle' by Joseph Terrell

Picked by Ben Rappaport, reporter

Joseph Terrell, of the Chapel Hill-based band Mipso, released his first solo project earlier this month. The album, "Good For Nothing Howl," is an ode to his roots in North Carolina and exploring creative expression beyond the everyday.

One way Terrell is also exploring that creativity is by moving to Chatham County. Our new neighbor says he was inspired by the trees and nature in his creation of the album.

"I started writing songs about trees, but I think it ended up being more about that feeling of paying attention," Terrell told Axios Raleigh in an interview about the new album. "There are these things that are always all around and they really make up the fabric of the world that we live in. It's amazing how much we don't pay attention."

"Cast Iron Kettle," the single off the new album, speaks of paying attention more to the places we call home, and appreciating its intricacies. And the ways feeling home can reinvigorate our souls with a sense of place and renewed energy.

Summer can often be a time of vacation, or feeling jealous of the places other people visit while you're stuck at home. Terrell reminds us, with this song and his album at large, that there is beauty to appreciate in our own backyard if we stop and listen to the sycamores,

persimmons and all the howls Chatham County has to offer.

'Oxen' by Chatham Rabbits

Picked by Ben Rappaport, reporter

Bynum natives Austin and Sarah McCombie found success in the folk and Americana music scene as Chatham Rabbits. The duo, which got their start playing shows on Bynum Front Porch, leans on stories of Chatham and its roots as a mill community as fodder for their tunes.

In "Oxen," a single containing the titular lyrics off their sophomore album "The Yoke is Easy, the Burden Is Full," they speak of the power of community to uplift and carry people into the future.

"There's strength in numbers/ And we can share the load," Sarah sings. "Look over your shoulder/ And there you'll find your hope."

I've always found summer to be a period of transition — from one school year to another, a break from the hustle and bustle. In those transitions, the McCombies remind us the importance of leaning on friends and loved ones.

"When we decided to take the plunge I just remember the Chatham community being so incredibly encouraging," Sarah told the News + Record earlier this year. "No one thought we were crazy because it's such a strong arts community."

While Chatham County is growing by the day, its roots as a close-knit rural community remain. This summer, let's remember the words of "Oxen" and be there for one another through this transition into the unknown future.

'Strange Fascination' by Chatham County Line

Picked by Ben Rappaport, reporter

The bluegrass melodies of Chatham County Line offer a sense of return-to-nature that remind me of the desired bliss of summer.

"Strange Fascination" is the local band's most popular song and title track off their 2020 album of the same name. Like other songs from local artists, it shares themes of being entranced by nature and the power of the rural landscapes of Chatham County have in centering us amid a chaotic world.

"Strange fascination/ Reach for a shooting star," lead singer Dave Whiting sings in the chorus. "Don't know how lucky/ Don't know how lucky you are."

The song's peaceful tones are a reminder of the serenity summer can bring, and the ways being surrounded by loved ones in this sunny season can enhance those feelings.

'National Anthem' by Lana del Rey

Picked by Lauren Rose, design editor

Combine "hot girl summer" with "sad girl summer" and

you've got a clear hit — and perhaps a potential emotional roller coaster (but no judgement there).

Though known for her sultry, "sad girl" aesthetic, Lana del Rey's single "National Anthem" takes a split from that persona to indulge the listener in instrumentals and lyricism that can't help but radiate "summer vibes," and the chorus speaks for itself: "Red, white, blue is in the sky/ Summer's in the air and baby, heaven's in your eyes/ I'm your national anthem."

Life, love and luxury are prominent themes in this single, and paired with a distinct Los Angeles summer-energy, this single makes for an essential song to add to the summer playlist this season. I promise this one will be your "Summer Anthem" by the end of the season.

'Island in the Sun' by Weezer

Picked by Lauren Rose, design editor

Well, it seems the title speaks for itself for this choice.

If Lana's "National Anthem" brought on the feels, then Weezer's "Island in the Sun" will definitely mellow them out.

Opening with laid-back guitar strumming, you can already tell this single is going to have a chill energy to relax with by the pool. Soft vocalizations carry the listener into lyrics describing the peak summer experiences for the chorus: "On an island in the sun/ We'll be playin' and havin' fun/ And it makes me feel so fine/ I can't control my brain."

I *literally* can't think of anything I'd rather be doing on summer break than playin' and havin' fun. Can you?

'Long Beach' by Kota the Friend, Hello O'shay and Alex Banin

Picked by Jeremy Vernon, sports editor

It wouldn't be summer without summer love, and Brooklyn-based rapper Kota the Friend rhymes to that effect in this single from the album *EVERYTHING*, which came out back in 2020.

As the title suggests, Long Beach is peak summer vibes. The song opens with waves of electronic sounds, rather than ocean waves, but they carry the tune through its upbeat chorus and two light-hearted verses.

"I can change the story if you let me/ Promise in the mornin' won't forget me/ Lately, I been missin' California, I am far from perfect/ But you get me."

Relatable and versatile, Long Beach is a song for any situation, whether it be a day on the beach, a night on the town or a low-key night in with your summer love.

'Slide' by Calvin Harris ft. Frank Ocean and Migos

Picked by Jeremy Vernon, sports editor

This single from pop artist and producer Calvin Harris came out in February of 2017, but it always reminds me of the summer season.

From the first few notes, which are played on my favorite instrument — the piano — Slide takes hold of you and transports you to a place where all the worries of your normal life melt away. This song came out during my senior year of college, and it always reminds me of my last semester at UNC and my first summer out on my own after graduating.

While Frank Ocean, Quavo and Offset provide the vocals for Slide, Harris played a new version of the song at Coachella this year that included a verse from the third member of Migos, Takeoff, who was killed in a shooting in Houston back in November. It was a nice tribute to who I personally thought was the best rapper of the Atlanta-based trio.

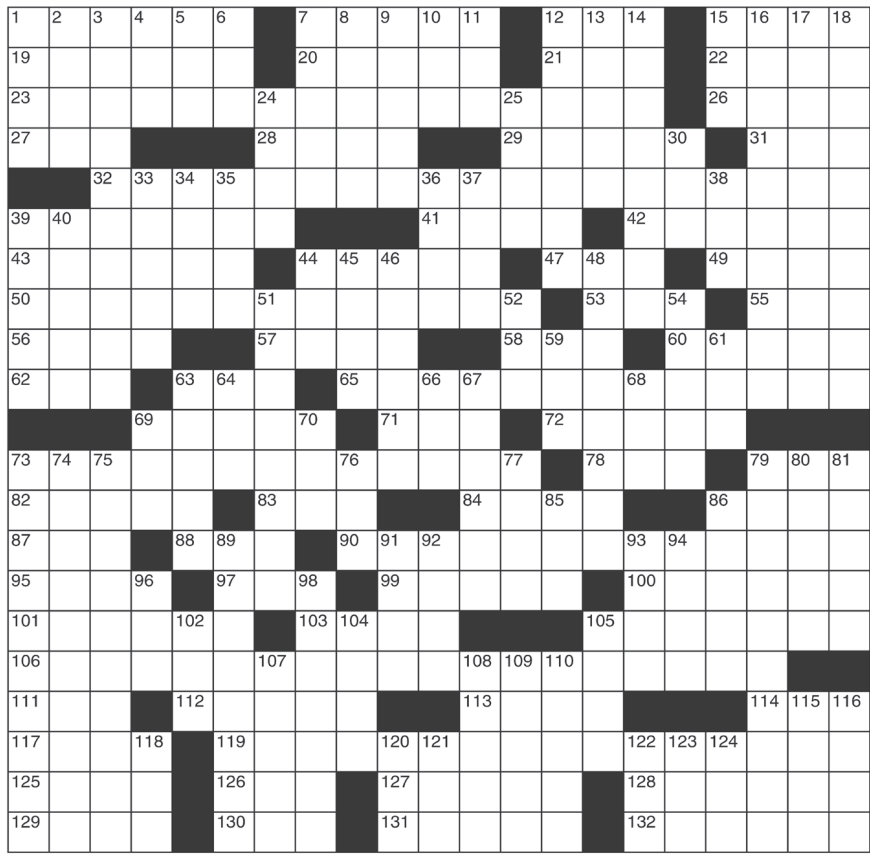
Slide is all good vibes.

PEN AND PAPER PURSUITS

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo

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- ACROSS**
 1 Despises
 7 Tennis great Rafael
 12 Loutish guy
 15 Drop- (declines)
 19 Comed beef sandwich
 20 Kind of daisy
 21 Bullring shout
 22 Perfume bottle
 23 Baseball's "Iron Man," fully stated?
 26 Western U.S. gas brand
 27 Hit sketch show since '75
 28 Atop
 29 Move, as a seedling
 31 Stitch clothes
 32 Statistic of a chemical element, fully stated?
 39 Protein in egg white and milk
 41 Panther
 42 2010s dance move often done with the Whip
 43 Tropical vines
- DOWN**
 1 Circle bits
 2 Coffee bit
 3 Uproar
 4 Kabuki sash
 5 Sports official
 6 — -Caps (candy brand)
 7 Not for Windows
 8 Truism
 9 Country singer Carter
 10 Scottish port
 11 Luau gift
 12 Certain cola container
 13 Hebrew "A"
 14 Rail against
 15 Egg cells
 16 Initial performance on Broadway, say
 17 Inked cheek image, e.g.
 18 Period when sales slump
 24 Destroy
 25 Baby buggy, in Britain
 30 Airport agcy.
- ACROSS**
 44 —'s razor ("keep it simple" principle)
 47 Fallon's network
 49 Singer Ora
 50 Irritability, fully stated?
 53 — Lingus
 55 Some racing autos
 56 Evil "Get Smart" group
 57 Tyro, in gaming lingo
 58 Actor Cage, informally
 60 Sneeze noise
 62 Prefix with tourism
 63 "Aladdin" monkey
 65 Auto-cleaning site, fully stated?
 69 "I knew it all —!"
 71 Once surnamed
 72 "Thank you, Yvette!"
 73 Lode of unrefined metal, fully stated?
 78 — -di-dah
 79 .001 inch
 82 Singer Cherry
 83 Hoppy drink
- DOWN**
 84 UConn women's basketball coach
 Auriemma
 86 Radiohead title track of 2000
 87 Prone (to)
 88 British islet
 90 Biblical boat, fully stated?
 95 Architect Ludwig Mies van der —
 97 Fun, in brief
 99 "The — Professor"
 100 Tribe of the Southwest
 101 Grads
 103 Ear-busting
 105 Mistaken
 106 Annual beauty contest, fully stated?
 111 Sorority letter
 112 Motif
 113 Solitary
 114 Uproar
 117 At the drop of —
 119 "Mystic River" actor, fully stated?
 125 Christ, in Italy
 126 CPR expert
 127 French ice cream
- ACROSS**
 80 Boise locale
 81 Cutting beam
 85 Anti's vote
 86 Tree knots
 89 Body of water west of Liverpool
 91 "Movin' —" ("The Jeffersons" song)
 92 German auto
 93 "Citizen —"
 94 Impressionist
 96 "Mom" has two weather conditions
 102 Tiny criticism
 104 Uncork, e.g.
 105 Judith with two Tonys
 107 Looks as if
 108 Arm bones (temporarily)
 109 For the —
 110 Map blowup
 115 Cut calories
 116 Boaters' tools
 118 Mon. follower
 120 Links gp.
 121 Letters before 96-Down
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Solution for the puzzle in last week's edition.

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 MANYLONGHOURSEACH MIT
 RID OMAR MMI DIRE SIS
 OSAGE TAD PBS RAFT
 DESI DAYENTIRELY SPIT
 LOIS WII IDI LARCH
 ITS BOHO LON INDO UKE
 NRA ONAVOLUNTEERBASIS
 LANCE ERASER SENSEI
 ASTI SARI AFC KISS
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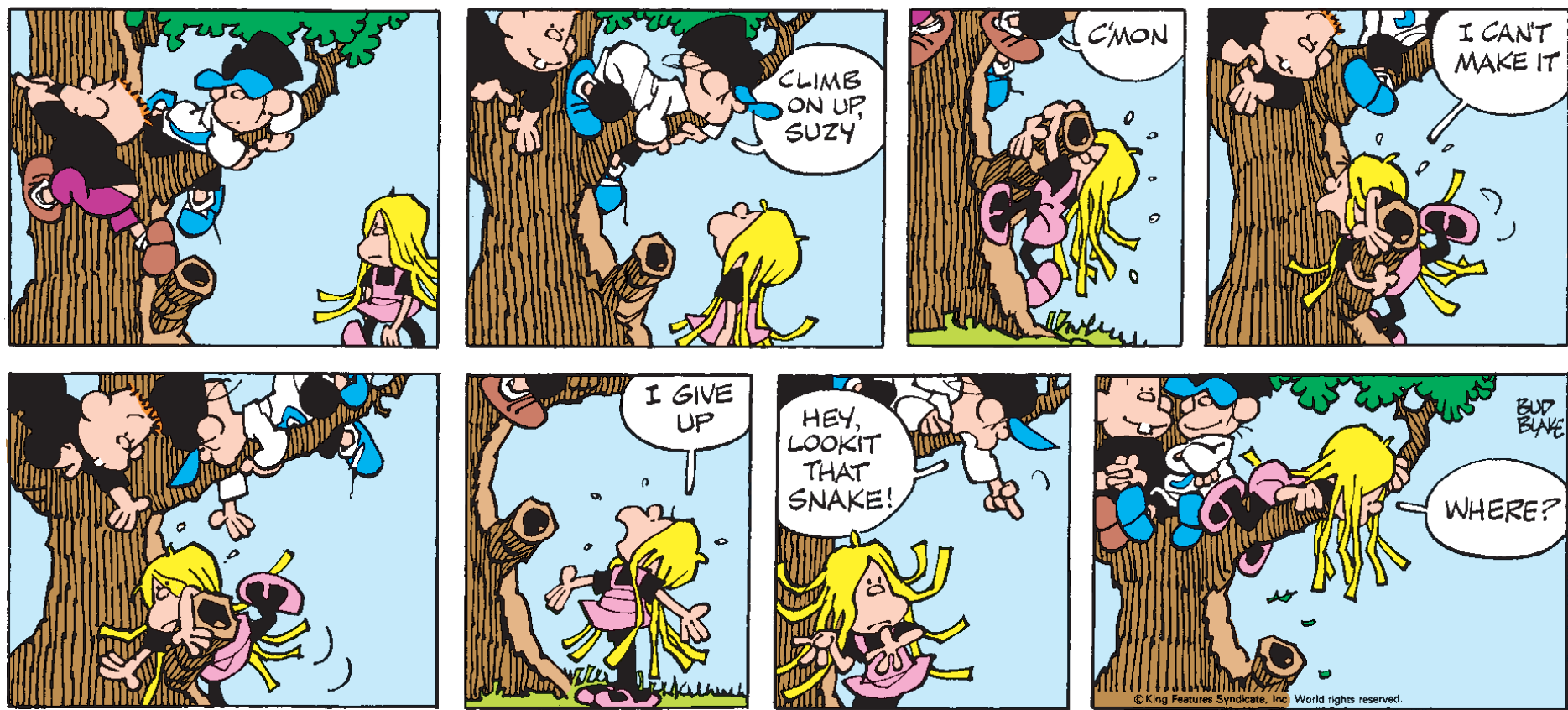
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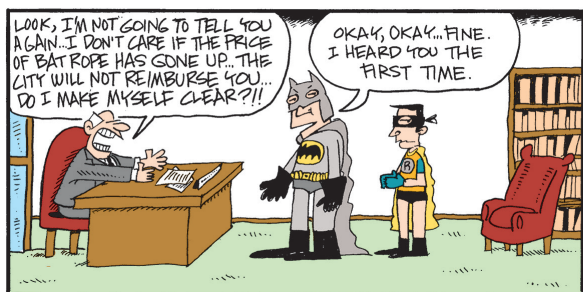
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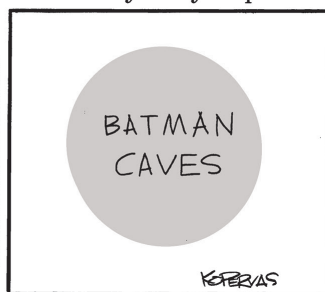
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Out on a Limb



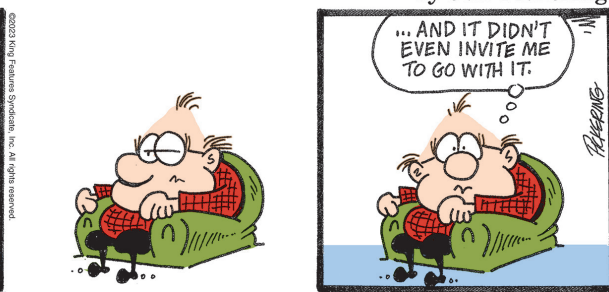
by Gary Kopervas



The Spats



by Jeff Pickering



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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.

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◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging

◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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 Y W V U S R F Q M B P B C N M

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally
 Unlisted clue hint: A CONTAINER FOR ARROWS

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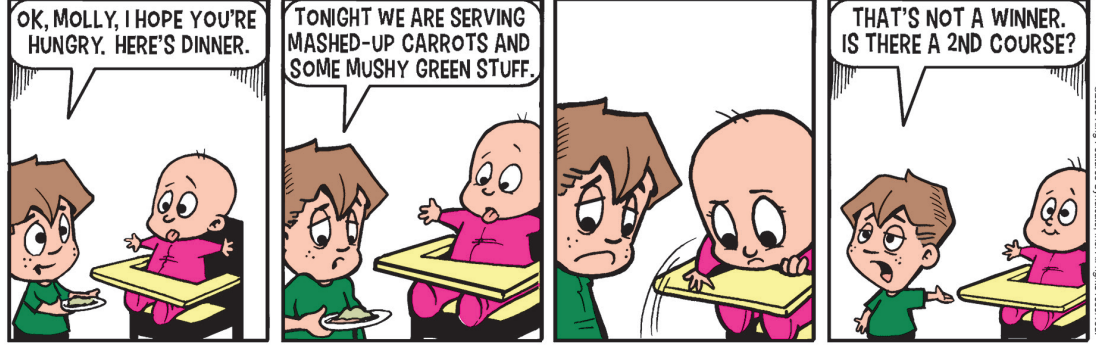
GRIN and BEAR IT by Wagner



"We used to mold them like clay. ... Now it's Silly Putty!"

Amber Waves

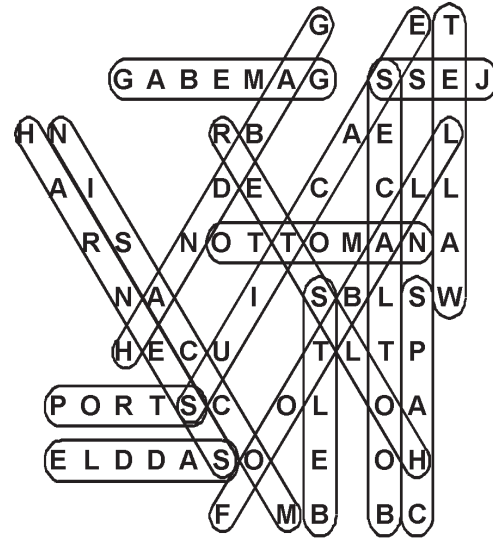
by Dave T. Phipps



SOLUTIONS

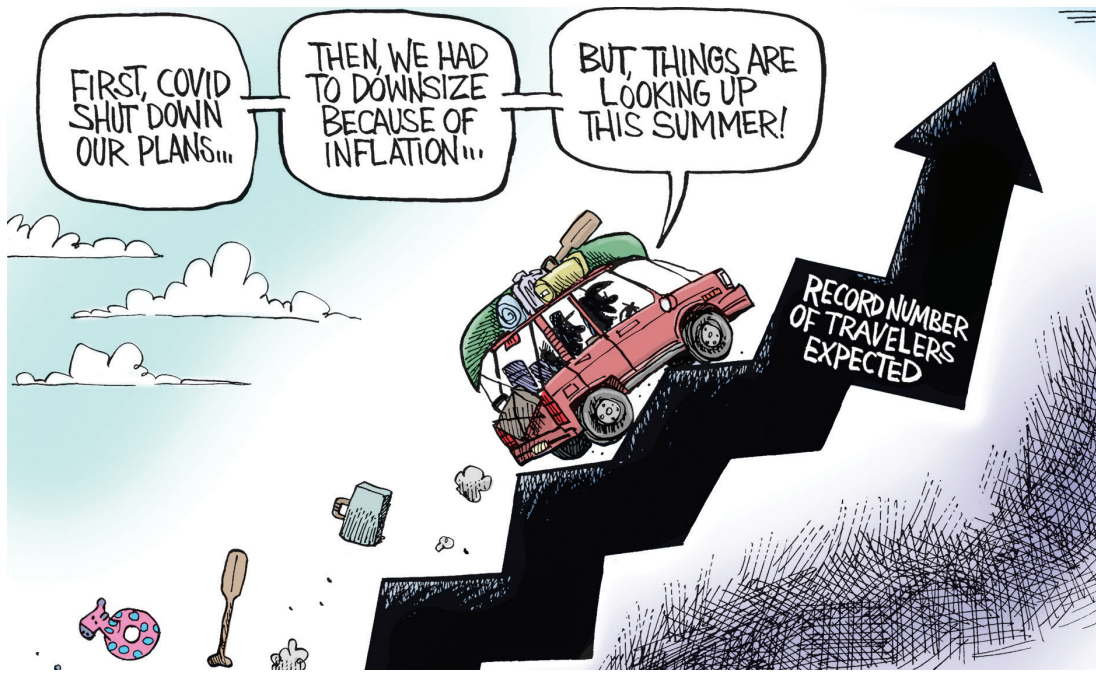
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Pictured: Cathy Baker

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Two prime cuts of New York strip steaks from the N.C. Agricultural Festival. When cooked, they pair perfectly with a side of potatoes and leeks.



COURTESY OF DEBBIE MATTHEWS

Chrissy's Potato Leek Stuff

- 1 baking potato for each diner, peeled and cut into 1 1/2 inch chunks**
- 2 leeks for each diner, cleaned with white part only sliced 1/4 inch thick**
- 3-4 garlic cloves for each diner, minced**
- Butter**
- Cream**
- Salt and pepper**

Melt a couple of tablespoons of butter in a large, heavy-bottomed pot. Add sliced leeks and season. Cook until the leeks have melted down and are translucent. Add garlic and cook until fragrant.

Add potatoes and stir together until mixed.

Pour in enough heavy cream to cover.

Stir together and turn down to very low, 2 1/2-ish. Cook, stirring every 10 minutes or so until everything cooks down together, the potatoes are completely cooked and the whole thing looks like extremely chunky mashed potatoes.

Check for seasoning. Re-season if necessary.

Serve.

Cast Iron New York Strip

- 2 New York strip steaks 1 1/2 to 2 inches thick at room temperature**
- 1 tablespoon peanut or grapeseed oil**
- 2 tablespoons European butter (there are less solids in European butter so it won't burn as quickly)**
- Salt and Pepper**

Turn largest burner to medium-high and get your cast iron skillet hot, but not quite smoking. Add oil and butter.

Very, very liberally season steaks, stick a probe thermometer into the thickest part of the largest steak set to 127 degrees. Place meat in skillet.

As the steaks cook, baste the side that's face up with the fats in the pan.

When there is a nice brown crust, place the steak, fat edge down, onto the skillet's surface. You'll have to hold the steaks upright with some tongs. Cook until the fat is brown and crispy looking.

Then flip and cook the other side, continuing basting as before.

When the temperature is reached, remove the steaks from the pan, and set them on a cooling rack over a cookie sheet. Loosely place a piece of foil on top to keep the steaks warm. Let sit, undisturbed for seven or eight minutes, then slice, lightly sprinkle with a finishing salt, like Malden salt, and serve.

The resting will bring the steak up to 130 degrees, perfectly medium rare, and it will relax the fibers in the meat so that when you cut it, you don't get all the juice running out and leaving you with a dry and not juicy steak.

An Ag Fest-inspired meal, featuring New York strips

By Debbie Matthews
Curious Cook

I FORGET, and I'll bet, Gentle Reader, that you do too. Some of the traditions that we barely think about, or make fun of, or are so deeply ingrained within us that we don't think of it as a tradition any more than the oxygen we breathe is an endearing tradition that humans share.

So it's a good thing, when someone comes along who is not native to this beloved state of ours, and reminds us that not everybody knows what a Nab is, or that the car racing we're so proud of came from the chases between bootleggers and revenuers along the dark country roads of this state.

The Kid, who just turned the advanced age of 31 a few weeks ago, and I have been attending the Got To Be N.C. Festival since said child was in the 3rd or 4th grade.

In addition to everything else, if the N.C. State Fair is too chock-a-block other humans for you, the Ag Fest is a way to go out to the fairgrounds, see scary fashion, eat scary food, ride some rides, play some games, all without being shoulder to shoulder with 63% of the population

'Wilders, a cattle and pork farm based in Sampson County, attended and brought samples of their Wagyu beef. It was delicious.'

of the state.

And besides that, the flea market still takes place, so you get the best of both worlds.

But the big draw of the festival is inside the Exposition Center.

Gathered (and this year was the most organized and easiest to navigate we've ever encountered) are state food producers. Everything from peanuts to bourbon.

Each year, we put on our eatin' drawers (you may laugh, but I'm not kidding), and eat our way through the entire building. Then we go outside and have fair food for lunch.

This year, we took a newcomer, my friend Darby.

Here are her impressions, in her own words:

"Never seen a tractor parade before. And all the crazy food. We don't have that crazy of food in California. It was just really

interesting as an observer from a different state to see everything that was similar but quite different from any fair that we have in California."

The festival had a surprise this year.

Wilders, a cattle and pork farm based in Sampson County, attended and brought samples of their Wagyu beef. It was delicious.

The Kid and I are both dedicated carnivores and very fond of the minute amounts of Wagyu beef we've had in the past.

I purchased two New York strips. Let's just say they were expensive. But probably less expensive than a meal at an old-school steak house.

The Kid cooked them and when they were about halfway through, I realized the pressure that was on my child's shoulders. Cooking this steak that cost what a few years ago was our weekly food budget. I am grateful that my situation has changed, but I still feel a measure of Catholic guilt.

Fortunately, The Kid did an amazing job with the cooking. And I learned that even guilt can be tasty when it comes on top of a piece of Wagyu beef.

Contact me at dm@bullcity.mom.

Hudson announces 2023 Congressional Art Competition winners

Chatham News + Record

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Representative Richard Hudson (R-NC) announced the winners of the 2023 Congressional Art Competition from North Carolina's 9th District last Friday.

"The Congressional Art Competition is an incredible opportunity to highlight the artistic talents of our District's high school students, and I was very impressed by

all of the submissions we received this year," said Rep. Hudson. "I congratulate this year's winners and thank everyone who participated in the competition. I look forward to showcasing their artwork in the Capitol and my office."

Below are the winning selections for North Carolina's 9th District:

First Place: Mya Hausauer of Pinehurst, Pinecrest High School, The Baptism

Second Place: Jae Hee Shin of Cary, North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics, Distorted Reflection

Third Place: Emma Johnson of Sanford, Southern Lee High School, Self Portrait

The first-place winner's artwork will hang in the U.S. Capitol, second place will hang in Rep. Hudson's Washington, D.C. office, and third place will hang in his Southern Pines office.

Each spring, the Congressional

Institute sponsors a nationwide high school visual art competition to recognize and encourage artistic talent in the nation and in each congressional district. Since the Artistic Discovery competition began in 1982, more than 650,000 high school students have participated. North Carolina's 9th District Congressional Art Competition is judged by a committee of local artists who reviewed submissions earlier this year.

First Place: Mya Hausauer of Pinehurst, Pinecrest High School, The Baptism

Second Place: Jae Hee Shin of Cary, North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics, Distorted Reflection

Third Place: Emma Johnson of Sanford, Southern Lee High School, Self Portrait



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Strong opinions expressed over proposed Randolph County 'Harm Reduction' plan

By A.P. Dillon
North State Journal

ASHEBORO — Strong opinions were expressed during a faith-heavy discussion about a proposed "Harm Reduction" plan during a May 22 meeting of the Randolph County Opioid-Drug Community Collaborative.

The Collaborative was first initiated through funding by the county board of commissioners in 2016. Per Layton, the Collaborative convened in 2017 with community partners to launch its coalition, and in the timespan between 2017 and 2019, the Collaborative began implementing its initial action plan.

The 2 p.m. meeting was held at the AVS Catering and Banquet Center in Asheboro. The public information officer for Randolph County said the meeting had been posted on county social media platforms on May 18 and Layton said there was no public notice posted because it was a "coalition meeting." Despite the short timeframe leading up to the meeting, it was well attended with an estimated crowd of around 100-150.

The main presentation on "Harm Reduction" was given by Jennifer Layton, the assistant health director for Randolph County's public health department.

In addition to Layton's presentation, remarks were also given by a panel consisting of Elizabeth Brewington, Manager of Health Programs for the NC Association of County Commissioners; Pastor Allen Murray of the Asheboro-area "Faith in Motion Ministries;" and Robi Cagle, the program coordinator for the Uwharrie Harm Reduction Initiative.

A tense and at times emotional question and answer session followed the presentations and remarks by the panel.

Several faith leaders from Randolph County and the Asheboro area expressed strong opposition to part of the Harm Reduction Plan that involved a program that would supply clean needles to addicts, referred to as a syringe services program or SSP.

SSP's began to show up in various counties after the General Assembly passed a law in 2016 authorizing needle and hypodermic syringe exchange programs. The intent of the law was an effort to promote "scientifically proven ways of mitigating health risks associated with drug use and other high-risk behaviors."

Dr. Jonathan Burris, a pastor for the New Center Christian Church, located in Seagrave, North Carolina, cited the low rates of needles returned or collected associated with SSP's. Burris said he was also a data scientist with his own consulting firm that works in the area of statistics, data analysis, artificial intelligence, and heuristics.

"I like numbers. Numbers do

not lie," said Burris. He went on to cite the North Carolina Safer Syringe annual report from 2021 and 2022 he said shows that "there are more needles and more naloxone being served to the same people year over year."

Naloxone is a medication similar to Narcan which rapidly reverses an opioid overdose.

"How is this not facilitating more drug addiction when only 5% are actually referred to treatment?" Burris asked. "In addition to that, we see that 19.4 million needles have been distributed. Only 6.9 million have been recovered. That means that 65% of that 19.4 million - over 12 million needles - are unaccounted for."

Burris pressed the point, saying that he had heard Harm Reduction was collecting the needles and asked who had collected the needles from in a "bucket" in front of a "local Asheboro business down the street" in the last year.

"It was not the folks doing the Harm Reduction," said Burris. "It was the business owner."

Burris also asked the panel if they agreed with a message on numerous pamphlets for organizations and programs that promote SSP's.

"Do you agree with the message 'Enjoy Your High,' asked Burris, holding up an example of a pamphlet with that message on it.

"I appreciate the sentiments here, but this is not the solution," said Todd Nance, a pastor from Ramseur. "These people need help, but I don't think clean needles is the solution."

Other attendees, including the pastors present spoke of finding used needles on the playground areas of their churches as well as drug deals going down at night in their church parking lots.

At one point, two women got into a heated shouting match over the topic of supplying needles to substance abusers. One woman, who had lost a son to an overdose, seemed to support an SSP plan while the other woman said giving needles out wasn't the answer to the problem, but instead perpetuates it.

In her comments, Layton referred to the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services' "Opioid and Substance Use Action Plan" as a basis for the work of the Collaborative. The state's plan includes three components; prevention, reducing harm, and connecting with care.

One slide described the "core values" of Harm Reduction as overlapping the concepts of "Love, Compassion, and Kindness," while another billed Harm Reduction as "a social justice movement" to "respect the rights of people who use drugs," and a "practical set of strategies" to reduce negative impacts of drug abuse.

Another slide cited 2021 statistics that each day 11 North Carolinians die of a drug overdose and eight of those deaths

were opioid-related. An additional statistic on the same slide cited 32,000 North Carolinians had died of a drug overdose between 2000 and 2021.

No specific statistics were supplied for Randolph County in the slides nor when an audience member asked Layton for those numbers later in the discussion.

According to the Randolph County Opioid Resources data dashboard, there have been 257 drug overdoses resulting in 28 fatalities so far in 2023. The heat map associated with the 2023 data shows a concentration in Asheboro and in the High Point/Archdale area.

The data for past years show a steady increase in both overdoses in the county with 786 overdoses and 84 fatalities in 2022, 610 overdoses and 82 fatalities in 2021, 576 overdoses and 53 fatalities in 2020, and 664 overdoses resulting in 36 deaths in 2019.

The data dashboard does not indicate if the data is all opioid-related overdoses or if it includes other drugs.

Layton warned about making "dangerous assumptions" about the plan and directed those in attendance to "come ask questions from those doing the work."

Part of Layton's presentation included a short video of Reverend Michelle Mathis, the executive director of "Olive Branch Ministries," a "faith-based Harm Reduction" organization that serves Allegheny, Ashe, Burke, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Lincoln, McDowell, and Watauga Counties. In the video, Mathis compares the story of Lazarus in the Bible to that of helping addicts recover, stating near the closing that "this work is messy but also miraculous."

Rep. Neal Jackson (R-Randolph) was on hand to give an invocation at the start of the meeting, as were several of the county's commissioners, including Chairman Darrell Frye and Kenny Kidd.

Frye opened the meeting with some brief comments which referenced the county commissioner's intent to deal with the opioid crisis per its 2016 Strategic Plan and the \$9,825,790 million in settlement money apportioned to Randolph County for funding the county's opioid response.

In June 2022, N.C. Attorney General Josh Stein announced local governments would begin receiving the first payments from a \$26 billion national opioid agreement with the nation's three major drug distributors (Cardinal, McKesson, and Amerisource-Bergen) and Johnson & Johnson. The release stated that the fund distribution could be accessed through the Community Opioid Resources Engine for North Carolina (CORE-NC).

Per the NC-CORE dashboard, so far Randolph County has received \$1,209,154 in two payments during 2022; \$377,436 in the spring and

\$831,718 in the summer.

According to Frye, the over \$9.8 million breaks down to \$1 million in funding a year that will stretch for the next 18 years as a result of two settlements; one with Purdue Pharma and another dealing settlement money obtained from a lawsuit against distributors of opioids like CVS and Walgreens pharmacies.

Frye mentioned the settlement funds the county has received come with "directed issues and procedures to be followed." According to the website for the NC opioid settlement, a Memorandum of Agreement offers local governments two options for spending the money. Option A is a list of 12 approved strategies to choose from. Option B is a "collaborative strategic planning process" that includes an expanded approved list of strategies.

"We can't save a soul or rehabilitate a person who is dead," Frye told the audience. He went on to say that, "County Commissioners have not [yet] made decisions or directed any money. This is part of the conversation today."

In an interview with North State Journal, Kidd said that while the Collaborative was convened to offer solutions, the commissioners would be the deciding factor in what strategies would ultimately be employed.

"The commissioners will decide what to do and what not to do," said Kidd. "Ultimately, we will make the decision - the five of us." He indicated the topic may be brought up at the next meeting of the board of commissioners in June.

"A month ago, they [the Collaborative] came to us with proposals for the \$1.2 million dollars and there are about eight different strategies they are going to address with the rollout of those \$1.2 million dollars," said Kidd. "The commissioners tabled it because we knew this meeting was coming up and it would be a good time for public discussion."

When asked about the majority of the meeting's at-

tendees opposing a needle program, Kidd said he "agreed with that assessment."

Kidd also provided North State Journal with images of syringes found around the Asheboro area.

"It's Randolph County... it's a pretty conservative community," said Kidd, noting the area is a strong, faith-based community. "I don't think the needle distribution program is a good idea and I agree that if there's a 150 people here, 100 of them came to say this needle thing is a crazy idea."

"It is not condoning. It is not enabling," Murray said during his panel remarks about providing support services, such as clean needles to addicts. "It's giving them one more chance." He later added, "They're [addicts] going to use anyway."

Murray's Faith In Motion Ministries is relatively new and was formed as a non-profit in August 2021. Murray told North State Journal his organization is non-denominational.

During his comments, Murray also alluded to the fact he is a recovering addict and told the audience not to let politics become more important than people.

The panel did not include a representative of the "Community Hope Alliance" which handouts for the meeting indicate is leading the Harm Reduction workgroup. The contact for Community Hope Alliance is Kelly Link, who may have been in attendance but was not on the panel.

Among the other materials given out was a "Stop the Stigma" flier offering alternative language to terms such as drug abuse, addicts, and junkies as well as terms like clean and dirty needles. Instead, the flier suggested terms like "substance abuse disorder," "person with substance abuse disorder," and "sterile/used syringes."

The next meeting of the Randolph County Opioid-Drug Community Collaborative is scheduled for July 24 at 2 p.m. and will take place at the Randolph County Administrative Building.



Community Forum Town of Siler City Commissioner District 3

The Town of Siler City Board of Commissioners recently adopted a Strategic Plan.

One of the strategic priorities is to enhance community engagement.

The Town of Siler City is inviting the public to attend an informal community forum to share community projects, questions, comments, and concerns.

Forum Date:
Thursday, June 1, 2023

Forum Time:
6:00pm

Forum Location:
Siler City Presbyterian Church
(Fellowship Hall)
720 West Third Street

Since this is a public meeting, a quorum of the Board of Commissioners may be present, but no town business will be conducted.

If you have any questions, please contact Jack Meadows
Community Development Director @
919-726-8627 or jmeadows@silercity.org



PJ WARD-BROWN | NORTH STATE JOURNAL

About 70 people listen to Assistant Health director Jennifer Layton talk during the H.A.R.M reduction meeting at AVS Banquet center in Asheboro, NC on May 22, 2023.

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