

Chatham News + Record

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Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

A slow burn

A firefighter is silhouetted during a controlled burn of an old home on E. 11th Street in Siler City last Saturday. Aside from Siler City, fire departments from Silk Hope and Ramseur joined in the work. See more photos, page B7.

Siler City Police expands leadership staff, seeks more growth

BY D. LARS DOLDER
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — The town's police department held a ceremony last Friday to officially recognize two new sergeants. The internal promotions come as part of a department-wide effort to expand and improve the town's police force, which has struggled for years with staffing shortages and limited training.

Officers Justin Matthews and Marcus Klumb had each been serving as interim sergeants for several months, but pandemic restrictions prevented their full promotions. With their addition to the department's supervising staff, SCPD now has four active sergeants overseeing patrol officers. The department has 17 policemen, four short of the 21 Chief Mike Wagner is authorized to employ.

"So, I'm still short," Wagner told the News + Record, "but this is progress."

Their new responsibility is weighty, Matthews and Crumb said, but both are proud to assume leadership roles in a department that is working hard to better serve its community.

"This agency is changing on a daily basis," Matthews said, "and we're getting officers in here that are proactive."

Understaffing has burdened the scant police force and caused "frustration among officers not being able to feel like they're being able to provide 100% of the services that they take an oath to do," Matthews said.

"But now we're in that transition where we're starting to do more and more and more," he added.

Matthews, who started his career in 2008 with the Lee County Sheriff's Office, joined Siler City's police department as a patrol officer in 2017. In his 13 years of law enforcement, Matthews has worked in "patrol, drug interdictions, community policing, as a school resource officer and a field training officer," he said.

Klumb, a Siler City native, has been a policeman for six years. After two years with the Randolph County Sheriff's Office, he joined Siler City's department as a patrol officer and field training officer.

"We're going through a growth phase at the police department," Klumb said, "and Chief Wagner is implementing a lot of training stuff that we have not been able to get in the past that we needed to get. He's implementing it as fast as we can get it done."

Training includes internal department instruction and enrollment opportunities at Central Carolina Community College and other local schools that offer continuing law enforcement education curricula.

"We're stressed, because like I said, we didn't really have the training in the past that we should have had," Klumb said. "So, the people, the community of Siler City, I guess, it's been hard for them. And it's hard being a cop now in today's world with everything going on, and with COVID-19

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EQUITY IN EDUCATION

Chatham works to combat disparities, provide equal chance for success

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN & VICTORIA JOHNSON
News + Record Staff

Editor's note: In this first of a series of reports, the News + Record is examining school equity in Chatham and across the state — providing a broad view of the major metrics of equity, how Chatham County Schools is addressing existing disparities and what CCS and other local organizations are doing to combat those gaps. Future installments in the series will provide a deeper dive into various areas of school equity.

Throughout remote learning over the last year, many people argued that schools should reopen based largely on

SCHOOLS BILL UPDATE
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students' deteriorating mental health and worsening academics. But as schools begin reopening,

education experts warn that long-standing educational disparities have only deepened during remote learning and won't be fixed simply by returning to school — at least not for all students.

Before the pandemic, multiple metrics of student success revealed sharp disparities in race and income. Achievement gaps — which occur when one group of students outperforms another group —

See EQUITY, page A8

COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE

Testing the waters: Pittsboro

BY D. LARS DOLDER
News + Record Staff

Editor's note: This article is the third installment in a series exploring Chatham County's intricate water and sewer systems. This week, the News + Record investigates water conditions in Pittsboro, where aggressive real estate and commercial development are severely straining the town's modest infrastructure.

PITTSBORO — In the next 20 years, Pittsboro's population is expected to grow by more than 1,000%, demanding a robust and expansive infrastructure to serve the community's water and sewer needs.

Even now, though — with its fewer than 5,000 residents — the town's water and sewer systems are

reaching capacity.

"We're already there," Town Manager Chris Kennedy

told the News + Record. "We have to do something."

As we've examined in earlier installments of this series, water systems across Chatham County — both under county governance and in municipalities such as Siler City — are feeling the strain of growth demands. But nowhere in Chatham is poised for more dramatic metamorphosis than once-placid Pittsboro.

Chatham Park alone,

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INSIDE CHATHAM PARK: PART 2
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'YOU CAN'T GET THIS WAY'

Traffic circle project hurts some downtown business owners, encourages hope in others



Staff photo by Kim Hawks

Road construction in downtown Pittsboro has stifled traffic and limited access to several businesses such as Neal's Gas Station.

BY VICTORIA JOHNSON AND D. LARS DOLDER
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — The trucks arrived in January: dozers, backhoes, compactors. Soon, they'd stripped the pavement and gutted the roundabout. Almost overnight, it seemed, Neal's Gas and Convenience — directly adjacent to Pittsboro's historic traffic circle — was all but engulfed by the downtown road construction.

Where the property once had two entrances, one dusty path remains — and sometimes construction vehicles block

even that entryway.

"The way the signs are," said owner Manish Patel, "people think it's closed off."

Things were already tough for Patel before the N.C. Dept. of Transportation and Town of Pittsboro's joint project began in earnest. The pandemic hit his business hard. But two months of construction hit even harder. His sales declined in the last year — but not enough to shut him down. Now he's worried he might be approaching that threshold.

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HELPING CHATHAM'S OLDER POPULATION

UNC nursing students assist Council on Aging in clinical practicum

BY JAMES KIEFER
News + Record Correspondent

Allison Lipscomb is wearing her Carolina blues for the third time.

She earned an undergraduate degree in music from UNC in 1999 and later returned to get a master's degree in Public Health. After that, she got involved with farmworker health outreach in Boone and eventually landed a job doing similar work for the state.

"When I was doing outreach with farmworkers, I saw what nurses could do in the field was a lot more than what I could do," Lipscomb said. "So there were



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Julia Pitts (left) and Brianna Reeves, nursing students at UNC, act as runners for documents and materials from point to point — a critical component of the Chatham Ag Center's vaccine distribution operation.

some public health nurses that really inspired me."

Now the returning Tar Heel says she's enjoying

the challenge of the Accelerated Bachelor of Science

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IN THE KNOW

Chatham board gets reappraisal update; notices to be mailed March 26.

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State Sen. Jeff Jackson, seeking U.S. Senate seat, visits Chatham. PAGE A14

Former Bear finishes runner-up in NCAA Division II Championships. PAGE B1

Chat: Chatham Literacy helps 1 in 5 adults who lack basic literacy skills. PAGE B6

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

• **The Friends of the Chatham Community Library** has cancelled its Spring Book Sale, due to the continued lockdown of government offices and businesses, ordered by federal, state, and local government. More information can be found on the website: friendscl.org.
 • **Chatham County Council on Aging:** Both centers are closed at this time until further notice. If you need to pick up supplies, call the Siler City or Pittsboro location or check our website at chathamcoa.org.

ON THE AGENDA

• **The Pittsboro Board of Commissioners** will meet at 7 p.m. on Monday, March 22, at town hall in Pittsboro.

THURSDAY

• **The Pittsboro Farmers Market** is open with seasonable items year-round from 3 to 6 p.m. on Thursdays. It is located at 287 East St., Pittsboro.
 • **St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church** provides a healthy, meal at no cost to those who come to us hungry at noon on Thursdays. We provide a place of hospitality and fellowship for everyone. All are welcome, regardless of race, sex, age, national origin, religious preference, handicap, or income.

OTHER UPCOMING:

• **The United Way of Chatham County** will hold its annual meeting Thursday, March 25, at 11 a.m. The public is invited to attend. The meeting will be virtual via Zoom. Please contact United Way for access to the Zoom call. 919-542-1110
 • **Easter Egg "Roll-Thru" Extravaganza** event, hosted by **Siler City Parks & Recreation** at Bray Park on Saturday, March 27 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., all wearing masks and adhering to COVID-19 guidelines for social distancing. Drive thru with windows rolled down, Easter baskets ready, and follow the specified route - to collect free treat-filled Easter eggs. In addition, various organizations and the "Easter Bunny" will be in that line. The park is located at 200 Bray Park Complex Drive in Siler City.
 • **The American Red Cross** - Blood donations remain essential amid COVID-19 pandemic. Blood drive is scheduled on Monday, March 22 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints, 151 Old Rock Spring Cemetery Road, in Pittsboro. Schedule an appointment at 1-800-RED-CROSS, 1-800-733-2767.
 • **The Loves Creek Watershed Stewards** will be hosting a free rain garden workshop for up to 30 Siler City residents from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Saturday, March 27 (rain date: April 10). The workshop location will be provided after registration. Rain gardens are bowl-like depressions in the ground that capture rainfall runoff from your rooftop and driveway and allow water to filter into the ground. The plants, mulch and

soil in a rain garden combine natural processes to filter pollutants from runoff and break down in the soil over time. Visit <https://cvent.me/qMrzOL> by March 24 to reserve your spot.
 • **BYNUM Front Porch and the Blood Connection** will hold a Blood Drive at the Bynum General Store on Saturday, March 27 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Appointments not necessary but are recommended - just go to The Blood Connection website to make an appointment
 • The Chatham County community is invited to spring into the season with the **Chatham County Parks and Recreation Department's Hunt at Home: The Easter Egg Drive-Thru** will be held on Saturday, March 27, from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Chatham County Agriculture and Conference Center in Pittsboro. Modified due to COVID-19, this year's event will take place as a drive-thru, where participants will be asked to stay in their cars while in attendance. During the event, families will be able to collect 10 free Easter eggs per child, a spring-themed craft, bubbles, and additional items from other County departments and community partners that will be joining Chatham County Parks and Recreation in this event.
 • **Chatham Community Library** is offering free classes on Facebook, Microsoft Word, and Google Apps in March. While the library is closed, all classes will be offered online. Class descriptions and a registration link can be found at www.chathamnc.org/ComputerClasses, Microsoft Word: Google Apps: March 24, Wednesday, 3 p.m.

• **The Chatham Historical Museum** is open Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. Masks required and groups will be distanced. Adult and kid friendly; no admission fee. Our current special exhibit is vintage toys. Don't miss it! Our permanent exhibits cover all aspects of Chatham's unique history. The Museum is located in the historic Chatham County Courthouse in the circle. More info: <https://chathamhistory.org>
 • We will be closing **Second Bloom Thrift Store** on Tuesday, March 16 in order to restock. We are in our new location at the Food Lion Shopping Center and will re-open for business on March 17. Our new store hours will be from Tuesday until Saturday 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. Masks are required and hand sanitizer is also available. All proceeds provide support for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and promote community education in collaboration with Chatham County.
 • With COVID-19 sweeping the country, artists' livelihoods are being challenged like never before. The Chatham Arts Council has put together a relief effort specifically for artists and arts-workers called CAARE: **Chatham Artist and Arts-Worker Relief Effort**. For more information on CAARE, or to donate, visit ChathamArtsCouncil.org.
 • JMArts hosted a **JMACoronaConcert** via Twitter featuring performances submitted by JM students and faculty. Concerts can be viewed on its Twitter account @JMArts and by using the hashtags #JMACoronaConcert

performances and #JMACoronaConcert program.
 • **Foster and/or adoptive information:** Give children a safe place to grow. Interested in becoming a Foster and/or Adoptive parent? Call 919-642-6956 to learn more.
 • **Alcoholics Anonymous** — North Carolina District 33, call the Help Line at 866-640-0180 for the meeting schedule for this area.
 • **Motorcycle Association** — The Motorcycle Association for Chatham, Western Wake, Lee, Orange and Alamance counties meets in Pittsboro and is open to all riders. For information, call 919-392-3939 or visit www.chathamCBA.com.
 • **Narcotics Anonymous** — For drug problems in the family, Narcotics Anonymous helps. Call 1-800-721-8225 for listing of local meetings.
 • **Al-Anon Meeting** — Pittsboro Serenity Seekers Al-Anon Family Group meets at 7 p.m. Mondays at Chatham Community Church, in the lower level of Chatham Mill, Pittsboro.
 • **Scout News**
 • Boy Scout Troop 93 in Pittsboro meets 7 p.m. Wednesdays at the Harold Boone Scout Park on Hwy 64W, just past CCCC. Open to boys, ages 11-17. Visit www.bstroop93.org for more information.
 • Pack 924 of Siler City First U.M.C. meets on from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesdays for boys, grades 1 through 5. Come join the Cub Scouts.
 • Pack 900 in Bear Creek meets at 7 p.m. Tuesdays at Meroney's U.M.C., following the school calendar. See <http://pack900.com> for more information.

SILER CITY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Siler City's improving fiscal health

BY D. LARS DOLDER
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — The town's board of commissioners reviewed markers of the town's fiscal health — how its debt compares to similar municipalities and how its property valuations are trending — before discussing chicken festival plans and ordinance amendments in Monday night's regular meeting.

Siler City has long battled financial woes. Low resident income and scant commerce have plagued the town's spending capacity in recent decades and limited opportunities for improvement projects.

But the town is making a comeback and the numbers prove it. In September, town staff, led by Town Manager Roy Lynch, contracted Davenport & Company to develop a capital improvements plan for Siler City's general fund (where tax money is housed and organized). The Virginia advisory firm was tasked with plotting a 10-year plan to prioritize capital projects and identify potential funding.

On Monday, Ty Welford, a senior vice president at Davenport, presented the firm's assessment of Siler City's standing and prospects.

"We have access to some data," he said, "... to try to give you an idea of how you stack up against other cities and towns, both across the country and also in North Carolina."

Larger governments, such as Chatham County, are often scored by credit rating agencies with an indicator that represents their debt capacities and loan repayment potentials. The

three major rating groups are Moody's, S&P and Fitch.

Siler City has not had an official credit rating since the 1990s, but if it did, Welford said, the town would rank well. "You stack up very favorably," he said. Across three different key ratios, Siler City was "as good as you can get."

That doesn't mean the town is flush with cash and free to pursue every project it would like, though, Lynch pointed out. But Siler City is well poised to continue its emphasis on revitalization. "We've got a lot of work to do," he said.

Tax reveals

North Carolina requires all counties to reappraise property at least every eight years. Counties can elect to perform revaluations on shorter cycles, however. Chatham adheres to a four-year schedule.

To perform the revaluation process — the results of which became official on Jan. 1 — the county contracted Vincent Valuation LLC, an Elizabeth City market research firm. The company's owner, Ryan Vincent, attended Monday's meeting to debrief the commissioners. (He'd earlier attended the Chatham County Board of Commissioners meeting; see report, page A3.)

"Reappraisal is a process in which all real property in the county is appraised at its current market value," Vincent said. "... When we speak about real property that includes all the land and buildings that are permanently affixed to that land." Areas zoned for residential, commercial, agricultural and industri-

al uses are all included.

The purpose of reappraisal is to distribute "the property tax burden evenly throughout the county," Vincent said. The result is a "fair market value — what would a willing buyer and a willing seller pay for a piece of property."

Tax rates, however, are separately decided by Chatham County taxing jurisdictions after appraised value is already fixed.

Vincent Valuations will mail reappraisal notices to every Chatham property owner on March 26, but the pamphlets are not to be confused with tax assessments.

"When somebody calls us up after the notices go in the mail and asks us what their tax bill will be based on the reappraisal notice," Vincent said, "we don't know the answer to that, because the tax rates have not been set yet."

The first tax bills impacted by 2021's reappraisal will not come out until the summer.

While revaluation data has not yet been released, Vincent indicated that Chatham properties have generally increased in value, including those among the county's western municipalities.

Other news

• Town Planner Jack Meadows presented the board with several potential amendments to the town's unified development ordinance, which must be updated and approved by July. The commissioners voted in favor of all recommended adjustments.

Noteworthy amendments included new stipulation that accessory apartments may not comprise more than 50% of the gross floor

area of a primary residence, or more than 1,000 square feet, whichever is smaller.

Also, satellite parking must be located within 600 feet of a public entrance to a building or the entryway to an associated property before a remote parking shuttle bus service is required.

The UDO previously limited satellite parking to within 400 feet.

• Siler City's 2021 Chicken Festival — which was tentatively scheduled as a virtual event in May — probably won't happen until fall, although the board did not vote to officialize

any plans. Mayor Pro Tem Cindy Bray and others expressed apprehension with the virtual platform, preferring instead to delay the festival until in-person

gatherings are safe.

Reporter D. Lars Dolder can be reached at dldolder@chathamnc.com and on Twitter @dldolder.

Chatham County Council on Aging WEEKLY TRIVIA HUNT!

Q: What Chatham County town once served as the western-most inland port in the state?

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Chatham commissioners hear reappraisal update; notices to be mailed March 26

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — Chatham County’s Board of Commissioners heard an update Monday night on the county’s reappraisal process in advance of the scheduled March 26 mailing of 2021 reappraisal notices to Chatham property owners.

Ryan Vincent, owner of Vincent Valuations, the firm the county contracted for its reappraisal process, told board members the overall change of value in the county was 14%.

“Now, I want everyone to keep in mind and that doesn’t mean that their particular

property is going to go up 14%,” Vincent said.

About 77% of real properties in Chatham will see a higher value than after 2017’s revaluation, while 23% have a lower value. Nearly half of all properties (46%) increased or decreased by 15% or less.

“When people see these numbers, I don’t want everyone to think that their house (valuation) is going to go up 14% — your house might go up 14, it might go up more, it might go up less,” Vincent said. “Or in fact, it might go down based on a lot of factors that we look at.”

The reappraisal process is required in N.C. counties at least once every eight years;

under the process, all real property in a county is appraised at its current market value as of Jan. 1. A county’s tax office doesn’t create market value, a presentation by Tax Administrator Jenny Williams emphasized, but analyzes market sales to determine a market’s patterns and trends in different locations.

In Chatham, Vincent said the county’s reappraisal saw increases and decreases in market values in different areas, at a variety of rates. Reappraisal took effect Jan. 1, 2021, and new market values will be used to calculate tax bills to be mailed this summer — based on the county’s ad valorem tax

rate — and in future years, until the next reappraisal occurs.

Vincent emphasized that the deadline for property owners who want to appeal a valuation is May 6 — and it’s a hard deadline, he said.

“One thing that’s important to remember is once an appeal is filed, that appraisal file has been reopened, there’s three things that can result from an appeal: an increase in value from your notice, no change in value, or a decrease in value, and that’s a very important point,” Vincent said. “If we get an appeal after that (date), that owner will be responsible for that tax bill at that current value for the tax here in 2021.”

The board also recognized recent retirees and heard an update on COVID-19 from Public Health Director Mike Zelek, who said trends continued to improve in Chatham but vigilance and compliance with the three W’s remain important. The meeting, which was much shorter than usual, had no public hearings or public comment. The board’s next regular meeting will take place April 19, as the board voted to cancel its April 5 meeting after no action items were submitted.

Reporter Hannah McClellan can be reached at hannah@chathamnr.com or on Twitter at [@HannerMcClellan](https://twitter.com/HannerMcClellan).

PROJECT

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“It dipped a little (during the pandemic), but it wasn’t as drastic,” Patel said. “But now I’ve dropped off by half. ... Expenses don’t go away, but my margins are thin.”

The \$2.48 million traffic circle overhaul is part of a larger project to improve about two miles of U.S. Hwy. 15-501 in Pittsboro, encourage more pedestrian traffic and shore up driver safety. Yet for some nearby business owners like Patel, the Pittsboro traffic circle construction project comes as a badly timed sequel to a pandemic that hurt their bottom lines and threatened their economic survival.

“The pandemic was already bad,” Patel said, “and now we’ve got this.”

‘You can’t get this way’

On the corner of West Street and Hillsboro Street lies New Karma For Old Threads, a shop that owner Andrea Batsche opened about five years ago to give old clothing a new lease on life.

Located on 17 Hillsboro Street, her shop faces the traffic circle, just a stone’s throw from the courthouse. Before construction began, customers could pass through the circle from any side and slide into a small parking lot right in front of her shop. But now that the circle’s closed to thru-traffic, it’s a bit more challenging — and she said it’s hurting her business.

“It’s terrible that they think this is so important to have this torn up and done,” Batsche said. “Many of us are trying to survive COVID, the slowdown from COVID.

‘There’s no doubt that downtown will be improved with this project. I don’t think there’s any doubt that the project’s going to be tremendous at the end. I don’t think anybody can disagree that the timing — it just isn’t ideal. ... And so we are greatly empathetic to that and we’re trying to do what we can to work through that.’

CHRIS KENNEDY, *Pittsboro Town Manager*

And then this happens, and it just pushes these small businesses, these micro-businesses, into a place where we can’t continue.”

Before the pandemic, Batsche said she used to receive quite a few out-of-town shoppers passing through Pittsboro from Raleigh, Greensboro or Southern Pines.

“I have a lot of those shoppers, and they haven’t been in at all,” she said. “So is that COVID? Probably. Is it traffic? Most definitely.”

It’s been a tough few years to be a small business in downtown Pittsboro, Batsche said. In late 2019, weekend protests and counter-protests over the removal of the Confederate monument ruined the Christmas season for many nearby businesses. COVID-19 came soon after, further diminishing sales — and just as light appeared at the end of the tunnel, the traffic circle construction project began.

“Well, honestly, if it’s going to happen at all, January (or) February is the time to do it because it’s already the slowest sales time of the year after Christmas,” she said. “So that is this tiniest little good part, but I don’t know how quickly they’ll be done because now it’s March and now it’s important to have that be finished.”

But it’s not just bad timing, as some business

owners told the News + Record; the winding detour paths and ancillary construction work all over town have also sown frustration and confusion.

“You can’t get this way, and you try to go up here, and they’re working on the road up here, and if you go down Thompson Street maybe you go down that way and then they’ve got the road all blocked off. They’re working on it there,” Batsche said, citing a few examples. “So the detour work isn’t thought out. It’s like the left hand doesn’t know what the right hand is doing.”

“I had to go around my elbow to my phone to get in here,” added longtime customer Jean Templeton, shortly after arriving at Batsche’s shop. She’s lived in Pittsboro for about 30 years. “It really took me, ‘Well, can I go here? No. Backup.’ ... I was just determined to see (Batsche), so I go, ‘Nu-uh, can’t go that way. Nu-uh, can’t go that way,’ because they’re doing stuff all over.”

If it was easier to get downtown, Batsche said she thinks downtown would be a lot busier. The detour signs aren’t great either, she added, seconding Patel’s grievance. To drivers coming into town, many signs say roads ahead are closed to traffic — even on several exits going into Pittsboro from U.S. Hwy. 64.

For most locals, that’s

not really an issue, said Angelina Koulizakis, who owns Angelina’s Kitchen on 23 Rectory Street.

“We know all the side roads and can navigate our way around; it’s a small town,” she said. “But I do find myself kind of pulling my hair when I’m trying to think of the cleanest, clearest way to describe to someone coming from the east down to our shop because we’re west of the circle.”

It’s frustrating, Koulikakis said, but it’s not overwhelming. In fact, the traffic circle construction hasn’t really hurt her business.

“We have some hard-core customers,” she said with a laugh. “No one else makes some of the stuff we make. So I would say our business has been mildly affected, and it’s been more affected by the ancillary side work that somebody brain-farted that we should do at the same time.”

Community support, Batsche said, so far has allowed her shop to weather the months-long storm. She’s especially grateful for Main Street Pittsboro and the Sheriff’s Office, which put up a big sign near the Chatham County Agriculture & Conference Center that says, “Downtown is open.”

“That’s how we’ve gotten by — people making the effort to make sure that these small businesses don’t fall away,” she said. “But some days I sit here and I’m like, ‘I don’t want to give up, but should I?’ You know, that’s not what I want to do. But when do you decide enough is enough? And when is it too much?”

‘Tremendous at the end’

Pittsboro’s downtown



Staff photo by Kim Hawks

Town staff say the road construction will improve pedestrian access to downtown businesses.

traffic circle reconstruction has been years in the making. NCDOT fields project proposals from scores of municipalities statewide, but has limited annual capacity. According to Pittsboro Town Manager Chris Kennedy, towns have little flexibility to dictate terms — if their requests are granted at all.

“There’s a lot of people in the state that have needed projects that aren’t getting done right now,” he said.

While the timing is lamentable, Kennedy said temporary growing pains are worth an improved downtown experience.

“There’s no doubt that downtown will be improved with this project,” he said, adding, “I don’t think there’s any doubt that the project’s going to be tremendous at the end. I don’t think anybody can disagree that the timing — it just isn’t ideal. ... And so we are greatly empathetic to that and we’re trying to do what we can to work through that.”

Not all downtown business owners are upset by the project’s temporary inconvenience; some agree with Kennedy’s long-term perspective.

“I think that the town needed some updating to compete with the new business from Mosaic and all the trucks coming through town will have to be rerouted, so the noise level of the traffic will be less annoying,” said Claudia Perry, owner of The Modern Life Restaurant on Sanford Road. “I feel like we will be more of an extension of the downtown community and people will be drawn to SoCo for outdoor dining, music and just an all-round great place for our community to come together and have fun.”

Lexie Wolf, owner of Yoga Garden PBO on East Street, agrees that traffic circle modifications will help her

business eventually.

“As Pittsboro grows we want people to be enthusiastic about going downtown and not worried about traffic and parking hassles,” she said.

It’s hard for business owners in the interim, but Wolf is confident an improved aesthetic will invigorate community engagement downtown as the pandemic wanes and activity resumes.

“It is in hard times what we show our true character,” she said. “Pittsboro business owners have supported each other and our community has shown great concern and support for us. Downtown Pittsboro will emerge from this stronger than ever and will be bustling and thriving very soon.”

The project is scheduled to conclude in October, according to NCDOT’s website, but Kennedy predicts it may end earlier if the current pace continues. If businesses can hang on just a few months longer, he said, it will be worthwhile.

“While we are, again, very empathetic to these businesses, and we’re doing what we can to try and mend the gap,” he said, “I do think it will be worth the struggle. I just hope we can all get through it.”

Some owners, like Patel, aren’t sure whether they can hang on a few months longer. In the meantime, however, they hope to see more people stop by. Despite the construction, they said, downtown is open and ready for business.

“It’s a challenge to get here,” Batsche said, “but it’s worth it once you are.”

Reporter Victoria Johnson can be reached at victoria@chathamnr.com. Reporter D. Lars Dolder can be reached at dldolder@chathamnr.com and on Twitter at [dldolder](https://twitter.com/dldolder).



This Community ROCKS!

Abundance NC is matching folks in need during this Covid-19 period with volunteers and locals that have time and resources. Here is a recap of what **YOU** have accomplished since the pandemic started:



To DONATE:



For help or to help:



- Approximately 100 able + generous community members have bought & delivered groceries and paid utility bills directly for about 100 families in need, sometimes repeatedly. ~\$20,000
- Abundance NC has raised \$16,000 and paid \$11,000 worth of utility bills.
- You have avoided evictions several times by pooling in money to cover unpaid rent due to lack of work or reduced hours due to the pandemic.
- You have avoided disconnection of utilities and helped people get their utilities reinstated for about half a dozen families.
- We have connected approximately 50 families with other community resources available.
- We have been able to cover Abundance NC staff time to run this Neighbor2Neighbor program!!

Thank YOU!

Much LOVE and BLESSINGS from the families YOU help! This is community resilience!!

VIEWPOINTS

GUEST EDITORIAL | N.C.'S SUNSHINE WEEK

It's time for North Carolina to join the best government transparency states

It's Sunshine Week across America, a time when the public's right to see government records and attend government meetings — in order to hold government officials accountable to the people who employ them — is traditionally celebrated.

So it's an especially good time to take stock of where the people's right to know about government stands in our state. Unfortunately, for as long as anyone can remember, North Carolinians have been forced to suffer under the weight of one of the worst public records laws in the country. For more than 50 years, transparency of North Carolina government has been badly hindered by the lack of public access to arguably the most important government records, those surrounding the hiring, promotion, suspension, demotion, termination or discipline of state and local government employees. And yet public

access to these records — vital to holding public officials from teachers to law enforcement officers accountable — is guaranteed by the law in the states surrounding North Carolina and about 35 others.

This sad state of public affairs could change, thanks to a bill soon to be filed in the North Carolina General Assembly by Senators Bill Rabon (R-Brunswick) and Norm Sanderson (R-Craven). The bill, entitled The Government Transparency Act of 2021, would open the door ever so slightly to public viewing of the reasons for terminating, promoting, suspending, demoting, or disciplining a government employee. From our perspective, it is a sea change long overdue, and we strongly support the bill.

In an odd twist of thinking on the subject, other General Assembly members are preparing to file a bill at the urging of N.C. Attorney General Josh

Stein to continue the culture of secrecy surrounding government employee misconduct records. We are told this would be accomplished principally by creating a pair of databases containing law enforcement disciplinary and use-of-force incident records that law enforcement agencies would see, but not the public.

The idea behind the Stein bill is the polar opposite of government transparency. These state criminal justice sector databases would be created under the guise of criminal justice reform that is misleadingly claimed to improve visibility of records on wayward law enforcement officers. But by barring the public from seeing these records, something routinely done in 40 states, North Carolinians would remain in the dark about the records of those who police their streets and manage their state and local law enforcement agencies. Stein's is a secrecy bill, not a

transparency bill.

At the end of the day, what is our government trying to hide in refusing to make public the reasons for disciplining, suspending, demoting, or even firing government officials?

Instead of inspiring public confidence in government, blocking public access to government personnel records of this kind simply creates suspicion. And that erodes our public institutions, which are staffed by and large with principled and dedicated people.

We are thankful the Republicans in the North Carolina Senate who are behind the real government transparency bill have come to understand that the culture of secrecy that underlies government employee personnel records in our state is public policy that needs to change. The current policy prevents all North Carolinians from being equipped with information necessary to separate good teachers and

law enforcement officers from bad ones. But the winds may be shifting with the Republican Senators' bill, one that unlike the criminal justice "reform" bill backed by AG Stein, is charting a course for renewing the public's confidence in government through real transparency. It's high time.

This editorial was written by Paul Mauney and Bill Moss. Mauney is Regional President of Adams Publishing Group's news publications in North Carolina and serves as President of the North Carolina Press Association. Bill Moss is Publisher and Editor of Hendersonville Lightning and hendersonvillelightning.com, a digital and print edition newspaper serving western North Carolina and is chairperson of the NCPA's Legislative Committee. The News + Record's Bill Horner III, a past president of the NCPA, is also a member of the Legislative Committee.

If winter comes (and leaves), can spring be far behind?

To me the winter we're passing through, and soon to be out of, has been a little on the cold side here and there.

To be sure, we haven't done our imitation of life at the South Pole, but when it's been cold it's been *cold*. And the folks who primarily heat with wood — my family included — have gone through some wood. We're just about out of dry wood and it really hurts me to look out the dining room window and see Shirley struggling with really fresh (and wet and, therefore, heavy) red oak to get a fire going in the big outside heater.

Why, just the other day when the wind was up and the temperature was down, I did something to help her: I raised the window and called out to her to hurry up so she wouldn't get so cold.

On top of the cold, it's been wet. The rains and what few snow and ice events we've had have done their part to keep things juicy underfoot. That's not such a bad thing when you think that come July we'll be glad for every drop that's in the ground. But at times it's been a bit hard to get around through a foot of slop. On more than one occasion, I've walked out of my Muck Boots trying to put one foot in front of the other when feeding the herd or moving cows from one place to the other.

The girls seem to appreciate that effort and they can't live off snowballs or dirt, so it is what it is. But lately the sun is starting to feel good and the bursting forth of buttercups tells us the cycle of the seasons is continuing.

Aside from the first yellow flowers, however, there are other signs of the approaching of spring and lately I've begun to be aware of them.

The other day I passed by a just manicured lawn. There wasn't all that much grass in it, but the just-mowed wild onions smelled. . . well, they smelled like wild onions and spring. I've heard the first night-time insects and the tree frogs across the back yard and back pasture. The calves are running and jumping about, playing with one another and then looking for mama. The birds are flying here and there and fussing with and at the squirrels. Trees are thinking about putting on their new clothes. We're raising the windows in the house more and riding with the truck glasses down more.

In short, the signs are all around, and where there's smoke, there's fire — most of the time anyway. I have to admit I do like some cold cloudy rainy days. They're good for slowing us down some and I like to use them either to sleep a bit later or to reflect on things. But too much cloud blocks out the sun and it's sure nice to see that old friend again.

Maybe you've noticed these and other signs of spring in your life. That's a good thing. But the other day, if I doubted winter was heading toward being a has-been and spring was around the corner, I experienced the most telling sign and signal that warmer weather was in the air, no matter what Punxatawney Phil the Groundhog had said more than a month ago.

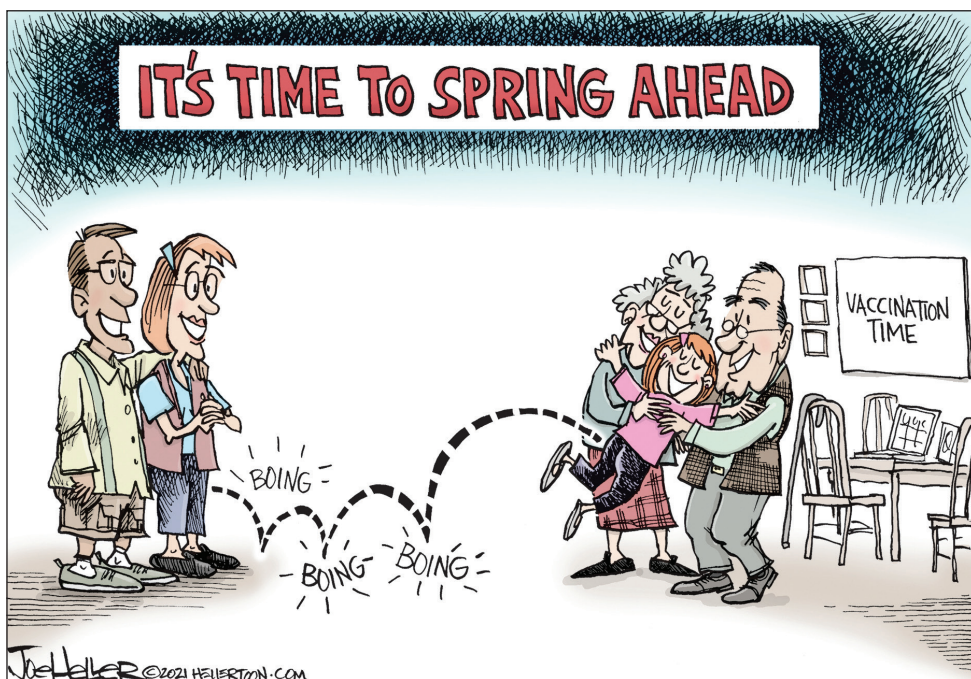
I was out for some sort of social event and was wearing my favorite denim jacket when across the parking lot I spied a young man who was not wearing winter's clothes. Instead this ol' boy was wearing shorts.

Spring is almost here.
Enjoy.

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.



BOB WACHS
Movin' Around



Navigating nuance in the school reopening debate



HANNAH MCCLELLAN
Elevating Voices

When I think back on the last 12 months of the pandemic, I grow concerned with our ability to navigate nuance. That might seem like a trivial concern compared to the many systemic problems facing us, but if anything, the last year has shown that our inability to come together and discuss issues with nuance has prevented us from implementing otherwise available solutions.

As an education reporter, this lack of nuanced discussion feels especially cumbersome in the debate over how and when to open schools for in-person instruction. Our inability to grapple with the reality that two things can be true at the same time has led to important points being missed — or willfully ignored — on both sides. As schools increase in-person instruction, in Chatham and across the state, there is no better time to think with nuance about these issues — many of which will remain long after the pandemic's effect wanes and a new normalcy is achieved.

I am the daughter of a career public school educator; I'm well acquainted with the fears, exhaustion and concerns many school staff members have felt these last months. In North Carolina, which ranks among the lowest states in average teacher pay, the underappreciation and overworking of school staff only intensified the challenges brought about by the pandemic. Even as most teachers I spoke with for the News + Record reported working 10-15 hours more than usual each week under remote and hybrid learning, a quick perusal of some Chatham community Facebook pages showed a callous disdain for these hardworking employees.

As the reopening debate intensified over the last six months, I've seen parents demeaning teachers as "lazy

babysitters." Others respond to concerned teachers with hateful all caps-locked comments. I've heard board members and public officials suggest teachers with fears surrounding a return to work are believing "fake news." All the while, I've spoken with teachers — often late at night when they're done with the school day and their lesson plans — who are tired, scared and upset their voices aren't often prioritized in the reopening discussions.

And yet, teachers have told me they wanted to return to school as soon as it's safe to do so. These teachers know their students' struggles. Before they saw the increased failure rates, decreased exam scores or mental health data, they've noticed the students who don't make it to Zoom meetings, or those who no longer ask questions or turn in work. Most were also well aware of the gaps in learning that existed long before the pandemic.

Why then, are parents and teachers often so pitted against one another in the reopening discussion? Many parents have advocated for a speedy return to daily in-person learning, emphasizing their students' academic declines and mental health struggles. While students have less of a platform to share their opinions, most have also expressed a desire to return, and soon.

If everyone agrees on getting students back into the school building as quickly as possible, why have such intense disagreements abounded? In my reporting, this division typically comes down to one thing: diverging opinions on safety standards.

In the last year, guidance surrounding COVID-19 has shifted as new information and understanding of the virus's transmission becomes available; that's true for school guidance too. Last week, Gov. Roy Cooper signed a bill allowing middle and high schools to return under Plan A — which doesn't require six feet of social distancing and previously was only an option for elementary students.

As guidance shifts — and at times

conflicts with other reports based on where you look — few acknowledge this shift, or how the shift might make those implicated in the guidance feel. With CDC still recommending six feet of distance elsewhere, and mandating it in other public places, what does that suggest to teachers about how their safety is valued? I've read the studies that show schools can safely open with three feet of distance without increased transmission. I've also seen the reports of clusters reported at some schools, and in other public places. While most of these clusters are the exception to normally safe gathering, a failure to acknowledge this even slightly increased risk is a failure to communicate with school staff about how their safety and value to the school is being prioritized.

Of course, I've also seen some teachers cite outdated data or guidance as a means to stay in remote learning. I suspect some employees, in schools and otherwise, will hesitate to accept new safety measures as vaccines are distributed and public spaces find a new sense of normal in the months to come.

And as we adapt to this new normal, we must all more regularly acknowledge that two things *can* be true — even if only one supports our case. We can and must value students and teachers. We must be transparent about the decisions made that put one group above the other. We must advocate for struggling students while also uplifting the stories of those who've thrived during remote learning by taking classes at Harvard, for example, or exploring an art hobby.

We must be willing to speak and listen with nuance for our sake and others' — believing that reality is never as simple as the facts we've compiled to support our own arguments.

Only by listening can we begin truly to work together.

Reporter Hannah McClellan can be reached at hannah@chathamnr.com or on Twitter at @HannerMcClellan.

VIEWPOINTS

GUEST COLUMN | BOB PHILLIPS

It's time to end gerrymandering for good in North Carolina

It was 209 years ago this month that “gerrymandering” was coined, and our nation has paid the price ever since.

In 1812, Massachusetts Gov. Elbridge Gerry soiled his reputation by approving a ploy to redraw the state’s voting districts to unfairly favor his party in that year’s election. The editor of a local newspaper opposed to Gerry’s scheme noted that one of the serpentine districts looked like a salamander. He combined that creature with Gerry’s name, and thus was born the “Gerry-mander.”

Two centuries later, gerrymandering still threatens our democracy as politicians manipulate voting maps to shield themselves from accountability, undercutting the right of voters to choose their representatives.

Now comes a crucial moment for North Carolina. In 2021, our state’s congressional and legislative districts will be redrawn based on 2020 census data. The new maps are intended to be in place for the next decade. How those lines wind through counties will affect

our elections, drive the priorities of our government and impact the people of North Carolina for years to come.

While gerrymandering is almost as old as our nation, today’s mapping technology enables politicians to rig our districts with even more harmful precision, splitting neighborhoods and treating voters like political pawns instead of constituents.

The damaging effects of gerrymandering are seen with increased polarization in government and extreme policies that ignore the will of voters. Black and brown voters have especially been hurt by gerrymandered districts that undermine their voice in our democracy.

While we pride ourselves as being the top state for basketball, for many years North Carolina has also been number one in gerrymandering — and that’s not the title we want. But once again we will need to be vigilant and ready to fight for fair maps. Thankfully, we’ve seen some recent victories and reason for hope that change is possible.

In 2019, a state court issued a landmark decision in *Common Cause v. Lewis*, ruling that partisan gerrymandering, like racial gerrymandering, violates North Carolina’s constitution. As a result, the court ordered new legislative maps to be drawn for the 2020 election in full public view and without using partisan data.

Meanwhile, in the 2019-2020 legislative session, there were a half-dozen redistricting reform bills introduced, including proposals that were co-sponsored by a bipartisan majority of N.C. House members. Sadly, legislative leaders refused to give any of those bills a vote. Nevertheless, it was heartening to see growing support for reform among rank-and-file lawmakers.

The courts have made clear that gerrymandering is unconstitutional in North Carolina, and the public overwhelmingly wants nonpartisan redistricting. Still, the temptation to manipulate voting districts remains a strong pull for politicians. In order to avoid illegal map-rigging, the redistricting process in 2021 must be nonparti-

san, with full transparency and robust public input — and be completely free from gerrymandering.

That means lawmakers must not shortchange the people of North Carolina with a rushed redistricting process. Instead, legislators should hold a series of meaningful hearings in communities throughout the state and actually listen — and be responsive to — public input in how the district lines are drawn.

Moving forward, we need to enact lasting reform that ultimately takes redistricting power out of the hands of politicians, entrusting it with a nonpartisan citizens commission to draw our voting maps without racial or partisan gerrymandering. There are a variety of nonpartisan redistricting models working in other states. Let’s learn from them and create a system that best serves North Carolina.

Bob Phillips is executive director of Common Cause NC, a nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to upholding the core values of American democracy.

Moments to live by in the Year of the Pandemic

When the pandemic began one year ago, I started eating a handful of M&M’s every day after lunch. I’ve never had much of a craving for desserts, but now I look forward to this daily taste of sweetness.

Throughout the pandemic, my wife and I have danced after supper with our three young children. Last summer, we had a phase when we boogied to the soundtrack of the musical “Hamilton.” But our children have returned to their favorite superhero theme songs: the “Superman” movie score by John Williams and the opening tune from the “Batman” TV show starring Adam

West. Listening to those songs for the umpteenth time, I admit I was sometimes impatient to start the bedtime routine of bath and books.

But other nights have been so fun I’ve lost track of the hour. The way the kids help me stay in the moment is their superpower.

The church that I serve as pastor has developed new habits and routines in the pandemic as well. In addition to the online and outdoor worship services, we started a weekly prayer meeting with another congregation. In the beginning, everyone dialed into a conference call. Now, we meet every Sunday afternoon on a Zoom videoconference.

Our members are white; theirs are Black. The impetus for this ministry was last summer’s death of George Floyd under the knee of the white police officer.

I am under no illusions that we or any other white people are saviors. But I speak for many in our church when I say that we have been blessed by the faith of our Black friends.

One of their deacons opens our meeting with a hymn. He starts off almost in a whisper, then grows louder and stronger in his gravely baritone. This gentleman often sings spirituals like “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,” “Go Down, Moses,” and “Steal Away to Jesus.” These words and melodies have given Black people strength to endure and resist evils from the time of slavery down to the present reality of police brutality. This is the genius of the Black church. Writer Zora Neale Hurston once called such faith “an inside thing to live by.”

Recently, this faithful deacon belted out, “Count your blessings. Name them one by one.” When he had finished, the rest of us took turns sharing examples of unexpected grace that had come out of this pandemic, including the friendships made between our churches. We try to keep our meetings under an hour, but in listening to everyone’s blessings, I once again lost track of time.

By sharing these stories, I do not intend to diminish anyone’s suffering during the COVID-19 pandemic. I realize many have faced economic hardships and lost loved ones to this terrible disease. Many of my own family members, friends and parishioners have been stressed, anxious or lonely. I would never tell someone in pain or grief to “count your blessings” or put on a happy face.

I share my stories to offer a little taste of what has helped me through these times. I have one more story:

During the pandemic, the creek that runs through the woods behind my neighborhood has been my family’s refuge. Several years ago, a large oak fell across the water from one side of the bank to the other. I have often sat on the fallen trunk, legs dangling over the creek, watching my kids play along the bank or in the water.

There have been plenty of times when I fretted about my to-do list. But other times, I have breathed slowly. And given thanks.

I hope we cross to the other side of this pandemic. As we journey ahead, I hope each of us finds our own “inside things to live by” — music that moves us, quiet places that still us, love that comforts and inspires us.

Just a little taste of sweetness can fill us with gratitude.

Andrew Taylor-Troutman is the pastor of Chapel in the Pines Presbyterian Church and author of Gently Between the Words: Essays and Poems. He is currently working from home with his wife and three children.

Driving through Pittsboro

Driving to my office on Hillsboro Street in Pittsboro was once as simple as waiting for a single stoplight to turn green.

Now, my commute is one big detoured adventure in yellow, orange and red.

I drive past orange signs erected by workers in yellow vests. I slalom through orange cones and between bands of yellow warning tape. I stop along with everyone else until a worker in a reflective yellow vest turns a handheld sign from red to yellow. It is stop and go, bumper to bumper traffic on narrow streets like Masonic or Salisbury, and we will not even talk about the crawling horror called East Chatham Street at 5 o’clock in the afternoon.

Not too many decades ago the town burghers and good deacons of Pittsboro rolled up the sidewalk every Wednesday afternoon. When the courthouse bell tolled 12 o’clock, retailers shuttered their shops, businesses locked their doors, and Pittsboro shut down so that practicing Christians could go to church. You could not buy even a haircut on a Wednesday afternoon.

Those days are long gone. While I was stopped in traffic this past Wednesday afternoon I watched a worker on the sidewalk cut into the concrete with a circular saw. He wore neither a particle mask nor a protective face shield; instead, his partner blasted the dust and the grit away from his face with a gas powered leaf blower at full throttle. Last month I saw one

crew laying electrical conduit on a Sunday morning. I hope they were paid overtime for working on the Sabbath.

Around the courthouse are large yellow tracked machines with names like Kobelco and John Deere and CAT. Ratchet straps hold tightly packed, vertically stacked 2x4s to protect the trunks of the old trees by the Presbyterian Church. Workers in hard hats and dirty coveralls trudge through the mud and the grit and the gravel. White utility trucks sit spattered with red clay like animals at a muddy watering hole. These trucks now come equipped with strobing yellow or white lights, and they tend to idle together in groups. I suppose this is so the drivers can communicate vocally. The great, metallic herd beeps when it backs up.

Dueling backhoes flank either side of Sanford Road. Workers with bucket trucks string electrical wire along new poles on Thompson Street. The line for detailing at Clapp’s car wash sometimes sticks out into the street, further slowing traffic, so take extra care on that block. I certainly do not encourage vandalism, but peachy little Pittsboro is ready for a barrel monster, that ferocious 3-D sculpture created by former NCSU student Joseph Carnevale.

Neal’s Store, sandwiched between two blocks of muddy construction, has suffered mightily. I went in to buy a candy bar and spoke with the owner, a neighbor of mine named Manish. He told me that because of the construction, delivery trucks could not get in or out. I spoke to him on a Friday afternoon; the two of us were alone in the store except for someone seated on a stool at the video poker machine. He told me Friday

afternoons are when he should be his busiest. Outside, a white minivan bottomed out in the red mud before clawing its way to the pumps. Across the street, an SUV tried unsuccessfully to cut through the back of Virlie’s Grill. The chain link fence made them retreat the way they came in.

Admittedly, little can be done to alleviate the stress caused by this mess; we will simply have to grin and bear it with clenched teeth. But I do believe there are steps drivers can take to make things easier on us all.

For one thing, stop letting your dog drive. In my daily travels to and from my office I have seen a dachshund, two terriers, a beagle, and one fluffy white poodle-looking thing, all with their paws on the steering wheel and their snouts poking out the driver’s window. I do not care if your hands are on the wheel, too, or if the dog drives well when you are down on the farm; you are in town now, and this is how accidents happen.

I ask that everyone check their high beams. Also, I would like to remind folks to use turn signals instead of fog lights. To the drivers of dark compact cars: please, turn on your headlights even when it is not raining so we can see more than your spoiler.

Most of all, everyone needs to hang up and drive.

Dwayne Walls Jr. has previously written a story about his late father’s battle with Alzheimer’s disease and a first-person recollection of 9/11 for the newspaper. Walls is the author of the book “Backstage at the Lost Colony.” He and his wife Elizabeth live in Pittsboro.

GUEST COLUMN | CINDY PERRY

Betty Wilson, Pittsboro ‘royalty,’ reflects on her life of service

Some people call her Queen Elizabeth. But she’s Betty Wilson, and she is the closest thing to royalty in Pittsboro.

Betty reigns over a spectacular family of six with grandchildren galore. As we sat in her Powell Place living room, we both enjoyed conversation and cuddling with Blossom, her rescue dog, and Sweet Pea, her rescue tabby cat.

Betty Faucette was born in Durham; in the summer before her senior year of high school, she met a charming young man named Noah Wilson. She started college at Meredith while Noah joined the military during the Korean War. Betty left college in her junior year to marry Noah and they started married life at Ft. Hood in Texas, and where the first of their six children, Marshall, was born.

After Noah’s military service, they returned to Durham, where Noah sold life insurance. They rented an apartment for \$27 per month for their growing family. Noah used the GI bill to go to dental school, after which Betty finished college with Rouse and Braxton added to their family.

During those years, she gave her family her total attention.

Bett, Charlotte and Jane Allen were added to the family, making six children. As the children grew up, she taught kindergarten in the Pittsboro Primary School. Then, with a master’s degree in Guidance Counseling, Betty moved to the counselor role for seven more years before retiring.

In her 10 years of teaching and seven years as a guidance counselor with the Chatham County Schools, Betty dedicated herself to giving every child in the system the kind of education, protection and the gentle guidance that each child deserved.

Life in Pittsboro offered the opportunity for work with the Garden Club, installing the brick sidewalks we walk today and for close friendships with Rossie Lindsey, Mary Hayes Holmes and Margaret Pollard. And, it was not long before Mary Hayes Holmes suggested that Betty run for county commissioner.

“It’s your time. You’re going to do this,” Mary Hayes told Betty in her famously commanding way. And Betty did.

Betty made an indelible mark on Chatham County with her service as county commissioner. Betty,

Margaret Pollard and Uva Holland served together as a trio of strong and capable women commissioners. Together they shepherded in Briar Chapel, the first compact community, Jordan Lake water supply provisions, and a breadth of other issues. “When you raise your hand to vote as commissioner, you also make enemies,” Betty remembered.

Betty always did her homework, strove to do the right thing, and most importantly, listened to make sure that all constituents were heard.

Now at 89, Betty cannot think of a better life than what she has lived in Pittsboro. She has reached most of her goals, has no regrets, and she glows when she talks about her children, their spouses and her grandchildren. Her relationship with her children reinforces what many parents say: each child is different, each is a different gem, and each has followed in the footsteps of their mother, giving back to their communities.

Cindy Perry has lived in Pittsboro for more than 45 years, practiced real estate law for 25 years, and served as mayor of Pittsboro for two terms.

VIEWPOINTS

COVID Stimulus Bill is reckless

The \$1.9 trillion “COVID relief” bill just enacted by



JOHN HOOD
John Locke Foundation

Congress and signed by President Joe Biden gives out \$1,400 checks to most Americans. It boosts the child-tax credit, keeps weekly unemployment insurance checks \$300 higher than normal, and throws lots of other (borrowed) money around.

I realize that, given the effects of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, most voters seem to like Biden’s bill. But I think they are mistaken. It is a reckless and irresponsible bill — one that, I’m pleased to report, most of North Carolina’s congressional delegation voted against.

Over the past year, the federal government has authorized \$4.1 trillion in response to the COVID crisis.

I supported some of that initial spending. We had a public-health emergency and a sudden, sharp economic decline. It was reasonable to expand UI eligibility and payments for a time. It was reasonable to supply liquidity to businesses clobbered by public-health regulations. It was reasonable to put billions of dollars on the table for vaccine development, assisting and incentivizing the pharmaceutical industry to achieve one of the greatest medical advances in the history of our planet.

Given that the federal government entered the crisis with its budget already severely out-of-whack — running trillion-dollar deficits — it was even reasonable to pay for last year’s COVID response with borrowed money. We weren’t going to raise federal taxes in the midst of all this.

Of course, all federal debts are paid with federal taxes in one form or another. To spend \$4.1 trillion today on reasonable

priorities is, inevitably, to spend \$4.1 trillion less in the future on other things, or to pay \$4.1 trillion (plus interest) in higher taxes in the future. That’s just math.

Actually, though, we didn’t spend all that \$4.1 trillion authorized in 2020. According to the latest estimates, some \$1 trillion of it remains unspent at this writing. So here’s strike one against Biden’s new \$1.9 trillion spending spree — last year’s spending spree isn’t even over yet!

Clearly some of last year’s “emergency” need wasn’t a true emergency. Biden has doubled-down, and then some, on that mistake. His 2021 package includes a \$350 billion bailout of states and localities whose true COVID-related fiscal shortfalls are only a fraction of that amount. Comparatively well-governed North Carolina will get \$9 billion of it, yes, but poorly governed jurisdictions will get more. The implicit message to politicians is: spend recklessly, create

fiscal messes, and Congress will eventually come along to bail you out with federal debt. As a result, we’ll get worse state and local governance in the future.

In addition to that, the Biden bill directs \$126 billion to public schools, supposedly for COVID mitigation, though the Congressional Budget Office estimates only 5% of it will be spent by this fall. In fact, more of these funds will be spent in 2026 than in 2021. COVID mitigation this is not.

There are too many other problematic provisions to list in a single column. Instead, I’ll answer the obvious questions. Doesn’t our economy need another dose of stimulus? Isn’t that worth adding an average of \$14,000 per household to the federal debt?

No and no. Although the COVID recession was disastrous for many families, it is already in the process of receding. North Carolina’s headline unemployment rate shot up to nearly 13% in April and May.

It is now 6.2% — higher than it should be, of course, but hardly the emergency we faced a year ago. Many firms and households have accumulated significant balances that they’ll be spending over the coming months and years on both consumption and investment. To borrow another \$1.9 trillion for “stimulus” in this scenario is indefensible.

In 2009, newly-elected President Barack Obama pushed through a \$787 billion stimulus. Many were outraged by such fiscal irresponsibility, as they should have been, though the unemployment rate was much higher then (North Carolina’s averaged 11% during 2009). Adjusted for inflation, Obama’s stimulus would be about \$1 trillion today.

Biden’s \$1.9 trillion mess should earn him scorn, not approval.

John Hood (@JohnHoodNC) is chairman of the John Locke Foundation.

Naming new governors

In a few days members of the North Carolina House and Senate will respectively name new members to the UNC Board of Governors (BOG).



TOM CAMPBELL
N.C. Spin

Our advice to them: DON’T. Naming new members will only make a flawed process worse.

North Carolina has never had a good system for governing education, but that’s another subject for another column. Let’s focus instead on the governance for our state-supported universities. D.G. Martin, former Secretary to the UNC System, has written a very good summary in Higher Ed Works of how university governance evolved. Find it at <https://www.higheredworks.org/2020/01/martin-history-of-unc-governance>.

Here’s my summarization: During the 1960s, the number of students wanting higher education exploded. North Carolina’s junior colleges, historically black and teacher training colleges grew rapidly, demanding more money, programs and buildings. Each, with the exception of the schools in Chapel Hill, Raleigh and Greensboro, had its own president and governing board of trustees; all were lobbying legislators for more help. Then the three-campus Consolidated University, consisting of UNC, NC State and Woman’s College, decided to add the Charlotte, Wilmington, and Asheville-Biltmore campuses, setting off even more jealousy and competition among those both in and out of this new framework. Schools not included wanted in. The bigger schools liked the way things were. A better governance system was needed.

Then-N.C. Gov. Bob Scott led a movement to consolidate all 16 state-supported colleges and universities into one large system, administered by one President with a single governing board. The proposal touched off a civil war. Scott quickly learned many of the institutions were unwilling to give up their autonomy, fearing that the larger schools would harvest the most money and attention, while they got the scraps. The larger schools were concerned the funding “pie” would get sliced into more pieces and they would lose money and status. The in-fighting grew emotional and intense.

Scott finally persuaded enough legislators to go along with his plan, sweetened by promising legislators they would have sole power to name all the members of the new board of governors.

There have been changes to the original structure over the years. Eight-year terms were reduced to four, membership was reduced from 32 to 24 governors, but perhaps the most significant was the elimination of promised representation to minorities, women and members of the party not in leadership in the legislature.

This plum appointment became tribal, consisting almost exclusively of white male Republicans. They fired and hired presidents with scant justification and drove off chancellors they didn’t like. Most recently they jimmied the process to name one of their own board members a chancellor. Many believed the BOG had gone rogue. Even lawmakers acknowledged as much by privately ousting the former chair and reigning in other members. New Chairperson Randy Ramsey has done a commendable job of returning the board to normalcy and restoring its mission to policy setting.

Here’s my spin: Now is as good a time as any to fix governance problems. If the UNC system is truly supposed to be for all the people in our state, the board needs to look more like our state. Fifty-one percent of our population is female and 21% African American. Our BOG is almost lilly-white and male. In political terms, 35% of us are registered Democrats, 33% Unaffiliated and almost 31% are Republicans. You’ll be hard-pressed to find Democrats or Unaffiliated voters on the BOG. Finally, the BOG is loaded with lobbyists, former legislators or big political donors who have little knowledge or expertise governing institutions of higher learning.

I’m opposed to a strict quota system, but either our legislature needs to make this board look more like our populous or we need to change who names the governors. The UNC System is supposedly the “crown jewel” of our state but instead is more closely resembles an exclusive country club.

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



North Carolina’s connection to China’s arm buildup



D.G. MARTIN
One on One

Last week, according to Bloomberg News, China’s top military leaders were using a North Carolina native’s concept to justify their commitment to increasing China’s military budget.

Bloomberg reported that Xu Qiliang, China’s top military officer, said the country needed to brace for a “Thucydides Trap,” which is an inevitable conflict between a rising power and an established one. China is the rising power and the U.S. is the established one.

Xu explained, “Facing the Thucydides Trap and border disturbances, the military must step up its efforts to improve its capabilities.”

He continued: “The most important thing is internal unity and cohesion and improvement of overall capabilities. If you are strong, you will have long-term stability, as well as invincibility.”

What is the “Thucydides Trap” and what is its connection to North Carolina?

Bloomberg explained, “Thucydides Trap refers to ancient Greek historian Thucydides’ explanation of the Peloponnesian War as an inevitable clash between a rising Athens and the established regional power, Sparta. The term was coined by Graham Allison, a professor at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government, who argued that China would threaten to displace U.S. influence, possibly resulting in an unhealthy rivalry or armed

conflict.”

Allison, the North Carolina connection, grew up in Charlotte, was a star football player at Myers Park High School, and attended Davidson College for two years before transferring to Harvard. Later at Harvard, he became the longtime leader of Harvard’s Kennedy School and more recently has served as director of Harvard’s Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.

Allison says his interest in Thucydides was sparked by George Labban, his Greek professor at Davidson. Labban promised his students that if they worked hard on his course, they would be able to read Thucydides in the original Greek. Allison worked hard and read Thucydides’s account of the war, including its origins in the competition between the Athens, the established power, and Sparta, the rising power.

In his 2017 book, “Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides’s Trap?” Allison argued that the U.S. and China were on a collision course because: (1) China was quickly overtaking us as the world’s dominant economic power; and (2) China’s firm aspirations will put it in direct confrontation with the U.S. Allison pointed out that China expects, over time, to reassert its historic dominance over Taiwan, the South China Sea, and territories claimed by Japan, The Philippines, and other allies to which the U.S. has specific treaty responsibilities for defense.

In his book, Allison carefully explained that war between the U.S. and China was not inev-

itable. He and his colleagues mapped out 16 other occasions in history when a rising power confronted an established one. In most cases the situation led to war, but in four cases war was averted, including the post-World War II Cold War Soviet challenge to the U.S.

Now that Chinese authorities recognize and cite the Thucydides Trap’s application to the Chinese-U.S. confrontation, does Allison think that war can be avoided?

In a speech last month at Utah Valley University Allison said, “Nature and technology have condemned us to coexist since the only alternative is to co-destruct.”

Allison explained that because the existence of nuclear weapons would bring catastrophic consequences for both countries in the case of war, neither country would logically choose to enter war except in the case of an unintended trigger, or “black swan” event.

Allison also pointed out one compelling reason for the two countries to work together. Both are responsible for significant emission rates of greenhouse gases that could lead to an environment in which neither country could survive. Unless the U.S. and China find ways to work together to constrain emissions, it could be an environmental catastrophe rather than a Thucydides Trap that victimizes them.

D.G. Martin hosts “North Carolina Bookwatch,” at 11 a.m. Sundays and 5 p.m. Tuesdays on UNC-TV. The program also airs on the North Carolina Channel at 8 p.m. Tuesdays and other times.

A GROWING PARTNERSHIP

Chatham Park's Smith, Rawl looking long-range at development's payoff

BY BILL HORNER III
News + Record Staff



Drone photo by Bill Oestereich/Chatham Park

A bird's-eye view of a part of the 7,068-acre Chatham Park development north of downtown Pittsboro.

Editor's note: This is the second of a two-part series examining what 2021 will mean for Chatham Park. Last week's story focused on where the development stands now, with the first residents moving in. This story looks at the partnership between developers Tim Smith and Bubba Rawl and the "work, play, learn" focus of Chatham Park's future.

PITTSBORO — A few years ago, a candidate seeking a seat on the town's board of commissioners met with Tim Smith and Julian "Bubba" Rawl to ask questions about Chatham Park, trying to ascertain whether the massive development was a good thing or a bad thing for Pittsboro.

"He said, 'Look, I went out and knocked on 408 doors, and 402 people were all for Chatham Park,'" recalled Rawl, a partner with Smith in Preston Development Company. "'And only six people opposed it.'"

Today, with its first homes occupied, more businesses in the Mosaic development opening soon and construction on infrastructure and more occurring at every turn, potential residents and businesses are now the ones knocking on Chatham Park's doors. The 7,068-acre development Rawl and Smith and their Preston Development team are creating north of downtown Pittsboro is expected to add as many as 60,000 people to the small town's population with 22,000 homes and 22 million square feet of office, research, retail and community space by its target completion date in 2045.

In addition, the North Village and South Village sections of Chatham Park will contain 2,000 acres of open park spaces, 30 miles of walking and bike trails, its own wastewater treatment systems, 5G cell

service, gigabit internet and the other kinds of amenities that will make the development's "live, work, play, learn" mantra real — making Chatham Park a good thing, even for the skeptical town commissioner, the six naysayers he encountered during his campaign for office, and others who have wondered what the fuss was all about.

Rawl thinks proof of that positive impact will come not just from the explosive tax base that will result, but with something not often brought up in discussions about Chatham Park: jobs.

"So many people leave Pittsboro because there's no place for them to further their professional life," he said.

That'll change with Chatham Park.

"We'll have a lot more of a 'live, work, play and stay' environment," Rawl said, "instead of a 'live, work, play and leave.'"

Mosaic alone — the 44-acre "gateway" to Chatham Park, with its 300,000 square feet of retail, restaurants and office space, hotel and entertainment venues north of the U.S. Hwy. 15-501 and Hwy. 64 intersection — will ultimately employ 2,000 workers, Rawl estimates. Chatham Park's outparcels will add even more when fully built out, boosting Chatham's economic fortunes significantly along the way.

And when that happens, the fortunes of Preston Development Company, too.

A long partnership

Smith and Rawl have been working together as developers for 39 years. Their list of projects includes Landfall in Wilmington, a 2,200-acre oceanfront private community with 2,000 homesites, and Preston, a Cary community which includes the 54-hole Prestonwood County Club golf course. Aside from Chatham Park, the Preston "portfolio" also includes nearly two dozen completed projects and more than a half dozen others in various stages of development, including Arboretum in Cary, Ashley Village in Cary, South Lakes in Fuquay-Varina, Carolina Colours in New Bern, Knightdale Station in Knightdale and Southport Marina in Southport.

"We're good friends," Rawl said of himself and Smith. "And we've been, I would say, complementary business partners. Tim's got a skillset that well surpasses mine, and every now and then I'll come up with an idea that he says is pretty good idea, and we'll throw that into the mix."

Rawl laughs. "So we're a little bit like Sonny and Cher," he said. "I mean, Cher is still

on the stage, and Sonny ran into a tree, so..."

Smith turns serious. "No, we do real well," he said. "Bubba does certain things well, and I do certain things well. And Vanessa [Jenkins, PDC's executive vice president] picks up where we leave off. We've been a great team, and the work has strengthened our relationship. And we're real proud of what we're doing — and we'll be more proud when we get more people in houses living here in Chatham Park."

Jenkins, one of a number of PDC staff members working with the two for more than 25 years, said tenure is rare in the development business. There's a reason why: huge dollars ride on decisions, and the stress can be a pressure-cooker for those involved.

"Tim and Bubba are fantastic leaders and entrepreneurs and encourage those around them to be the same," she said. "They're passionate about what they do and they are providing the very best possible in everything they do. It doesn't have to cost the most — but it has to be done right. We want to look at any project we complete and be proud of the finished product."

It's a common sight, she says, to see the two partners stop and pick up trash on a project, "grab a broom, mop or cleaning cloth to take care of something they see that needs attention." They're far from figureheads or absentee owners, Jenkins said, and that hands-on approach encourages PDC's staff to "give 200%."

Hotbed for development

The commitment to Chatham Park has been time-tested, but in the 17-year span of time between first considering the northern section of Chatham County as a hotbed for a development, the vision

of growth Smith and Rawl anticipated in the region from Chapel Hill, western Cary and Apex toward Sanford has occurred. They envisioned Preston Development Company as the entity to provide homes for families who would settle here — giving those future residents, as Rawl says, "the best place they can possibly live."

With residents now beginning to call Chatham Park home and the creation of infrastructure and businesses visible at every turn, their vision for the development is crystallizing.

"We looked into the future, and we saw Pittsboro," Smith said.

Have they gotten to the point where they envision a profit on their work, a return on investment that right now exceeds \$200 million? Do they think about that?

"We think about it every minute of every hour of every day," Smith said. "Yeah, we've got a lot invested, and the size of this project requires investment. We won't see a profit come out of this thing for 10 years — at least 10 more years. That'll be for our children and grandchildren ... We're not writing out any deposit slips now. We're writing checks."

And they're not seeking accolades, they say; rather, the reward, in addition to the financial ones, will also accrue to them when people — like the thousands who live among the long list of already-completed PDC developments around the state — choose Chatham Park. That will make the work, the risks, the setbacks and the frustrations worth it.

"I don't believe anybody's coming in here to say they came here because of all of our late nights," Rawl said. "They'll come because of the finished product. They'll come because the lifestyle is there. We're saying that we want to

sculpture a neighborhood that will be attractive for many years to come. And we're not really looking for anybody to pat us on the back for all the scar tissue we've gotten from it. We're more interested in having a quality project that will represent itself well for decades to come."

The quality of the work, and the sum total of Chatham Park's deliverables, will stand on their own merits, Rawl believes.

He thinks back to the town commissioner candidate and the six residents on the candidate's campaign trail who were opposed to Chatham Park. The takeaway, according to Rawl: "A few people can make a big ripple in a big pond. And I think that's what we've had ... that force, pushing against us."

"Candidly, I think they now realize we're not over there destroying the world," he continued. "They see the quality of what we've done so far. If they want to ride through the Vineyards, you'll see one of the nicer community neighborhoods that has been built in the state of North Carolina, much less what's been built in Chatham."

Is there anything they'd do differently?

"Oh, yeah, probably 10,000 things we would do differently," Smith said. "But to name something specific, I don't really know. You know, we might not have bought as much land as we did. But as far as planning and everything, I think we made good solid choices. We were stymied on our approvals a lot by the town. And that killed us on a lot of things. But we're getting them done ... We're kind of excited about where we are right now."

The real stories about Chatham Park, Rawl said, "are yet to be written."

"The good stories are in front of us," he said. "And so we're excited to be able to provide that canvas to throw some new paint on."

WATER

Continued from page A1

the 7,068-acre development in northern Pittsboro, will have room for more than 50,000 new residents across 22,000 anticipating new homes in the next 30 to 40 years. The community will bring new businesses, too, including shops, restaurants, entertainment spaces and more. So far, though, water and sewer are not established to support them. (See the News + Record's series about Chatham Park, part two of which is in this edition.)

"Our existing wastewater treatment plant has a capacity of 750,000 gallons (per day) and we are growing more and more increasingly towards that," Kennedy said. "And so from a growth position, we are not going to be able to meet those demands with that plant. We need many more millions of gallons of treatment capacity."

The town's water treatment plant also falls short of short-term needs, although its capacity is not immediately in danger of maxing out.

"From a capacity perspective, we need more water," Kennedy said. "It's not as dire (as sewer), but if development occurs at the rate we're anticipating that it will, we're only a couple more years from needing substantial amounts of water."

With drinking water, though, quality is of greater immediate consequence than quantity.

"More on the treatment side, we have issues with water, with its quality," Kennedy said.

Pittsboro draws its drinking supply from the Haw River, directly downstream of several

industrial plants. Though primary sources have not yet been identified, various contaminants are present in high concentrations. The most concerning is PFAS — Perfluoroalkyl substances — a family of chemicals known as potential carcinogens.

The town's PFAS contamination is among the worst in the country. The most recent available research found PFAS levels of 844.8 parts per trillion (ppt) in the Haw River at Pittsboro's water intake point, the News + Record previously reported. For some perspective, Cary — which draws its water from Jordan Lake — measured 110.6 ppt. Parts of northern and eastern Chatham County, which source water from Durham's Lake Michie and the Jordan Lake, had just 65.4 ppt.

"So, besides needing more water, we have to improve the water that we have," Kennedy said.

If nothing changes in Pittsboro's water and sewer systems, capacity limitations would bear disastrous consequences for the town's ambitious development plans. When a town nears maximum plant capacities, people get in trouble and town functions start shutting down.

"If you exceed your plant capacity, you will overflow your plant," Kennedy said. "You will violate your permit, and the state will send you what is called a notice of violation."

What's more, ongoing development — such as Chatham Park — would be stalled.

"You just can't grant permits anymore," Kennedy said. "You end up in a functional moratorium."

Fortunately, "we will not get to that point," he added.

Solutions are in place

There's good news and bad news about the town's water/sewer conundrum.

First, the good: After much time and deliberation, town staff and the board of commissioners have instituted solutions to address capacity and quality issues that will meet aggressive development requirements.

The town's sewer, which is nearer maximum capacity than water, will expand almost two-fold within a couple of months.

"We have projects like the Chatham Park Water Recovery Center (officially, the Chatham Park Decentralized Water Resource Recovery Facility)," Kennedy said. "It's about to go live here, hopefully in the next 60 days."

The facility will add another 499,000 gallons of sewer capacity per day in town.

There's also the "much discussed Sanford sewer line," Kennedy said, under the state-managed Pittsboro Wastewater Improvement project.

"Our existing 750,000 gallon plant will get decommissioned, and we will pump all of our untreated sewer to Sanford and they will treat it at their Big Buffalo plant," he said.

Under state ordinance, Pittsboro may discharge up to 2 million gallons per day to Sanford via a 14-mile force main. The project has been making its way through permitting offices for years, but Kennedy expects it will come to fruition soon after Chatham Park's wastewater plant is operational.

Water treatment plant upgrades — prioritizing water quality improvement — are

also under way.

In a meeting of the town's board of commissioners last month, the town's board authorized Kennedy to launch a \$3 million installation project at Pittsboro's current water treatment plant to be completed within about a year. The addition will include a granular activated coal (GAC) filtration system that can remove about 90% of all PFAS from the drinking supply. It will also facilitate at least one million extra gallons per day.

In tandem with that project, the town is designing a larger facility with GAC and ion exchange filtration that will process up to 6 million gallons of water per day by 2025.

At that point, the town's water capacity should be sufficient until at least 2040. Eventually, however, the town will need as much as 14 million gallons per day.

To meet such demand, the town is partnering with Durham, Chatham County and the Orange Water and Sewer Authority to build a new water plant on Jordan Lake's western shore. Together, the four entities are known as the Western Intake Partners. When the plant is finally operational, it will fulfil most of the town's water needs and effectively sidestep water contamination issues that come from the Haw River.

"But that's a project that we don't anticipate for probably for another decade to actually provide water to any of our communities," Kennedy said. "It's a big project. It takes time."

The bad news

Here's the bad news: Unlike water and sewer system

projects in Siler City and at the county level, which can be funded over coming decades, the urgency of Pittsboro's expansion needs hefty sums right away.

That means user rates will almost certainly increase.

"Our rates are going to suffer," Kennedy said.

It's not fair, but it's unavoidable.

"It's a problem that we didn't create," he said of the PFAS contamination introduced upriver. "It's not right for our residents, especially as a small community, to be forced to spend millions of dollars because of others polluting the water we have to drink."

But in the short term, at least, no one else is going to address the problem or front the expense.

"So you take a \$3 million project that adds on top of a \$5 million budget, and then you look at a long term project that's going to add maybe \$20 million to that budget over a few years — the rates have to make that up," Kennedy said. "And it's truly unfortunate, because our residents in the town itself weren't involved in that, and sometimes we just have to deal with it. And, you know, it's a hard pill to swallow."

Kennedy and his staff are still pursuing financing options such as private loans or potential grants. But there will be no way to mitigate costs entirely to spare town residents inflated rates in coming years.

"I do not see a scenario where the rate won't increase," he said.

Reporter D. Lars Dolder can be reached at lldolder@chathamnr.com and on Twitter @lldolder.

New state school reopening bill could slash CCS's Plan A timeline

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

Nearly a year after N.C. schools first closed down because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chatham County Schools Board of Education unanimously voted a week ago Monday to phase sending K-5 students back for in-person learning four days a week under Plan A.

But a deal reached last Wednesday between Gov. Roy Cooper and the GOP requiring fully in-person instruction under Plan A for elementary schools under Senate Bill 220 could change those plans. That reopening bill — a revised version of an existing bill on graduation requirements — was signed by Cooper late last Thursday afternoon, after the Senate unanimously passed it Wednesday and the House passed the bill 119-0 earlier that day.

“Getting students back into the classroom safely is a shared priority, and this agreement will move more students to in-person instruction while retaining the ability to respond to local emergencies,” Cooper said in a Thursday release.

Under the CCS board’s March 8 decision, EC and 504 students in grades K-5 would return March 16, with Pre-K through 3rd grade returning April 12 and 4th-5th on April 19. For all groups, Wednesday would continue to be a remote learning day to allow teachers extra planning time.

The new legislation gives schools a maximum of 21 days to offer in-person instruction after Cooper signed the bill into law, though schools could transition immediately if they choose. Under that 21-day timeline, Chatham County Schools would likely need to open for Plan A in-person instruction for K-5 students two to three weeks sooner than the board’s current plan calls for, on or before April 1 or 2. On Tuesday afternoon, the district announced that the BOE would hold a special meeting March 22 to discuss personnel issues and consider matters related to Senate Bill 220.

The Raleigh News & Observer first reported the agreement between Democratic Gov. Cooper and leaders of the Republican-led state legislature, which reopens N.C. K-12 schools to full-time daily instruction, last Wednesday morning. Cooper and Republican Senate leader Phil Berger made the announcement at an in-person news conference earlier that morning. The deal allows all school districts to offer daily in-person instruction to their K-12 students under Plan A — which, up until now, was only allowed for elementary schools.

Though the bill requires in-person instruction under Plan A, legislative staff said elementary schools could still have a cleaning day, meaning only four days a week of in-person classes would be permitted. That means CCS can maintain its mid-week planning day, offering in-person instruction four times a week for Pre-K through 5th grade students.

While the moving up of the timeline for implementing Plan A would be required by the state if the legislation becomes law, it’s unclear whether the board would consider moving grades 6-12 to daily in-person learning under Plan A. At the time of its March 8 vote, doing so was not an option.

In Chatham County Schools, elementary students began returning for in-person hybrid learning under Plan B on Oct. 19, with middle school students returning Dec. 7 and high schoolers on Feb. 1. Under that plan, students who opt for in-person learning, rather than the district’s virtual academy option, attend school twice a week.

CCS administration proposed a plan to the board at its Feb. 23 meeting that would move Pre-K to 3rd grade students back to Plan A on March 22, and 4th-5th on March 29. At last Monday’s meeting, administration expressed concerns with having enough time to buy furniture “conducive to distancing pieces” under Plan A. Previously, the administration said it could only guarantee four feet of physical distancing at

its schools under Plan A, though many classrooms would allow for six. That new furniture — which would allow schools to maximize physical distancing — wouldn’t arrive for three weeks after ordering, the district said.

Under the new state legislation’s timeline, the originally proposed March dates would both meet the 21-day deadline to reopen.

That bill requires schools operating under Plan A to partner with the ABC Science Collaborative to share anonymous data. CCS has already been in partnership with that group, which previously told the board that reopening under Plan A and providing three feet of distancing would be safe.

The passage of the bill follows months of disagreement about reopening schools — often falling on partisan lines — as well as Cooper’s veto of Senate Bill 37, which would have also required schools to offer in-person instruction. At the time, Cooper vetoed that bill to ensure DHHS guidance was followed, as well as to offer flexibility to local districts to remain or move to remote if needed. Under the new bill, Cooper would have authority to move a school district back to remote learning if necessary.

Under Senate Bill 37, public charter schools were not required to reopen. Under the new legislation, that is still the case — meaning Chatham’s Woods Charter School won’t be required to move up its timeline for implementing Plan B, or be required to offer Plan A to its elementary students.

Cooper first closed schools due to COVID-19 on March 14, 2020 — a year ago this week. While most school districts offer some form of in-person instruction at this point, many districts — like CCS — have up to now offered a mix of hybrid and fully in-person instruction, while others have only offered fully remote and hybrid options.

Reporter Hannah McClellan can be reached at hannah@chathamnr.com or on Twitter at @HannerMcClellan.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE BILL:

When will schools have to implement changes? Schools must open 21 days after Gov. Cooper signs into law; likely April 1 or 2 (about 2-3 weeks before CCS’s current plan).

What does it mean? All public elementary schools must offer in-person learning under Plan A; middle and high schools can offer in-person learning under Plan A or B.

Who does it affect? This bill applies to N.C. public schools, with the exception of charter schools. It also doesn’t apply to private schools.

What about masks? Universal mask-wearing is required under this bill; six feet of distance is not. The ABC Science Collaborative, which will partner with school districts under the bill, has said three feet of distance is safe is proper masking is followed.

Will there be a virtual option? All students will still have a virtual option available, but it may change to accommodate teachers teaching more students in-person under the bill.

EQUITY

Continued from page A1

between white students and students of color remain mostly unchanged in recent decades. Other metrics such as discipline, graduation and summer learning loss rates negatively skew toward low-income students and students of color.

Many of those problems exist in Chatham, too. According to the Southern Coalition for Social Justice’s 2019 Racial Equity Report Card (RERCs), white students at CCS in 3rd-8th grades were 2.6 times more likely to score “Career and College Ready” on final exams than Black students — a discrepancy that occurred in neighboring school districts at a similar rate.

According to the same report, Black students were also 4 times more likely than white students to receive a short-term suspension. CCS’s suspension rate fell between neighboring districts’ rates. Black students at Chapel-Hill Carrboro Schools were 10.4 times as likely to receive short-term suspensions while in Orange County Schools, the rate was 2.8 times as likely.

Amanda Hartness, CCS assistant superintendent of academic services and instructional support, said the district began formally addressing equity issues through the creation of its Equity and Excellence for Everyone (E3) team more than five years ago. The team, which has representatives from each of the district’s 19 schools, works to support students by eliminating barriers for student groups as well as by using and providing culturally relevant resources across the system. Hartness said over the last few years the district revised various policies, such as dress code and discipline, made language on district forms more gender inclusive and added more diverse texts and curriculum to classrooms.

“Another area that I would say that we’re proud of is achievement — we still have a lot of work to do with closing achievement gaps, but we’ve been able to move several of our low-performing schools out of that status,” Hartness said. “We’ve also closed achievement gaps in a couple of different

THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP BY THE NUMBERS:

CHATHAM COUNTY SCHOOLS: White students are 2.6x as likely to score “Career and College ready” on final exams than Black students. Black students are 4.0x as more likely to receive short-term suspension than white students.

	CAREER AND COLLEGE READY	SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION
CHAPEL HILL-CARRBORO CITY SCHOOLS:	2.6x	10.4x
DURHAM COUNTY SCHOOLS:	2.7x	7.4x
ORANGE COUNTY SCHOOLS:	2.4x	2.8x
WAKE COUNTY SCHOOLS:	2.4x	6.7x

areas by 15 to 20 percentage points, depending on the area. But we have a lot of work to do still, and so that continues to be a challenge that we’ll have.”

Equity in education ensures that every student has an equal chance for success, something advocates say requires proactive policies and systemic change to address underlying inequities and barriers. Chatham Education Foundation Executive Director Jaime Detzi emphasized that education equity efforts should begin before students start school.

“The most important thing is that all of our students have access to the same opportunity, and that starts from the day they’re born to the day they leave our school system,” Detzi said. “Having access to similar opportunities is probably one of the most important things, knowing that every student needs different opportunities to succeed.” Hartness said that along with race and income, the district’s equity efforts also focus on sexual orientation, religion, gender and any other protected class.

“We’re trying to look at everything we do as a district and trying to make sure that we’re meeting the needs of all students,” she said. “And that’s the crux of it.”

‘A sound basic education’

North Carolina’s Constitution grants everyone the “right to the privilege of education,” which is the state’s duty to “guard and maintain.” Article IX also

mandates that the state’s free public schools must provide “equal opportunities” for all students.

In 1997, North Carolina’s Supreme Court clarified those rights even further in a landmark court case, Leandro v. State. The court ruled that North Carolina’s Constitution guarantees “every child of this state an opportunity to receive a sound basic education” in the public school system.

“An education that does not serve the purpose of preparing students to participate and compete in the society in which they live and work is devoid of substance and is constitutionally inadequate,” the ruling read.

Over two decades later, North Carolina has not yet been able to comply with that decision, according to an independent WestEd report commissioned by Judge W. David Lee in 2018 to provide the state policy recommendations for compliance.

“Although North Carolina has had a deep and long-standing commitment to public education to support both the social and the economic welfare of its citizens, the state has struggled with fulfilling this commitment for all of its children,” that 2018 report said. “... Children of North Carolina deserve better.”

In addition to achievement gaps — found in end-of-year testing scores, literacy skills and graduation and college acceptance rates — many schools also have disparities in discipline rates and summer learning loss. Additionally, a lack of schoolwide accessibility for English Lan-

guage learners and their families can create challenges for these students that lead to learning gaps.

These problems are not specific to one place, and while schools have a responsibility to correct these inequities, many start before and outside of the classroom.

“This is not Chatham County-based, but statistics show that two-thirds of low-income students don’t have books in their homes, few if any,” Detzi said regarding periods of learning loss. “... even just the most basic of leveling that playing field is making sure that those kids have books that they can read. And they can go to a library, but can they get to the library? I mean, maybe not.”

Another gap seen in many North Carolina school districts is the diversity of school staff, along with the retention of diverse faculty members. At CCS, 83% of its teachers are white, according to the 2019 RERC; 51% of its students are white. Little representation among faculty can lead to minority students feeling less understood or supported.

Before the pandemic, Hartness said CCS hosted focus groups to get student insight on equity concerns. She said one reflection came up often: the best teachers are the ones who know how to facilitate classroom discussion. Students cited feeling less secure or comfortable with teachers who didn’t know how to address controversial or problematic topics.

“That was interesting to me that our kids were able to pick up on the fact that our teachers need more training — on all the things

they could have said that they wanted as kids for us to do as a district, it was to train our teachers,” Hartness said. “I thought that was pretty insightful. So I think that’s probably one of the biggest challenges that we have moving forward is how to help train our teaching staff on knowing how to do this work.”

‘The bridge to success’

CCS’s equity team recently began its district equity training efforts with a group called The Equity Collaborative, which will take place over the next two years. The district is also working with that group on an equity assessment, which will involve talking to all levels of school community members and looking at schoolwide data.

The team will share more of its efforts and plan moving forward at the Chatham County Board of Education’s April 19 meeting, Hartness said.

Many local organizations have also mobilized to work toward filling in these gaps. According to Detzi, Chatham Education Foundation seeks to close gaps in literacy, which she calls “the bridge to success.” Recently, CEF has begun to focus on early learning, too, she added since that’s “the key driver to making that gap close faster.”

CEF has also funded several district equity initiatives, including the Chatham County Schools’ Kindergarten Readiness Camp and the Math 180 program. The Kindergarten Readiness Camp helped prepare children with little to no preschool experience for kindergarten, while the Math 180 program that tutored rising ninth graders who didn’t meet math proficiency standards.

Communities In Schools of Chatham County works within schools to provide at-risk students with a support network; they also seek to empower students to achieve academically and stay in school.

Other programs specifically support high school and college students. Chatham Promise, an agreement between Chatham County and Central Carolina Community College, funds two years’ of tuition at CCCC for qualifying residents who graduated from a public high school.

Founded in 2017, Orgullo Latinx Pride, or OLP, seeks to empower high-

school aged Latinx youth and provide them the necessary tools to pursue higher education. It’s also the Hispanic Liaison’s youth leadership program.

The free, yearlong program typically takes on 25 to 30 teenagers each school year — and according to youth coordinator, Selina Lopez, 100% of OLP alumni have gone on to attend some form of higher education after graduating high school.

“A lot of (Latinx youth) do get left behind because either they’re not qualified to be in programs like AVID,” Lopez told the News + Record last fall, adding, “Our goal is to really have them pursue higher education, but it’s not an academic program. ... A lot of times it’s just no one has ever spoken to them about college or university and this idea of it being possible.”

What’s next?

As CCS works on implementing its upcoming equity-related projects, the district will also be writing a new equity strategic plan. This plan — and its equity work overall — focuses on three main buckets: relationships, policies and practice and curriculum and instruction.

The impact of the pandemic on such efforts cannot be understated. While many of the pandemic’s impacts on learning are still being discovered, emerging data suggests that students are failing classes and exams at much higher rates — and that the disparities that existed between student groups before the pandemic are widening.

As students and teachers return to in-person learning then, a focus on equity will be crucial in ensuring the return to school doesn’t just serve as a return to previous rates of disparity.

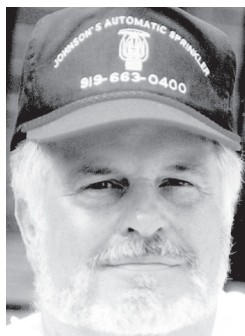
Hartness said the district is ready to tackle these issues — to continue making headway in the district’s motto: collectively creating success.

“It’s exciting to me that we’re really kind of rolling up our sleeves and starting to dig deep in the work,” she said, “because it matters for our students.”

Reporter Hannah McClellan can be reached at hannah@chathamnr.com or on Twitter at @HannerMcClellan. Reporter Victoria Johnson can be reached at victoria@chathamnr.com.

OBITUARIES

JOHN FRANCIS JOHNSON



John Francis Johnson was born September 24, 1943, in Windsor, N.C. His parents were John Cabot and Annie Minton Johnson; uncle, Woodrow Wilson Johnson; sister was Barbara Jean Jernigan; and nephew, Bimbo Jernigan (deceased).

Surviving is his wife of 41 years, Patricia Jones Johnson, (no children together); John's daughter, Teresa Johnson Griffith; granddaughter, Katherine Joyce Griffith and grandson, Robert Cooper Griffith; two first cousins, Libby Johnson Schoeb and

George Butler Rhodes.

In his youth John raised, showed, and judged show pigs with his uncle. Money for selling the animals was saved into a fund for college. He went to N.C. State College studying Animal Husbandry. He later decided he wanted a better life, so he moved from the small town and went through a five-year apprenticeship program with National Automatic Sprinkler Company who provided good benefits. In 1978, John installed a fire protection sprinkler system in "Resorts International Casino Hotel." This was the first Gaming Casino in Atlantic City, New Jersey. John moved to Siler City, N.C., in 1980. He later started a company called Johnson's Automatic Sprinkler. With John showing dogs and his wife knowing how to groom them, another business was started, Pat's Grooming & Boarding Kennel. John understood the dedication it took to make dogs happy. (Business will continue).

In 1984 he was awarded "The Order of the Long Leaf Pine." John was a member of Masonic Lodge in Siler City and a Shriner. His favorite hobby was showing Boston Terriers all over the USA and enjoying friends.

Memorials can be made to the Shriners or any Boston Terrier Rescue. If you choose to send flowers, the family requests no cut flowers that will die.

Friends may come by and sign the register book and view a memorial video of his life from 1 to 5 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, March 26th and 27th, 2021, at Smith & Buckner Funeral Home, 230 North Second Ave., Siler City.

Online condolences may be made and enjoy memorial video memories of Johnny's life at www.pughfuneralhome.com.

GEORGE BRIAN MOORE



George Brian Moore, 49, of Goldston passed away on Sunday, March 14, 2021, at his home in Goldston.

Mr. Moore was born in Lee County on April 14, 1971, the son of Spurgeon Clarence Moore Jr. and Jan Wilkie Moore-Thomas.

Brian was a member of Bethany Baptist Church. He attended Chatham Central High School, after which he spent his working years as an owner of a landscaping company. He had a love of cars, especially

the Ford Mustang, and enjoyed using his free time working and fixing them up. Brian loved any excuse to be outside and being on his tractor. He had a great love for his family, and would spend time with them whenever possible, especially his granddaughters. Brian is preceded in death by his father, Spurgeon C. Moore Jr.; paternal grandparents, Spurgeon C. Moore Sr. and Janie Clark Moore; and maternal grandfather, John Wilkie Jr.

He is survived by his daughter, Danielle Moore Sanchez-Gil and husband Javier of Siler City; son, Brian Kent Moore of Durham; mother, Jan Moore-Thomas; brother, Russell Moore and wife Jessica of Gulf; granddaughters, Kenleigh and Mireyah Sanchez-Gil; grandmother, Betty Wilkie of Amarillo, Texas; niece, Jordyn Moore; and nephew, Alex Moore.

A graveside service will be held at 2 p.m. on Friday, March 19, 2021, at Bethany Baptist Church Cemetery, 503 Alton King Road, Gulf, with Rev. Bob Wachs officiating. Friends may pay their respects at other times at the home of his mother.

Memorials may be made to American Diabetes Association, 1300 Baxter St., Suite 150, Charlotte, N.C. 28204, www.diabetes.org/honor.

Smith & Buckner is assisting the Moore family.

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

WILLIAM WHITE BEAVERS SR.

William White Beavers Sr., 94, of Goldston passed away on Sunday, March 14, 2021, at his home.

William was born on October 11, 1926, the son of Herbert N. Beavers Sr., and Ava White Beavers. He was a native of Chatham County and a 1945 graduate of Bonlee High School. He was a member of Bear Creek Baptist Church where he served as a Deacon and a member of the Building and Cemetery Committees. He spent his working years as a Poultry and Cattle Farmer. He enjoyed being outdoors, working on his farm, and hunting. In addition to his parents, William is preceded in death by his wife, Helen Andrews Beavers and brothers, Herbert N. Beavers Jr. and Hal Rogers Beavers Sr.

He is survived by his son, Billy Beavers and wife Doreen of Bear Creek; daughters, Betty Beavers and husband Danny of Bear Creek, and Pam Haga and husband Lamie of Columbus, Georgia; brother, Cecil Beavers of Siler City; grandchildren, Beth Dixon, Jeff Beavers, Kellie Fuquay, Brian and Allison Willett, Dennis and Laura Leigh Haga, and Chelsea Foust; great grandchildren, Aaron, Chase and Scott Harvey, Caleb, Caitlin and Ciley Beavers, Bray, Carter, Chloe and Claire Fuquay, Luisa and Justin Willett, Brianna Davis and Ava Willett, MaryBeth, Braxton and Brennan Foust; great-great grandchildren, Braxton, Kelsie, Landon and Madison Harvey.

The family received friends Wednesday, March 17, 2021, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Bear Creek Baptist Church, 1278 Bonlee-Carbonton Road, Bear Creek. The funeral followed at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, March 17, 2021, at Bear Creek Baptist Church, with Rev. Bob Wachs, Rev. David Hicks and Rev. Val Chadwick officiating. Burial followed in the church cemetery. The family returned to the church after the graveside service for further visitation. Services were also streamed live on 87.7 FM radio.

The family is especially grateful for the loving kindness of his devoted caregivers, Margie Cockman, Kathy Fedney, Levonda Farrar and Betty Phillips.

Memorials may be made to Bear Creek Baptist Church, 1269 Bonlee-Carbonton Rd., c/o Joe Oldham, Bear Creek, N.C. 27207.

Smith & Buckner is assisting the Beavers family.

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

ARCHIE MANNING JR.

Archie Manning Jr. departed this life on February 24, 2021. He was a native of Siler City, N.C., and made his home in Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

He was born to Archie Manning Sr. and Armenchel Moffitt Manning on December 24, 1938. He graduated from Chatham High School in 1956. He attended North Carolina A&T State University and then joined the Air Force. He made his career at IBM in Vancouver for many years until his retirement. He was a big man with a big personality, and he told the most amazing stories. He was also a very complex and mercurial man and interacting with him was always an adventure. He was preceded in death by his wife, Sharon Simone Manning.

Archie leaves to cherish his memory, his sister, Jennie Keyes (Larry), his sister, Sandra M Alston (Alvis); special family friend, Lawrence Lipscomb; nieces, cousins, and friends.

Acknowledgements: the family wants to thank everyone for the kind thoughts, prayers, and support at this time. The family would also like to extend their appreciation to the employees of Vancouver Coastal Health for their support and help in our time of grief and sadness.

RANDY TATE WHITE

Randy Tate White, 61, of Siler City passed away on Monday, March 8, 2021, at his home in Siler City.

Mr. White was born in Chatham County on August 7, 1959, the son of John Ray "Pete" and Sarah Leonard White.

Randy was a 1977 graduate of Jordan-Matthews High School. After graduating, he was employed at Boling Chair Company until their closing, then spent his last years working at Chatham Hospital in Siler City. He was a very simple man with simple ways. He enjoyed spending time outside watching birds and all things baseball related and listening to all kinds of music. Randy loved to draw and read about trains and history. He was a collector of Matchbox cars. In addition to his parents, Randy was preceded in death by his infant brother and niece, Julie White.

He is survived by his brothers, Jerry Ray White and wife Barbara of Bear Creek, and John L. White and wife Ann of Goldston; nieces, Leslie Witt and husband Jimmy, Wendy Perrell and husband Donald, Shelby Vedder and husband Ryan; special niece, Jodie W. Phillips and husband Shane and great nephews, Carter and Westin; niece, Dianna Ritter and husband Chris; many great nieces and nephews, and one great-great nephew.

A memorial graveside service was held at 2 p.m. on Friday, March 12, 2021, at Brush Creek Baptist Church Cemetery, 5345 Airport Road, Bear Creek with Dr. Patrick Fuller officiating. The family received friends at other times at the home of Jerry and Barbara White, 1008 Joe Brown Rd., Bear Creek, N.C.

Memorials may be made to Children's Home Society of North Carolina, P.O. Box 14608, 604 Meadow Street, Greensboro, N.C. 27415, www.chsnc.org

Smith & Buckner assisted the White family.

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

FRANCES GEE PETTY

Frances Gee Petty 94, of Dillon, passed away peacefully Tuesday morning March 9, 2021.

Frances was born the daughter of Robert Dewey Gee Sr. and Grace Dixon Gee on January 22, 1927. She leaves behind her son, Billy Petty (Yvonne), daughter, Gail Gibson (Charlie), son, Bert Petty (Marilyn) and a sister, Judy (Gilbert) Poindexter; grandchildren, Kelly Hall (Chris), Kristen Rundell (Ethan), Jonathan Petty (Nicole), and great-grandchildren, Katie Hall, Caleb Hall, Thomas Petty, Samuel Petty, Anna Rundell, John Anders Rundell, Alethea Lee Rundell, and Eden Frances Rundell, who was named after her; and her furry friend, Scooby.

She was preceded in death by her father and mother, sister, Marie Heron, brother, Bobby Gee, and her beloved husband, William Horace Petty. Frances and Horace were married for almost 68 years. Frances was a member of Oakley Baptist Church, Siler City, in her youth, of Hanks Chapel Church in Pittsboro after her marriage, then the First Baptist Church in Siler City and at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Dillon, S.C. She faithfully served in all of those churches until her health limited her. She worked at the ASCS (Agricultural Stabilization Conservation Service) in Pittsboro for about 30 years. She was a great cook, loved to read, crochet, and loved Horace Petty.

The first service was held at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Dillon, on Friday, March 12, with outside visitation from 10 to 11 a.m., with the funeral service inside at 11 a.m.

The second service will be a graveside service at Hanks Chapel Church in Pittsboro, Friday, March 12, at 4 p.m., directed by Cooper Funeral Home. Services will be officiated by her son, Pastor Bert Petty.

Memorials can be given to Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Dillon, S.C.

GEORGE GUSTAVE PAULY

George Gustave Pauly of Chapel Hill died at home Tuesday, March 2nd, 2021.

Born October 30, 1956, at New York City of Evelyn M. (Rockwell) and Leonard R. Pauly, he was raised in Indiana. He graduated from Indiana University in 1980 with a B.S. in Chemistry. He received an M.S. from the University of South Florida in Marine Geochemistry in 1984.

He moved to Chapel Hill and worked a variety of chemistry and computer jobs in the area. George dedicated himself to living a sustainable life, advocating for biodiversity, native plants, social and ecological justice. He was active in several groups, including the Haw River Assembly, North Carolina Botanical Garden, Chatham County Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee and Triangle Land Conservancy. George created an organization, Rock Spring Branch (<http://rockspringbranch.org>), to help heal the human/Earth relationship.

He was a kind and generous man who will be greatly missed and will always be remembered by those whose lives he touched. George never married. He is survived by his brother, Tom, several cousins, and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his brother, Evan, and his sister, Florence.

Make memorials to one of the environmental groups he was active in.

A memorial service is planned in June.

Condolences may be made at www.donaldsonfunerals.com.

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

LINDA FAYE CARTER BROWN

Linda Faye Carter Brown, 77, of Bennett passed away on March 10, 2021, at Chatham Hospital.

The funeral service was held at Mt. Zion U.M.C. at 2 p.m. on Monday, March 15, 2021, with Rev. Dr. Russell Brownsworth presiding.

Linda was born in Walker County, Alabama, on May 24, 1943, to Robert Lee and Ethel Louise Groves Carter. She was a draw-in technician at Joann Fabrics for more than 30 years. She was a member of Mt. Zion U.M.C. where she taught Sunday School, sang in the choir, served as secretary-treasurer and was a member of the cleaning committee. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Melvin Brown.

Linda is survived by her daughters, Carolyn Brown Croom of Delco, N.C., and Donna Brown Miller of Bennett; a sister, Margaret Carter Hanvey of Jasper, Alabama; a brother, Robert Lee Carter Jr. of Lexington Park, Maryland; four grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Flowers are accepted or donations may be made to Mt. Zion U.M.C. General Fund, 8616 Curtis Powers Rd., Bennett, N.C. 27208.

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

IRENE SEGURA-GARCIA

Irene Segura-Garcia, 80, passed away Saturday, March 13, 2021, in Chapel Hill.

The funeral service was at 2:30 p.m. Monday, March 15, 2021, at the St. Stephen Catholic Church in Sanford with Fr. Baiju Augustine, MS, officiating. Burial followed at Buffalo Cemetery.

Irene was born on July 3, 1940, in Mexico to Aureliano Segura Cardoso and Siria-na Garcia. She finished her schooling in Mexico City and moved to the United States in September, 1991.

Survivors include her husband, Perfecto Hernandez; children, Patricia Hernandez of Florida, Perfecto Hernandez Jr. and Hector Hernandez, both of Mexico, and Jose Hernandez of North Carolina; nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Condolences may be made at www.bridgescameronfuneralhome.com.

ROBERT LEE 'BOBBY' THOMERSON JR.

Robert Lee "Bobby" Thomerson Jr., 64, of Denton passed away on March 11, 2021, at his home.

A graveside service was held at 2 p.m. on Monday, March 15, 2021, at Guilford Memorial Park with Preacher Mark Shelley presiding. Friends may visit at the home of his daughter in Bennett.

Bobby was born in Guilford County on February 8, 1957, to Robert Lee Thomerson Sr. and Ava Clarice McPherson. He was a member of Shannon Hill Bible Church in Greensboro. He and his father-in-law owned and operated B&B Woodworking, where he was a master craftsman and cabinet maker. He was preceded in death by his parents.

Bobby is survived by his wife, Joanne Thomerson, of the home; daughter, Heather Cox (Punk) of Bennett; and one grandson.

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

Joyce-Brady Chapel of Bennett is honored to serve the Thomerson family.

WENDELL DEVON HILL JR.

Wendell Devon Hill Jr., 20 of Sanford, passed away, Wednesday, March 10, 2021.

Funeral services were held at 1 p.m. Wednesday, March 17, 2021 at St. Mark United Church of God, with burial following in Lee Memorial Garden.

LISTON SUMPTER

Mr. Liston Sumpter, 86, passed away on Friday, March 5, 2021.

A graveside service was held at 1 p.m. Saturday, March 13, 2021, at the Church of God Cemetery (Olivia area) in Sanford.

OBITUARIES

Continued from page A9

JOHNNY RAY BLACKMON

Johnny Ray Blackmon, 73, of Bear Creek, died Sunday, March 14, 2021, at UNC Hospitals. The family received friends Wednesday, March 17, 2021, from 1 to 1:45 p.m. at Emmaus Baptist Church. The funeral service followed at 2 p.m. with Pastor Steve Moore presiding. Burial was at Chatham Memorial Park. Johnny was born in Harnett County, on May 19, 1947, to the late Edward and Stella Ammons Blackmon. He was also preceded in death by one brother, Bobby Blackmon; and two sisters, Mary Stone and Eveline Oldham.

Surviving relatives include his wife, Victoria K. Blackmon of Bear Creek; one son, Joel Neal of Bear Creek; daughter, Deanna Glosson of Pittsboro; brothers, Jimmy Blackmon and Kenny Blackmon, both of Sanford; sisters, Beulah Stone and Mae Jamerson, both of Sanford; five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. In lieu of flowers, the family asks for memorial contributions to be made in Johnny's memory to Emmaus Baptist Church, 2430 Silk Hope-Gum Springs Road, Pittsboro, N.C. 27312 or PACE, 163 Chatham Business Drive, Pittsboro, N.C. 27312. Condolences may be made at www.donaldsonfunerals.com.

MIRIAM SPIVEY BLAKLEY

Miriam Spivey Blakley, 82, of Sanford, passed away on Saturday, March 13, 2021, at her home. A graveside service was held at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, March 17, 2021, at Rocky Fork Christian Church Cemetery with Rev. Vanya Mullinax and Rev. Misty Mowery officiating. She was born in Lee County to the late James Dandy Spivey and Thelma Wicker Spivey. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Ralph Lee Blakley; sister, Bernice "Pee Wee" Branch and brother, Clyde Burton Spivey. She was a member of Rocky Fork Chris-

tian Church where she was involved in the choir and the Christian Women's Fellowship. She was also a volunteer at the Lee County Enrichment Center and the Meals on Wheels program. Mrs. Blakley is survived by her daughters, Tracey Eades and Mary Jones, both of Sanford; son, Richard Lee Blakley of Sanford; five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Flowers are appreciated or donations may be made to Rocky Fork Christian Church Cemetery Fund, 4246 Rocky Fork Church Road, Sanford, N.C. 27332. Condolences may be made at www.bridgescameronfuneral-home.com.

PHYLLIS MARCHELL LUCAS
Phyllis Marchell Lucas, 57 of Fayetteville, passed away Sunday, March 14, 2021, at Autumn Care of Fayetteville. Professional services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home, Sanford.

IDA PAMELA (HEADEN) REEVES
Ida Pamela Reeves, 65, of Fayetteville passed away on Friday, March 12, 2021, at UNC Hospitals in Chapel Hill. Services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home.

Chatham County Parks and Recreation opens its first dog park

CN+R Staff Report

PITTSBORO — The Chatham County Parks and Recreation Department welcomed the community to use the long-awaited Dog Park at The Park at Briar Chapel on Monday. This area is Chatham County Parks and Recreation's first dog park; it's open dawn to dusk, seven days a week. Located at 1015 Andrews Store Rd. in Pittsboro, this dog park features two separate sections for both big and small dogs. The dog park also includes shaded benches, water fountains and dog waste stations. All dogs must be leashed until safely inside the park, and dogs must be licensed

and vaccinated for rabies and with the canine distemper shot (DHLPP). Owners are required to stay inside the fence with their dogs at all times. While COVID-19 is still present in the community, parkgoers must wear a face covering when six feet of distance cannot be maintained. "Based on the Chatham County Parks and Recreation Master Plan, a dog park was the sixth-highest facility most requested by households," said Chatham County Parks and Recreation Director Tracy Burnett. "We are excited to add this amenity to The Park at Briar Chapel. Our department was fortunate enough to qualify for a grant from the N.C. Parks and



Photo courtesy of Chatham County

Signs at the entrance of Chatham's Dog Park.

Recreation Trust Fund in order to make this project possible." For more information about the new dog park, residents may contact Parks and Recreation Assistant Director Jina Stamey at 919-545-8554



Photo courtesy of Chatham County

A water station at the dog park.

NEWS BRIEFS

Virtual mini youth expo

The Systems of Care Collaborative in Alamance, Caswell, Chatham, Orange and Person counties — in partnership with the AOCOP JJBH Team and the JCPC — invites you to register for their upcoming virtual Mini Youth Expo. This is an opportunity for young adults ages 14-18 to receive valuable information from speakers and resources, along with youth engagement and more. Participants will receive \$25 upon completion. Space is limited, so registration will be required. For more information, contact Chandrika Brown at cbrown@nc-familiesunited.org

Teaching at UNC-Chapel Hill, as well as the NCSLA Herman Gatling Award for Outstanding Science Education Leadership. Dr. Ryan will be recognized at the NSELA Leadership Summit in May and its Summer Leadership Institute in July.

Changes coming to the Chatham County website

PITTSBORO — Chatham County Government announces that big changes are coming to its website with a new location and a fresh look that is easier to navigate. The Chatham County website (previously www.chathamnc.org) is now

located at www.chatham-countync.gov. In addition to a new location, the Chatham County website is getting a makeover. Over the next several months, www.chatham-countync.gov will undergo a redesign process. Feedback from the community is very important as the redesign process moves forward. The public is encouraged to take a few minutes to share comments and suggestions in an online survey found at this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C6S6SZD>. Chatham County's redesigned website is expected to be complete in late 2021.

— CN+R staff reports

Former Chatham County educator wins national award

Dr. Darlene Ryan has won the Outstanding Administrative Support Award from the National Science Education Leadership Association for demonstrated exemplary support for science education at the school, district, higher education, and/or county level. This award honors an administrator whose primary responsibility is outside the area of science instruction. Dr. Ryan serves as Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Schools for Durham Public Schools. She has been a teacher leader, STEM coach, district-level science/math coordinator, principal, and executive director for curriculum/instruction. She was previously recognized as North Chatham School Teacher of the Year and Principal of the Year in Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School. She has received the Distinguished Alumni Award for Excellence in



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NURSES

Continued from page A1

Nursing program, an 18-month long curriculum intended for people with previous degrees coming back to school to study nursing.

That journey has Lipscomb and several other UNC students working with the Chatham Council on Aging — a nonprofit that focuses on providing aid and resources to people over the age of 60. Those students are being tasked with helping the organization address the public health needs that Chatham's older residents face.

Placing public health in perspective

Lipscomb is one of nine students working with the COA this semester. Julie Jacobson Vann leads the class that places nursing students with the organization and explains that her students are completing what's called a clinical practicum — an immersive, supervised learning opportunity where students can see how professionals actually perform in the field.

Vann said most clinicals take place in something like a hospital setting, but since the class she teaches focuses on public health nursing in community settings, students are matched with an organization and they work on health promotion, disease and injury prevention initiatives.

"We instead focus on population health," she said. "We look at a population like the older adults in Chatham County. The students do a population assessment by looking at different sources of information by identifying what the health needs are of the population and then work on projects, or interventions, to help deal with those things on a relatively small scale."

This semester's group of students hasn't been immune to the effects of the pandemic either; it's forced what is usually very hands on, in-person based learning to go mostly virtual. Being able to interface with adults at one of the COA's centers in Chatham County has been replaced with video meetings and phone calls trying to make sure good information is getting to people that could need it most.

Vann explained one goal of working in public health is developing effective prevention



Nursing student Brianna Reeves stands in the doorway to the Council on Aging's 'operation room' at the Chatham County Ag Center.

Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

programs, which she broke down into three parts: The first is primary prevention, which aims to prevent problems from occurring to begin with. (Think of switching to a healthier diet or keeping up to date on your vaccinations.) The next phase, secondary prevention, is the label making phase of the preventative public health.

"(It's) identifying problems early so that they're more treatable, and that's things like screenings," Vann said.

And finally, tertiary prevention aims to prevent problems or complications from getting worse, ideally making people less likely to end up in hospitals or an emergency room — according to Vann. She likened it to someone with diabetes taking an instructional class on how to better manage their disease.

This year, students are creating presentations for the Virtual Health & Wellness Expo that's set to take place throughout March. Along with the UNC School of Nursing and Chatham Health Alliance, the COA is having students host presentations every Tuesday morning on subjects ranging from the assumptions and myths around the COVID-19, getting regular health screenings and home safety tips.

Vann added the COA also helps students get an idea of how to plan care outside of medical offices.

"I think it's just totally a unique experience for them because they get to see some of

the challenges that people have once they leave the hospital," she said. "That's pretty eye opening for them. When they do get out in the field, they get a chance to see what people really deal with outside the hospital, so even if they end up working as nurses in the hospital, they may have a better understanding of challenging it can be for people to take care of themselves at home. Whether or not they have access to healthy food, or access to safe places to be active."

'A different start'

Lipscomb said it's been an adjustment as the university restructures classes to operate in a pandemic. She says there have been some benefits, like being able to stay home with her daughter and accommodate her husband's work schedule. But she adds it's been odd not having some of the face-to-face learning she was expecting.

"I think one of the more challenging things has been not having our clinical experiences earlier in the program," she said. "Last summer we didn't get to practice with live patients; everything was remote. And I think the university program is really doing it's best to figure out solutions and to get nurses through and get us the training that we need. I think we will catch up, it's just been a different start."

For her intervention project, Lipscomb is working with members of the Chatham County Public Health Depart-

ment to vaccinate communities of color, specifically older members of those communities. She said those efforts includes everything from making phone calls to mailing informational postcards that dispel myths about the vaccine and provide information on how to get vaccinated.

Lipscomb said her intervention aims to break down hesitations in communities that have a history of being exploited and left out of the medical system. She hopes that more people in communities of color will get vaccinated if they can see people like themselves signing up for a shot in the arm.

"We've heard that the older populations have been less hesitant to get the vaccine because of that immediate return on investment in the sense that their health is most vulnerable," she said. "I think that the barriers that older people have, transportation wise and isolation, getting enrolled on the internet, there's just more barriers for that population as well."

The missing piece

Perhaps the biggest barrier for both the nursing students and the COA is access to real time human interaction. Liz Lahti, who manages the Eastern Chatham Senior Center, said having a level of warm contact was a cornerstone for the students as they performed their clinical work, something that's proving hard to replace.

There have been efforts to set up driveway visits, at a safe distance, where students and seniors can get some social interaction and possibly do a health assessment. But she said she could see why some older adults would be hesitant to pick up the phone when an unfamiliar number from Chapel Hill pops up.

"When it was on our turf, we were there, we could see the interaction," Lahti said. "I think some of the seniors are a little bit more leary about answering a phone call they don't know. We've done a lot of scam training, so I think they're a little bit leary about a total stranger calling them up and wanting to come by and see them."

Lahti did mention the COVID-19 pandemic has taught the COA a few new tricks. Some of the nursing students are working on teaching older adults how to effectively use electronic devices to access things like health records, make appointments or simply connect with people. That's something she imagines could be a serious boon to isolated seniors and potentially keep them engaged in the future.

The backdrop of all of us is that Chatham County, like the rest of the country, has a growing senior population. With people 60 and older now making up a third of the county's population, Lahti is hopeful that means good things for the COA. She says more seniors means more potential donors and volunteers.

"I'm actually looking forward to it," she said. "I don't think we're going to have to necessarily (do more work), they might be healthier, they might be younger, they might have a different frame of thinking. I welcome them, because it's not going to be that much taxing. I think they're actually going to add to our programs and to our center."

Lipscomb said she'll be graduating the program glad she got placed in a county that's working to address its aging population and with an organization that focuses on keeping older people well resourced.

"I think the COA specifically really addresses what is needed in the home and in the communities," Lipscomb said. "The COA plays a really important role in addressing other social needs. ... I feel like they really help serve the needs of aging populations when they're not in the healthcare system and help prevent them from going into the healthcare system."

POLICE

Continued from page A1

going on."

The pandemic has especially taxed the department's work capacity as it has tried to support Siler City residents enduring economic hardship.

"Just the wear and tear it's taken on the community," Matthews said, "people losing jobs, not being able to work full-time, struggling to make ends meet. It's hard."

The department has not grown, though, to address new and unusual demand even as crime has intensified in the last year. In every major crime statistic, Siler City is "well elevated above both the state and national level," Wagner said in the town's annual budget retreat last month.

Between Nov. 2019 and Oct. 2020, Siler City had 67 violent crimes ranging "from homicide to rape, sexual assault and shootings," according to Wagner.

"I feel that public safety ... really needs some direct attention for this year," he said in the budget meeting. "And I think that it's a sound investment to build on our future and the past."

New department leaders such as Matthews and Klumb will better equip the department to fulfil its community obligation.

"The sergeant position in the police department is critical, because they really are a connection between the chief's office policy and practice to our patrol

officers and the boots on the ground," Wagner said. "So, they play an important role in community outreach and engagement. And they play a critical role in the delegation of policy and practice. And also, they play a critical role in coaching and mentoring officers and the future of the agency."

Still, Wagner needs a larger force to address the town's entrenched

criminal activity and serve as a better resource to its beleaguered residents, he said.

In January, the police department, in cooperation with the town's human resources department and the board of commissioners, launched an incentive program for officers to recruit new talent. Police staff can earn a \$1,000 bonus for every person they recruit to the department.

So far, the program seems to be working.

"We've had some staff look for talent outside the agency, through their connections, either personal or professional," Wagner said, "and they've applied and they are now being considered for employment. So that's a positive thing."

None have made it through the entire hiring process yet, Wagner said, but he expects to

meet his 21-person staff capacity soon. Next, he hopes the board of commissioners will approve a request to expand his force to 24 or 25 officers, at which point he will reevaluate the department's ability to serve Siler City's needs.

"Right now, we're at a disadvantage to really make a true assessment because we're short staffed," Wagner said, "and everything is com-

pounded when you're short staffed ... So, if the board is willing to give me three additional new hires, then once those people are on board, we'll do a reassessment of resources and need as it's compared to crime and community crime prevention."

Reporter D. Lars Dolder can be reached at dldolder@chathamnr.com and on Twitter @dldolder.

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After years of LGBTQ lobbying, N.C. school records will now list students' preferred names

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

When Northwood senior Caroline Puckett first heard that the N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction was updating its PowerSchool student information system to display a “preferred name” on most state records, she couldn’t believe it.

The co-president of her school’s Pride Club, she immediately thought of all the students whom this move would make more comfortable. She also thought of the students already graduated — like her sibling, Piper — who had experienced the dysphoria of being misgendered or “dead named,” by being called by their birth name.

“I personally do not have a change name or have any sort of conflict with my current name right now, but I know a lot of people who do,” said Puckett, who is bisexual and prefers to be referred to by the she/they pro-

nouns. “I have a lot of people in my club who may have a different preferred name, or changed their name ... I think they’re going to be really excited to hear that people are going to be actually seeing them and viewing them as people and not just a system of students.”

At Northwood, Puckett said she’s heard about teachers who call students by their dead name, even after being corrected.

“It’s really frustrating to hear those kinds of things,” Puckett said.

“I just think that it will make people feel better about themselves,” said Pride Co-President Oliver Ewy, a sophomore at Northwood, of the change. “Because obviously, seeing a name that you don’t associate with yourself, or that you associate with negative things can make someone really uncomfortable.”

Under the new PowerSchool update, announced to school districts by DPI on March 5, the “pre-

ferred name” will be displayed on most records. The only report that will display a student’s legal name is official state student transcripts.

The move follows years of lobbying by LGBTQ advocacy groups, who’ve said using a student’s legal or birth name causes emotional harm to transgender students and can put them at risk for being outed.

“This is a really big deal for a lot of North Carolina families,” Craig White, supportive schools coordinator at the Asheville-based Campaign for Southern Equality, told the News + Record. “This is something that most states around the country have had in place for years. So it is a very important step forward, but it’s still only a piece of the puzzle when we look at schools having full comprehensive protection and support for LGBTQ students.”

DPI said the change will go into effect during a maintenance update

beginning this week, and that the preferred names will be used on records such as state reports, student report cards and teacher grade books.

‘This is a welcome change’

KJ Hill, a senior at Northwood who is transgender, learned about the change on Wednesday — the same day he started widely sharing his chosen name, “KJ,” with people. While he’d previously been using he/him pronouns, he said he was waiting for his lacrosse season to end to “completely come out.” The announcement of the PowerSchool change felt like perfect timing, Hill said.

He’s glad the change is happening, especially knowing how a transgender friend had previously been dead named in PowerSchool and on documents.

“I wish it would have happened a long time ago, especially now that I’m a senior,” he said.

“But I think it’s amazing — it helps empower and just make trans people feel validated.”

“I’m very, very happy about it, and I feel like it’s very much so necessary.”

While students who have legally changed their names will see their preferred names changed in PowerSchool, White said that process poses challenges to minor students who might not have access to financial or legal resources. The Campaign for Southern Equality first contacted DPI about this issue in 2017, White said.

When the pandemic pushed learning aboard virtual platforms, he said many user IDs for those platforms were created based on the names listed in PowerSchool.

“All of a sudden, students were being asked to make the transition to virtual learning, which was hard for everybody,” White said. “But a lot of transgender students were all of a sudden seeing their legal names pop up in front of themselves and other teachers and classmates.”

In response, the organization worked with about 300 parents, students and educators to send a letter to former Superintendent Mark Johnson last April, “explaining why this was such a critical issue that needed to be addressed right away.”

In Chatham County Schools, Assistant Supt. of Academic Services and Instructional Support Division Amanda Hartness said the district is waiting to determine how this change will impact the other software platforms that PowerSchool feeds into. CCS will also look to further guidance from DPI, which said it would share a short demonstration video with schools sometime this week.

“Obviously, we always want to protect the safety and rights of all of our students, and we’ve had to work with a variety of our families that have transgender students,” Hartness said. “We try to put a variety of different security things in place for them so that their identity is safe and all that. However, PowerSchool created a really big challenge, and it was a hurdle that went beyond our reach.”

She noted that while the district could train teachers to ensure they understand the importance of using preferred names, it hasn’t previously had control over documents such as report cards that are generated through PowerSchool. Once the new change goes into effect, Hartness said the district will have a formalized process for any student profile changes, including the preferred name field.

“This is a welcome change and we know that many of our families of LGBTQ students will be happy that we can now accommodate their requests,” she said.

Still, some conservative groups have criticized the move, saying the school system should only be allowed to change a student’s name once they’ve “fully transitioned” — a phrase for which there exists no uniform definition. Hartness said she’s heard pushback from people who think students will now be able to “make this change willy nilly,” which she says is not the case. It’s her understanding, she said, that as with other student record changes, the process will be parent driven.

In its Friday announcement, DPI said it’s updating documentation that will give schools more

specific details — likely to include details on what will happen in the case that students and parents disagree on the student’s preferred name.

‘It’s not abstract for transgender and nonbinary students’

Though the change is being widely celebrated by transgender students and advocates, all students will have the ability to record their “preferred name” and legal name in the updated system.

Northwood’s Ewy hopes the change can serve as a sort of catalyst for more LGBTQ protection in schools.

“I would hope that this leads to more recognition of transgender students in schools, especially in North Carolina schools,” Ewy said, “and to see how they can improve other aspects like restroom use and student sports, since that is a big issue especially in southern states.”

Hill also raised concerns that Northwood, and other high schools across the state, needing more unisex and single-stall bathrooms. Up until his junior year, he said he’d used the women’s restroom, which was uncomfortable.

“I definitely had a lot of experiences (where) people would ask me why I was there and things like that,” he said. “And so I feel like there’s room for improvement.”

The expected PowerSchool change is “just a step in the right direction,” he added.

White concurred, saying that schools should also be working toward anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies for students — particularly for LGBTQ students and LGBTQ students of color, who data show experience more bullying and harassment online and at school than other groups of students.

“When we’re talking about policies and decision, that’s kind of an abstract thing, but it’s not abstract for transgender and nonbinary students ... They either get the message of, ‘You’re welcomed, you are supported, you’re part of this community,’ or they get the message of, ‘You’re rejected, we don’t want you here,’” White said. “And for a population of students that is already wrestling with some of the highest rates of anxiety, depression, substance use, homelessness and suicidal ideation, we cannot afford to be sending them anything but a message of love and support.”

“To all the LGBTQ young people out there, I want you to know that people have your back, that you’re an amazing person, just who you are. And that there are folks that care about you.”

For Puckett, though she knows the change still might not impact how certain teachers interact with students, and that other challenges for LGBTQ students remain, DPI’s announcement feels like much-needed good news.

“It’s just really great to know that there are good things coming to us,” Puckett said. “Because I feel like in the media, a lot of things that are portrayed for our community specifically are pretty much just negative ... I think it’s really, really good to hear those positive changes that we’re having, so that we can work toward having a more equal system of education and for students in general.”

Reporter Hannah McClellan can be reached at hannah@chathamnr.com or on Twitter at @HannerMcClellan.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Development

Town of Siler City: Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service (RUS), USDA

ACTION: Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that RUS, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act, is issuing an environmental assessment (EA) in connection with possible impacts related to a project proposed by the Town of Siler City. The proposal is for Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Nutrient Removal and Capacity Increase in Siler City. The Town of Siler City has submitted an application to RUS for funding of the proposal.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nancy L. Whittington, Area Specialist, USDA Rural Development, 847 Curry Drive, Ste 104, Asheboro, NC 28359, 336.308.1660 Lynn.Whittington@usda.gov.

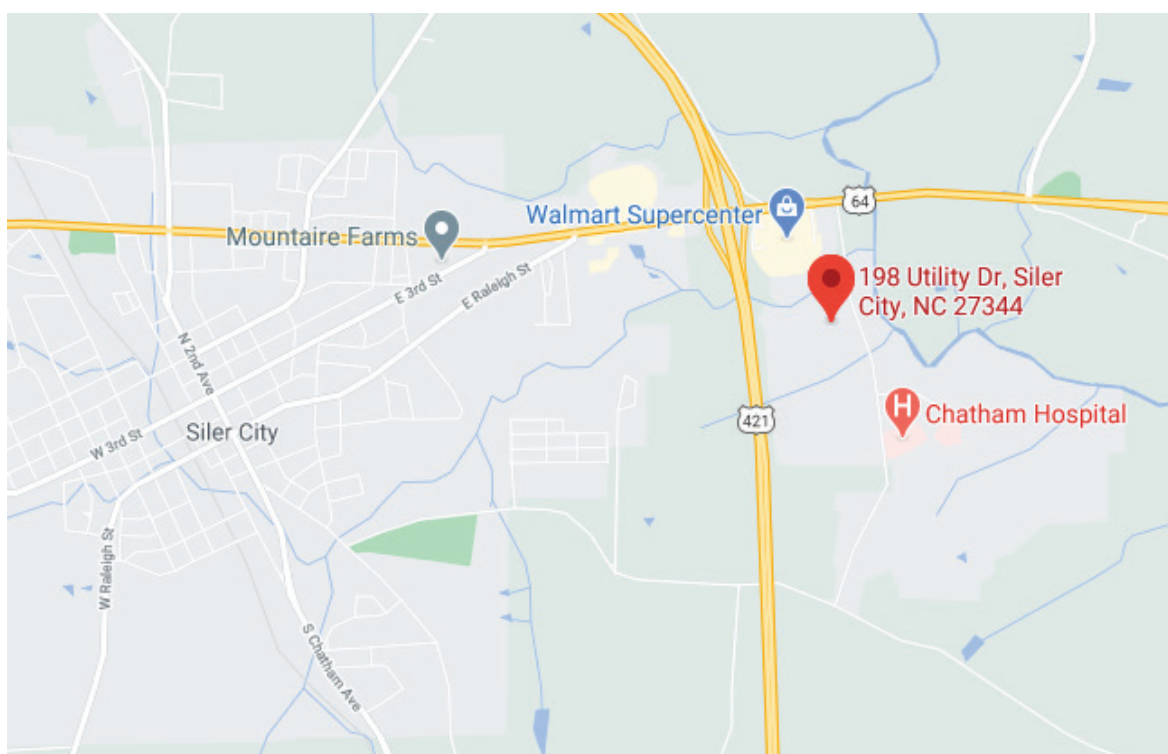
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Town of Siler City proposes to improve/upgrade the Town’s existing WWTP located at 198 Utility Drive, Siler City, North Carolina. These upgrades are proposed to be completed in two (2) phases due to permitting requirements. The proposed phase 1 upgrade includes modifications to the existing oxidation ditches (mixers, control valves, fine bubble diffusers, etc.) four (4) new 100 horsepower (HP) blowers, air piping, yard piping, related electrical and site work, and appurtenances. The upgrades also include replacement of clarifier equipment and the installation of a new standby power generator with automatic transfer switch to ensure that the WWTP facilities remain operational during a loss of power. The second phase of the project includes upgrades to expand the current treatment capacity from 4.0 million gallons per day (MGD) to 6.0 MGD, expansion of the headworks (screening & grit removal), and influent pump station. A third oxidation ditch is proposed to be constructed along with a third clarifier for biological treatment and settling. Lastly, the project includes upgrades to approximately 5,600 linear feet (LF) of gravity sewer interceptor from the point that Mountaire Farms flow enters the interceptor to the WWTP.

McGill Associates, P.A. an environmental consultant, prepared an environmental assessment for RUS that describes the project, assesses the proposed project’s environmental impacts, and summarizes as applicable any mitigation measures used to minimize environmental effects. RUS has conducted an independent evaluation of the environmental assessment and believes that it accurately assesses the impacts of the proposed project. No significant impacts are expected as a result of the construction of the project.

Questions and comments should be sent to RUS at the address provided. RUS will accept questions and comments on the environmental assessment for **14 days** from the date of publication of this notice.

Any final action by RUS related to the proposed project will be subject to, and contingent upon, compliance with all relevant Federal environmental laws and regulations and completion of environmental review procedures as prescribed by 7 CFR Part 1970, Environmental Policies and Procedures.

A general location map of the proposal is shown below:



100-COUNTY CAMPAIGN

State Sen. Jeff Jackson, seeking U.S. Senate seat, holds outdoor town hall in Chatham

BY D. LARS DOLDER
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — About 40 people gathered at Pittsboro’s Kiwanis Park on Monday — shivering in the cold and socially distanced — to hear state Sen. Jeff Jackson (D-Mecklenburg) pitch his bid for U.S. Senate.

The Chatham rally was Jackson’s eighth stop on what he calls his “100 county campaign,” an effort to personally visit and pow wow with residents of each N.C. county. The trans-state tour has no rigid timeline, according to Jackson campaign press secretary Ty McEachern, but would ideally conclude within 100 days, in advance of the primaries.

Jackson’s objective, he says, is to rework the traditional campaign model to better engage would-be voters and address their concerns. When he first entertained the idea of running for Congress, campaign experts and political advisers recommended Jackson synthesize his objectives into “five key phrases” with mass appeal that could be easily repeated and broadcast.

“Well that’s bulls-t,” Jackson said in his speech Monday, evoking cheers and applause from the crowd. “... It’s easy to demonize a set of vague principles. We need to make it specific. We need to localize it.”

Jackson’s goal is to hear from as many North Carolina voices as possible before committing to a platform.

‘I think in the last election, most people found themselves voting against something. And the purpose of this campaign is to give them something to actually vote for. But in order to do that, you have to take a little bit of time to learn about the candidate, and to listen to what they’re saying. And so at this early stage in the campaign, I’m really not asking for people’s support. I’m asking for the opportunity to earn their support. And that’s what I would ask folks here.’

JEFF JACKSON, candidate for US Senate

“The idea is you make it a 100-county campaign by going everywhere,” Jackson said. “But then you build an agenda that actually reflects the state.”

Having only begun his rounds, then, it’s premature for Jackson to assemble his primary objectives or to request voter support, he told the News + Record.

“I think in the last election, most people found themselves voting against something,” he said. “And the purpose of this campaign is to give them something to actually vote for. But in order to do that, you have to take a little bit of time to learn about the candidate, and to listen to what they’re saying. And so at this early stage in the campaign, I’m really not asking for people’s support. I’m asking for the opportunity to earn their support. And that’s what I would ask folks here.”

Jackson, a 38-year-old Charlottean, is serving in his fourth term as a state

senator. He is a lawyer and previously worked as a Gaston County prosecutor. He is also an 18-year army veteran, having fought in the Afghanistan war, and he currently serves as a captain in the U.S. Army Reserve. He is among six candidates — including Chatham’s Kimrey Rhinehardt, who is unaffiliated — seeking to replace longtime Sen. Richard Burr (R) in the 2022 election. (Burr isn’t seeking re-election.) If Jackson wins, he could further tip the Senate’s narrow Democratic majority.

Though a Democrat, Jackson has been openly critical of politicians from both major parties, expressing disdain for any leader who makes policy decisions in the interest of party power. He reiterated this contempt on Monday when addressing the state’s history of gerrymandering.

“Democrats could have done something about it, but wanted to hold on to power,” he said, referring to when the Democratic



Staff photo by Kim Hawks

State Sen. Jeff Jackson (D-Mecklenburg) visited Pittsboro on Monday to meet with would-be voters in his bid for U.S. Senate.

Party last held majority power in the General Assembly about 10 years ago. “First thing we did when Republicans took over was say, ‘How about independent redistricting?’ And they said, ‘How about epic payback?’”

The double standard represents what most voters recognize, Jackson said — a widening party divide.

“This is as bad as it’s ever been,” he said. “But what’s interesting is coming out of this pandemic, there’s going to be a physical coming back together. Well, what if we could pair that with a political coming back together?”

If so, Jackson expects Congress will find that many of the biggest issues facing this country transcend party lines. Chatham’s primary concerns, for example, including water contamination and broadband inequity, are almost

nationally ubiquitous. All voters would like cleaner water, he said — it shouldn’t be framed as a one-party mission.

On broadband, he said federal spending must accelerate in the short-term to prevent any further delay in universal access.

“We’re making a mental transition at a state level from broadband being a luxury to being a necessity,” he said. “But that comes with an appropriation that’s required.”

State and federal programs already exist to promote broadband expansion in rural areas, but they’re underfunded and sluggish, according to Jackson.

“There is a program for pushing out broadband into more rural areas, but we only funded to the tune of about \$10 million a year,” he said. “And that money goes really fast. That’s not enough to move the needle ... What

we need to do, rather than parcel that out over 10 years or 12 years, is front-load that funding — spend as much of it as early as possible. Can you imagine being the last community to be hooked up to broadband 12 years from now? Terrible.”

To achieve such lofty goals, however, voters must unite behind common ideals, Jackson said, not party banners. He hopes to demonstrate with his campaign that he’s interested in what’s important to all North Carolinians.

“Everyone deserves respect; I show everybody respect,” he said. “... What we’re trying to do with this campaign is to treat it as a massive showing of good faith and a raising of people’s expectations. You should expect more from your representatives than people who constantly lower your expectations.”

The event was scheduled to last one hour, from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., but was halted early when a Kiwanis Club representative interrupted to inform the campaign that political events were forbidden on the property. A similar Republican event had been turned down earlier, the representative said. Jackson followed the in-person town hall with a similar virtual event broadcast from downtown Pittsboro outside the historic courthouse.

Reporter D. Lars Dolder can be reached at dldolder@chathamnr.com and on Twitter @dldolder.

Changes coming to county’s Household Hazardous Waste Program

CN+R Staff Report

PITTSBORO — Chatham County Solid Waste & Recycling is making several changes to its Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) program. The HHW program is for residents to properly dispose of hazardous waste that is generated at home. HHW events take place from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. on the third Saturday each month from March through November.

Latex Paint

Beginning this month, residents will only be allowed to bring 20 gallons of latex paint cans to each HHW event. Rather than bringing latex paint to HHW events, residents are encouraged to dry out the latex paint and throw it in the trash.

“Approximately 60% of the material brought to HHW events is liquid latex paint,” said Kevin Lindley, the county’s environmental quality director. “It is the most costly item we collect in total. Yet, latex paint is only hazardous when in a liquid form. Latex paint can easily be dried out and thrown away with your regular trash. This new paint limit will help Solid Waste & Recycling save our budget to handle more hazardous wastes.”

To dry latex paint, take off the lid and let it sit outside in a covered area, so it is not exposed to rain. Or add kitty litter, sand or sawdust to the paint can and mix it up. The paint does not have to be completely solid-

ified but should be like a paste. As long as the latex paint can no longer run out of the can, it can be thrown away with your regular trash. As an alternative, instead of drying it out, simply paint something, then throw that item away once the paint is dry.

Residents can bring 20 gallons of latex paint cans per HHW event. A one-gallon paint can that has half a gallon in it will count as one gallon. Residents are encouraged to combine partial cans of paint as long as they are all latex paint. The new paint limit only applies to latex paint. Any other type of paint (oil-based, spray, etc.) cannot be hardened, so residents should bring it to an HHW event, and there is no limit.

The first HHW event of 2021 will be Saturday, March 20. For future dates and to learn more about the Household Hazardous Waste program visit <http://www.chathamcountync.gov/hhw>.

Electronics

Changes were made to the Electronics Recycling program in August 2020 and as a result electronics are no longer accepted at HHW events. For residents with a current decal, electronics are accepted at all 12 collection centers. Three centers (Bonlee, Cole Park, and Pittsboro) accept electronics of any size and weight. The remaining nine centers can only accept electronics that

are less than 50 pounds and computers/televi-sions that are less than 25 inches across.

For residents who do not have a decal to use the Collection Centers, they can bring their electronics to the main

facility. There is no size limit on electronics at the main facility, but there may be a charge for residents without a decal. There is a \$5 charge per television, monitor, desktop computer, laptop computer, printer, copier,

and fax machine. There is no charge for smaller electronics accepted in the Electronics Recycling program.

Learn more about the Electronics Recycling program at <http://www.chathamcountync.gov/>

electronics. Residents who have questions may contact the Solid Waste & Recycling main office from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays at 919-542-5516 or at recycle@chathamcountync.gov.



PREVENTION

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— Pop Quiz —

1 Which of the following cancers can be prevented with screening?
(a) Prostate (b) Breast (c) Colon

✓

Colon Cancer

Both breast and prostate cancer are diagnosed after cancer has already formed. In the colon, polyps form before cells become cancerous.

2 At what age should you get a colon cancer screening?
✓ Age 50

If you have a family history of colon cancer, you may need to be tested at a younger age.

3 Where should you have your colon cancer screening?

✓

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NORTHWOOD 17, SWANSBORO 8

Northwood switches style, trounces Swansboro in first round

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
News + Record Staff

Note: As of the News + Record's print deadline, Northwood's second-round playoff game on Wednesday had yet to be played. Head to our website, www.chathamnewsrecord.com, or follow us on Twitter, @ChathamNRSports, for updates and results.

PITTSBORO — The Northwood men are moving on to the second round of the playoffs.

That's a sentence you probably could have written at halftime on Monday.

The Northwood Chargers earned a commanding home win over the 10th-seeded Swansboro Pirates on Monday night, 17-8, to advance to the second round of the NCHSAA 1A/2A/3A Men's Lacrosse playoffs.

Despite the score showing a single-digit contest, it wasn't actually that close.

To close out the night, Northwood Head Coach Randy Cox used the fourth quarter to substitute his starters for younger players on the team who don't typically get much playing time. This way, they could gain experience in a postseason situation.

The Pirates scored four of their eight goals in that final period — all but one coming from senior attacker Zechariah Frantz — when Northwood had all but let its guard down.

"We did get everybody in the game which is nice, we played a lot of people," Cox said. "That's to help build confidence and really continue to develop our program, so it worked out well."

In reality, Northwood was in control of this game from the moment the ball was dropped for the opening face-off.

After a few back-and-forth turnovers to start things off, the Chargers began to settle into their rhythm, leading to an opening goal from senior attacker Terry Moore, followed by three-straight goals from senior attacker — and team leader in goals scored — Jake Mann.

By the end of the first quarter, it was 5-0. Northwood showed no signs of letting up.

For most of the game, it was the Chargers' defense that stole the show. It was their aggressiveness, their ability to swarm to the ball, their technique of using their sticks to both take control of and cause discomfort for opposing

See **LACROSSE**, page B2



Northwood senior Terry Moore waits around during a stoppage of play in the middle of his team's 17-8 win over Swansboro in the first round of the NCHSAA 1A/2A/3A men's lacrosse playoffs on Monday. Moore had 4 goals on the night.

Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

WOODS CHARTER 6, SOUTHERN WAKE 2

Howarth stars in 5-goal performance as Wolves handle Southern Wake

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
News + Record Staff



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Woods Charter senior Kyle Howarth (10) dribbles toward the goal in his team's win over Southern Wake, 6-2, on March 10. Howarth was an offensive force all night, scoring five goals in the victory.

CHAPEL HILL — If March 10's soccer game at The Park at Briar Chapel were a television program, it'd be titled "The Kyle Howarth Show."

Howarth, senior striker for Woods Charter's men's soccer team, scored five goals en route to a 6-2 victory over the winless Southern Wake Academy Lions last Wednesday, extending the Wolves' winning streak to four games and putting them in prime position to compete for the conference title with Research Triangle.

A few weeks ago, it would have been nearly impossible to see Woods Charter in this position.

After starting 0-3 and losing those three games by a combined 10-1 score, the Wolves seemed lost, destined for an

uncharacteristically poor year.

Then, they flipped a switch. "Part of it was that we were struggling to practice," said Graeme Stewart, Woods Charter's head coach. "We had COVID stuff at the beginning, plus then the rain, we couldn't get out here ... So Research, when we played them away, we were close, so we just got into a rhythm. You can practice all you want, but you need to play and you need to get into a rhythm and get the games going."

Howarth and the Wolves kept that rhythm going against Southern Wake.

After a slow opening 20 minutes and no score at the first mask break, Woods Charter found that same switch.

By the time halftime rolled around, Howarth had already scored a hat trick, hammering in three goals in the last 20

minutes — including a possession where he got the ball on a great pass inside the box, spun around with three defenders around him and effortlessly slotted the ball past them into the right portion of the net.

"Finding the goal has always been something I've been pretty good at and I just never give up," Howarth said. "There's always a chance, there's always going to be more chances. You've just got to keep your head up no matter what happens in the game."

He'd score twice more, with his final tally coming after he won a battle for the ball left of the goal, dribbled past a fallen defender and rocketed a shot past the keeper into the right corner of the goal.

"Kyle's got natural talent, he's got that thing you can't

See **HOWARTH**, page B5

Two Chatham Charter seniors sign to play collegiate athletics

From Chatham Charter School

SILER CITY — The Knights Athletic Department held a signing ceremony for two Chatham Charter seniors to sign letters of intent to play collegiate athletics. On the afternoon of March 9, administration, staff, family members and high school students watched as Trevor Golden and Rebecca McGaughnea made

their decisions public.

Golden, who has played soccer, basketball and baseball throughout middle and high school at Chatham Charter, has signed an intent form to play baseball at Brunswick Community College in Supply.

McGaughnea, who has played volleyball, basketball and baseball throughout middle and high school at Chatham Charter, has signed an intent form to play basket-

ball at Methodist University in Fayetteville.

"It's always a special day when we can host a signing ceremony for our student-athletes to continue their playing careers at the next level," said Clint Fields, Director of Athletics and Operations for Chatham Charter. "We are proud of Trevor's and Rebecca's accomplishments and happy that we could be with them along their athletic journeys."



Submitted photo

Trevor (center) signs a letter of intent with Brunswick Community College on March 9 as his parents, Kelly (left) and Richard Golden look on.



Submitted photo

Rebecca McGaughnea (center) signs a letter of intent with Methodist University on March 9 as her parents, Patrick (left) and Jennifer McGaughnea look on.



UNC Pembroke senior, and former Chatham Central wrestler, Nick Daggett (right) takes down McKendree's Christian Mejia in the semifinals of the NCAA Division II Wrestling Championships in St. Louis this past weekend. He would defeat Mejia by decision, 6-5. Submitted photo from NCAA

Former Bear finishes as national runner-up in NCAA Division II Wrestling Championships

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
News + Record Staff

ST. LOUIS — A former Chatham Central Bear state champion showed out in St. Louis this past weekend.

Nick Daggett, a 2017 graduate of Chatham Central High School and senior wrestler at UNC-Pembroke, finished as the national runner-up in the 125-pound class at the 2020-21 NCAA Division II Wrestling

Championships in St. Louis.

After winning the NCAA Super Regional II Tournament Championship at Emmanuel College in Franklin Springs, Georgia, on March 3, Daggett qualified for the NCAA Championships, taking a 13-3 record into the tournament, where he won two matches on his run to a national title bout as a fifth seed.

See **WRESTLING**, page B2

LACROSSE

Continued from page B1

players.

The first half, in which they allowed just two goals, was a masterclass in rattling an offense. A major key to Northwood's win on Monday — and any victory they earn moving forward — is an old adage from former Alabama football head coach Paul "Bear" Bryant: Defense wins championships.

"I'm going to give credit where credit is due because Coach (Eric) Ditter heads up our defense and he has an aggressive style," said Cox. "We're going to rely on them down the stretch. We're going to rely on our offense to go ahead and produce, too, but defense wins championships. If we can keep the ball out of the goal, I think we can give ourselves a chance."

As great as the shut-out first quarter was for the Chargers, it was the second period where everything began to come together.

Northwood is a team that typically likes to play a more controlled style of offense. Methodical. Paced. Poised. Possessive. Focusing on ball movement, the Chargers often look like a predator hunting their prey, patiently waiting, moving the ball around and around, looking for the perfect moment to strike.

However, Monday's second quarter was much more about striking than it was about waiting.

In three minutes, from the 6:35 mark to the 3:35 mark, the Chargers scored five goals as they broke down the Pirates' defenders possession after possession.

On a couple of possessions, a Northwood player scooped up the face-off after a goal, took it immediately down the center of the field and dumped it off to a teammate, who scored an easy goal.

An example of this is when senior midfielder Kade Little won the face-off with ease, ran it down the center and barreled towards the net, but dumped it off to a teammate on the left at the last second, who orchestrated a couple of quick passes across the crease until it got to Moore, who slotted it into the net for a simple, point-blank goal.

In total, that possession lasted 10 seconds.

Another of their possessions took just eight seconds.

It was the exact opposite of Northwood's typical style, one that featured rapid-fire shots,

quick decision-making and speedy ball movement. But it worked.

"Every opportunity is an opportunity to try and develop and teach, so we wanted to go ahead and press in that way ... just to see how well we could do it," Cox said. "We really tried to go ahead and press our offense to see if we could get some quick goals and produce some offense, and we did."

A wizard with the stick, Mann led the team in goals on Monday with six, along with two assists, followed by Moore with four goals.

Northwood scored 17 goals on the night, but could have easily gotten well over 20 if it weren't for the phenomenal goalkeeping by Swansboro junior Hunter Shank, who tallied 27 saves, a massive feat.

"Their goalie played really, really well," Cox said. "Their goalie really caused a lot of havoc for us ... so hats off to their goalie, hats off to their team."

Despite the game's score and Northwood's dominating win, Cox still found a couple of issues that he said he wants to see fixed moving forward, including the team's "mental breakdowns" at times during the game, which occasionally led to turnovers and bad positioning on both sides of the field.

"I think they'd agree that we didn't play as well as we're capable of playing," Cox said. "We had moments where we were playing really, really well. And then we had moments where we broke down. ... As we move along and as we advance, we can't have those mental breakdowns. It's a win. It's not as nice of a win as we would like, but it's a 'W.'"

Even with a couple of mistakes made, Northwood moves on with a relatively comfortable win and is scheduled to play second-seeded Orange on the road in Hillsborough on Wednesday at 7 p.m. In the first matchup between the two schools on March 8, the Chargers prevailed with a 17-6 win.

"This one's behind us and I think it sort of gets the jitters out of everybody," Cox said. "There's always that little bit of nervous energy, doesn't matter who you're playing. There will be jitters when we start on Wednesday night depending on where we're playing ... I just hope they'll settle down so that we're rockin' and rollin' and we come away with the 'W.'"

From March 10: 'Northwood blows out Carrboro, loses to Apex ahead of postseason'

PITTSBORO — If you're interested in attending a skills clinic on ball movement, you'd be hard-pressed to find a better place to learn than Northwood High School during a men's lacrosse game.

The Chargers racked up 12 assists in their 17-6 win over the Carrboro Jaguars last Tuesday night — March 9 — a commanding victory that bodes well for Northwood as they head to the postseason as a wild card team.

"Everyone touch!" Chargers Head Coach Randy Cox could be heard yelling throughout the night. And that they would.

Northwood spent many of its possessions throwing the ball around in circles or semicircles, playing a 1-4-1 offense and methodically swinging the ball around until it was time for one of the Chargers' attackers to, well, attack.

"If we have the ball, then we can control the pace of the game," said Cox after the game. "And really get people in a place where they're comfortable and they're moving the ball and then we can go into our offense."

Saying the Chargers controlled the game would be an understatement.

With around a minute remaining in the first quarter, Northwood took a 5-0 lead on a goal by sophomore attacker Taylor Laberge. Senior goalkeeper Hunter Klingel made a great save, then got into position and threw a beautiful, 65-yard pass downfield that landed right in Laberge's stick as he went one-on-one with Carrboro's goalkeeper for an easy score.

The Jaguars would tuck on a goal with 12.1 seconds left in the period to avoid the first-quarter shutout, but the Chargers fired right back in the start of the second with four goals in the first 2 minutes, 42 seconds — two by Laberge, one by sophomore midfielder Will Smith and another by senior midfielder Kade Little — to take a 9-1 lead, that goal total already surpassing what Carrboro would score in the entire contest.

"I challenged the boys before the game that it wasn't about whether or not we beat them, it wasn't about how many goals we beat them by, it was more about our discipline as a team to make sure that when we had the ball, we managed the ball," Cox



Staff photo by Peyton Suckles

Northwood senior midfielder Henry Sapienza (3) faces off against a Jaguar opponent during the Chargers' 17-6 win over Carrboro on March 9. Sapienza had one goal on the night.

said. "So I think I was impressed with the fact that they actually played the way we asked them to play."

Jaguars' sophomore goalkeeper Will Naismith was no match for Laberge, who was dialed-in all night long, acting as a powerful force near the net and scoring six goals in the first three quarters, many of which were from point-blank range just outside of the attack area.

Laberge is one of just five non-seniors on the Chargers' roster, which is loaded with upper-classmen, many that are starters and massive contributors to Northwood's success.

"I think it's certainly a positive to have that many upperclassmen," Cox said. "The game has so many different levels to it and so what we're trying to do is, even with their skill level, to advance them even further to understand the game a bit more. So it certainly helps to have that level of skill from a stick-skill standpoint."

In addition to its ball movement, Northwood's aggressive defense was another standout point from the Chargers' win, with defenders getting in midfielders' faces immediately, interrupting passing lanes with their sticks and cross-checking Carrboro to force them to lose posses-

sion or miss out on loose ground balls.

Northwood out-shot Carrboro, 28-16, with Klingel making 10 saves compared to Naismith's six, in part because the Chargers' defense tightened up and rarely allowed the opposition to take shots.

"We want to go ahead and challenge them to move the ball," said Cox. "We want to challenge them so that the ball ends up being on the ground and then we want to win the ground ball game."

Cox wasn't satisfied with parts of the Chargers' pass-game, most notably the few times a pass sailed just over a player's head, out of reach. Even though they were playing the Jaguars, who ended the year with a 1-7 record after the loss, he said the team still needed to "elevate your game and play at a pretty high level," which he doesn't think they did consistently.

The Chargers led Carrboro, 17-4, at the end of the third quarter and wouldn't score for the remainder of the contest. But in reality, they didn't need to.

A day later, on Wednesday, Northwood visited

the Apex Cougars, where it lost its last game of the regular season, 18-7.

Despite the non-conference loss, however, the Chargers (5-4 overall, 2-3 in the Conference-10) are poised to get into the playoffs as one of the 10 wild card teams in the East Region of the NCHSAA 1A/2A/3A playoffs. Seeding will be determined during the bracketing process on Saturday.

In preparation for the postseason, Cox explained his team needs to "play bigger," being more confident in their size and their ability to move the ball. He wants them to eliminate any sloppiness he saw against Carrboro since they'll be playing much tougher teams next week.

"Everything is really in preparation for what lies ahead," Cox said. "Leave everything on the field, loser goes home. We have a talented group of upper-classmen. If they don't play collectively as a team, we will all go home as a team."

Reporter Victor Hensley can be reached at vhensley@chathamnr.com or on Twitter at [@Frezeal33](https://twitter.com/Frezeal33).

UNC Pembroke senior, and former Chatham Central wrestler, Nick Daggett (right) holds his runner-up trophy at the podium during the NCAA Division II Wrestling Championships in St. Louis over the weekend. Daggett lost by major decision, 12-2, to West Liberty's Cody Laya (center). Submitted photo from NCAA



WRESTLING

Continued from page B1

He took down fourth-seeded Josh Portillo (Nebraska-Kearney) by major decision, 9-0, in the quarterfinals, then proceeded to earn a comeback win over 11th-seeded Christian Mejia (McKendree) by a 6-5 decision in the semifinals. Mejia gained a 5-3 advantage after a reversal, but according to a release from UNC Pembroke's Associate Athletic Director Todd Anderson, Daggett fired back as he "executed a reversal 13 seconds later and used a riding time point to advance to the national championship bout."

tim to a monster eight-point third period by second-seeded Cole Laya (West Liberty) and lost by major decision, 12-2, ending his shot at a national championship.

As a team, UNC Pembroke finished in 19th place (17 points) at the Championships. Daggett became the fifth Brave to compete for a national title in the last nine seasons.

While Daggett won't end his career with a Division II national championship in his trophy case, he's crafted quite a resume during his time in Pembroke.

Daggett, a two-time All-American, has accrued a 100-31 (.763) overall record including tournament play, qualified for the NCAA

Championships all four years including his second-place finish this year, won three NCAA Super Regional II Championships, among many other achievements.

All of his college accomplishments are on top of his stellar career at Chatham Central, where he was named a three-time 1A state wrestling champion for the Bears, racking up a 171-7 (.961) overall record, including two perfect seasons to close out high school (36-0 his senior year, 42-0 his junior year) and an NCHSA All-American nod as a senior.

Reporter Victor Hensley can be reached at vhensley@chathamnr.com or on Twitter at [@Frezeal33](https://twitter.com/Frezeal33).



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HIGH SCHOOL SOCCER PLAYOFFS

Preview: What Chatham-area teams have a shot at a state soccer title?

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
News + Record Staff

Record's print deadline. Make sure to visit our website, www.chathamnewsrecord.com, or follow us on Twitter @ChathamNRSports for updates and results.

CHATHAM COUNTY — The playoffs for men's soccer — along with men's and women's lacrosse — are back this week and two of Chatham County's three men's soccer teams made the cut and earned bids for the 2020-21 NCHSAA Men's Soccer Championships and will start their state title journeys on Tuesday.

In this playoff preview, we'll look at each team's season leading up to this point, their upcoming playoff schedule, key players and more, starting with the Men's 1A classification.

Note: The first-round games on Tuesday were played after the News +

Men's 1A
Woods Charter Wolves
Record: 5-3 (5-1 in Central Tar Heel)
Conference: Central Tar Heel 1A (second place)
Seed: 12
First Round Opponent: vs. (5) Gray Stone Day, Tuesday at 7 p.m.

Potential Second Round Matchup: at (4) Research Triangle or vs. (13) Langtree Charter, Thursday

It's been a tale of two seasons for Woods Charter.

The Wolves started the season 0-3 after dealing with coronavirus-re-

lated quarantines, rain keeping them off of the practice field and plenty of postponements, the latter of which are consequences of playing soccer in the winter — during an exceptionally rainy one, at that. In those three games, they were outscored 10-1, getting shutout by undefeated Carrboro twice.

Since that less-than-stellar start, however, Woods Charter has turned up the heat, finishing the season on a five-game winning streak to end the year at 5-3. They just barely missed out on a Central Tar Heel conference title, which inevitably went into the hands of the now fourth-seeded Research Triangle Raptors, a potential second-round opponent for the Wolves.

Woods Charter is a team defined by its upperclassmen core, with six seniors that hold down all three areas of the field, including senior striker Kyle Howarth — the team's most dangerous offensive weapon — and midfielder Marky Noronha, who score the bulk of the goals. At

midfield, seniors Elijah Heatherington and Nicholas Mann act as versatile and crucial pieces on both sides of the pitch. And defensively, senior defenders Justin Galiger and Eli Terrell are aggressive, turn-over-producing machines that make sophomore goalkeeper Coyt Neagle's job easier.

Just as they started the season a bit slow, the Wolves are also notorious for starting games a little sluggish, but Howarth credits Woods Charter's head coach, Graeme Stewart, for correcting that during games.

"He's one of the best coaches I've ever had and he definitely knows how to get the team up and running," said Howarth. "We always have a slow start in the first half and he just gets the team up and we always come out with a win."

Woods Charter will have its hands full with the unbeaten Knights (6-0-2) from Gray Stone Day, but as Stewart put it in the team's regular-season home finale on March 9: "It doesn't matter who you play, home or away,

you've got to turn up ... and play with everything you've got."

Men's 2A
Jordan-Matthews Jets
Record: 9-1 (9-1 in PAC 7)

Conference: PAC 7 2A (conference champions)
Seed: 5
First Round Opponent: at (12) Northeastern, Tuesday at 6 p.m.

Potential Second Round Matchup: at (4) Washington or vs. (13) Trinity, Thursday

Jordan-Matthews was mere seconds away from an undefeated regular season.

In the Jets' Feb. 10 loss to Wheatmore, 1-0, the Warriors scored the lone goal on a breakaway with 2.1 seconds remaining in the first half to end Jordan-Matthews' chance at perfection.

Since that goal, Jordan-Matthews has played seven games, earning seven wins that include three shutouts — one being a 3-0 revenge win over Wheatmore — and five by two or more goals.

They've won games in just about any situation. Blowouts, second-half comebacks, close calls. They've seen games won on penalty kicks and leads change in an instant. If there's a team that's primed itself for a postseason run, Jordan-Matthews is it.

But all that matters are the results moving forward.

The Jets are a young team, as Head Coach Paul Cuadros is quick to mention, but they're clearly hungry. Affected

by academic eligibility issues and challenges from an abbreviated winter season, this team has taken every punch in stride and continues to dole them out.

Their defense is solid, led by the "Twin Towers" of Cristian Cruz and Irvin Campos Cervantes, two unforgiving defenders who wreak havoc on the back end. All season long, the Jets haven't given up more than two goals in a game. And that's only happened twice, a major credit to Cruz, Campos Cervantes and goalkeeper Ricardo Rocha.

In addition to their lockdown defense, they've also scored two or fewer goals just twice all year, averaging 4.2 goals per game and scoring as many as 10 (on March 2 vs. Randleman). They have a plethora of players — Franco Basurto, Cristian Escobedo, Alexis Ibarra, Zander Ocampo, among others — who have a knack at finding the net and will force opposing teams to match that production if they want to win because slowing it down won't be easy.

If Jordan-Matthews begins playing its style — a controlled, possessive offensive game — and stop potential break-away opportunities from Northeastern or any other opponents, the Jets are going to be a hard out in this year's postseason.

Reporter Victor Hensley can be reached at vhensley@chathamnr.com or on Twitter at @Frezeal33.

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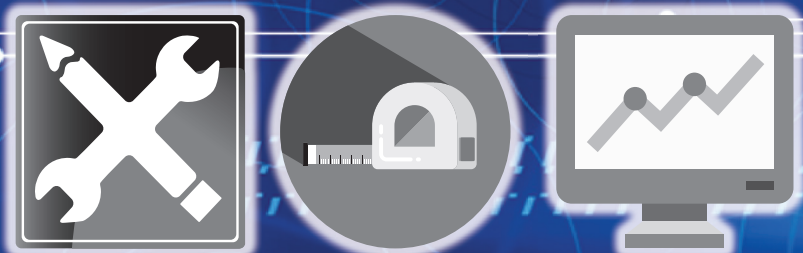
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Stampeding Seniors



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

The Northwood women's soccer team celebrated senior night during its season-opening victory over the Cedar Ridge Fighting Red Wolves, 5-2, on Monday. Here, Chargers senior Imagene Cooke (center in green, with flowers) walks with her parents as her teammates look on during the ceremony.



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Northwood junior Sydney Arnott (10) chases a Cedar Ridge offensive player down the pitch during her team's 5-2 season-opening victory over the Fighting Red Wolves.

CHATHAM COUNTY ATHLETICS RUNDOWN

This week's schedule and last week's results

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
News + Record Staff

This week is jam-packed, with the first three rounds of NCHSAA men's and women's lacrosse and men's soccer playoffs being hosted this week, along with the start of the women's soccer and softball and men's tennis seasons. In addition, spring football continues across the county with Northwood (2-0) and Chatham Central (1-0) still undefeated. Here are this week's schedules and last week's results.

THIS WEEK

Wednesday, March 17

Lacrosse: Northwood men at Orange, 7 p.m.
Soccer: Northwood women at Southern, 6:30 p.m.
Soccer: Woods Charter women vs. Clover Garden, 6 p.m.
Softball: Northwood women vs. Cedar Ridge, 6 p.m.
Tennis: Chatham Charter men vs. Cornerstone, 4 p.m.
Tennis: Jordan-Matthews men vs. Randleman, 4:30 p.m.
Tennis: Northwood men vs. Southern, 4:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 18

Soccer: Second round of NCHSAA men's soccer playoffs, both Woods Charter (1A) and Jordan-Matthews (2A) could be playing in this round, depending on Tuesday's

results.

Softball: Chatham Charter vs. Chatham Central, 4:30 p.m.
Softball: Jordan-Matthews women at Eastern Randolph, 6 p.m.

Friday, March 19

Football: Chatham Central vs. North Rowan, 6:30 p.m.
Football: Jordan-Matthews at Trinity, 7 p.m.
Football: Northwood at Southern, 7 p.m.
Lacrosse: Third round of NCHSAA men's lacrosse playoffs, Northwood could be playing here depending on

Wednesday's results.

Softball: Chatham Central women at Southern Lee, 6 p.m.
Softball: Northwood women at Southern, 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 20

Soccer: Third round of NCHSAA men's soccer playoffs, both Woods Charter (1A) and Jordan-Matthews (2A) could be playing in this round, depending on Tuesday's and Thursday's results.

LAST WEEK

Monday, March 8

Football: The Jordan-Matthews men lost a lopsided road game to the Eastern Randolph Wildcats, 49-0.
Lacrosse: The Northwood women lost their fifth game in a row to the Wakefield Wolverines, 19-9. Leading the Chargers were junior Kendall Laberge (4 goals) and

sophomore Mia Collins (3 goals).

Lacrosse: The Northwood men earned an important win over the Orange Panthers, 17-6. Leading the Chargers were sophomore Taylor Laberge (6 goals, 1 assist; 7 points) and senior Terry Moore (5 goals, 4 assists; 9 points).

Soccer: The Jordan-Matthews men won a shutout game over the Wheatmore Warriors, 3-0, to clinch their first PAC 72A conference championship since the 2017-18 season, getting revenge over the Warriors, who handed them their only loss of the season in February.

Soccer: The Woods Charter men earned a 2-1 victory over the Cornerstone Cardinals. Scoring for the Wolves were senior midfielders Elijah Heatherington and Nicholas Mann, each with one goal apiece.

Tuesday, March 9

Lacrosse: The Northwood men earned a controlling win over the Carrboro Jaguars, 17-6, in their final regular-season home game of the year. Leading the Chargers were sophomores Taylor Laberge (6 goals) and Will Smith (3 goals).

Soccer: The Northwood men lost to the East Chapel Hill Wildcats, 4-2, in their season finale. Leading the Chargers were senior Burke Waudby and sophomore Gino Valenti, each scoring one goal.

Wednesday, March 10

Lacrosse: The Northwood men fell in their regular-season finale to the Apex Cougars, 18-7. Leading the Chargers were senior attacker Jake Mann (3 goals) and senior midfielder Kade Little (2 goals). Northwood ends the regular season with a 5-4 record (2-3 in Conference-10).

Lacrosse: The Northwood women finished their season with a 10-4 victory over the Carrboro Jaguars, snapping their five-game losing skid. Leading the Chargers were junior Kendall Laberge (4 goals, 1 assist) and sophomore Sophia Cremeans (3 goals). Northwood will end the season with a 4-8 overall record.

Soccer: The Jor-

dan-Matthews men earned a comfortable win, 5-0, over the winless Providence Grove Patriots to finish up the regular season.

Soccer: The Woods Charter men won handily against the winless Southern Wake Academy Lions, 6-2. Leading the Wolves were seniors Kyle Howarth (5 goals), who scored a hat trick by the end of the first half, and Marky Noronha (1 goal).

Thursday, March 11

Soccer: The Woods Charter men earned a commanding win, 4-0, over the Cornerstone Charter Academy Cardinals, closing out their regular season with a 5-3 record (5-1 in the Central Tar Heel 1A) as they take

their five-game winning streak into the postseason as a wild card team.

Friday, March 12

Football: Jordan-Matthews fell to the Randleman Tigers at home, 56-6, dropping its record to 0-3 on the season. All night long, the Jets struggled to move the ball and stop the run, finding themselves down 42-0 at the end of the first half. With a little less than eight minutes left in the game, quarterback Xavier Woods ran in a 25-yard touchdown to put Jordan-Matthews on the board, though it was too little, too late.

Reporter Victor Hensley can be reached at vhensley@chathamnr.com or on Twitter at @Frezeal33.

Chatham COA Events & Announcements

March 18th - March 24th

Thursday, March 18th

- [Chair Yoga with Liz](#) at 10:00 AM
- [March Birthday Celebration](#) at 11:15 AM
- [Tai Chi for Arthritis](#) at 3:00 PM

Friday, March 19th

- [Strong & Fit with Jackie](#) at 9:00 AM
- [Weekly Call with Director, Dennis Streets](#) at 10:15 AM

Monday, March 22nd

- [Chair Yoga with Liz](#) at 10:00 AM
- [Bingo with Joe](#) at 11:15 AM
- [Tai Chi for Arthritis](#) at 3:00 PM

Tuesday, March 23rd

- [Strong & Fit with Jackie](#) at 9:00 AM
- [Virtual Health & Wellness Expo: Eating Good, Feeling Better](#) at 11:15 AM

Wednesday, March 24th

- [Bible Study](#) at 10:00 AM
- [Science with Alan](#) at 11:15 AM
- [Short Stories with Chris](#) at 12:30 PM

On Zoom On Conference Line: 727-731-8717

For more information or to register for these programs, visit our website:
<https://chathamcouncilonaging.org/coa-virtual-activities/>

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Virtual VITA is coming! NO APPOINTMENTS. Pick up your information packet at the Eastern or Western Chatham Senior Center in the VITA box, 24/7.

Drop-off your tax documents for processing from February 9th through April 6th. Complete info packet before dropping off your tax documents at the Eastern Chatham Senior Center in Pittsboro on Tuesdays 1-6 PM, Thursdays 8:30 AM-2 PM or on Saturday March 27th from 11 AM - 3 PM. **Call 919-542-4512 for more info.**

Join the Trivia Hunt & Win!

Each week the COA will offer a trivia question in the *Chatham News + Record*. Find the correct answer in the paper and enter to win a \$25 VISA gift card in the COA's monthly trivia hunt contest drawing. Look in **Section A** for this week's question.

The Chatham COA is Here for You!

For more information on our ongoing programs & services visit our website at chathamcoa.org or call our centers, Monday-Friday, 8 am - 5 pm.

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RANDLEMAN 56, JORDAN-MATTHEWS 6

Jets experience turbulent week, lose big to conference powerhouses

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — Saying it's been a rough week for Jets football may be putting it lightly. After a fairly positive start to the season — an eight-point home loss to T.W. Andrews that featured a fourth-quarter comeback to tie it at 26 before falling, 34-26 — the Jets have since taken a nosedive against two of the best 2A teams in the state.

Jordan-Matthews lost a road shutout, 49-0, to Eastern Randolph last Monday night. Monday games are becoming increasingly more common in high school football this season, often playing host to rescheduled games for teams dealing with coronavirus-related quarantines like the Wildcats.

Then, just four nights later, last Friday, the Jets found themselves unable to recover from



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Jordan-Matthews' star senior running back Jacquez Thompson (21) takes a 31-yard touchdown run into the end zone in his team's loss to Randleman, but it would be called back because of a holding penalty.

another massive deficit against the unbeaten Randleman Tigers, falling 56-6 at home to push their record to 0-3 on the season.

In five days, Jordan-Matthews lost two games by a combined 105-6 score.

"We had to turn around and play two top-10 teams four days apart," Jordan-Matthews

Head Coach Sam Spencer said. "Lucky us. All because somebody else had COVID issues, so we got punished."

Spencer said that in a week like this one, staying healthy "was a big concern, but for the most part, we did."

MaxPreps has Randleman (8) and Eastern Randolph (24) ranked as two of the top-25 2A schools in the state. The teams' statement wins over Jordan-Matthews this week were clear indicators those rankings aren't flukes.

The Jets went down 14-0 early against the Tigers after Randleman bulldozed its way into the end zone on two of the team's first three drives. But on the first play of the Tigers' fourth drive, with 58 seconds left in the first quarter, senior quar-

terback Harrison Moffitt threw an interception to Jets' junior safety Calvin Schwartz, who returned it to his team's 44-yard-line.

In a perfect embodiment of the game as a whole, Jordan-Matthews' first two plays of the next drive would be a nine-yard run by senior quarterback Xavier Woods, followed by an eight-yard sack on Woods. Two plays later, the Jets punted.

Nearly every time Jordan-Matthews did something positive, a negative play or two would always be waiting right around the corner. One step forward, two steps back.

It would only get uglier. After three more touchdowns by Randleman in the second quarter, the score was 35-0 with 46 seconds left in the half. And then, in a baffling decision given the situation, the Tigers decided to try an onside kick. They recovered it.

One play later, Moffitt threw a 29-yard dime for a touchdown and Randleman took a 42-0 halftime lead into the locker room.

"I thought it was horses--t," Spencer said. "You can quote that. I thought it was nonsense. Not a fan. Not a fan of the head coach over there. I don't care if he knows that."

Spencer cited a pre-game incident where he claims he overheard Randleman's head coach, Shane Timmons, speaking to the officials about the Jets' tendency to "blatantly cut lead blockers." In other words, intentionally take out the legs of defenders, which could lead to injury.

"We don't teach that, it's not true," Spencer said. "It happens every now and again, that's football. But to be sitting there telling the referees that it's blatant means you're telling him that we coach it that way and that's bulls--t."

Despite the clear frustration by Spencer

and other players — both about the questionable decisions by Randleman and the game as a whole — the sideline never appeared to give in.

Even in the second half, with the Tigers up 49-0 and the clock continually running — essentially the NCHSAA's "mercy rule" — coaches on Jordan-Matthews' sideline were seen trying to keep players' spirits high and keep them engaged in the game. There was no visible bickering between players or staff members, either.

"The coaching staff impressed me," Spencer said. "It's real easy to get negative and start blaming, but the coaching staff did a good job of keeping guys positive. That's the biggest thing with the team was the positivity, even though things kind of got away from us."

However, on the field, the same things that were issues in the season-opener against T.W. Andrews also presented problems on Friday.

The offensive line was the most glaring issue, as Woods had little time to throw or run, was sacked multiple times and had a few low snaps that severely impacted plays — with Woods sometimes having to fall on the ball immediately, wasting a down and losing yards.

Jets' star running back Jacquez Thompson also rarely had time to get anything going on the carries he received.

"(The offensive line) is our biggest concern," Spencer said. "The eligibility issue hit us bad. We had over 20 ineligible players, but it hit us badly on the o-line. ... We're kind of banged up, too. The o-line's a concern, but they're working hard every week and doing what we ask them to do and it's just got to come down to execution."

As was the case with T.W. Andrews, Jordan-Matthews strug-

gled against the Tigers' physicality up front, along with the size and power of Randleman's sophomore running back Amariyon Moton, who looks like a smaller version of Tennessee Titans running back Derrick Henry on the field.

While there are a plethora of issues that will need to be fixed after a rocky week, Spencer said he remained impressed with Thompson — a 2019 all-conference linebacker — and senior defensive end/tight end Eral Jones, who combined for 16 tackles, 10 from Thompson.

"Eral Jones and Jacquez Thompson really stuck out," said Spencer. "Their effort doesn't change no matter what the score or the situation is. All they say is 'Yes, sir' and go play like hell."

To start the fourth quarter, Jordan-Matthews drove down the field on the back of Thompson, who started the drive with a 24-yard run to the Randleman 31-yard line. The next play, Thompson took it to the house on a run to the left side. It was called back for holding.

A couple of plays later, however, Woods ran it into the end zone for a 25-yard score on a quarterback keeper. With 7:53 left in the game, they had finally gotten on the board. It was 56-6.

While a run like that appeared to be meaningless — and in terms of the outcome, it was — it further emphasized the mentality of this team: don't worry about what happened earlier in the game, just focus on the next play.

"Before every game, I'll have a coaches' meeting and I'll say 'Next play, next play. Just coach the next play,'" Spencer said. "We can't ask the players to focus on the next play if we're not."

Reporter Victor Hensley can be reached at vhensley@chathamnr.com or on Twitter at @Frezeal33.

Eureka! You found the answer!

A: Moncure/Haywood. Those steamships often brought tourists from the coast escaping the heat and mosquitoes of summer.

To enter the COA's monthly drawing for a \$25 Visa Gift Card, call the COA at 919-542-4512, extension 223 and follow the prompts on the voicemail.

February's winner will be drawn from eligible entries provided by 3/2/2021. The February winner will be announced in a March issue of the Chatham News + Record. One entry per household, per week. Employees of the COA and their dependents not eligible.

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HOWARTH

Continued from page B1

buy," Stewart said. "He's got speed, he works hard, his first touch is good ... He knows where the goal is. That's experience that he's built on over the years."

Contrary to the show's title, however, the game wouldn't entirely be about Howarth. His teammates — including his five fellow seniors — had a massive hand in both his production and the Wolves' victory.

Most notably, the Wolves' defense was essentially unbreakable.

Woods Charter had possession of the ball for what felt like 90% of the game. Whenever Southern Wake would get possession and make their way down the pitch, a defender — especially seniors Justin Galiger or Eli Terrell — would immediately disrupt their flow and force either a turnover or a rushed, undesirable shot attempt.

It's a miracle the Lions even scored two goals, both of which took place in the second half; the latter coming right after the Wolves switched out their goalkeeper late in the game.

"Sometimes that's when you need even more focus because if you have the ball a lot, you can feel like, well, they can't score on you," Stewart said, "But you can see it can change in an instant. When they've got somebody quick up top, it can change in a heartbeat, so you've got to be disciplined, you've got to keep your shape and you've just got to play the fundamentals right."

Despite the comfortable four-goal win, Stewart wasn't fully satisfied with the way his team played, concerned about their slow start and sloppiness down the stretch.

Stewart said after the game that he believed they could have had "four or five more" goals had they played up to

their potential.

"We were not focused enough at the beginning," Stewart said. "And we did control the game, I was comfortable with the way we controlled the game, but we lost our focus and we were sloppy and I can't accept that."

After the win, each of the fans in attendance, along with the players and Stewart, came onto the pitch to celebrate senior night, recognizing all six seniors — Howarth, Galiger, Terrell and midfielders Marky Noronha, Elijah Heatherington and Nicholas Mann — and their accomplishments.

Next season, the loss of these six players will undoubtedly leave holes in the Woods Charter game plan. However, they weren't done yet, as they earned another four-goal win on Thursday — this time against the Cornerstone Charter Academy Cardinals, 4-0 — to improve their conference record to 5-1 (5-3 overall) and bump their winning streak to five games.

The Wolves will finish second in the Central Tar Heel conference, just behind Research Triangle (5-1, 6-1-1 overall) due to their overall winning percentage.

Even without the conference title under their belt, they got into the playoffs as a 12th-seeded wild card team under the revised playoff format. They're facing off with unbeaten, fifth-seeded Gray Stone Day on Tuesday at 7 p.m.

"We've been fortunate to go into the playoffs every year, so we know what it takes," Stewart. "There's not a lot that's going to surprise us, but you've got to match the intensity and you've got to earn the right. So it doesn't matter who you play, home or away, you've got to turn up and you've got to be mentally sharp and you've got to be focused."

Reporter Victor Hensley can be reached at vhensley@chathamnr.com or on Twitter at @Frezeal33.

One in five Chatham adults lack basic literacy skills. Chatham Literacy works to teach, enhance and more.

Throughout the pandemic, Chatham Literacy's staff and volunteer tutors have been working remotely to help resi-

dents gain a variety of life skills. This week, we speak with Vicki Newell about the work and about the organization's upcoming fundraising event.

Newell has been the executive director of Chatham County Literacy Council since 2011 and was tutor coordinator for two years before that. While staying home for six years to raise her three sons, she volunteered on the boards of Family Violence and Rape Crisis Services and the PTA of Pittsboro Elementary School. Newell has a master's degree in health communication from Johns Hopkins University and worked for six years as the health specialist with the Smart Start Initiative at the state and Chatham County levels. A former member of the Peace Corps, she speaks French and Tshiluba. You can reach her at 919-542-6424 or at vicki@chathamliteracy.org.

Since we last checked in with you in July, you've had a major event ("No Show" Fall for Literacy) in September. How'd that go?

As you know, the event we held last fall was a "phantom" event featuring author Alan Gurganus. We sent Gurganus' Book, "A Fool for Christmas," to 74 participants and asked that they read the short work in the comfort of their own home or hold a small or virtual get-together with friends. Thanks to everyone who participated in this "no participation" event, we

CHATHAM LITERACY

Please Join Us for Our Online Spring Author Event!

You won't want to miss this live online presentation with local authors Jill McCorkle and Tom Rankin.

Tuesday, April 20 from 11:00am to 12:15pm Chatham Literacy presents a Virtual Spring Author Event with noted novelist and award-winning short story writer Jill McCorkle and Duke professor, photographer, folklorist and author Tom Rankin.

This online event includes live discussions with the couple about their acclaimed book, *Goat Light*, showcasing vivid photography and reflective stories about their rural Piedmont life.

Ticket sales: \$100/person, beginning February 15 at www.chathamliteracy.org and 919-742-0578.

Each ticket purchased includes one raffle ticket for the door prize drawings done throughout the event.

- 1) Golf for four at the Golf Course at Chapel Ridge, carts included
- 2) Two-night stay at the Inn at Celebrity Dairy
- 3) One-night stay at the Inn at Celebrity Dairy
- 4) Autographed copies of *Goat Light*
- 5) \$50 gift card to the Sycamore at Chatham Mills

raised \$15,000 for our programs! The support from our community is truly something to behold. It is such support that fuels our agency.

A special thanks to the businesses that sponsored our event: Mountaire Farms, Wren Foundation, Galloway Ridge at Ferrington, Restoration Systems, Carolina Meadows, Reynolds & Associates, Edward Jones, and Chatham Park.

You also partnered with the Chatham EDC on a set of enhanced job skills courses for local business professionals. Tell us about the results from that.

In collaboration with Central Carolina Community College's N.C. Works Career Center and the Chatham Economic Development Corporation, last July we introduced a work skills enhancement workshop called "Ready, Success, Grow!" In addition, we developed another workshop to help adults with pre-employability and online interviewing skills. These workshops were delivered online via Zoom to 18 participants.

We are very proud that two of the participants obtained a job within two months of completing the workshop, earning them a refurbished laptop from us for achieving a long-term goal. These skill-building workshops will remain among Chatham Literacy's offerings, which we will continue to deliver online and in-person when it's safe to do so.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been with us for a year now. What have you seen and experienced through the work of Chatham Literacy?

Last March, when we stopped in-person tutoring services, none of us knew how to tutor via distance learning (our learners, tutors and staff). We only knew that we had to make the transition, so learn it we did. (I'm feeling a little Yoda, I am!)

I'm glad we documented all of our journey because it now seems as if distance learning has always been a teaching option for us. More than 60% of our learners have made the transition with

us as well as 46% of our tutors; the remaining learners and tutors await the return of in-person tutoring.

Throughout the pandemic, we continued to provide tutoring services in reading, writing, and math; GED preparation; basic computer skills; workforce enhancement; English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and citizenship preparation.

Distance learning seems to be here to stay. For some of our learners, remote instruction allows them to learn from home when their busy schedule would not otherwise accommodate tutoring whether because of their work schedule, the need for child care, the need to care for family members, or the lack of transportation.

During this past year, our learners enhanced their digital literacy skills, helping them to be a better support for their children while they learned from home. Because of their interaction with our great volunteer tutors, most adult learners are now able to better navigate public support systems (and a good thing too) since many systems transitioned to online applications and appointments. Our learners also improved their job skills and became or remained marketable. I think throughout this process we kept literacy relevant for our community and learners. We witnessed that our programs kept our learners from being left behind.

What's ahead for training and tutoring?

For the foreseeable future, we will continue to operate our programs remotely. We are currently experiencing an increase in new learners who seek literacy services for GED preparation, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and

citizenship preparation.

Because of this, we need new tutors! We provide free tutor training which includes an orientation with Chatham Literacy staff via Zoom and an 18-hour online training. We also provide opportunities for new tutors to shadow and observe active tutoring groups via Zoom and match new tutors with seasoned tutors as a support system.

Based on data from the 2020 PIACC (Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies), we know that nearly one in five Chatham County adults lack the basic literacy skills required to:

- read and interpret financial or legal documents such as rental contracts;
- talk with and understand their doctor;
- learn about community resources for food and health care;
- read COVID-19 guidelines for maintaining personal and community safety; and
- complete an online job application.

When individuals learn how to read, write, and understand English, do basic math, and use computers, they have the power to lift themselves out of poverty, lower health care costs, find and keep sustainable employment, and ultimately change their lives (Source: ProLiteracy).

To become a tutor, call 919-742-0578 or visit www.chathamliteracy.org.

You're setting the table now for your next fundraising event in April. What do we need to know, and how can folks find out more?

On April 20, Chatham Literacy will hold an online spring author event featuring best-selling author Jill McCorkle and her husband, author and noted photographer Tom Rankin. This promises to be a unique,

celebratory and engaging author's event, so please join us! The authors will explore the making of their jointly-produced, lush and vivid new book, "Goat Light," which dwells on the beauty of the Piedmont landscape, the life they experienced with their farm animals and their thoughts on the sacredness of home.

Jill McCorkle is the author of seven novels and four short story collections. Her writing style is described by O Magazine as "shimmering prose." Tom Rankin, a Professor of the Practice of Art at Duke University, is renowned for his photographic work and books on iconic rural life in the southeastern U.S. Both Jill and Tom will answer questions live during this event and you'll also have a chance to win some awesome door prizes!

Door prizes include a round of golf for four with carts at the Golf Course at Chapel Ridge; a two-night stay with breakfast at the Inn at Celebrity Dairy; a one-night stay with breakfast at the Inn at Celebrity Dairy; autographed copies of the book; and a \$50 gift certificate to Pittsboro's newest restaurant, the Sycamore at Chatham Mills.

The details:

- When: 11 a.m. - 12:15 p.m., Tuesday, April 20
- Where: From your computer in the luxury of your own home or together with a small group of friends
- How: Donate \$100 to Chatham Literacy at www.chathamliteracy.org or call 919-742-0578. Please register by April 16th.

We really appreciate your support of this virtual FUNdraiser. Money raised will directly support tutoring services that help an adult become a U.S. Citizen, earn a GED, and obtain a new job to name a few. Help us, help our learners turn dreams into reality.



Submitted photo

SABA to host golf fundraiser this Saturday

Valencia Toomer, founder of School of the Arts for Boys Academy, and her husband Tavares pose with their children in SABA's new T-shirts. SABA will host a golf tournament fundraiser at Chapel Ridge in Pittsboro on Saturday, March 20, with every dollar raised going to directly support the school. You can register for \$100 on-site the morning of starting at 7 a.m., and can learn more about the event and SABA at <https://www.sabacademy.org/>.

Carson Scholars Fund announces 2021 recipients

CN+R Staff Report

After 25 years of recognizing and rewarding students in grades 4-11 who embrace high levels of academic achievement and community service, the Carson Scholars Fund (CSF) has awarded its 10,000th scholarship this year. The CSF gifts \$1,000 college scholarships to students who excel academically and selflessly give of themselves, their time, and their talents to others. The 2021 Carson Scholars will be honored and recognized at festivities this fall.

Chatham County's 2021 Carson Scholars:

- Carleigh Gentry from Chatham Central High School
- Deontae Glover from Chatham School of Science & Engineering
- Elizabeth Hall from Horton Middle School
- Blair Hill from Chatham Grove Elementary School
- Tamarr Moore from Northwood High School
- Liam Patterson from Pittsboro Elementary School
- Brady Phillips from Bonlee School
- Keylor Ureña-Secaña from Siler City Elementary School



Building a Brighter Future By Supporting Local Education

SHOP Local

Controlled burn in Siler City



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

A Siler City Fire Department member carries oxygen tanks to the lineup of roughly 40 firefighters from several area departments. The firefighters performed a controlled burn on a house on E. 11th Street last Saturday.



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Bonlee Captain Justin Bray helps Captain Dylan Smith adjust a piece of his gear before masking up and beginning the burn.



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

This photo was taken during an intentional flashover in the home's kitchen, illustrating the power of the flames.



This photo provides a closeup of the SCBA masks worn by firefighters, a critical piece of the gear kit necessary for storming through blazing structures. Staff photo by Peyton Sickles



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

A firefighter climbs up to a side window to extinguish some of the residual flames from the home's upstairs.

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Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Siler City Fire Chief Scott Murphy takes a momentary breather after adjusting his suspenders and mask outside the house.

Wednesday Spotlight



Meet Kyle Stinson and Melissa Bolainez. These entrepreneurial 8th graders from Horton middle school have launched a real estate marketing business highlighting new listings. They create flyers, social media posts and brochures. **Contact them today with your needs!**



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POLICE REPORTS

What to do with your stimulus check

After some consternation, much deliberation and delayed adjudication, they're finally here: stimulus checks 3.0. They're bigger than ever at \$1,400 a pop, but fewer Americans will qualify than in earlier rounds of federally sponsored assistance.

The checks — although many recipients will get theirs through direct deposits — arrive at a different time in our pandemic saga than previous iterations. Congress authorized the first stimulus bill, 2020's CARES Act, almost exactly a year ago amid a truly unprecedented economic low. The national unemployment rate flirted with 15%. In North Carolina, we topped 13% — the worst it had ever been in our state's recorded history, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

These days, it's a different story. Here in N.C., we're teetering just below 6% unemployment. It's not great, but not far off from the historical nationwide average.

Still, many will need this stimulus money to preserve and extend any semblance of financial security. The employment rate may have improved, but simple stats hide what is likely a grim situation for millions of American families. Only a few months ago, NPR reported that one in three adults struggled to pay for basic expenses such as food, rent, car payments and other loans. At the pandemic's start, the American Payroll Association released survey data suggesting almost 75% of all employed Americans were living paycheck to paycheck. After a year in a pandemic, I doubt that figure has improved.

For such individuals, then, \$1,400 is a vital lifeline to stay afloat while long-term recovery idles.

But what if you're not in financial irons? After all, you can earn up to \$75,000 annually (\$150,000 for joint filers) and still qualify for the complete payout. You may be doing just fine.

Let's assume you have been employed throughout the pandemic, you have at least a three-month emergency fund (a basic best practice), your savings/retirement fund is appropriately robust according to the years you have left in the work force — what should you do with your \$1,400 check? Blow it.

Seriously. And don't feel bad. There are few opportunities in life to spend money with no strings attached. Now, I know, there's no such thing as "free money;" I've written about that before (if you're not subscribing to our newsletter, the Chatham Brew, you're missing out). But you can't get much closer than federal money deposited directly into your bank account — no questions asked.

If it makes you feel better, consider it your civic duty to be a momentary spendthrift.

"When governments are trying to stimulate the economy, a transfer of cash can allow people to spend more, buy more, eat out more, all of which helps to keep the economy growing," Aparna Mathur, a resident scholar at American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank, told NBC News when the first round of stimulus was under consideration.

The point of these trillions in federal dispensation is not to line our mattresses. Those who need stimulus money to shore up their financial well-being should spend or save accordingly. Everyone else should put the money back into circulation.

"If you haven't really been financially impacted by this pandemic," said finan-

cial planner Michael H. Baker in a recent Newsweek interview, "I urge you to consider helping others with these funds."

Small businesses are hurting. I've spoken with dozens of business owners in Chatham in recent months. Only one told me he was unscathed in the last year.

Help local commerce if you can. It's a win-win — guilt-free spending never felt so guilt-free.

If you're unfamiliar with the details of this most recent stimulus package, here are some highpoints:

- Unless you earn more than \$75,000 individually, \$112,500 as head of household or \$150,000 for joint filers, expect a \$1,400 check or deposit in the next few weeks

- If you're out of work, the bill includes \$300 in weekly federal unemployment benefits to last through Labor Day

- The biggest beneficiaries will be those with kids. The child tax credit is going up to \$3,000 from \$2,000 — \$3,600 if your kids are under 6. And that's PER CHILD. Normally the tax credit is applied toward your tax return, but in this case, the government will send those funds as extra checks to the child-rearers among us.

Other business news

- The Chatham Chamber of Commerce announced 19 new members last week. They include The Cut Buddy LLC, an innovative self-grooming product manufacturer that has been featured on Shark Tank and in Forbes, GQ and NPR; The School of the Arts for Boys Academy (see Hannah McClellan's recent article on Chatham's newest school); and Main Street Pittsboro, a group of business owners working to stimulate Pittsboro's economic development while upholding the town's historic preservation.

Look out for dedicated examinations of Chatham Chamber of Commerce members in later Enterprising Chatham installments.

- Our friends south of the border (across the Chatham County line, in Lee) were recently recognized as one of the best attractors of corporate investment in the country.

Sanford placed fifth on Site Selection Magazine's ranking of Micropolitan Areas in the United States, the Sanford Area Growth Alliance reported last week.

The prestigious ranking is based on a community's ability to attract and develop corporate projects. The magazine defines "micropolitan" communities as having a population of 10,000 to 49,999.

Sanford was the highest ranking North Carolina community on the list which selects 100 communities from around the country. Altogether, nine N.C. communities made the list.

"Being recognized as a Top 5 community — out of over 500 communities in the entire United States — is a marketing coup for the Growth Alliance," Bob Joyce, senior director of business retention and expansion at SAGA said in a release. "Site Selection Magazine's 138-year-old history and its reputation among corporate decision-makers means this award provides a significant boost for our national marketing efforts."

Despite unusual challenges over the last 18 months, including a year of pandemic, Sanford attracted \$282 million in new investment, according to SAGA Board of Directors Chairperson April Montgomery. With new business came 675 new jobs.

"(It) is positive proof that our public-private partnership approach in economic development works," she said.

Have an idea for what Chatham business topics I should write about? Send me a note at dldolder@chathamnr.com or on Twitter @dldolder.

CHATHAM COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

On March 9, Jerreal Orlando Burton, 32, of 701 Honeysuckle Drive, Pittsboro, was arrested by Deputy Jonathan Frazier for assault on a female. Burton was held on a 48-hour domestic violence hold and is scheduled to appear in Alamance County District Court in Graham on April 5.

On March 10, Lashanda Denise Brown, 35, of 4114 St. Vincent Avenue, Shreveport, Louisiana, was arrested by Deputy Jonas Lassiter for kidnapping/abduction of children and conspiracy to commit abduction of children. Brown was issued a \$100,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on April 5.

On March 11, Edward James Person, 63, of 444 Evie Lynn Road, Pittsboro, was arrested by Deputy John Beach for assault on a female. Person was held on a 48-hour domestic violence hold and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on April 14.

On March 11, William Scott Janhonen, 66, of 125 Poplar Trail, Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Brandal Harrington for burglary/breaking and entering. Janhonen was issued a written promise to appear in Moore County District Court in Carthage on April 7.

On March 12, Kelly Gene Headen Jr., 35, of 1215 North 6th Avenue, was arrested by Deputy Jonathan Frazier for felony stalking and obstructing justice. Headen was held on a 48-hour Domestic Violence hold and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County

District Court in Pittsboro on March 22.

On March 12, Matthew Caleb Parsons, 21, of 1019 Poe Road, Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Brandal Harrington for injury to personal property. Parsons was issued a written promise to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on April 7.

On March 12, Mariyah Alysse Lynn Tran, 20, of 1019 Poe Road, Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Brandal Harrington for simple assault. Tran was held on a 48-hour domestic violence hold and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on April 14.

On March 13, Karen Pickering, 40, of 55 Jamir Lynn Lane, Apex, was arrested by Deputy Reggie Griffin for failure to appear on charges of speeding and driving while license revoked. Pickering was issued a \$500 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Sampson County District Court in Clinton on April 5.

On March 13, Elijah Kayden Ingrassia, 20, of 1936 Holt Road, Cary, was arrested by Deputy Reggie Griffin for failure to appear on charges of speeding and reckless driving to endanger. Ingrassia was issued a \$100 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Pender County District Court in Burgaw on June 9.

On March 14, Tyson Sung Kim, 35, of 135 Twin Oaks Court, Pittsboro, was arrested by Deputy Andrew Gray for assault by strangulation, assault on a female, and communicating threats. Kim was issued a \$5,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on March 22.

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Main Street Pittsboro Celebrates Chatham 250 with Found It! Chatham Rabbit Hunt

Selfies taken with hidden embellished rabbit statues will win vouchers to participating Pittsboro businesses

From Main Street Pittsboro

PITTSBORO — Main Street Pittsboro invites everyone to downtown Pittsboro on Saturday, April 10, to participate in the Found It! Chatham Rabbit Hunt.

Five embellished rabbit statues will be hidden on and near Hillsboro Street. The first 25 visitors to the Welcome Center between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. who show a photo of themselves with three of the five statues will receive a \$10 voucher to be redeemed at one of the participating downtown businesses. All participants will be entered into a drawing to win one of the rabbit statues.

In acknowledgment of Pittsboro's thriving creative culture, the 11-inch rabbit statues will all be embellished by local artists Theresa Arico Mosaics, Lani Chaves, Theresa, Sally Gregoire, Darcy Szeremi — many of whom are exhibiting

artists at the Pittsboro Gallery of the Arts.

"The choice of a rabbit as an icon for the event refers to a chapter in our history from 1880-1920 when Chatham County was the source for the 'Chatham Rabbit', a delicacy served in the finest hotels and rail cars all along the East Coast," said Main Street Pittsboro's chairperson, Maria Parker-Lewis. "With this symbol of spring we can have fun, share a bit of our history, and support downtown businesses at the same time."

Found It! Chatham Rabbit Hunt coincides with the kick-off of Chatham County's 250th birthday celebration called Founding Day. Founding Day also happens from 2-5 p.m. on Saturday, April 10, on Hanks Street in downtown Pittsboro. This drive-thru event will have multiple stations that focus on history and community, with opportunities for community

members to share, learn, and engage. Participants can also look forward to a birthday party theme. There will be a goody bag, party hat, a pinata raffle, and a sweet treat for community members to take home.

Raffle tickets to win four of the Found It! rabbit statues will be available for \$5 each at participating downtown businesses. Proceeds of ticket sales will go to Main Street Pittsboro, a 501(c)3 non-profit agency.

2021 is set to be a year of hope, celebration and inspiration as the Chatham community celebrates its 250th birthday. In order to make the most of this special occasion, Chatham County will host several events throughout the course of the year that people of all ages and backgrounds will be able to take part in and enjoy. More information about Chatham250 and Founding Day can be found at www.chatham250.com

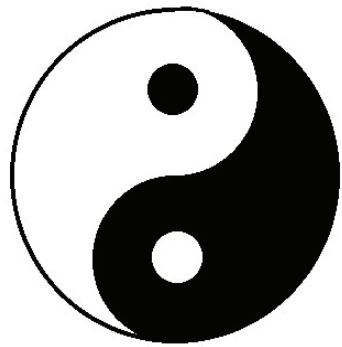
About Main Street Pittsboro

As a Main Street America



Affiliate, Main Street Pittsboro is part of a national network of more than 1,200 neighborhoods and communities that share both a commitment to creating high-quality places and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic

development. We accomplish this through organization, promotion, design, and economic vitality, encouraging the mission to preserve and protect the unique flavor of downtown Pittsboro. For more information visit www.mainstreetpittsboro.org.



Announcing:

TAI CHI FOR ARTHRITIS

Mondays and Thursdays from 3—4 pm
Starting March 22, 2021

Register at: <https://chathamcouncilonaging.org/coa-virtual-activities/>

Improve movement, balance, strength, flexibility, and relaxation. Decrease pain and falls.

Contact Liz Lahti for more information:
liz.lahti@chathamcoa.org or 919.542.4512 ext 228



NEWS BRIEFS

Leadership Triangle launches its annual leadership summit virtually

RALEIGH — Leadership Triangle today announced the 2021 THRiVE Virtual Leadership Summit, N.C.'s most powerful and engaging leadership summit. 2021 THRiVE is an event created to develop leaders and offers a new way for engaged community members within the Triangle to collaborate. The 2021 THRiVE Virtual Leadership Summit will be from April 7-8. Tickets are on sale at \$109.

"We're all tired of virtual events, where the most engagement we seem to get is through chat. THRiVE is different — it's a virtual event designed for reconnection - for reigniting our professional networks and our loose ties," says Kristine Sloan, executive director of Leadership Triangle.

For more information on THRiVE, visit <https://leadershiptriangle.com/thrive>

Parks and Recreation presents Hunt at Home: The Easter Egg Drive-Thru

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This event will take place from 2-4 p.m. on Saturday, March 27, at the Chatham County Agriculture and Conference Center in Pittsboro. Modified due to COVID-19, this year's event

will take place as a drive-thru, where participants will be asked to stay in their cars while in attendance. During the event, families will be able to collect 10 free Easter eggs per child, a spring-themed craft, bubbles, and additional items from other County departments and community partners that will be joining Chatham County Parks and Recreation.

For more information, visit the Hunt at Home Facebook event at <https://www.facebook.com/CCParksandRecNC/events>, or contact Mallory Peterson at 919-545-8553 or at mallory.peterson@chathamcountync.gov.

Robust interest for superintendent vacancy in Chatham County Schools

PITTSBORO — The Chatham County Board of Education received applications from 45 individuals interested in becoming the next superintendent of Chatham County Schools. The applicants are from 18 states and U.S. territories.

The school board will consider the applicants based, in part, on the qualities and characteristics community members indicated they desire in the school system's next superintendent. A survey captured that insight.

The school board meets March 22 to begin narrowing down candidates for interviews.

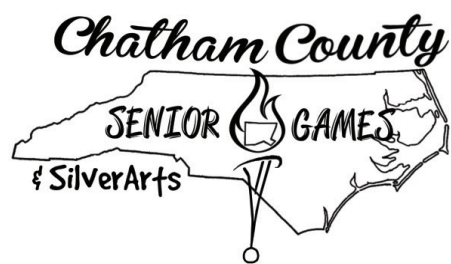
Dr. Randy Bridges is the school system's interim superintendent tentatively through the end of June.

— CN+R staff reports

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2021



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Registration Deadline: April 16, 2021

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For More Information:

Liz Lahti, 919-542-4512 ext. 228

liz.lahti@chathamcoa.org



Tentative schedule - contingent on status of Covid-19

- May 1 Cycling
- 3 SilverArts Entry Drop off
- 4 Archery
- 21 Tee shirt and Packet Pick-up
- 22 Track/Field
- 22 Football & Softball Throw
- 22 Fun Walk
- 24 Golf
- 24 Croquet
- 25 Disc Golf
- 25 Swimming
- 25 Tennis—Women's Singles/Men's Doubles
- 26 Men's Bocce
- 26 Tennis—Men's Singles/Women's Doubles
- 27 Horseshoes
- 27 Tennis—Mixed Doubles
- 28 Women's Bocce
- 28 Bowling
- June 1 Basketball Shoot
- 1 Corn Hole
- 2 Pickleball
- 3 Table Tennis
- 4 Awards Ceremony



Submitted photo

Totten honored as EOY

Brandon Totten (left) was recently recognized as the Pittsboro Christian Village's 2020 Employee of the Year. He works as a maintenance assistant in facility services. Brandon is from Siler City and has been serving at Pittsboro Christian Village since 2017.



Pet of the Week: DIAMOND

The Chatham County Sheriff's Office would like you to meet Diamond, a two-year-old, female, pit bull mix. Diamond's favorite activities include going for walks, giving/receiving hugs, and rolling around in the nice, cool dirt. She is also obsessed with squeaky toys and is endlessly curious about how they work. Diamond is a big girl, but she is still a pup at heart. She is cute as a button and loves snuggle time, especially if you let her pile into your lap or join you on the sofa. Diamond would be a perfect fit for a moderately active family looking for a new canine soulmate! For more information about how to meet or adopt Diamond or another pet, please contact the Sheriff's Office Animal Resource Center (ARC) at 919-542-7203 to schedule an appointment for a visit at 725 Renaissance Dr., Pittsboro. Submitted photo

Kid Scoop THE AWARD-WINNING PRINT & ONLINE FAMILY FEATURE

Find Kid Scoop on Facebook

© 2021 by Vicki Whiting, Editor Jeff Schinkel, Graphics Vol. 37, No. 15

LUCK O' THE IRISH

What is luck? On St. Patrick's Day people like to talk about LUCK! Does wearing green bring you luck that day? Or are four-leaf clovers really lucky charms?

The idea of luck has been around for centuries. It is a marvel and mystery. And people all over the world have come up with ideas of what brings good luck and bad.

How many four-leaf clovers can you find?

Don't Walk Under a Ladder

Walking under a ladder is supposed to be bad luck. But this old superstition may just be a good safety tip!

Start

Can you get through this maze without walking under any ladders?

Finish

Mirrors and Luck

Many believe that breaking a mirror dooms you to seven years of bad luck. The superstition may come from the belief that mirrors don't just reflect your image, they hold bits of your soul. That belief led people in the old days of the American South to cover mirrors in a house when someone died, for fear that their soul was trapped inside. Yikes!

Black Cats

Some people think it bad luck for a black cat to cross your path. But it is lucky to own a black cat and very lucky to sleep with one.

Can you find the two black cats that are exactly alike?

If you want to live and thrive, Let the spider run alive!

Luck in School

Below are some of the ideas kids around the world have come up with to be lucky in school.

Wear your sweater backward, or wrong side out, for luck during exams.

Some children believe if they use the same pencil they used when they did well on a previous test, it will help them pass a new test.

Children almost everywhere say if you sleep with your book under your pillow, you will remember what is in it in the morning.

In England, some children say if you see a spotted dog on the way to school, cross your fingers and you will pass your exams.

Lucky rabbit's foot?

Might be lucky for you, but not so lucky for the rabbit!

Good Luck Scavenger Hunt

Look through the newspaper for images of things you think are lucky or unlucky. Here are some ideas:

- Shamrock
- A black cat
- The number 13
- A penny
- A wishbone
- The number 7

Standards Link: Research: Use the newspaper to locate information.

Best Lucky Charm for Tests

Circle every third letter to discover the best way to have good luck for any test at school.

DFSCBTLKUZRDVWY

S

Kid Scoop Together: Lucky 13

Replace these missing words. Can you replace all 13? That might be good luck!

- | | |
|------------|-------|
| UNDERSTOOD | DIG |
| FARM | URNS |
| GROUND | FOOT |
| THRUST | CROPS |
| THING | |
| JEWELS | |
| FORTUNE | |
| STRONG | |
| MAN | |

Once there was a farmer who had three _____ children. When the old _____ lay dying, he called the children to him and said, "My whole _____ lies in one square foot of _____ on this farm."

So, the three children began to _____. They dug together. They took _____. They dug and dug. Each one turning over one square _____ of soil with every _____ of the shovel. Finally, every square foot of the farm had been dug up and turned over.

They did not find a _____. There was no box of money or _____. Nothing buried _____ anywhere on the farm.

But that year, because the ground had been turned up, it yielded more _____ than ever before.

Then they _____ what their father meant, that their fortune was in the _____.

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For more information about our literacy non-profit, visit kidscoopnews.org

Kid Scoop Puzzler

Lucky Leprechaun Patterns

Draw the coin, horseshoe, wishbone, clover or leprechaun that continues the pattern in each row.

Row 1: horseshoe, clover, leprechaun, horseshoe, clover, leprechaun

Row 2: horseshoe, horseshoe, leprechaun, wishbone, horseshoe, leprechaun

Row 3: clover, clover, clover, horseshoe, clover, clover

Standards Link: Writing Applications: Students provide a context for action.

Double Double Word Search

Find the words in the puzzle. How many of them can you find on this page?

BACKWARD
SWEATER
PATRICK
CLOVER
MIRROR
CHARMS
LADDER
RABBIT
GREEN
CROSS
BLACK
PATH
COIN
LUCK
WIN

GREENHAPPD
RECHARMSRR
EDYSKWINA
TDTCCBRPBW
AAURILRABK
ELTORAORIC
WICSTCRVTA
SKDSAKAYEB
IHTAPCOINR

Standards Link: Letter sequencing. Recognize identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

Write On! Leprechaun Gold

How did the leprechauns get their gold? What do they do with it?

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UNITED WAY AT WORK

Rapid Rehousing Pilot Program offers homeless family life-changing opportunity

BY SHELLEY SMITH
United Way of Chatham County

For five years, Mike and Karen lived in the woods beside the Siler City Walmart.

They searched through dumpsters for food and clothing. Swallowing their pride, they panhandled, asking for money for food, or gas canisters to light the camping stove that kept them warm at night. In the summers they fought off copperheads and coyotes, and during the winter they fought off the cold, watching icicles form above them on the roof of their tent. They never envisioned a life like this.

Years prior they had a place in Pleasant Garden. And they had a car. Karen worked as a waitress, and Mike did odd jobs. But a criminal charge when he was 17, along with untreated schizophrenia, kept Mike from being able to find and keep a good job. When their car broke down and they were unable to pay both their rent and car repairs, Karen lost her job, and one month later they were evicted from their home. They found themselves moving around a bit trying to find their space in the homeless community, eventually making their way to Siler City.

“There was nothing else on my mind but survival,” Mike said.

Donna Smith, Service Center Director for the Salvation Army of Chatham County, met Mike and Karen by chance in the Walmart parking lot. Over the years she got to know them, and would check on them during the cold months to make sure they had gas to keep them warm.

“They were one of the first families that I met, and they were the most chronic,” she said.

In March 2020, Smith

approached Mike and Karen with the opportunity of a lifetime. The Salvation Army had just received funding for one family to enter the Rapid Rehousing Pilot Program — a multi-agency collaboration managed by Salvation Army — to house a homeless family for one year and connect them with every resource needed to end the cycle of poverty and pave the road to self-sufficiency.

“I was in disbelief,” Mike said.

Within days Mike and Karen were resting their heads in a fully furnished apartment, and taking hot showers — something they hadn’t experienced in years.

“The most amazing thing was being able to turn that stove on and get instant heat and cook something to eat,” Mike said. “Not first having to stand and ask people for money, get food, then hope I have enough gas to cook the food. Just being able to prepare a meal with ease was such enjoyment.”

Although cooking brings him the most joy, Mike says nothing compares to the feeling of security he now has by being able to lock his door.

“The security of being able to shut my door and feel safe, and not worry about people coming up and assaulting you, or raiding your camp and getting gear stolen, that’s wonderful,” he said.

The Rapid Rehousing Pilot Program is funded by Salvation Army, United Way of Chatham County and Chatham County Government. In 2020, United Way of Chatham County directed \$53,000 of its COVID-19 Relief Fund to the Salvation Army of Chatham County to assist with homelessness caused by COVID-19, with a portion going toward rent expenses for the

Rapid Rehousing Pilot Program.

This first year Smith and others have figured out the gaps, worked through significant challenges, and discovered additional community resources to help determine the feasibility and proper execution of a full-time Rapid Rehousing Program in Chatham County. More than 15 community and government organizations and businesses have played a role in the Rapid Rehousing Pilot Program.

“It’s been a huge community event,” Smith said.

Partnerships & challenges

Mike lived most of his life as an undiagnosed schizophrenic, and then most of his homeless life without medication after losing Medicare.

“I remember walking barefoot in the woods and I couldn’t figure out why I was doing it, and where I was,” Mike said. “I was skirting the edge of society for so long because of my disability. I didn’t cry out for the help I needed.”

Mike was eager to gain control of his mental health. However, due to delays created by the pandemic, his Medicaid approval took five months. Once approved, he and Karen were referred to the ACT Team with UNC’s Department of Psychiatry, and they currently work with more than 15 different people within the team.

The ACT (Assertive Community Treatment) Team provides support for individuals with severe mental illness as they move from being homeless or living in a facility to living on their own. The team includes a team leader, mental health professionals, nursing staff, psychiatrist, housing specialist,

vocational specialist, and a peer support specialist.

Mike now receives his medications in easy-to-manage daily dosage packets, he received an iPhone from the team to help with communication, and they even give him a ride to appointments if needed.

“They are a wonderful organization,” Mike said. “They help me with anything.”

They are also currently working with Mike and Karen on curbing their hoarding habits — one of their greatest challenges at the moment.

“When you lose everything, and when you come by something, you want to keep it because it’s good,” Mike said.

“But I’ve been working with doctors, and Donna’s been helping, too.”

Another thing fueling Mike’s collection of goods is his passion for reconstructing and fixing things.

“He is an engineer,” Smith said, and she hopes he can eventually earn an income with his engineering brain. Mike built the bicycle he rides 20+ miles each day, putting parts together to form a reliable ride of his own.

Mike and Karen are both individually working with Central Carolina Community College, exploring career paths that can lead them to become self-sufficient.

Nikia Jeffries, Education Navigator at CCCC, works with the Chatham County Employment and Training Program, and knew Mike and Karen while they were homeless. She is now working on a plan with them focusing on the small business and culinary programs.

“The first time I met Mike and Karen they were eager to make a change,” Jeffries said. “Each time Donna and I speak with Mike we

can see his growth and willingness to continue to move forward to achieve his visions and dreams of having the security and peace that he deserves.”

Next steps

Smith said Mike is struggling to find a sense of purpose. She hopes the ACT Team and Central Carolina Community College will help with that.

“He’s not living in crisis now, so he doesn’t know what to do with his time,” she said. “And with COVID, everything is shut down.”

The ACT Team is also working to get Mike disability benefits, but it’s a long process, Smith said.

Despite the current challenges, and fear of the unknown, Mike and Karen remain optimistic and committed to their goal of becoming self-sustainable.

“I want to hopefully get some sort of business going for myself and my wife, if she wants,” Mike says. “I’d like to be able to generate the funds that I need to keep this life. Five years is a long time camping, and it seems like it was forever.”

Mike says he also wants to help others who are in similar situations he was in. And his main goal, he says, is to just feel human again. “I just want to be accepted in society like everybody else,” he said.

Jeffries believes Mike and Karen’s spirit and desire to help others will help drive them to achieve their goals.

“Mike and Karen have a testimony to share,” Jeffries said. “They can attest that it is not easy to overcome life’s challenges, but when someone is dedicated and willing to accept guidance, they can and will make a difference in their lives. Mike and Karen have made an impact on my life and we will continue to support them as they work to-

wards their goals.”

Smith calls herself lucky to be part of their transformation.

“It’s very humbling to see how far they’ve come, and to see Mike evolve and get excited and thinking of things other than day to day crisis,” Smith said. “This program helps allow them to dream and look at something other than ‘how am I going to get through today.’”

The Rapid Rehousing Pilot Program typically lasts one year, but due to delays and unexpected challenges surrounding the pandemic, Smith has requested additional funding from Salvation Army to allow for a 6- to 12-month extension of services for Mike and Karen. She is unsure if the extension will be granted due to a shortfall in donations in the current budget year.

Mike hopes he can continue to share his story and inspire people to be kind to those in need, and to give what they can. He also worries the homeless population will continue to grow because of the pandemic.

“The people with the hearts that give, please don’t stop giving,” he said. “Look into your heart and if you feel like giving to someone or an organization, just give. It really is a good feeling.”

The United Way of Chatham County funds 22 programs managed by its 15 nonprofit agencies that specialize in the education, financial stability, and health of Chatham County residents. In 2020 the United Way provided an additional \$100,000 to agencies with urgent COVID-19 related needs. For more information on the agencies and programs funded by United Way, volunteer opportunities, or to make a donation, visit www.unitedwayofchatham-county.org.

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— CN+R staff reports



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“A warm thanks to our clients and community members for supporting our Chatham families in need. With your help, we were able to collect 859 pounds of food for Chatham Outreach Alliance (CORA) last month.”



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Suite 118
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Lee Shanklin, AAMS®
120 Lowes Drive
Suite 107
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2000 DUTCHMAN SIGNATURE Travel Trailer, 5th Wheel, two slides, 5th wheel trailer hitch included. Call 336-824-2726 and leave message. M18,25,2tp

YARD SALE

EXTRAVAGANT YARD SALE: Saturday, March 20, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 2356 Mays Chapel Road. (Rain date: Sunday, March 21, noon to 4 p.m.) For information, call 919-542-6632 or 919-545-4934. M11,18, 2tp

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SERVICES

RAINBOW WATER FILTERED VACUUMS, Alice Cox, Cox's Distributing - Rainbow -- Cell: 919-548-4314, Sales, Services, Supplies. Serving public for 35 years. Rada Cutlery also available. F4-A15,11tp

JUNK CARS PICKED UP Free of charge. Due to many months of low steel prices and unstable steel markets, we cannot pay for cars at this time. Cars, trucks, and machinery will be transported and environmentally correctly recycled at no charge. 919-542-2803. A2,tfnc

I PAY IN CASH FOR Junk Cars and trucks. Prompt courteous service. Call 910-464-5434 or Cell: 910-639-5614. God Bless! J9,tfnc

CARPENTRY WORK - all types, repairs, renovation, installation, windows and doors. Call Robert Clark, 919-742-3194. My25,tfnc

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

HELP WANTED

CLEANING LADY WANTED - In Gulf, 3 to 4 days per week, 40 hours or so, \$15 per hour. Call Reba at 919-898-4846. M18,25,A1,3tp

PAINTERS NEEDED, Sanford area, with 3 years experience. Call 919-770-3330, M18,25,A1,8,4tp

LOCAL OPTOMETRY OFFICE looking for immediate front desk help. Experience is preferred, but will train. Must be friendly, outgoing and responsible. Paid health insurance, holidays and vacation days. Fax resume to 919-742-4599.

M11,18,2tc

HOMECARE SEEKING, Now hiring for immediate positions in Pittsboro/Siler City: Certified Nurse Aides - Competitive Weekly Pay, CNA's start at \$10.00/hr. & up for extra care cases - Total LifeCare, Call (919) 799-7275 or visit 106 Village Lake Rd. Ste. A, Siler City for more info or to apply. F11,18,25,M4,11,18,25,7tc

LEGALS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY I, MARK L. AYER, have qualified as Executor of the Estate of **JEAN M. AYER**, deceased, formerly of Chatham County. This is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the decedent to present them to me at the address shown below on or before May 27, 2021, or your claim will be barred pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 28A-19-3. I hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations indebted to the decedent to make immediate payment to me. This the 19th day of February, 2021.

Mark L. Ayer, Executor
Estate of JEAN M. AYER
Post Office Box 2608
High Point, North Carolina 27261
Steven H. Bouldin
KEZIAH GATES LLP
Post Office Box 2608, Suite 400
300 North Marin Street
High Point, North Carolina 27261
(336) 889-6900
F25,M4,M11,M18,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21-E-104
All persons having claims against **CLYDE EDWARD CLARK**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned

on or before the 26th day of May, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 25th day of February, 2021.
Mark Allen Clark, Executor
321 Clyde Clark Rd
Siler City, NC 27344
F25,M4,M11,M18,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21-E-50
All persons having claims against **MARCUS FREDRICK EDWARDS JR.**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 26th day of May, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 25th day of February, 2021.
Martha Jean Brown, Executrix
1884 Andrews Store Road
Pittsboro, NC 27312
F25,M4,M11,M18,4tp

IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE DISTRICT COURT DIVISION FILE NO. 20 CVD 336 NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY MARINE FEDERAL CREDIT UNION,
Plaintiff vs
AUBREY BURNETTE,
DEFENDANT
NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION To: Aubrey Burnette
Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: Money owed, which is more completely described in the Complaint for Chatham County File Number 20 CVD 336, to collect the money owed. You are required to make a defense to such pleading no

later than April 13, 2021 which is forty (40) days from the first date of publication. Upon your failure to do so, the party seeking service against you will apply to the Court for the relief sought. This the 4th day of March, 2021.
MEWBORN & DESELMS, ATTORNEYS AT LAW
By: Brett J. DeSelms, Jonathan Eure,
Attorney for Plaintiff
829 Gum Branch Road, Suite C
Jacksonville, NC 28540
Telephone: (910) 455-9755
M4,M11,M18,3tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
The undersigned, having qualified on the 23rd day of February, 2021, as Co-Executors of the Estate of **BETTY JEAN PHILLIPS aka BETTY J. PHILLIPS**, deceased, of Chatham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 7th day of June, 2021, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned. This the 4th day of March, 2021.
Tracey E. Parker and Scott R. Phillips, Co-Executors
Estate of Betty Jean Phillips aka Betty J. Phillips
c/o J Alan Campbell Law
PO Box 850
Hillsborough, NC 27278
M4,M11,M18,M25,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21-E-122
All persons having claims against **MARGIE MARTIN KIVETT**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 4th day of June, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 4th day of March, 2021.
Diane K. Saylor,
Limited Personal Representative
220 North Tenth Avenue

Siler City, NC 27344
M4,M11,M18,M25,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
Having qualified on the 23rd of February 2021, as Co-Administrators of the Estate of **CHARLES NEWELL HANCOCK, JR.**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the decedent to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 4th day of June, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to the estate should make immediate payment. This the 1st day of March, 2021.
Daune Honeyutt and Shara Bunker, Co-Administrators of The Estate of Charles Newell Hancock, Jr.
213 Sugar Mill Road
Sanford, NC 27332
1940 Chris Cole Road
Sanford, NC 27332
Attorneys: Law Offices of W. Woods Doster, P.A.
115 Chatham Street, Suite 302
Sanford, NC 27332
M4,M11,M18,M25,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
ALL PERSONS, firms and corporations having claims against **Gary Dean Jackson**,

CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

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

deceased, of Chatham County, N.C., are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before Friday, June 4, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.

HIRING CNA's 3RD SHIFT

CALL: 919-542-3151
Monday-Friday 8:30am to 4:00pm
for appointment to complete application and interview
Pittsboro Christian Village
1825 East Street, Pittsboro, NC



Career Opportunities Available

Visit www.chathamnc.org and click on Jobs

PITTSBORO VILLAGE APARTMENTS

Now accepting applications for 2BR, 1.5BA Range, refrigerator, dishwasher are included in the rent. Rent starts at \$630 and up.
400 Honeysuckle Dr., Pittsboro, NC 27312
919-542-5410
TDD 1-800-735-2962
Email: pittsborovillage@ECCMGT.com
EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES



CENTRAL CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Job Title:
Maintenance Technician

Job Description:
The Maintenance Technician will troubleshoot problems reported and make repairs to facilities and equipment. Technician will assist with HVAC repairs and preventive maintenance, as well as furniture and equipment moving and surplus. Also, employee will make minor renovations and alterations to facilities. This position will work on the Chatham Main Campus in Pittsboro.

Minimum Requirements:

- High School Diploma or equivalent with basic skills in electrical, HVAC, mechanical, plumbing required.
- At least three years experience in maintenance experience such as electrical distribution equipment, lighting, HVAC, air compressors, pumps, and other facilities related equipment; or equivalent combination of training and experience.
- Valid NC Driver's License.
- Equivalent combination of education and experience may be considered.

For a complete listing of employment opportunities, visit us online at www.cccc.edu/employment

AUCTION

Living Estate of Larry High - Moving Woodworking Shop, Farm & Lawn Equipment, '65 Ford 100 Truck, Allis Chalmers G, Vintage VW "Thing", 16' Trailer, Ski Boat
190 Oakley Farm Rd., Chapel Hill, NC
Previews/Inspection Times on Website



Register & Bid Online @ RogersAuction.com

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(919) 545-0412
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NCFL7360

This day, Thursday, March 4, 2021.
Rachel Jackson, Executor of the Estate of Gary Dean Jackson 278 Woodfield Court, Fuquay Varina, NC 27526 M4,M11,M18,M25,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
ALL PERSONS, firms and corporations having claims against **JOHN W. ROBERTS**, deceased, of Chatham County, N.C., are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before June 11th, 2021 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This 11th day of March, 2021.
Brook H. Roberts, Executor Estate of John W. Roberts c/o Roberson Law Firm 1829 E. Franklin St., Ste. 800C Chapel Hill, NC 27514 M11,M18,M25,A1,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21-E-120
All persons having claims against **JOSEPH FIELDS ROBERTSON**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 11th day of June, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 11th day of March, 2021.
William L. Robertson, Executor 1312 B Louisa Ln. Wilmington, NC 2840 3 M11,M18,M25,A1,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21-E-134
All persons having claims against **MARY FANNIE BURKE (LOPOSSAY)**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 11th day of June, 2021, or this notice will

be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 11th day of March, 2021.
1. Jeffrey Ray Burke, Co-Administrator
2. Dawn Marie Burke (Pate), Co-Administrator 785 Glovers Church Rd Siler City, NC 27344 M11,M18,M25,A1,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
The undersigned, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of **Trudy Letitia Shapcott** of Chatham County, North Carolina, hereby notifies all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned c/o David P. Nanney, Jr., Esq., P.O. Box 19766, Raleigh, North Carolina, 27619-9766, on or before the 11th day of June, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to the said estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned. This the 11th day of March, 2021.
Robin Goldcott, Executor c/o David P. Nanney, Jr. Kirschbaum, Nanney, Keenan & Griffin, P.A. P. O. Box 19766 Raleigh, NC 27619-9766 M11,M18,M25,A1,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
The undersigned, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of **WILLIAM A. KOEHLNLINE**, Deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned at the offices of Marcus Hudson, Attorney at Law, 641 Rock Creek Road, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514, on or before the 14th day of June, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment. This 11th day of March, 2021.
Evelyn Koehline, Executor, Estate of William A. Koehline Marcus Hudson, Attorney at Law 641 Rock Creek Road Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514 M11,M18,M25,A1,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21-E-94
All persons having claims against **ROBERTA B. LARSON**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 11th day of June, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 11th day of March, 2021.
Rebecca L. Redman, Executrix 15232 Shannon Dale Rd Purcellville, VA 20132 M11,M18,M25,A1,4tp

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE TOWN OF PITTSBORO
The Pittsboro Town Board of Commissioners will hold the following Public Hearings on Monday, March 22, 2021 at 7:00 pm. The Public Hearing will be conducted remotely via Zoom, a teleconference software, for the following item: Graham Scott Oldham is requesting a Conditional Rezoning from R-A2 (Residential Agricultural – 2 acres) to C2-CZ (Highway Commercial Conditional Zoning) for a shopping center, located on 5 parcels (PID 7108, 7109, 7110, 93983, 93984), the total being approximately 12.85 acres, located at 3151 US 15-501 North, Pittsboro, north of Oldham Place, owned by Graham Scott Oldham. The purpose of the legislative public hearing is to provide interested parties with an opportunity to comment on the request. **SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES IN THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT MAY BE MADE FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC HEARING.** The complete records are on file at the Town Planning Department located at 480 Hillsboro Street, Suite 400, and are available for inspection through e-mail. The meeting will be held via Zoom, a teleconference software. Instructions on how to join the Zoom Meeting can be found on the Town's website under the BOC Agenda, Minutes, and Audio tab (pittsboronc.gov). If you wish to make written comments, please send them to the Town Clerk, Cassie Bullock, PO Box 759, Pittsboro, NC 27312 or via email at Cbullock@pittsboronc.gov by 4 p.m. on March 22, 2021. The Clerk will receive written comments to be included in the minutes for 24 hours after the meeting. Please sign up with the Clerk by 4:00 p.m. on March 22, 2021 if you wish to participate. M11,M18,2tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21 E 145
The undersigned, having qualified as Executrix of the Estate of **JERRY WALTER CATES**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, notifies all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned at her address, 1985 Andrews Store Road, Pittsboro, North Carolina, 27312, on or before the 11th day of June, 2021, or this Notice will

be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment. This 8th day of March, 2021.
Lynn Rimmer Cates 1985 Andrews Store Road Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312 GUNN & MESSICK, PLLC P. O. Box 880 Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312-0880 M11,M18,M25,A1,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
All persons, firms and corporations having claims against **FLORENCE AUTRY MCCACHREN**, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit them to Susan Tera McCachren as Administrator of the Estate of Florence Autry McCachren on or before June 11, 2021. c/o Thomas J. Neagle, Attorney at Law, 605 W. Main Street, Suite 104, Carrboro, North Carolina 27510, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to the decedent are asked to make immediate payment to the above-named Administrator. This the 11th day of March, 2021.
Susan Tera McCachren, Administrator c/o Thomas J. Neagle, Attorney 605 W. Main Street, Suite 104 Carrboro, North Carolina 27510 Attorney for Estate: Thomas J. Neagle Neagle Law Firm, PC 605 W. Main Street, Suite 104 Carrboro, North Carolina 27510 (919) 368-3536 M11,M18,M25,A1,4tc

PUBLIC NOTICE Chatham County Schools' federal projects under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 are presently being developed. Projects included: Title I (Helping Disadvantaged Children Meet High Standards) Title II Title III (Language Acquisition) Title IV A Student Support and Academic Enrichment McKinney-Vento (Homeless Education) Migrant Education Program Career and Technical Education High school students can enroll, without cost, in college credit classes through the Career and College Promise program. This includes Career and Technical Education pathways of study. IDEA (Students with Disabilities) The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA-Part B, Public Law 108.446) Project is presently being amended. The Project describes the special education programs that Chatham County Schools proposes for Federal funding for the 2021-2022 School Year. Interested persons are encouraged to review amendments to the Project and make comments concerning the implementation of special education under this Federal Program. All comments will be considered prior to submission of the amended Project to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction in Raleigh, North Carolina. The IDEA-Part B Project is open to the public for review and comments during the week of April 12-16, 2021 in the office of Melvin Diggs, Executive Director Exceptional Children and Academically and Intellectually Gifted located at Horton Middle School, Central Office-South, Pittsboro, NC. These projects describe the programs that Chatham County Schools proposes for federal funding for the 2021-2022 school year. Non-profit private schools and interested persons are encouraged to review these federal guidelines for the above listed projects and indicate their interest in participation of the projects if qualified. These projects are being developed during April and May and are due to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction on June 30, 2021. The initial Equitable Services for Private Schools meeting will be held on April 20, 2021, at 2:00 PM via virtual platform. Interested parties are encouraged to contact the office of Carol Little, Executive Director Federal Programs and School Improvement, at Chatham County Board of Education, P.O. Box 128 / 369 West Street, Pittsboro, N.C., prior to April 20, 2021. M11,M18,M25,A1,A8,A15,6tc

PUBLIC NOTICE
North Carolina Environmental Management Commission/ NPDES Unit, 1617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1617.
Notice of Intent to Issue a NPDES Wastewater Permit NC0020354 Town of Pittsboro WWTP
The North Carolina Environmental Management Commission proposes to issue a NPDES wastewater discharge permit to the person(s) listed below. Written comments regarding the proposed permit will be accepted until 30 days after the publish date of this notice. The Director of the NC Division of Water Resources (DWR) will hold a public hearing should there be a significant degree of public interest. Please mail comments and/or information requests to DWR at the above address. Interested persons may visit the DWR at 512 N. Salisbury Street, Raleigh, NC 27604 to review information on file. Additional information on NPDES permits and this notice may be found on our website: <http://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-resources/water-resources-permits/wastewater-branch/npdes-wastewater/>

public-notices, or by calling (919) 707-3601. The Town of Pittsboro [485 Small Street, Pittsboro, NC 27312] and Chatham Park Investors LLC [2261 US Highway 64 Business East, Pittsboro, NC 27312] have requested modification and renewal of NPDES permit NC0020354 for the Pittsboro Wastewater Treatment Plant, located in Chatham County. This permitted facility discharges treated municipal wastewater to Robeson Creek, a class WS-IV, NSW water in the Cape Fear River Basin. The permit modification incorporates the inclusion of the Chatham Park Water Recovery Center as a discharger to the existing Outfall 001 to Robeson Creek. Currently BOD, ammonia, total residual chlorine, fecal coliform, dissolved oxygen, pH, total copper, nitrate, total nitrogen loading, total phosphorus, and total phosphorus loading are water quality limited parameters. This discharge may affect future allocations in this segment of Robeson Creek. M18,1tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21-E-141
All persons having claims against **CHARLOTTE BARE ALLSUP**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 18th day of June, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 18th day of March, 2021.
Thurman Allsup, Executor 1743 Dewitt Smith Rd Pittsboro, NC 27312 M18,M25,A1,A8,4tp

TOWN OF PITTSBORO 2021 STREETS RESURFACING PROJECT NOTICE TO BIDDERS
Bids will be received by the Town of Pittsboro, 635 East Street, Pittsboro North Carolina, 27312 until 11:00 A.M. on March 26, 2021. At the same time bids will be publicly opened and read. The Town of Pittsboro reserves the right to reject any and all bids and wave any informality. The Town will not discriminate against any bidder submitting a bid because of race, creed, color, national origin or handicap. **PROJECT DESCRIPTION** - 2021 Street Resurfacing Project: Asphalt resurfacing of approximately 26643 x 187 feet of Town streets with 1.5" inches of asphalt, consisting of furnishing and installing work zone traffic control, adjusting of water box and manhole covers, asphalt milling, asphalt resurfacing and replacement of pavement markings. Work shall be conducted and performed in conformance with the latest edition of the NCDOT Standard Specifications for Roadway and Structures. **REQUIRED WORK** - The work to be bid consists of furnishing all materials, labor, tools, equipment and services required for resurfacing, paving and milling in the project description. Successful bidder must be able to commence work within 45 days. The following description shall not be constructed as a complete description of all work required. Street, Chatham, From US 15-501 to S Small, Length 126; Width 21, Quantity [SY] 294 Street, Masonic, From East to Thompson, Length 7768; Width 32, Quantity [SY] 27619 Street, Masonic, From Thompson to End; Length 16320; Width 18, Quantity [SY] 32640 Street, MLK, From East to Thompson, Length 858; Width 22, Quantity [SY] 2097 Street, MLK, From East to End, Length 262; Width 19, Quantity [SY] 553 Street, Rectory From Hanks to W Salisbury, Length 356; Width 18, Quantity [SY] 712 Street, W Salisbury, From West to Hwy.87, Length 953; Width 20, Quantity [SY] 2117 **BID BOND**
1. A 5% bid bond shall be submitted with the bid.
2. Performance and Payment Bond: Amount of the bond should be 100% of contract amount.
3. The Town will remit payment after completion of work and after performing an inspection (inspection period may take up to seven (7) days). Successful bidder must provide bonding as noted within 10 days of notice of award. A pre-construction meeting will be held with the successful bidder, shortly after the contract award is made. The Town of Pittsboro reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive technicalities and to make an award as deemed in its best interest. Failure to respond to any requirements outlined in the request for proposal (RFP), or failure to enclose copies of the required documents, may disqualify the bid. **SEALED BIDS**
All bids shall be placed in a sealed envelope and clearly marked as 2021 BID FOR ASPHALT RESURFACING". **MAILING OF BIDS**
The bidder accepts all responsibility for the timely receipt of bids. The bidder may choose to mail bids to: Proposals may be mailed to: John Poteat, Director of Public Utilities, Town of Pittsboro, P.O. Box 759, Pittsboro, N.C. 27312 Or they may be hand delivered to: John Poteat, Director of Public Utilities, Town of Pittsboro, 635 East Street, Pittsboro, N.C. 27312 Questions should be addressed to: John Poteat, Town of Pittsboro, Director of Public

Utilities, Phone: 919-542-2530 or email: jpoteat@pittsboronc.gov M18,1tc

PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE
The United Way of Chatham County will hold its annual meeting Thursday, March 25, at 11 a.m. The public is invited to attend. The meeting will be virtual via Zoom. Please contact United Way for access to the Zoom call. 919-542-1110 M18,1tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
HAVING QUALIFIED, as Administrator of the Estate of **FRANCES MARSH**, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned on or before June 23, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. This the 18th day of March, 2021.
Ronald P. Collins, Administrator of Frances Marsh Estate 117 West Raleigh Street Siler City, North Carolina 27344 (919) 663-2533 M18,M25,A1,A8,4tc

TOWN OF PITTSBORO REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS Post-Filter GAC Treatment PROJECT DUE DATE / TIME: March 25, 2021 @ 3:00 PM
Deadline for Inquiries: March 22, 2021 @ 4:00 PM
Time and Date Set for Submittal: March 25, 2021 @ 3:00 PM
Notice of Selection: March 29, 2021
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ) FOR DESIGN BUILD SERVICES Post-Filter GAC Treatment PROJECT INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS TO DESIGN BUILDERS 1 - GENERAL INFORMATION
1.1 The Town of Pittsboro ("Pittsboro") intends to procure a qualified Design Builder to provide design and construction services for the Post-Filter GAC Treatment Project ("Project"). The Project is located at 3746 Hwy 15-501 N, Pittsboro, NC 27312.
1.2 The Statement of Qualifications ("SOQ") must be received by the Town Engineering Department at 480 Hillsboro St, Suite 400, Pittsboro, NC 27312.
1.3 Questions pertaining to the selection process should be directed to Mr. Kent Jackson, Pittsboro Town Engineer, at kjackson@pittsboronc.gov.
1.4 Pittsboro shall not be held responsible for any oral instructions. Any changes to this Request for Qualifications ("RFQ") will be in the form of an addendum, which will be furnished to all registered RFQ holders.
1.5 Pittsboro reserves the right to reject any or all SOQ's, to waive any informality or irregularity in any SOQ received, and to be the sole judge of the merits of the respective SOQ received.
1.6 Project Site Visit: Due to COVID-19 restrictions there will be no site visits to the Pittsboro Water Treatment Plant ("WTP").
1.7 Project Description: The Pittsboro WTP can treat up to 2.0-million gallons per day (mgd) of water for the Town's customers. On a typical day, the Town treats less than 1.0-mgd, with hourly peaking at approximately 1.5-mgd. The Town intends to expand the WTP in the future to a capacity of 6.0-mgd of overall treatment, which will include a Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) treatment system of the same capacity. The current Project, for which this RFQ is in reference to, will design-build an initial 1.0-mgd of GAC Treatment at the Pittsboro WTP. The Project will take into consideration the future 6.0-mgd expansion, as well as overall build-out of the site. In addition to GAC vessels, the project will include ancillary facilities and equipment, including, but not limited to: civil and structural improvements, piping, electrical, site lighting, instrumentation, and feed pumps, which are needed to complete the GAC treatment system.
1.8 A partial design (approximately 60%) of the GAC treatment system and ancillary facilities shall be provided by the Town. The selected Design Builder will form a team with Pittsboro and execute agreements for design completion and construction for new 1.0-mgd GAC treatment system, utilizing two (2) 40,000-lb GAC contactor pressure vessels.
1.9 The Design Builder will be selected based on qualifications.
1.10 The Design Build services will be performed using Design Build Institute of America (DBIA) contract documents with one entity identified as the Design Builder. Services will include all necessary activities to complete design, permit, construct, and startup the project.
1.11 The Design Builder will be an integral member of the Project Team, consisting of the Design Builder, representatives from Pittsboro, and other consultants, as required. It will be the responsibility of the Design Builder to integrate the design and construction phases, utilizing skills and knowledge of design and general contracting, to provide design, code analysis, and review constructability issues, develop schedules; prepare detailed project construction cost estimates; and, in any other way deemed necessary, to contribute to the development of the Project during the

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project phases.
 1.12 The Design Builder assumes design and construction risk and has direct authority over the sub-consultants and subcontractors. The Design Builder will act as Pittsboro's fiduciary and have a relationship of trust and confidence between itself and Pittsboro. Pittsboro intends to enter into a Progressive Design-Build Agreement with the selected Design-Build firm utilizing DBIA form 545 (Progressive Design-Build Agreement for Water and Wastewater Projects), or another mutually agreed upon DBIA Agreement. The Project will be an "open book" job whereby Pittsboro may have access to review the cost details.

1.13 The Town does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, or disability. Any contractors or vendors who provide services, programs or goods for the Town are expected to fully comply with the Town's non-discrimination policy. In accordance with North Carolina General Statute 143-128.2, the Town of Pittsboro established a verifiable ten percent (10%) goal for all building construction contracts for participation by Historically Underutilized Businesses as defined by the NC Department of Administration HUB Office.

2 - ANTICIPATED SCOPE OF WORK

2.1 The project scope of work generally includes, but is not limited to the following primary tasks:

2.1.1 Completion of the Design Documents, utilizing the partial (60%) design documents provided by Pittsboro. These documents are in preparation concurrent to the Design Builder selection process and will be made available to the selected Design Builder.

2.1.2 Obtain all necessary permits and regulatory reviews and approvals necessary for completion of the Project, included those required prior to construction commencement, during construction, startup/commencement, and construction closeout.

2.1.3 This Project will include installation of a 1.0-mgd GAC Treatment System, new pump station and the decommission of the existing pump station.
 2.2 After being selected, the Design Builder will execute a contract with Pittsboro to provide design completion and construction services of the Project including:
 2.2.1 Project management and administration through project leadership and overall team coordination
 2.2.2 Interdisciplinary coordination
 2.2.3 Review of codes and standards
 2.2.4 Identify opportunities for economy and offer cost savings suggestions and best value recommendations
 2.2.5 Project planning and scheduling
 2.2.6 Constructability review
 2.2.7 Construction cost models, risk register development, and estimates based on marketplace conditions
 2.2.8 Coordination of contract documents
 2.2.9 Provide record documents and drawings
 2.3 The Design Builder will assume the risk of delivering the Project and will be responsible for construction means and methods.

3 - STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS SELECTION CRITERIA

3.1 Firms interested in providing design build services must submit a Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) that addresses the following evaluation criteria. Applicants are encouraged to organize their submissions in such a way as to follow the general evaluation criteria listed below. Information included within the SOQ may be used to evaluate your firm as part of any criteria regardless of where that information is found within the SOQ. Information obtained from the SOQ and from any other relevant source may be used in the evaluation and selection process.
 3.2 Cover Letter (1-page) containing at a minimum: Company name, contact name, address, phone number and email address.
 3.3 Qualifications Criteria

For the development of a shortlist, a rating system will be utilized by Pittsboro to score and rank each proposal. Proposers are encouraged to keep their proposals concise and to include a minimum of marketing materials. At a minimum, each proposal must address the following criteria: Item, Evaluation Criteria, Maximum Points
 1 General Information & Relevant Firm Experience 25
 2 Team Staff Experience and Qualifications 30
 3 Project Understanding and Approach 35
 4 Other Factors 10
 5 Financial & Legal, Pass/Fail, Total Possible Points 100
 3.3.1 Evaluation Criteria 1 - General information
 a. Description of firm/team
 b. Legal company organization plus organization chart with names. Organizational chart shall also include major subcontractors, including those that plan to do 20% or more of the work.
 c. Identify the Project Manager for the Design Build firm who will be assigned to this Project.
 d. List of applicable North Carolina licenses for construction, engineering, or other trades/professions pertinent to the Project requirements.
 3.3.2 Evaluation Criteria 1 - Relevant Firm Experience

a. Applicant's overall reputation, service capabilities and quality as it relates to this Project.
 b. List and briefly describe 3-5 comparable projects completed by your firm or currently in progress, include your firm's role. For each project, include contract value and construction value, project owner, project location. For at least 3 projects, including: contact name and title, address, current and accurate telephone number, and email address (if available).
 c. Experience with design of GAC treatment systems for PFAS Removal
 d. Experience with Design-Build projects at WTPs in North Carolina.
 e. Experience with water treatment related services to

the Town of Pittsboro.
 f. Type and amount of self-performed work that is anticipated.
 3.3.3 Evaluation Criteria 2 - Team Staff Experience & Qualifications
 a. Describe each team member's position within the firm. Provide resumes of each proposed team member in Appendix A.
 b. Briefly describe each team member's role on this project.
 c. Provide "team" experience working together on similar projects.
 d. Explain your understanding of, and experience with, performing Progressive Design Build projects. Experience in North Carolina will have an increased weight in the evaluation.
 e. Provide information regarding teaming history and working relationship between the Design-Build contractor and the Design-Build engineer. A history of successful past working relationship will have an increased weight in the evaluation.
 3.3.4 Evaluation Criteria 3 - Project Understanding and Approach

a. Describe your understanding of the project, and overall approach to completing the project.
 b. Identify and discuss any potential problems during design and construction.
 c. Identify and discuss methods to mitigate those problems.
 d. Describe the work you anticipate self-performing, and the work you anticipate being performed by sub-consultants/subcontractors.
 e. Provide an anticipated project schedule.
 f. Describe approach to maintaining operations at the existing facility during construction activities.
 g. Describe approach to startup, training, and warranty compliance.
 3.3.5 Evaluation Criteria 4 - Other Factors

a. Current workload and ability to proceed promptly.

b. Experience addressing PFAS and emerging contaminants in Drinking Water.
 c. Relevant factors impacting the quality and value of work, including, but not limited to past work/performance and general reputation of the Design Builder and/or Engineer.
 3.3.6 Evaluation Criteria 5 - Financial & Legal
 No points will be allocated for Evaluation Criteria No. 6; Proposers will be rated as acceptable (pass) or unacceptable (fail). This information shall be provided in Appendix B.

a. The selected Design Builder firm will be required to provide a Performance and Payment Bond in the full amount of the contract. For this submittal, proposers shall provide evidence of their ability to provide and maintain the following:
 i. A Performance and Payment Bond in the amount of at least \$3.0M
 ii. General Liability Insurance at \$5.0M per occurrence and \$10.0M aggregate
 iii. Umbrella Liability Insurance at \$5.0M per occurrence.
 iv. Workman's Compensation \$1.0M Each Accident, \$1M Disease-Each Employee, \$1.0M Disease-Policy Limit
 v. Professional Liability at \$2.0M per occurrence.

4 - SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

4.1 The SOQ shall include a one-page cover letter plus a maximum of twenty (20) pages to address the SOQ criteria specified in Section 3 (excluding Resumes). Table of Contents, section divider pages, and Appendices A and B do not count toward the total page count. Resumes for each key team member shall be limited to no more than two pages. Resumes shall be attached as Appendix A.
 4.2 Four (4) hard copies and (1) electronic copy of the Statement of Qualifications and Appendix A must be submitted to Town Engineering Department, 480 Hillsboro St, Suite 400, Pittsboro, NC 27312, by March 25, 2021 at 3:00 pm local time.

4.3 Failure to comply with the following criteria may be grounds for disqualification:
 a. Receipt of submittal by the specified cut-off date and time.
 b. The number of originals and/or copies of the submittal specified.
 c. Adherence to maximum page requirements.
 4.4 Adherence to the maximum page criteria is critical; each page side with criteria information will be counted. Pages shall be generally 8-1/2" x 11" paper. A maximum of two (2) pages may be on 11" x 17" size paper.

5 - SELECTION PROCESS AND SCHEDULE

5.1 Reviewers for Pittsboro will evaluate each Statement of Qualifications ("SOQ") according to the above criteria. No oral interviews are planned for the selection process. Following a review of the submittals Pittsboro will select Design Builder and notify that firm. Those firms not selected for further consideration will be notified as well.
 5.2 The following tentative schedule has been prepared for this project. Firms interested in this project must be available on the interview meeting date.
 a. SOQ's due: March 25, 2021 @ 3:00 PM
 b. Firms notified of Selection: March 29, 2021
 5.3 Pittsboro will enter into negotiations with the selected Design Builder. If the selected Design Builder and Pittsboro are unable to agree on terms and conditions, and as a result the Design Builder firm is unable to execute a contract within two weeks of notification of the highest rated team, Pittsboro may then negotiate with the second or third highest ranked firm until a contract is executed, or Pittsboro, in its sole discretion, may decide to terminate the selection process. Pittsboro reserves the right to terminate the selection process at any time.
 6 - ATTACHMENTS, None.

M18,1tc

Farro from home

I was in Whole Foods one day and bought six of the cutest leeks I've ever seen. They were so adorable that to get them, I had to reach right between two shoppers who had stopped there for an extended conversation. I felt guilty for being rude, but it was fathoms less rude than giving one of them an elbow check and growling, "Move it!"

In the frozen food section, I decided to grab a box of frozen spinach and have creamed leeks in the next day or so.

But life got in the way, in the form of a new job I'd taken.

I will continue to write for the News + Record, but my passion for shoes and thrift stores has strongly persuaded me into taking a side gig — a 55 hour-a-week side gig. So the past few weeks has been spent readjusting my entire life. I'm struggling to figure out how



Photo courtesy of Debbie Matthews

Creamed spinach leek farro, a simple and scrumptious dish.

to shoehorn my entire previous life into two days off and a few hours each evening, which has brought chaos, stress, exhaustion, and lots and lots of plan B-ing it. I'm barely walking the dog anymore, I've been reading the same book for two weeks, and I miss RuPaul's Drag Race weekly. Thank goodness for on-demand TV (never thought I'd be downright grateful for the cable company).

The elaborate, time-consuming meals of yore are, at least for now, on hold. Before I started, I figured I'd remain organized and continue putting home-cooked meals on the table. Nope. The past two weeks

have been a blur of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, blue box mac, and scrambled eggs. The more traditional meals I have made on my days off are but sad, pale imitations of past repasts.

Meanwhile, those leeks continue languishing, contemplating hanging out with refrigerator thugs and going bad themselves, becoming Low Down Cheap Little Punks®, if you will.

One night I got home from work with an idea. I could use those leeks as the star of a one-bowl meal instead of just a side dish that would be part of a dinner that would take way more time and work. I'd make a big pot of farro, one of my favorite starches,

Creamed Spinach and Leek Farro

1 1/2 cups traditional farro (not quick cooked)	1 tablespoon duck fat or butter	4 1/2 cups water	
		Salt & pepper	
Cooked chicken, cut into bite-sized chunks			
In a heavy saucepan, put water, fat, and a big pinch of salt and pepper. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Stir in farro, cover, and cook for 30-35 minutes or until the farro is cooked but still toothsome, and the liquid is gone. Take off heat, lay chicken on top of the farro, and let sit covered, for at least ten minutes. The heat of the farro will warm the chicken.			
Meanwhile...			
10-ounce box frozen spinach, thawed	1 tablespoon of duck fat or butter	and cleaning below)	Salt & pepper to taste
1/2 yellow onion, chopped	6 small or 4 large leeks (instructions for cutting)	1/4 cup sherry	1 cup of microgreens
13-15 gratings of a fresh nutmeg		1 1/2 cups skim or 2% milk	
		1 cup heavy cream	

To clean and prepare leeks:
 Cut off the dark green parts and 1/4-inch of the root end. Discard. Slice lengthwise, then slice into 1/4-inch half-moons. Put the sliced leeks into a colander and wash under cold water thoroughly, using your fingers to separate the slices and make sure all the sand and dirt have washed away.
 Allow draining while the spinach cooks.
 Melt butter or duck fat in a large skillet and add thawed spinach, onions, nutmeg, and a pinch of salt and pepper.
 Cook, uncovered until all of the liquid has cooked out and the veg are picking up a little browning. Add leeks and cook until the pan is again dry and the leeks are picking up a touch of color.
 Pour in sherry and stir, scraping up any browned and stuck bits from the pan. This is called deglazing.
 When the pan is dry one more time, take the pan off the heat and stir in milk, cream, and Parmesan. Lower the heat to medium-low (not quite four) and bring to simmer. This should keep the dairy from curdling.
 Once the mixture simmers, turn to 6 1/2 and let cook until the mixture has thickened to a creamy sauce.
 Once the veg and the farro are done, take the skillet off the heat. Add the farro to the spinach and leeks, pour in the lemon juice, and gently combine. Taste for seasoning, and re-season if necessary.
 Plate each serving then top with microgreens.
 Serves 4-6 hearty eaters.

and then mix it with delicious creamed leeks. The creamy, chewy farro was soul-soothing. The creamed leeks were both delicate and earthy while adding texture, color, nutrients, and fiber. And I used up some leftover chicken which added heartiness and protein's satisfying fullness. It was a creative solution to the new-job pressures.

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