

Chatham News + Record

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'THERE'S NOTHING LIKE IT'

Postal carrier veteran adjusts to COVID-19 mail delivery



Staff photo by Kim Hawks

'I really do enjoy the job,' Siler City Post Office carrier technician Stephen Suslik said. 'There's nothing like it, to be honest.'

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — As a carrier technician with the United States Postal Service for 21 years, Stephen Suslik has had his fair share of experience with hazards postal workers know well: dogs on the loose and bad weather.

He's been at the Siler City Post Office for two years, but before that he worked in Syracuse, New York, where he regularly shoveled and trudged through snow to deliver mail. Luckily, he's only had to use the dog spray each worker is given "a handful of times" over the years, but the fear of seeing a dog taking

a run at him is by far one of the worst parts of the job, he said.

At least, before last March. Now a new, bigger hazard is on Suslik's mind as he works — COVID-19.

"It's really on your mind every day now when you do the job," he said. "Before you got in this routine, and everyone was just, you know, 'Hey, there's the mail carrier.' Now, it's like you stop, you hesitate, calculate a little bit more. It's just weird situations that, before you never thought anything of it."

Darin Shamberger, the postmaster at the Siler City office, said his office has prioritized having plenty of personal protective equipment for employees, as well as having frequent meetings to dis-

cuss safety protocol and any questions.

"Of course, at the Postal Service, safety is first for us to make sure our employees are safe in every aspect," Shamberger said. "One thing about me — I'm a pastor also — is I have to set the example for others to follow. So what I have to do is just make sure that I'm doing everything possible to show them how to be safe."

As COVID-19 restrictions in the state loosen, Shamberger said his office is continuing to emphasize vigilance. For carriers, this means distancing from customers, wearing masks when needed and sanitizing throughout the day.

See **CARRIER**, page A3

ELECTIONS 2020

Ballot features two uncontested races

BY D. LARS DOLDER
News + Record Staff

Two incumbent Chatham County officials, Register of Deeds Lunday A. Riggsbee and Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor J. Lynn Mann, are running uncontested in this year's elections.

Here's what you need to know about their accomplishments and aspirations:

Register of Deeds

The Honorable Lunday A. Riggsbee knows all about record keeping and organization, not only from her six years of experience as register of deeds, but also the 30 years she spent in private practice as a lawyer.

"I started practicing law in '84," she said. "I opened my own practice in '86. My practice ran the gamut when I first started, but the last 10 to 15 years it was getting to be really strongly about real estate. So, I came into the position with a strong background from the other side of the counter."

Now, as register of deeds, Riggsbee oversees vital record keeping for the county's citizens. Documents include marriage licenses, birth certificates and real estate records. The responsibility is a full-time occupation. Riggsbee, therefore, gave up her practice to fulfill her current responsi-

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ELECTIONS COVERAGE

- The News + Record's coverage of the 2020 elections continues in this edition and online at www.chathamnewsrecord.com. We'll be posting updates and results online from now until Election Day and beyond.

- Find previous candidate profiles, questionnaires on our website.

- Early voting continues through Oct. 31, with six local early voting sites open from 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. weekdays, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays and noon to 3 p.m. Sundays.

- For more information about the 2020 general election, early voting and Election Day, visit the Chatham County Board of Elections website at chathamnc.org/elections or call (919) 545-8500.

Chatham's voting begins with early success

BY D. LARS DOLDER
News + Record Staff

While lingering concern over potential voter intimidation will likely persist through Nov. 3, early in-person and mail-in voting in Chatham County has, so far, been a resounding success — a credit to the county's careful preparation for an historic election.

Statewide, 826,285 ballots were cast on Oct. 15, the first day of early voting, according to the N.C.'s state board of elections. Chatham County, which ranked first in the state in early-voter turnout per registered voters, was a major contributor to that figure.

The county has always ranked among the highest early voting

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Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Early voting began last Thursday, with early success in Chatham County. Pictured here is Susan Sigmon, site director at the Chatham County Agriculture and Conference Center — a popular one-stop early voting center in the county.

'WE REALLY WANT THOSE PEOPLE TO FEEL SAFE'

Observers remain vigilant against threat of voter intimidation

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

Last February, demonstrators donning Confederate flags and apparel gathered outside the Chatham County Agriculture and Conference Center in Pittsboro — one of the county's one-stop primary early voting sites — shouting slurs and "Trump 2020." The Ag center's single-road entrance meant all potential voters had to walk through the demonstration in order to enter the building.

It's an event the North Carolina NAACP took seriously at the time, writing a letter on Feb. 24 to the N.C. General Counsel and State Board of Elections, nine days after what it described as the "disturbing voter intimidation incident" took place in Chatham.

"There is no place for racism at North Carolina's polls. Preventing voter intimidation in all forms is a central focus of our organizations in the 2020 election cycle," read the

See **THREAT**, page A7

Perch Pittsboro navigates pandemic

BY D. LARS DOLDER
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — Coworking sites across the country are shuttering as pandemic restrictions and social wariness over shared spaces discourage new membership. But Pittsboro's Perch Coworking is plugging along, buttressed by a commitment to safety and a devoted community.

In 2019, coworking was a hot concept. DeskMag, an online magazine about coworking, estimated that by end of year, 2.2 million people would share coworking spaces around the world, up from 1.7 million in 2018.

Then the coronavirus pandemic struck. Overnight, it seemed, the notion of community workspaces was stigmatized.

Lingering public apprehension is reflected in gloomy figures: 2020 has, so far, seen

See **PERCH**, page A8

CHATHAM SCHOOL BOARD

BOE candidates give final thoughts on COVID-19

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

While school boards have certainly always made important decisions, in recent months they've stepped into a larger, more harsh spotlight — deciding about re-opening schools in communities where deep disagreements and divides on the subject exist.

At Chatham County Schools, this holds true. Over the last six months, the CCS Board of Education's decisions regarding the district's plan for returning to school during the COVID-19 pandemic have been controversial — with teachers, parents, students, faculty and staff alike. During an election year, these decisions, and the public's

reception to them, are particularly important.

It's no surprise, then, that the majority of candidates on this year's ballot for Chatham's Board of Education seats have made discussing COVID-19 plans a priority for their platforms. This year, two of the non-partisan board's five seats will be up for re-election this year, with incumbent Melissa Hlavac facing opposition from Tim Winters and Ryan Armstrong in District 1, and incumbent David Hamm from Dennis Lewis in District 2.

"As you can imagine, these decisions have been arduous and, in many instances, agonizing," Hlavac told the

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Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Perch Coworking founder Betsey Elborge works from inside the business location on Hillsboro Street in Pittsboro.

IN THE KNOW

Siler City's Hispanic Heritage Month ends without a Fiesta. **PAGE A3**

Can I see your new badge? For Siler City P.D., that's a yes. **PAGE A10**

UNC COVID-19 vaccine trials: The only side effect is hope. **PAGE B7**

'Why do you travel so often?' A reporter's encounter with ICE. **PAGE B8**



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Events are subject to change based on closures due to coronavirus. Verify with organizers prior to events.

CANCELLATIONS

• **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.
• **Chatham County Historical Museum:** For the safety of visitors and volunteers, the Chatham County Historical Museum is closed until further notice. See our website: <https://chathamhistory.org>.
• **Chatham Community Library:** Closed to the public at this time.

ON THE AGENDA

• **The Pittsboro Board of Commissioners** will meet at 7 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 26, at town hall. For more information, see the town's website at pittsboronc.gov.
• In addition, **The Duke University Nicholas School of the Environment and the Haw River Assembly** will host a virtual town hall meeting to hear about their study of PFAS exposures and to ask questions of the researchers. The meeting will be held from 10-11 a.m. on Sat., Oct. 24. The Zoom link is bit.ly/PFAStownhall.
• **Chatham County Solid Waste & Recycling** will have mulch sales during the month of October at the Main Facility, at 28 County Services Rd., Pittsboro. Saturday sales are from 7:30 a.m. to noon on October 24 and 31. Wednesday sales are from 7 a.m. to noon on October 21 and 28. Solid Waste & Recycling staff will load the mulch, and residents must haul it. Mulch is \$5 per scoop, about one cubic yard. Staff will load large trailers and dump trucks only with a large scoop for \$10 per scoop. Note: Saturday sales are cash or check only. Sales will continue as long as supplies last. All loads of mulch MUST be secured. Learn more about securing your load. Tarps are available for purchase at the Main Facility and during mulch sales. The tarps are \$3 each and are 6x8 feet.

• **The League of Women Voters of Orange, Durham and Chatham counties** (LWVODC) reminds everyone of the availability of VOTE411.org, their online 2020 Election Voter Guide. The League's nonpartisan election resource offers voters a "one-stop shop" for all things election related. Visit VOTE411.org, enter your address and see: Your customized ballot; Candidate profiles and responses to questions in the candidate's words; Where and when to vote; Voter registration status, and more.
• **Central Carolina Community College:** Whether you are looking for flexible course choices to meet your personal schedule or starting a new program of study, CCCC's 8-week term allows you to find courses that fit your academic and career goals. To register for courses, contact your advisor or the admissions office at 919-718-7300 (Lee Main Campus), 919-545-8025 (Chatham Main Campus), and 910-814-8827 or 910-814-8867 (Harnett Main Campus). See www.cccc.edu/12and8 for a list of classes.
• **Chatham Community Library** is also offering free classes on Digital Genealogy, Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel in October. All classes will be presented virtually. Register online to receive a meeting link. A description of each class, including topics covered and prerequisites for attending, can be found at www.chathamnc.org/ComputerClasses. Going Digital with Genealogy: Now in progress, Wednesdays, 3 p.m.; Microsoft Excel Basics, Part 1: Oct. 21, Wednesday, 3 p.m.; Microsoft Excel Basics, Part 2: Oct. 28, Wednesday, 3 p.m. For more information, call 919-545-8086 or email reference@chathamlibraries.org. A full list of upcoming programs can be found on the library's events calendar.

THURSDAY

• Main Street America announces that the second round of the HartBeat of Main Street Grant Program will open on Thursday, Oct. 22 at 9 a.m. PT. In partnership with The Hartford, the program will continue to fund solutions that help small business owners respond and adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic, and also help to revitalize and strengthen older and historic downtown commercial districts. A link to the

application will be posted on our program web page as soon as the application opens.
• **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, appetizing 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.

FRIDAY

• **FireClay Cellar/Winery** Craft Show and Wine Tasting: preview Friday, Oct. 23; Event scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 24 from 12 to 6 p.m. (Rain date: Sunday). Out of the Studio - "Into the Vines" - Join us as we celebrate the fall season, with a family friendly, socially responsible local happening. Wear the mask, y'all! No pets please!

SATURDAY

• The CCCC Financial Aid office will host two virtual FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) days from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Oct. 24 and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Oct. 30. The events are free and virtually open to the public. Participants should use 2019 tax information to fill out the FAFSA. To schedule an appointment, visit <https://tinyurl.com/ccccfadsaday>. For more information, call (919) 718-7229, or email finaid@ccc.edu, or visit www.cccc.edu/financialaid/ contact.
• **NEW HOPE VALLEY RAILWAY** is Back on Track. The nonprofit railway reopens with limited capacity Halloween train rides in Bonsal. The North Carolina Railway Museum, which operates New Hope Valley Railway (NHVR) has reopened to the public and resumed train rides with its popular Track or Treat: Halloween Express trains. Located at 3900 Bonsal Road in New Hill, it is nicknamed the Triangle's Train. NHVR's family-friendly Halloween trains are planned for weekends in October, Saturdays Oct. 24 and 31. Trains will depart at 2:45, 4:00, 5:15, 6:30 and 7:45 p.m. and tickets will only be sold online prior to ride days and not at the railroad on the day-of.

Tickets cost \$14 for all ages.
• **Chatham Arts & Recreation: Youth Art Class** will meet Thursdays from 4 to 5 p.m., through Oct. 22. This is a six-week exploration of various art and craft skills. Participants will experiment with projects such as watercolor painting, dot painting, paper crafts (quilling and/or origami) and 3D art. For details on how to register, visit the parks and recreation website: chathamnc.org/parks-recreation or call 919-545-8555.
• **Chatham Arts & Recreation: The Trunk or Treat Boo-Thru** will have candy drive-throughs and a pumpkin carving contest this year. Event 1: A "Monster Hunt" will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. in Southwest District Park on Thursday, Oct. 29, and Event 2: from 6 to 8 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 30, in the Northwest District Park.
• **SILER CITY FRIDAY NIGHTS FLICKS** series concludes Oct. 23. Make plans to join Siler City Parks and Recreation for the final Friday Night Flick of the 2020 season series. "The Addams Family," a 2019 animated film, will premier on the big screen at dusk at Bray Park. Grab your blankets, chairs and enjoy the final free family-friendly movie under the stars.
• **FireClay Cellar/Winery** Craft Show and Wine Tasting: preview Friday, Oct. 23; Event scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 24 from 12 to 6 p.m. (Rain date: Sunday). Out of the Studio - "Into the Vines" - Join us as we celebrate the fall season, with a family friendly, socially responsible local happening. Wear the mask, y'all! No pets please!

ALSO HAPPENING

• Thales Academy, a college preparatory network of K-12 independent schools, will be opening its newest campus in the Vineyards neighborhood of Chatham Park in July, 2021. The first school to open in the Chatham Park community is now accepting applications for grades K-4 for the 2021-2022 school year. Subsequent grades will be added in the future to ultimately serve grades K-12. Applications are first-come, first-served and will be open until seats are filled and a wait-list is created. Enrollment is open to all area families, not just Chatham Park residents. Tuition at Thales Academy Pittsboro will be \$5,300

per year. Scholarships, discounts, and payment plans are available to further reduce this cost. Families may apply right from our website, ThalesAcademy.org, and if they have any questions, they may contact admissions@thalesacademy.org.
• **Second Bloom** of Chatham will be having a Halloween Sale. All black and orange clothing will be 50% off from Oct 20th until Oct 31st. Come and treat yourself to some fine clothing and jewelry. Masks are required and hand sanitizer is also available. The store is open 10a.m. - 4 p.m. Tues.-Sat. We are also accepting donations of clean, new and gently used men and women's clothing, shoes, accessories and jewelry. We accept credit cards. We are located on the Courthouse circle at 10 Sanford Rd., Pittsboro.
• 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.
• **Adult Volunteers Needed** at Chatham Hospital in Siler City, a 25-bed Critical Access Hospital located in Siler City and part of the UNC Health Care System. All prospective volunteers must complete an on-line application, a criminal background check, an orientation and have documentation of required immunizations. To learn more go to: www.chathamhospital.org/ch/about-us/volunteer.

• **Volunteers Needed:** Nonprofit agencies in Chatham seek teen volunteers to help with many projects. Teens can help at food pantries, in gardens, fundraising projects, office work, and care for animals. Chatham Connecting website lists many volunteer opportunities for youth. See where you are needed to help in the community: www.chathamconnecting.org.
• **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.

Dolder joins CN+R staff as reporter

CN+R Staff Report
Lars Dolder, who has been working as a correspondent for the News + Record — producing feature stories and covering news events — has joined the newspaper's staff as a full-time reporter.
He'll be covering municipal government and providing news and feature stories, as well as doing investigative reporting and working across the newspaper's digital platforms.
"Our readers will recognize Lars' name," News + Record Publisher Bill Horner III said. "He's been writing stories for us for a few months now as a correspondent. Lars is a very talented and experienced writer and a determined journalist. We're fortunate to have him join our team."
Dolder graduated from N.C. State in 2016 with a degree in mathematics, but switched to finance writing because he

found it more interesting. He said journalism had more appeal to him than finance writing because of the importance of the role news and information has on society.
"There's a staggering disconnect in our society these days — people don't know where to find truth," he said. "But local journalism, from reputable newspapers, is one of the best sources of accurate information. The News + Record is one of the finest examples of community journalism I've ever read; I'm excited to work with its excellent staff in the noble dispensation of accurate news."
Dolder's mother was a journalist, and he counts legendary editors Ben Bradlee (Washington Post) and Marty Baron (the Post's current editor) as influences, as well as the Sulzberger dynasty at The New York Times.
"Lars has already been an asset to us with our elections coverage, even before he came on board full-time," Horner said. "He's been a perfect fit to our team so far and will help us raise the level of insightful reporting we're bringing to our readers."

CORRECTION

In the story titled "Online petition calls for BOE to bring all students back," in the Oct. 15-21 edition of the CN+R, it was incorrectly stated that Ashley Webster was a parent of a child in Chatham County's public school system. Her child actually attends Chatham Charter, which is unaffiliated with Chatham County Schools. The CN+R regrets the error.



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Chatham County Council on Aging

WEEKLY TRIVIA HUNT!

Q: How many rides to medical appointments and services did the COA provide in 2019?

Find the answer in this issue for your chance to win a \$25 Visa Gift Card!

Prayer VIGIL

Tuesday, October 27th, 2020
at 11:00 AM
Front Lawn of Chatham County Sheriff's Office
295 West St., Pittsboro, NC

Join us in prayer, to honor men and women of LAW enforcement of Chatham County, Pittsboro, Siler City and SBI Capital District

VIEWPOINTS

Some itsy-bitsy spiders took a very long road trip

I'm afraid — not deathly, but nearly so — of spiders.



BILL HORNER III
Publisher + Editor

That fear, probably better described as a *loathing*, has waned over the years, probably after asking my wife to “take care of” a large-ish spider which found its way into our house one too many times during our 30-year marriage.

Embarrassing, I know. Particularly when she gives me that “You’re a man, aren’t you?” look.

She doesn’t mind rubbing it in. A couple of weeks ago, out of the blue, Lee Ann suddenly said, with a little too much enthusiasm: “Oh! Can I tell you about the spider I saw in the garage yesterday?”

Uh, no thanks. She proceeds to tell me any-

way, accompanying her story with a vivid description of said spider and an “it was *THIS* big” visual aid, using both hands to make a circle with the diameter of a baseball.

This isn’t a story about big spiders, though. It’s actually about a bunch of small spiders, and a newfound respect I have for the resilience of the species.

It started after I detached the bicycle rack from the back of my car for a couple of days last week in order to take the car to the shop for an alignment. I left the heavy-duty rack outside, beside our garage. When I re-attached it last Tuesday evening in preparation for an early-morning departure Wednesday for Florida — where I’m writing this now, down for a visit with our son Addison and his wife in Orlando — I noticed them.

Looking closely, I studied the intricate system of webbing stretched within a U-shaped curve in the bike rack. Within the strands were dozens of baby spiders — tiny but unmis-

takable. The mom was nowhere to be seen.

For a minute I gave thought about what to do about the spiders — I mean, what were my options? Help them find their mom? — before loading our two bicycles onto the rack and securing them, careful not to disturb the web.

Now it was my turn to tell Lee Ann about spiders. She suggested spraying the web with a disinfectant, which for some reason struck me as cruel. “They’ll blow off on the road tomorrow anyway,” I said, reasoning that being caught in a vortex and spit out onto I-95, then crushed under the wheels of a tractor-trailer, was somehow more humane for the little darlings.

That was Tuesday night. On Wednesday morning, the spiderlings were still there, still moving as I loaded our bags into the car. We hit the road shortly after 8 a.m.; some nine hours and 570 miles later, after we pulled into the driveway of

our rental house in Orlando, the first thing I did was check on my babies.

Still there. Still there AND still moving. It looked like I lost a few along the way, but for the 15 or 20 remaining to have survived that trip — including hour after hour with the cruise control set at 78 as we barreled south on I-95, then west on I-4 out of Jacksonville — it seemed miraculous.

I ended up Googling “mother spider with babies” to see if I could research some science about the resiliency of the little freaks, but my search returned — unfortunately — scores of videos of throngs of scattered baby spiders instinctively running for their lives after mom was squashed, nudged with a broom on a garage floor or somehow otherwise encumbered upon.

A bit too creepy for me, so my formal research project ended there.

We’ve spent a week in Flori-

da. I’ve checked on the spiders each morning; alas, by day four, only a few were still in the web. Then we had a heavy rainfall: down came the rains, as the song goes, and washed the spiders out.

It was a bit sad, having seen them survive the elements, and certainly the exposure, of such a long trip, and then get flushed away by a cascade of rain. One or two may have survived. They may have vague recollections of North Carolina, but what a story they’ll have to tell their Sunshine State brethren about the trip down, huh?

Or at least that’s what I kinda hope.

Know what I’m *not* hoping? Of course you do: that the mother spider — no doubt a strategic predator who probably ate the spiderlings’ father and is steaming mad about having her brood kidnapped — is plotting revenge upon my return.

Maybe Lee Ann will see her first and save me once again.

Spooky Scary Sundays send shivers down your spine

It looms over you from the moment you wake up to the moment you fall asleep.



RACHEL HOROWITZ
Millennial Musings

It hangs in the doorway, creeps across the hall, and whistles through the air duct. It doesn’t go by “The Thing” or “Slenderman,” and it doesn’t leave on November 1.

I’m talking about the notorious “Sunday Scaries” — the feelings of existential dread or apprehension about the week ahead.

Society has tried to brand Sunday as not just time for religious reflection (for some), but a time for self-care. This is often exemplified by bubble baths, yoga, and massages. I, however, won’t feel relaxed enough to do any of those things until I’ve organized every apartment surface, answered work emails that really could wait until Monday, and run around the neighborhood once or twice. Sometimes the fact that I can’t fit in time to pamper myself makes me more anxious than if I just stopped caring about self-care. Isn’t it ironic, don’t you think?

The worst Sunday Scaries can make you feel immobilized and afraid that you’re wasting your free time by sitting on the couch and watching Bob’s Burgers. Perhaps you drank too much coffee that morning or stayed up too late on Saturday night. Perhaps you’re not quite sure why you suddenly have heart palpitations and don’t have the energy to cook dinner.

Sundays in 2020 may contain some additional frights, such as uncertainty around family or friends, overly-crowded hiking trails or the store running out of toilet paper before you can stock up for the week. We are also trying to cope with not knowing when COVID-19 restrictions will end or when we will get a vaccine — and until then, your weeks may look indistinguishable from one another. Cue the existential dread.

I’m forcing myself to write this on a Sunday so that I can best capture the feeling that relentlessly arrives every weekend. I also know that the Scaries manifest differently for every person...or animal. It doesn’t help that my dog often chooses Sunday to crawl into crevices. (Listen Sheba, we need to coordinate our anxiety attacks around each other, okay?)

In all seriousness, we shouldn’t be scared of the Sunday Scaries. There are much worse things to fear, like the ghost in the attic or the person who doesn’t realize we’re in an actual pandemic. But this remains easier said than done. Maybe we can start by talking about it when we notice someone else struggling too.

Rachel Horowitz resides in Chatham County and works in Pittsboro. She is a graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill’s Hussman School of Journalism and Media.

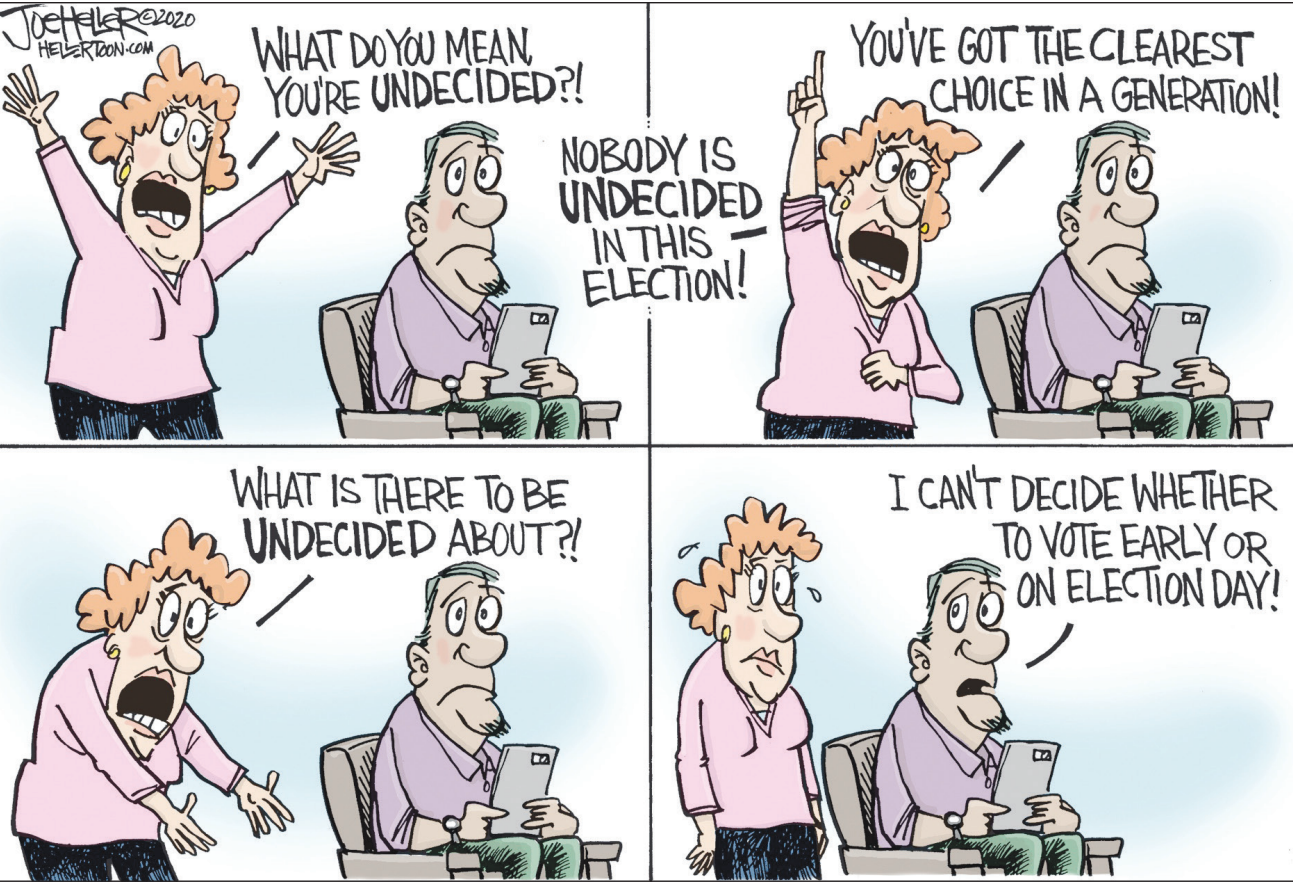
What’s on your mind?

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

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

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

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



Cardboard reminders of season are everywhere

The leaves are turning colors and falling from the trees. There’s a nip in the air. The days are getting shorter.

It must be fall; those are all signs of the seasons.

It’s also election season. Just drive around and notice how many telephone poles have sprouted posters.

Look at how many roadsides and front yards and intersections groan under the weight of “Vote For ...”

There ought to be a law. Against visual pollution.

Folks in high places who deal with our highways and byways would raise the roof if you put out a sign for some kind of business or to advertise the location of your school or to promote your church, civic club or other worthy activity — if we could have such activities these days of pandemic.

But placards praising politicians? That’s a different story. Apparently.

I’ve noticed one thing about the current and even most recent crops of candidates, incumbents and would-be office holders.

Many of them have not, despite what they might say to the contrary, learned the Golden Rule or one of my mama’s better rules, namely “If you can’t say something nice about somebody, just don’t say anything at all.”

My mama could teach this current group of candidates a thing or two.

Maybe I’m missing the mark or something but when someone asks for a vote, I’d like to hear him/her say what they would do in a given situation, not just fire away at the opponent.

Seems to me that doing nothing but attacking what someone else did is like criticizing Gen. Custer for being in the Army in the first place.

Being a life-long son of the South, I have had the chance to observe at

close range some political candidates and goings-on from time to time, sometimes at too close of a range.

Once when I was a lad, my good friend Bobby Joe High’s second cousin Benjamin (Ben) Dover offered himself for the high post of county clerk in another state. Early in the fall and, thus, in the campaign as well, Bobby Joe went off with his family to visit their out-of-state kin. When he got home, he told me of some of what he had seen and heard on the campaign trail.

He said things seemed to have gotten off to a good start for Cousin Ben until one night when he and his wife Eileen fell into a heated discussion. Seems Ben and Eileen had been out for a long day of pressing the flesh and meeting and greeting folks.

As they arrived home, Eileen flopped down not so lightly into the living room easy chair, kicked off her shoes and exclaimed with a loud sigh, “Boy, what a day. I’ve never been so tired in all my life.” “You?” Ben snarled. “Why should you be tired? How ‘bout me? I made nine speeches to the voters today. You didn’t have to do that.”

“That’s true,” Eileen agreed. “But remember I had to listen to every one of them.”

Later, Ben got into a fight with his opponent.

Not the vocal kind.

More the fisticuff kind. Seems the two were pioneers of sorts in the art of face to face debate, although to call what they did a debate may be stretching it a bit.

Anyway, seems that Cousin Ben’s opponent and he were being rather civil to one another until Mr. Opponent up and screamed at Ben, “What about the powerful interest that controls you?” At that point, Ben jumped up, shouted, “You leave my wife out of this” and made for the other guy’s throat.

As it turned out, Ben won by a rather sizable margin, although some folks who didn’t care for him

raised some questions about some folks going to the polls more than once and about some people who had been dead for a while coming back to vote.

But Ben never paid any attention to that. He lived by the creed that an honest politician was one that stayed bought after he was bought.

He was also fond of telling the story about the lion that once ate a bull. After doing away with the bull, the lion felt so good that he roared and roared. A hunter heard the noise and killed the lion with one shot.

The moral, Ben said, is “When you’re full of bull, keep your mouth shut.” Most of the time he did that and had a long career as a local politician.

Years later, though, Bobby Joe learned a final interesting tidbit about his cousin. When it came Ben’s time to leave this world, he was so proud of his service that he asked the local funeral home for a special inscription on his tombstone. It read “Here Lies a Politician and an Honest Man.”

Sometime after the stone was installed, Bobby Joe heard that a husband and wife were strolling through the cemetery and passed by Ben’s final resting place.

“Look here,” the wife said to her husband.

“What?” he asked, walking back to where she stood admiring the stone.

“I’ve never seen this. They’ve put two people in one grave.”

To all the candidates and campaigners, when this is over, pick up your signs.

Please.

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.

Chatham News + Record

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VIEWPOINTS

How will the virus affect economic development?

Although COVID-19 is still with us, there's been a recent shift in the kind of attention given to the virus. For months, the focus has been on coping with the virus, controlling the spread and deciding how much personal interaction can safely occur.



MIKE WALDEN
You Decide

Those concerns are still with us, but with optimism about a vaccine and statements from some medical experts that life should be “back to normal” next summer, I’ve noticed a new kind of attention. There’s now more thought and discussion about how life will be different after the virus is gone.

These discussions have been wide-ranging, from how people will live and work, how students will be educated, the changes in travel and the differences in human interactions that will become normal. Regarding the latter, there’s speculation the handshake as a greeting may disappear.

A very important aftermath of the virus — especially for North Carolina — will be on

economic development. While many metrics show the state’s economy has made impressive gains in recent decades, there are still numerous lingering economic issues.

One of the most discussed is the urban-rural divide. Economic growth has been rapid and widespread in metropolitan areas, often centered around higher education, the tech sector and finance. In contrast, rural areas have struggled with the relative decline in their legacy industries (tobacco, textiles, furniture) as the world has become more globalized, as well as with their lack of high-speed internet service so necessary to today’s tech-tied workplace.

The question is, what will a post-COVID economy mean for North Carolina; will it be a net plus or a net minus? More specifically, what will it imply for narrowing the urban-rural divide and providing economic opportunities for all residents?

Let me start with the state’s performance during the pandemic. Regarding the important measure of COVID deaths per capita, at the end of September, North Carolina ranked 31st among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, with a rate of 33 deaths per 100,000 population. New Jersey had the

highest rate (181) and Alaska had the lowest rate (8). North Carolina’s rank was lower than those for any of our neighboring states as well as for states we often compete with for businesses, like Texas and Ohio.

This performance bodes well for North Carolina in going head-to-head with other states for generating economic growth in the future. While we aren’t protected from future pandemics, we can say we survived the COVID-19 pandemic better than most states. This will be particularly important for luring companies and entrepreneurs from high death-rate states, such as those in the Northeast.

What about economic growth within our state? Will the big metro areas of the Triangle, Triad, and Charlotte still be winners in the post-COVID economy? Or will they suffer because of their higher densities that can provide fertile ground for the spread of future viruses?

I think the urban regions of North Carolina will still be economic racehorses in upcoming decades. One reason is that COVID-19 case rates have not been consistently higher in more populated counties. Wake (Raleigh) and Guilford (Greensboro) have been at the lower end of case rates, while Meck-

lenburg (Charlotte) has been at the higher end. The highest case rates have been in some down-east and northeast rural counties with older populations.

Still, I think lower density counties, particularly those within easy driving time of big cities, will have a renewed opportunity for economic growth. Many households will want to protect themselves with more space as they look ahead to possible future viruses. The growth of these more rural regions will be even more enhanced if remote working and remote schooling catch on.

Which brings me to the all-important topic of high-speed internet service. High-speed internet (HSI for short) is to rural areas today what the lack of electricity was a century ago. It is their Achilles’ heel. By definition, rural areas have fewer folks per mile, so the costs of laying cable may not be covered by the number of people who connect to the service. In other words, HSI is less profitable — if at all — in rural areas.

One option is to make HSI a public utility, meaning the public pays for installing the infrastructure. A study put the price tag at \$2 billion for extending HSI to all of North Carolina. Another option is to rely on innovation. The most talked about innova-

tion is LEO (low earth orbiting) satellites 800 miles up, which is 99 percent closer than current satellite provided internet. Several high-profile business persons, including Elon Musk (Tesla) and Jeff Bezos (Amazon), could debut LEOs in two to three years.

One conclusion is North Carolina’s economic competitiveness will improve. Out-of-state businesses and households looking to move could consider North Carolina a “safe state” based on its low ranking for Covid-19 deaths. Also, the search for safety might lead more people to pick rural North Carolina as home, especially if HSI comes to under served areas.

Wouldn’t it be ironic if, looking back from years ahead, we consider the period immediately after the pandemic a positive turning point for North Carolina’s economy? You decide.

Michael Walden is a William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor and Extension Economist in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at North Carolina State University who teaches and writes on personal finance, economic outlook and public policy. He'll be the featured speaker at the upcoming Chatham Chamber of Commerce Development Briefing.

LETTERS

There’s only one race, so you can’t be a racist

TO THE EDITOR:

Race and nation have different definitions. Twins can each establish a nation, but having the same mother, they are one race. Therefore, Genesis Chapter 25, Verse 23, is of no consequence to Genesis Chapter 7, Verse 23, which reads, “Only Noah and those who were with him on the Ark remained alive.” Everyone on Earth today is a descendant of Noah and one race ranging from light beige to dark brown. No one is black, and only Albinos are white.

Politicians proposing, supporting and creating laws based on the lie there’s more than one human race on Earth are promoting segregation. Example: since there is only one race, there cannot be a racist. Therefore, any laws addressed to racist is based on the lie of there being more than one race and is promoting segregation.

Bills and laws supporting colleges based on the lie there is more than one human race on Earth are supporting segregation.

These acts of segregation are a major factor in dividing Americans and must come to an end.

Carol Gene Good
Conover

Fill the cracks in the Constitution

TO THE EDITOR:

Why should Democrats be apologetic about adding more judges to the Supreme Court? What is wrong with 11 justices? We have 12 jurors on a jury don’t we? If 12 is good enough for a jury then 11 is good enough for the Supreme Court. The Republicans have already stacked the court with two conservative judges and I see no reason why Democrats should avoid negating this pure power play.

Congress has to go one step further to fix this procedural Constitutional hole we have. Congress should amend the Constitution to specify that the Senate must begin the Advise and Consent process within 30 days of the President submitting his nomination and that the President could not submit a candidate in the final year of his term.

The Constitution cannot possibly define every single action that legislators should take. In these instances, it has operated on the good faith and behavior amongst themselves. The behavior of Trump, McConnell, Graham and other Republicans have exposed clearly that dishonorable men behaving mischievously have exposed the cracks in the Constitution. It is time to fill the cracks and Democrats should not be apologetic in doing so.

Michael Izquierdo
Pittsboro

A vote for Trump?

TO THE EDITOR:

1) You love chaos. What he says doesn’t have to be true to believe him. But isn’t it exciting? All he’s planning to do if he’s elected. Maybe he forgot he really is president!! He’ll make changes next time around — maybe.

2) Your mother, girlfriend, sister, wife told you they love him gra**** by their ****y. So grab away! He said they’d love it! Vulgar? Depends on your definition.

3) He believes in family values — yes, his family continues to increase in value.

4) The economy is “so tremendous” — “the best it’s ever been.” You’re making lots of money. So do as he does and don’t pay all those pesky taxes.

5) He boasts, “I could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody

and I wouldn’t lose any voters.” What does that say about his followers?

6) His big promise was to build a wall; Mexico would pay for it. Guess Mexico didn’t get the memo. Guess who’s paying? But he’ll protect you against all those people trying to get in the country. But don’t worry about the children — they’ll be caged.

7) Glad the virus is “under control.” And fortunate that you are not one of the 220,000 people who died from this “controlled” environment. He says this virus will just “disappear.” Look at him — he’s “cured.”

8) Glad he “drained the swamp” by firing all those inconsiderate people who do not agree with him. That’s the way we like our democracy — with fear, reprisals and kindergarten name calling.

9) I live in comfort knowing he has a “health plan” to replace the ACA. Supposedly happening — soon he says. I believe I heard him say that in 2016 — must have heard wrong.

10) He says voting this year is rigged. If he wins (did I say that?) I wonder what he’d say then. Guess it’ll be just another one of his today stories that changes tomorrow and he’ll continue to tell more stories of what he’s planning to do — maybe.

If you voted Trump in 2016 you logically believed he would bring the changes he boasted. They turned out to be false promises. Read legitimate news sources, listen to scientists, let your moral conscience guide you. There’s no new health plan, no new safety plan, no unity — only exhausting chaos.

I may not change your mind — just hope you reconsider.

Marie Vanderbeck
Pittsboro

What do Dems have to lose by seating Barrett?

TO THE EDITOR:

The 5th Circuit Court of Appeals found the Affordable Care Act unconstitutional. It’s being appealed to the Supreme Court, which most court watchers maintain will, at worst, be split 4-4 — which means a tie defaults to upholding the Appeals Court’s decision and ACA is dismantled...without Amy Coney Barrett.

Should Barrett be seated and votes to dismantle it, the 5th Circuit’s decision is upheld and the ACA is dismantled...with Amy Coney Barrett.

It’s reminiscent of the popular rock group U2’s song “With or Without You.” However, should she vote to uphold the ACA with a 4-4 vote by the other justices, the ACA remains law.

So, what do the Democrats stand to lose by seating Barrett on this issue? I cannot believe supposed intelligent people, members of the world’s most exclusive club [the U.S. Senate], have chosen this issue as their crutch.

Just one more reason for voters to understand what the Democratic Party has become: a do nothing, obstructionist, power-hungry, political organization that wants to control every part of our lives by taxing and regulating to the point we are totally dependent upon their government. In their orthodoxy we’re too stupid to run our own lives, families, and businesses.

They are afraid to go too far; Roe v. Wade or any other hostile issue is unseemly, so they have chosen to show a united front on ACA. I think every Dem in their opening statements had the picture of someone dependent upon ACA. Such a shame they didn’t have pictures of the business owners whose lives have been destroyed by thugs and rioters...rioters, some of whom Democrats, including Kamala Harris, bailed out of jail.

Philip H. Johnson
Siler City

GUEST COLUMN | TOM SILVESTRI, THE RELEVANCE PROJECT

A vote for newspapers is a vote for democracy

Newspapers face another big election.



TOM SILVESTRI
Guest Columnist

employees.

We’ve just observed National Newspaper Week, so it’s time to vote for newspapers.

Vote by subscribing to support your local newspaper. (If you already do, a big thanks.)

Vote by advertising — cheers to current ad buyers. Patronize those who do.

Vote by engaging your newspaper. Write a letter to the editor, tweet appreciation to an enterprising reporter, send a suggestion to the publisher with a request to speak to him or her for a personal exchange.

Vote by learning more about your newspaper, its history, its mission, its staff and its ownership.

Vote by frequently checking the newspaper’s web site or news alerts.

Vote by signing up for its newsletters. And if it doesn’t have one, tell the newspaper you’re interested — especially the day’s headlines or a weekly entertainment summary of what’s happening.

Vote by adding to newspaper “likes” on social media.

Vote by making a video with pro-newspaper testimonials from neighbors and friends.

Heck, put up a sign in your front yard or window boasting you’re a newspaper reader.

Fear not. This campaign to elect newspapers is winnable, but much is at stake.

Consider this passage from long-time journalist Margaret Sullivan’s 2020 book, *Ghosting the News* — Local Journalism and the Crisis of American Democracy: “Some of the most trusted sources of news — local sources, particularly local newspapers — are slipping away, never to return. The cost to democracy is great.”

For good measure, Sullivan, who is the media columnist for the Washington Post, quoted the conclusion of a major PEN American study in 2019: “As local journalism declines,” stated the organization that champions free expression, “government officials conduct themselves with less integrity, efficiency, and effectiveness, and corporate malfeasance goes unchecked. With the loss of local news, citizens are: less likely to vote, less politically informed, and less likely to run for office.”

Democracy loses its foundation, Sullivan stated.

Vote for newspapers. In an August column, H. Dean Ridings of America’s Newspapers cited the depressing study from the University of North Carolina to note that 1,800 communities have lost their local newspaper over the last 15 years. “What would my town be without a newspaper?” the national association’s CEO wrote. “If you haven’t asked

yourself that question, perhaps it is time to consider just what the newspaper means to this community.”

Among the answers Ridings provided was this:

“The most obvious is the community’s access to news about itself: the workings of its town hall; information about taxes and property values; the operation of schools for its children; the achievements, or the criminal activities, of local residents; the scores of local ball teams; and the offerings of local small businesses.”

This year’s National Newspaper Week should be anything but routine. It’s a time to be bold — even daring.

Newspapers throughout the United States and Canada should use National Newspaper Week to conduct town halls — go virtual if you have to — or a series of conversations that gather answers to this simple but provocative question:

How can the newspaper become THE Community Forum?

Dig deeper on this role. Or as Sullivan put it: “After all, a newspaper’s purpose isn’t only to keep public officials accountable; it is also to be the village square for an entire metropolitan area, to help provide a common reality and touchstone, a sense of community and of place.”

It’s an important commitment.

At issue is replacing the tiresome, negative perception of newspapers’ demise with an updated mission to become THE reliable Community Forum — sharpening knowledge of what’s on the minds of citizens; delivering trusted journalism and accurate information; gathering updated market data; attracting diverse audiences to join loyal readers; contributing to an equitable, healthy economy; fostering vibrant communities where we live, work and play; and nurturing a dynamic democracy.

In its 2020 sweeping assessment of “Trust, Media and Democracy,” the influential Knight Foundation and Gallup noted that although Americans have lost confidence in expecting an objective media, “strong majorities uphold the ideal that the news media is fundamental to a healthy democracy.”

And those majorities think the media could do “a great more” to heal political divisions in country, Knight/Gallup added.

By becoming a true Community Forum, newspapers shift from thinking like a limited product to becoming a vital community service in big demand. It perfects inviting, listening, researching, planning, collecting, reporting, connecting, collaborating and developing solutions.

In many ways, the newspaper as THE Community Forum becomes a non-stop, informed conversation — interesting, civil, engaging, educational, timely and, of course, relevant.

To repeat: How does the newspaper become THE Community Forum?

Campaign hard.

Score votes.

Newspapers have got to win this pivotal election.

Democracy wins, too.

Tom Silverstri is executive director of The Relevance Project, which advocates for community newspapers. He retired Dec. 31 after 15 years as the president and publisher of the Richmond (VA) Times-Dispatch and 42 years in newspapering. Contact him at tas@relevanceproject.net.

VIEWPOINTS

Sparks fly in state treasurer debate

The person who manages most of state government’s financial assets — the \$107 billion pension fund for state and local employees, for starters — is not an appointee of the governor. The voters of North Carolina elect a state treasurer every four years.

JOHN HOOD
John Locke Foundation

The current treasurer, Republican Dale Folwell, is a former state legislator now seeking reelection to a second term. The Democratic challenger seeking to replace him, Ronnie Chatterji, is a professor at Duke University. At a recent debate hosted by the North Carolina Institute of Political Leadership and Spectrum News, the two candidates sparred repeatedly about the pension fund and Folwell’s push for cost savings and transparency in the state employee

health plan. Chatterji, formerly an economist in the Obama White House, said that Folwell’s investment strategy was too conservative. If more pension assets had been in stocks, the market trajectory of the past few months would have produced an addition \$4 billion in gains, he said. “If you are scared to put the money to work, you’re going to lose money for North Carolina,” he argued. Folwell responded by pointing out that the state treasurer is obligated to balance market return and risk in real time. “We are in the check-delivery business,” he said. His office pays out about \$550 million in pension and disability benefits each month to more than 300,000 state and local employees. Indeed, there are now fewer public employees paying into the pension fund than retirees drawing from it. If North Carolina starts chasing higher rates of return by investing in riskier assets, Folwell argued, that could

lead to unwelcome situations in which the state must sell low to pay monthly benefits. Chatterji called that approach too risk-adverse, like keeping “cash underneath the mattress somewhere.” As you can see, the Folwell-Chatterji debate was a substantive one, populated with lots of references to numbers, fiscal principles, and high-stakes policy decisions. But it was also a surprisingly combative debate, with Chatterji trying to rattle Folwell by ridiculing his use of the phrase “keeper of the public purse” — famously the slogan of former State Treasurer Harlan Boyles — and Folwell’s own signature use of props such as redacted documents and convoluted hospital bills to illustrate his points. A key area of conflict was health care. Some years ago, the General Assembly transferred responsibility for the financially shaky state health plan to the state treasurer’s office. During his first term, Folwell sought to

shore up the health plan by renegotiating the state’s contracts with medical providers — his initial efforts helped reduce the state’s unfunded liability for retiree health benefits by \$3.3 billion — and pursuing more transparency in medical billing. The latter idea is that with more information, plan members will make more cost-effective decisions. Health care “is the only thing in your viewers’ lives where they don’t know the price or value of [it] after they consume it,” Folwell said during the debate. Chatterji didn’t criticize the goal. He argued that Folwell’s initiative, the Clear Pricing Project, hadn’t worked. While tens of thousands of providers, mainly doctors, chose to participate in it, North Carolina’s major hospital systems did not. That’s because they weren’t adequately consulted and the challenges facing hospitals adequately addressed, Chatterji said. “It’s really important to have transparency in health care,” he added, but “you have

to get the job done.” Tellingly, hospital executives and employees tend to favor Ronnie Chatterji in the 2020 race for state treasurer, while the State Employees Association of North Carolina is working hard to reelect Dale Folwell. That said, this race is about far more than conflicts between associations and interest groups. Public employees understandably care a great deal about who is managing their retirement savings and health plan, but all North Carolinians have a stake in the outcome. Taxpayers help finance both plans, too. And the treasurer is North Carolina’s primary banker, issuing state bonds and safeguarding the state’s coveted triple-A bond rating. Don’t forget to vote in this race. It’s important.

John Hood (@JohnHoodNC) is chairman of the John Locke Foundation and appears on “NC SPIN,” broadcast statewide at 7:30 p.m. Fridays and at 12:30 p.m. Sundays on UNC-TV.

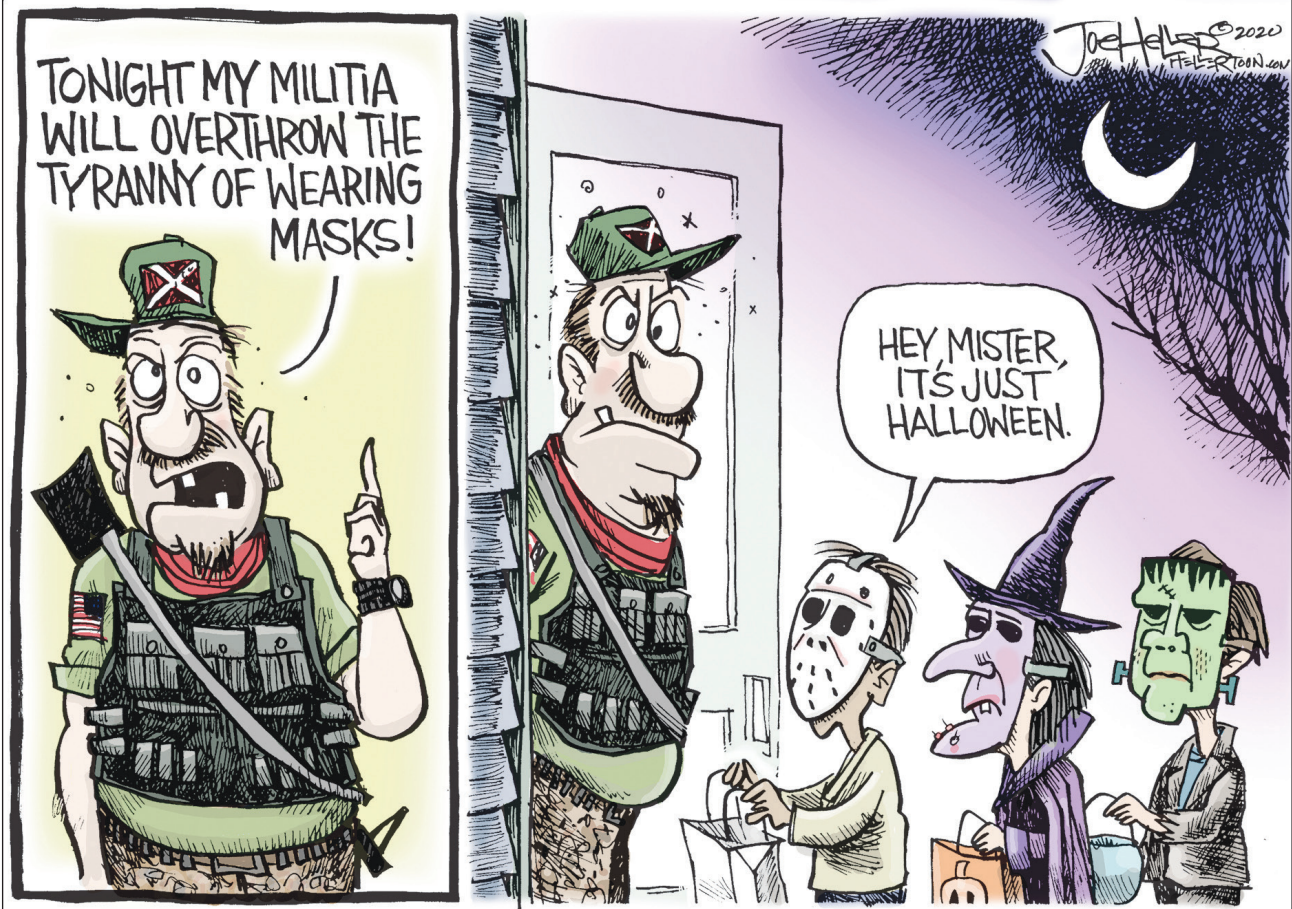
North Carolina’s godfather

Does North Carolina have a godfather? We would not want our godfather to be anything like Mexican Gen. Salvador Cienfuegos Zepeda, who is called “El Padrino,” which means “The Godfather.” Zepeda was arrested last week and charged with helping a drug cartel smuggle thousands of kilograms of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine and marijuana into the United States. We would rather have one like Sam Ragan, who was known throughout North Carolina as our literary godfather.

D.G. MARTIN
One on One

Ragan, who died in 1996, was an editor of The News & Observer in Raleigh before buying, then managing and editing, The Pilot newspaper in Southern Pines. He served as the state’s poet laureate and chairman of the North Carolina Arts Council. He gained his godfather status, not so much from these high-level positions but from how he used these influential posts to promote poets, novelists, essayists, and writing in general. His own writing was mainly down-to-earth and full-of-life poetry that he mixed in with his newspaper columns that celebrated North Carolina and its people. Ragan’s remarkable life called out for a biography that explained the sources of his poetic and writing talents and his commitment to promote the talents and works of others. Thankfully, Lewis Bowling, a writer himself and a teacher at North Carolina Central University, has taken up the task. His new book, “Sam Ragan: North Carolina’s Literary Godfather,” is the result. Bowling follows Ragan’s life from his growing up days as the child of struggling tobacco farmers, his successful college days at Atlantic Christian College (now Barton College), his journeyman experiences with several North Carolina newspapers before landing with the News & Observer where he ultimately became executive editor, his marriage to his beloved partner Marjorie, his three years of service in World War II, and his time at The Pilot. Bowling tells this rich story best when he uses Ragan’s own words from poetry and columns. For instance, Ragan’s column for the Atlantic Christian campus newspaper titled “Thoughts While Strolling,” was, Bowling writes, “a collection of random thoughts instead of a cohesive narrative.” Here is a short sample from the young college student: *Observations on a downtown street: the public be jammed. Time means nothing to me. I prefer Literary Digest. I like to taste the blowing wind when it’s thick and raw. Flowers are hopping out of the ground like rabbits out of a hat.* These published musings came close to poetry and were a predictor of how Ragan turned such musings into his fine poetry. Later, at the News & Observer and The Pilot, his column called “Southern Accent” shared information about events and writing in the region. Each year he wrote a Christmas poem. In 1954 it contained these words: *With a jingle of bells, and songs very loud, Merry Christmas to clans from McAnn to McLeod. To elks and their ilk in all of the lodges, We add greetings to all, and to Governor Hodges.* Sometimes, he used his own poems to teach and inspire others to write. For instance: *Where does a poem come from? No one knows. Bits and pieces are lodged within From days, months, years, lifetimes, And then something nudges them Into the sunlight. You suggest and imply, Something happens, A poem is written a long time Before it goes down on paper.* Bowling’s book, it turns out, is largely an anthology of Ragan’s columns and poetry. As such, it is a treasure for which we owe Bowling an enthusiastic thank you.

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.



Justice in selecting judges

Perhaps the most overlooked elections, ranking just slightly ahead of Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners, are those of judges. This year our judicial elections may be among the most important votes we cast. For the past 10 years North Carolina has witnessed increasing instances where our appellate courts are forced to settle political arguments, especially between the Executive and Legislative branches. Sometimes these jurists are accused of “legislating from the bench,” usurping the role legislators are assigned. Unless you are a lawyer or have business before the courts, chances are good you can’t name more than one or two District or Superior Court judges and even fewer on the Court of Appeals or Supreme Court. Many a voter will emerge from the voting booth saying they didn’t know any of the selections, so they just picked one according to which name was listed first, whether the person was a Republican or Democrat or, worse still, because they just liked the person’s name. That’s a lousy way to make important electoral decisions. This year North Carolina voters will be asked to vote for three Supreme Court and five Court of Appeals seats. The only real requirements are that they must be licensed to practice law in our state and list whether they are registered as a



TOM CAMPBELL
N.C. Spin

The current makeup of the high court is six Democrats and one Republican, due to the defeat of a Republican justice in 2018 and the resignation of former Chief Justice Mark Martin (Republican) in January of 2019. Governor Cooper appointed a Democrat to replace Martin as Chief, giving that court the 6-1 margin. Republicans claim we have a “stacked court” and decisions are pro-Democratic. They want more balance.

Republican or Democrat. Judicial candidates are restricted from telling you how they stand on issues like abortion, Obamacare, gun control, the death penalty or other current topics. Our state is fortunate to have had good judges who have overwhelmingly acted with wisdom and prudence. But how many times have we read columns or heard debates about the need for a better way to select our judges? The discussion usually dies because, even though citizens don’t know judicial candidates, they aren’t willing to give up their right to select them. In the midst of a pandemic and the throes of an ugly national election, we are also watching with interest confirmation hearings for a vacant U.S. Supreme Court seat. There’s much talk about the fairness of doing so just before the election, accompanied by charges and counter-charges of packing the court. The belief is that the political affiliation or philosophical persuasion of a potential justice will make all the difference in court decisions. North Carolina has a somewhat related conversation in our Supreme Court and Court of Appeals elections. The current makeup of the high court is six

Democrats and one Republican, due to the defeat of a Republican justice in 2018 and the resignation of former Chief Justice Mark Martin (Republican) in January of 2019. Governor Cooper appointed a Democrat to replace Martin as Chief, giving that court the 6-1 margin. Republicans claim we have a “stacked court” and decisions are pro-Democratic. They want more balance. Our Court of Appeals currently has eight Democrats and seven Republicans and both parties are wanting to gain an edge. You are now the judge, judging the judges. These elections have consequences and we strongly encourage you to get to know the men and women seeking the bench. The State Board of Elections has published an excellent guide with pictures and bios of each candidate in our two appellate courts. For the sake of justice please review them before you vote: <https://www.ncsbe.gov/mailers/2020/judicial-voter-guide/candidate-profiles>. *Tom Campbell, a former assistant N.C. State Treasurer, is creator/host of NC SPIN, a weekly statewide television discussion of N.C. issues that airs on UNC-TV’s main channel.*

Chatham News + Record

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What’s on your mind?

The Chatham News + Record welcomes letters from its readers on topics of local and public interest, as well as thoughtful and informative guest columns. At our discretion, we may edit letters for clarity. We reserve the right to refuse letters and other submissions that promote a commercial product, contain either libelous material, personal attacks on individuals or vulgar language. Consumer complaints and letters containing unverifiable factual claims are ineligible for publication. Each letter must contain the writer’s full name, address and daytime telephone number for verification. Letters should be no more than 400 words in length. Letter-writers are limited to two published letters per month. Letters selected for publication may be edited and all letters become property of the Chatham News + Record. To submit a letter: Mail it to the News + Record at P.O. Box 290, Siler City, N.C. 27344; or email to bhorner3@chathamnr.com; or drop by our office at 303 West Raleigh Street in Siler City.

VOTING

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supporters in North Carolina. In 2016, on the first day of early voting, 3,139 people voted in person in Chatham County. This year, 3,729 voted on day one — a 19% increase. Mail-in ballots, however, tell a more dramatic story.

In 2016, 45 people cast absentee-by-mail ballots by the end of early voting’s first day. That number soared to 8,263 this year, an 18,000% increase that numbered 30% of total absentee ballots cast for Chatham County’s entire 2016 election season.

As of Tuesday morning, 36.71% of registered voters in Chatham County had already cast their ballots.

Despite the unprecedented surge in early voting support, activity at the polls has been well-organized and calm. In recent months, there have been nationwide murmurs of voter intimidation and pugnacious “poll watchers” rearing to disrupt order. In response, many government agencies made concerted efforts to discourage unwelcome hypervigilance.

In Chatham, Sheriff Mike Roberson’s office has worked closely with the board of elections in the weeks leading up to Oct. 15. He was pleased with their early success.

“People have been polite,” Roberson said. “People have been cooperating, social distancing and, to be honest, it’s been crickets out there.”

Steve Simos, deputy director of the Chatham County board of elections office, spent day one of early voting “bouncing around” between the county’s 18 polling locations.

He corroborated Roberson’s assessment of the day’s activity.

“I haven’t heard of anything happening at any of our sites,” he said. “And we’re in direct contact with Sheriff Roberson’s office, too.”

While the responsibility to oversee peaceable activity at the polls lay primarily with the BOE and sheriff’s office, some citizen organizations were permitted to establish a presence at polling sites. You Can Vote, a bipartisan volunteer organization based in Durham, set up tents at several polling sites where its members sought to “educate, register, and empower all North Carolina citizens to cast their ballot,” as per the group’s website.

“I’m out here to make sure everyone is registered to vote, making sure they’re not feeling intimidated by anyone else out here,” said Germilia Taylor, a You Can Vote volunteer who worked the Agricultural Conference Center polling location in Pittsboro. “This is an important election; we’re going to be a part of history.”

What others are saying

Thomas Strom, a volunteer



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Statewide, 826,285 ballots were cast on Oct. 15, the first day of early voting, according to the N.C.’s state board of elections. Chatham County ranked first in the state in early-voter turnout per registered voters.

with the Chatham Democratic Party, was amazed at the day one turnout.

“One of the election officials from the board of elections said it was the biggest turnout he’d ever seen,” Strom said. “And that’s just great; that’s amazing.”

It was Michelle Vitko’s first time volunteering at the polls. Although she had worked behind-the-scenes for the Democratic Party in years past, she was apprehensive about her first role in such a public capacity.

“I was kind of nervous because of some of the rhetoric in the news,” she said, “I was worried about guns. It’s a crazy thing that we even have to worry about that, but, fortunately, people have been respectful.”

Members of both political parties were well represented at the polls with some candidates for local office present. Jimmy Pharr, candidate for the Chatham County Board of Commissioners, spent his day at the Agricultural Center’s GOP tent greeting voters as they waited in line.

“It’s been fun,” he said, “people have been very nice, very respectful.”

THREAT

Continued from page A1

letter, which was also co-signed by more than 15 other leaders and organizations. The letter said witnesses reported feeling “intimidated and harassed, and others chose to leave to avoid entering the demonstration area.

“Given the history of intimidation and violence by members of neo-Confederate groups, this incident underscores our concern for the safety of the public and of poll workers and elections officials during the early voting process and on Election Day,” the letter said. “We therefore write to ask that the State Board of Elections (SBOE) take emergency and proactive action to ensure that voters are able to access the polls in the primary and general elections, free of any voter intimidation or harassment.”

Just eight months later, some voting and advocacy groups in Chatham have concerns that similar methods of intimidation might take place as folks show up to vote in the 2020 general election. A week into early voting, which began Oct. 15, more than 1.8 million ballots have been cast in the state, according to the N.C. State Board of Elections website. By Tuesday, 21,089 of those ballots were cast in Chatham — a turnout of 36.71% of registered voters in the county.

Still, while the early success is promising, local leaders are remaining vigilant.

Alirio Estevez, the leader of Voto Latino Chatham, an organization encouraging Latinx Chatham residents to vote, says he hasn’t seen any intimidation so far.

“But the concern is that President Trump has repeatedly said that he wants his army to patrol the polling sites — that is very scary for some people, especially some Latinos here in the area, because they may be afraid that some people may try to go to the polls and intimidate them,” he said.

Since Thursday, Voto Latino Chatham has been at a Siler City

one-stop early voting place for at least part of every day. The group is making Siler City a priority not only due to the large population of Latinx residents there, Estevez said, but also because of the large number of Republican and conservative voters, some of whom he said citizens fear are “on the fringe.”

Both the Chatham County Democratic Party and the Chatham County GOP have had tents set up outside of the polling site, along with a group called “You Can Vote,” a bipartisan volunteer organization based in Durham. These groups can help answer questions for potential voters about the voting process and registration. Though the pre-election registration period is over in N.C., all citizens can register to vote at a one-stop early voting site now until the last day of early voting on Oct. 31.

People cannot register to vote on Election Day.

“I’m out here to make sure everyone is registered to vote, making sure they’re not feeling intimidated by anyone else out here,” You Can Vote volunteer Germilia Taylor told the News + Record last Thursday, where she worked the ag center polling location. “This is an important election; we’re going to be a part of history.”

In an Oct. 9 memo from the N.C. State Board of Elections, Executive Director Karen Brinson Bell warned county boards of elections to be vigilant in “prohibit(ing) intimidation and coercion at the polls.”

“Election officials must be prepared to respond immediately to behavior that disrupts or threatens to disrupt the peace and order of a polling site,” she wrote. “If the behavior poses a threat to any person’s safety, the election official should immediately contact local law enforcement for assistance.”

According to N.C. statute 163-48, any concerns about voter intimidation should be communicated to the chief judge of a polling location, who can then call on law enforcement at their discretion.

“The chief judge and judges of election shall enforce peace

and good order in and about the place of registration and voting,” that statute reads. “They shall especially keep open and unobstructed the place at which voters or persons seeking to register or vote have access to the place of registration and voting. They shall prevent and stop improper practices and attempts to obstruct, intimidate, or interfere with any person in registering or voting.”

The statute gives the chief judge authority to “eject from the place of registration or voting any challenger or witness for violation of any provisions of the election laws” and makes them responsible for preventing “riots, violence, tumult, or disorder.”

Still, Sheriff Mike Roberson told the News + Record that while his office is attuned to threats, the public notion of voter intimidation does not always align with the illegal practice.

“Voter intimidation, in the legal sense, and feeling intimidated are different things,” he said. “Someone might go to vote wearing a confederate flag jacket, and it might make others uncomfortable, but that’s not illegal.”

That’s where groups like Voto Latino Chatham step in — saying they’re there to ensure people feel safe to vote, under any form of intimidation, interpreted as being technically legal or not.

“We would like to see as many Latino voters to get out and vote and to invite their friends, their family members to go out and vote because this election is very important for the future of their family, the future of the community, their own future,” Estevez said. “And we really want those people to feel safe, that they can exercise their right to vote without any fear. And hopefully, by the end of the election, we can see that the rate of a Latino participation has increased, especially here in Chatham County.”

Staff reporter Lars Dolder contributed reporting.

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BALLOT

Continued from page A1

bility.

During her tenure, which began with her appointment in 2014, Riggsbee has instituted a number of innovations to the department’s operations.

“Since I’ve been in office,” Riggsbee said, “we’ve added some services. We’ve added e-recording, which is recording documents electronically. And we’ve added a system which is allowing our county to search for (birth) certificates for people who come in here statewide if they were born after 1971 — used to be you had to go to the county where you were born to get it.”

E-recording especially, which launched in 2015, has been instrumental in allowing the office to function through the coronavirus pandemic. Since March, it has accounted for 68.8% of incoming records and the fees for electronically filed documents have contributed 89% of the office’s total revenue.

“I thought that after a month or two with COVID it would slow down,” Riggsbee said. “But it has absolutely not slowed down at all.”

On the contrary, activity in her office has escalated in recent months. Early on, few marriage license requests came through the office, but soon the demand skyrocketed.

“People were waiting to see thinking that this was going to be over in a few months,” Riggsbee said. “And I think part of what’s happened, the reason we’re getting a lot more marriage licenses than normal, is because people have decided that this is going to be going for a while, and if they want to get married, they just need to figure out how to do it, sort of in the new normal.”

In September, the office of the register of deeds processed 70 marriage licenses.

“In the six years or so since I’ve been register of deeds,” Riggsbee said, “we’ve occasionally had a month with 40 — usually it’s 20.”

Real estate records, too, have not decreased during the pandemic as Riggsbee expected.

“We’re slammed with real estate recordings,” she said, “and the other things we do like processing other vital records.”

In her next term, Riggsbee plans to continue expansion of the office’s services. Chatham County’s growth, particularly in Pittsboro with the Chatham Park development project, portend a rush of documentation for the register of deeds to process.

“Eventually, I’m going to have to figure out, if Chatham County continues at this rate of growth, how to keep up with demand,” she said.

An influx of real estate records from new development around the county is already taxing the department. But soon the office of the register of deeds must begin processing in earnest records it has not seen in 30 years — new birth certificates.

“Now with Chatham Hospital there, we’re going to be adding baby’s records to our vitals,” Riggsbee said.

Moving forward, then, efficiency is Riggsbee’s number one objective.

“Hopefully we’ll be able to continue into the future with as few growing pains as possible,” she said. “So, I guess my goal is just figuring out

how I’m going to continue to serve the community in the most quick, effective way both during and after the pandemic, whenever we get to whatever our new normal is going to be.”

Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor

According to J. Lynn Mann, Chatham County’s Soil and Water Conservation district supervisor, his organization’s objective is “to ensure the wise use of our natural resources which are soil, water, air, plants and animals.”

More specifically, Soil and Water “helps animal, livestock and crop farmers with technical and educational services to help protect the land and the waters of the state of North Carolina,” he said.

The mission is dear to Mann. He has devoted his entire life to protecting land and farmer, as a private citizen and a government official.

“I’m a lifetime farmer,” he said. “I farmed my whole life; my ancestors before me farmed. So, you know, we have a natural caring for the land and animals. I own a century farm — the farm has been in the family here for over 100 years.”

For 19 years, Mann has served on Chatham County’s five-person district board of Soil and Water — in the last 16 years as its chairperson.

Despite what the name might suggest, Soil and Water does not address the water contamination and drinking supply issues that have plagued Chatham County in recent times. Its responsibilities deal mostly with farmer assistance.

“Our biggest thing is rural and agricultural areas, working with the farmers as far as livestock — keeping livestock out of streams,” Mann said. “So, we put in areas where livestock can cross over a stream without getting into the water. And in residential areas like Siler City, we’ve done some natural gardens to help control the runoff water.”

Soil and Water’s work has become more important since the coronavirus pandemic began. Many farmers have come under hard times. But Mann and the board have pivoted keep the department’s vital services available when they are most needed.

“The pandemic has stressed a lot of agriculture, a lot of farms out there,” he said. “But as far as us being able to continue to handle our work, I think we’ve pretty much stayed current with that.”

As long as the pandemic persists, Mann’s goals will remain short-term: helping Chatham County farmers to survive, one day at a time.

“We want to continue to help the rural communities and agricultural communities in any way that we can through this, whether it be education or technical services,” he said. “We’ll keep trying to educate the farmers on different practices, make all our best management practices available be it crop farming, livestock exclusion, and just to educate new people coming into the area that want to have their own little farms and stuff. We’ll give them an idea of what best practices they can use to protect the land and the soil and water and to keep farming alive.”

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

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PERCH

Continued from page A1

a -12.9% growth rate in the coworking spaces market, according to Business Wire. “Operators of coworking spaces have seen an almost 50% decline in footfalls,” the article reported. Many coworking sites have closed their doors as a result.

Among the casualties was Perch’s original location in Carrboro. The downtown workspace, which had served 50 to 60 members, according to Perch founder Betsey Elbogen, was forced to close its doors in August.

“It was just too expensive,” she said. “It’s kind of challenging to have a co-working space during these times because what a coworking space is, is bringing together a community, right? That’s why you come here.”

In the same month, however, Perch’s Pittsboro location at 102 Hillsboro St. opened for business. Renovations of the downtown building completed in March, but plans for a ribbon-cutting were derailed by pandemic restrictions.

“There was no grand opening,” Elbogen said, “or soft opening. It was just an opening — nothing like we had imagined.”

Still, Perch Pittsboro is overcoming the odds and negotiating pandemic vicissitudes. Part of the location’s success, Elbogen hypothesized, is in its “bou-



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

The entrance to Perch Coworking in Pittsboro.

tique” model.

“We really concentrate on our members and our community,” she said. “And I know, that’s like a big catchphrase for coworking — community. But really, it is our community. We’re a small space and our members make our space. If it wasn’t for them, it would be nothing.”

Perch members include an architect, an editorial business and, as of last week, the Chatham County Chamber of

Commerce which will be renting a suite as its second office.

“Betsey has been the best of the best,” said Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Cindy Poindexter. “She’s been very accommodating; she’s just wonderful. I think the space will serve us well.”

The coworking space has just 11 members right now, but the building is not designed to hold many more. The 2,000 square-foot space has 12 personal desks which individuals can rent for \$275 a month, three private office suites for \$500 a month and a conference room that can be reserved by the hour. Cafe style seating is also available for \$175 a month and Elbogen recently added two soundproof “phone booths” from ROOM NYC where members can take phone calls and virtual meetings away from the din of open space.

“I think we really nailed the aesthetic,” Elbogen said. “When you come in, you want to feel like, ‘Ah, this is a great place to work,’ right? You want natural light; you want plants. Because why would you come here if it was just going to be in a dingy dark space?”

But looks are not the end-all these days. Perch members require the highest standards of safety if they are to keep working there while a pandemic continues, and Elbogen is happy to oblige.

“We’re very cautious of who’s coming in, because we want to have a safe environment,” she said. “We’ve got a HEPA filter and we constantly disinfect the

high traffic areas throughout the day.”

Elbogen is confident her business model will continue to appeal to prospective members. Many workers who thrive in office settings have been forced to work from home and they are suffering from the isolation. Eventually, she thinks, those workers will make their way to a coworking site.

“I think people eventually are never going to want to work at home again, or they’re going to change the way they want to work,” she said. “They may not go to the office, but they do want to have a place to work. It’s just different than working from your bedroom, or your closet, right? Because really, when you come here, you’re away from your home, and your mindset is different. You can be productive. You’re not worrying about the dishes, or your kids, or the barking dog. You can just have this dedicated time to work.”

The future is promising but tenuous for Perch as the pandemic drags on toward its indeterminate end. For now, the business model is working and operations are stable. But small business ownership is a shaky proposition in a coronavirus world.

“The future is — I don’t know,” Elbogen said, “I think for us it’s week by week. But I do have to say, coming here in this beautiful space, it makes everything better.”

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

FINAL

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News + Record, adding that it was difficult to make a decision that is satisfactory to all community stakeholders given the “broad geographic footprint and cultural and socioeconomic diversity” of Chatham.

Hlavac, who has served on the board since 2016, added that the task of measuring COVID-19 data that is evolving — and at times contradictory — makes the board’s work anything but easy. A champion of equity issues at CCS during her tenure, Hlavac says she has consistently emphasized both safety and equity in the board’s discussions regarding learning plans. As a “seasoned” board member, she said she is comfortable leading decision-making based on doing the right thing for the district, not for political gain.

“In this precarious environment, COVID-related decisions are some of the most critical decisions we will render, yet we must move forward with the backdrop of ongoing policy setting and guidance that must continue to propel the school district in a positive direction,” she said.

Both of Hlavac’s opponents have been critical of the board’s decisions regarding the coronavirus, with Winters describing its decision-making process as being “painful to watch” and Armstrong claiming the board “lacked communication and preparedness” at previous meetings.

Winters, who has two children in Chatham County Schools, told the News + Record that while he felt the board’s most recent decision was the right one, the process leading up to the decision felt erratic. On Sept. 23, the board voted 4-1 to extend remote learning through the end of the semester, which ends Jan. 15. At that meeting, the board planned to meet the following week to discuss making exceptions to Plan C for certain subset groups. On Sept. 29, the board unanimously approved hybrid learning for Extended Content Standard E.C. students, PreK students and K-2 students (who were not previously discussed) and indicated that other students might go back to hybrid learning before the Jan. 15 date decided the week before as well.

“I think at the end of the day, they probably got to the right decision in terms of providing a way for the parents that need to get their kids back into schools, to give them an avenue to do that. But it’s such a roller coaster right to watch,” Winters said.

He added that he thinks parents and teachers in each school should be surveyed to see their priorities, and that if elected, he would advocate for re-opening plans customized by school.

“I’m a huge believer in the masks, the social distancing, and obviously the hand hygiene. You know, the virus is not a hoax, it’s not going to go away in two months, it’s going to be with us, I feel,

in a meaningful way for unfortunately, probably for the next 12 months or so,” he said. “I believe we do have schools out there that can probably get their kids back into a hybrid learning scenario right now, and so again, I’m glad that the board is kind of getting there. But you know, I know it’s a roller coaster for a lot of parents and the teachers for that matter, as well.”

Winters said he believes there is a “huge opportunity” during the pandemic to improve communication between the board and stakeholders, and that he doesn’t think doing so would cost the district anything.

Armstrong, who advocated for a hybrid learning plan for all students in response to the News + Record’s candidate questionnaire, said he’d like to see a plan that allows flexibility for students and teachers both in opting for remote or in-person learning — emphasizing the added workload for teachers who will teach in-person class and also have to teach remotely.

“We’ve got to understand the virus isn’t going away. That’s for starters. Second, you know, the administration has to make a better plan,” Armstrong said, adding that if elected, he will be “visible and reachable.”

Though the board is non-partisan, Armstrong is running on the Republican campaign ticket with Dist. 2 candidate Dennis Lewis. Armstrong stressed that his campaign was focused on education and not politics, but affirmed that he and Lewis had the right backgrounds for the job.

“I want the voters to know and understand that even though I’m running on the Republican ticket, at the end of the day, I’m going to do what’s right, by the students, the teacher, and parents,” he said. “It’s time to take politics out education, and focus on education, because we have a great school district.”

In District 2, Lewis has emphasized wanting to serve as “the voice of the parents” if elected, particularly by re-assessing the Seaforth attendance zone decision. Though he said he is not a career educator or parent of CCS students like other candidates, he believes this gives him an open mind, to approach decisions without any “fixed agendas.”

Like the other candidates running for election, Lewis criticized the board’s decision-making process, and questioned which factors were considered to reach decisions.

“I think the COVID-19 situation is both confusing and concerning,” Lewis said, adding that while much of current media coverage focuses on cases and death count, there’s not as much coverage of how the virus impacts younger children or how schools have successfully opened.

“I think that right now, we should have a plan in place with trigger points, to say we’re going to open and the plan is already there, so people aren’t

caught off guard — to have a plan to reclose again, if something bad should happen,” he added. “I don’t see this plan. I don’t see this plan communicated. And I think that causes a lot of frustration throughout the community.”

Facing Lewis in District 2 is incumbent David Hamm, who has served on the BOE since 2008 — winning his last two terms without opposition. Hamm has consistently prioritized the safety of teachers and students in the board’s discussions on COVID-19 learning plans. At all three of the board’s meetings passing motions related to the coronavirus, Hamm has made the motion for remote learning — first with the board’s July 16 decision to start with four weeks of remote learning, then with the board’s Aug. 10 decision to extend that period to nine weeks and finally at the board’s Sept. 29 meeting, which extended remote learning through Jan. 15.

He has also emphasized the difficulty of the decision — reminding residents that no decision will make everyone in the community happy.

“When all this started, and things started coming down, I remember saying and I know I said at one of the meetings: the only consistent thing we have going right now is all the inconsistencies coming at us. And it hasn’t changed,” Hamm said.

Prior to the last 12 years serving on the board, Hamm taught in the school district for 40 years.

“I do feel that I have and give a perspective on the board that every school board should have,” he said.

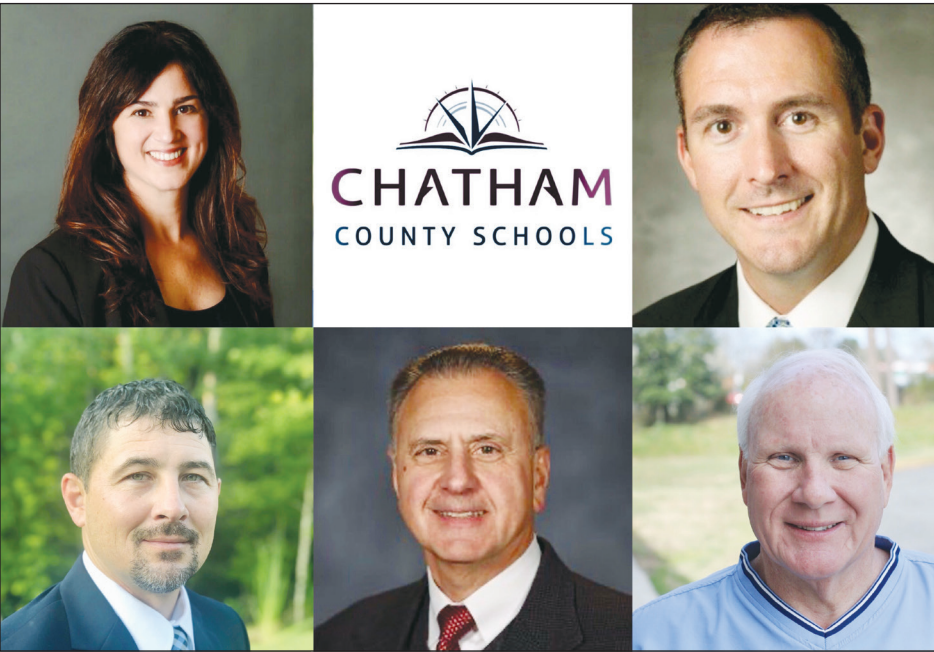
Still, he anticipates that this year, a lot of people will vote strictly based on his COVID-19 decisions and votes — something he says is just a part of the job.

This past week, cases in the state have experienced record highs, with daily new cases setting consecutive records on Thursday and Friday. And while making decisions about COVID-19 certainly isn’t the only thing the board does, COVID-19 has impacted in some way all the decisions it does make. And making those decisions never gets easier, Hamm said.

“I’m sitting here saying, ‘Did we make the right decision, sending the kids back today?’” Hamm said Monday, regarding the return of certain student groups to hybrid learning Oct. 19. “You know, for every email we get saying that we are the most wonderful people in the world for sending kids back, we get an email saying that we’re the most dangerous people in the world for sending kids back.”

He added, after a brief pause: “So you know, that just comes with the territory.”

You can read more about the BOE candidates and their non-coronavirus priorities on our website, under articles titled, “Chatham school board candidates prioritize COVID-19, redistricting plans” and “Candidates talk goals, plans for Chatham County Schools.”



This year, two of the non-partisan board’s five seats will be up for re-election this year, with incumbent Melissa Hlavac (top left) facing opposition from Tim Winters (top right) and Ryan Armstrong (bottom left) in District 1, and incumbent David Hamm (bottom right) from Dennis Lewis (bottom middle) in District 2.

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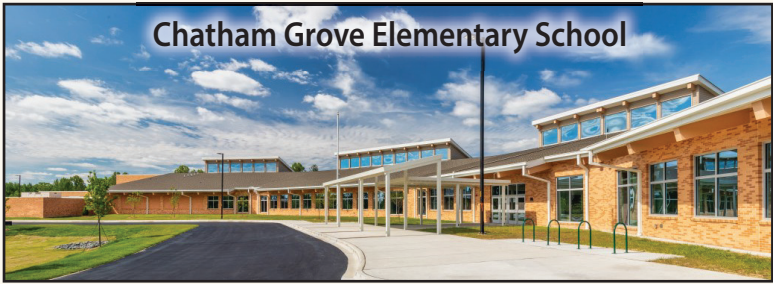
Serving the Chatham County Community While Overcoming Unprecedented Times

2020 started off as a tremendous year for progress in Chatham County. Business was booming, development was advancing and the future never looked brighter. Then, the county was struck by something unprecedented—a global pandemic. Chatham County’s first confirmed case of COVID-19 in March 2020, was the second in North Carolina. Even before that first case came to Chatham, the county was aggressively preparing weeks in advance for the inevitable. Every department sprang into action to adapt so that the county could continue to provide its valuable and often life-saving services and programs to the community. While progress temporarily pivoted to focus on available resources and support to ensure sustainment, the county never lost sight of what mattered most – the people. The county’s steadfast leadership demonstrates each and every day through its passion to serve others that the Chatham community is the best place to live, work and raise a family.

Chatham Comprehensive Plan Activities Underway

- ◆ The expansion of the Chatham County Animal Resources Center is under construction.
- ◆ The new Emergency Operations Center and 911 Communications hub is in design and will be located on land acquired by the county on Renaissance Drive in Pittsboro.
- ◆ Upgrades to the emergency communications system are underway.
- ◆ The county has recently released Requests for Proposal (RFPs) for the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) and are anticipating selection of new firms to undertake the project by January 2021.
- ◆ Chatham County Parks and Recreation master planning continues
 - Completed the Southeast District Park master plan which is named the Parkers Ridge Park located in Moncure.
 - Completed the Northeast District Park master plan expansion.
 - Completed the Brooks Creek corridor plan study.
 - Completed the shared use agreement for the Parks & Rec Department’s first community center at Chatham Grove Elementary School.

Education Facilities



Chatham County made significant progress on major school facility projects in FY 2019-2020 in the county’s Capital Improvement Plan. The County retained its AAA rating from Standard and Poor’s and Aa1 bond rating from Moody’s Investors Service.

- Careful planning and oversight allowed Chatham Grove Elementary School to come in under the projected budget when it opened for the 2020-21 school year.
- Seaforth High School remains on schedule to open for the 2021-22 school year.
- Chatham Health Sciences Center opened in January 2020, with medical assisting students and students completing preparatory coursework for Certified Nursing Assistant licensure attending classes.

Economic Development

New Jobs & Business Investment			
	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Projected	FY 2020 Actual
Number of expanding businesses	21	17	15
Jobs created by business expansion	48	100	128
Number of referred projects	75	65	87
Number of projects responded to	49	35	57
New jobs created by new businesses relocated to Chatham County	87	400	96

Industry Development

- Floorazzo is constructing a new facility that will enable it to increase production and its workforce.
- Brookwood Farms plans to expand its existing campus with a new office space and common area for employees and has closed on land for a new distribution center in Siler City.
- Brookwood Farms and Capital Ready Mix Concrete were named 2019 Family Business Award winners by the Triangle Business Journal.

To see the full 2020 State of Chatham County Report, visit chathamnc.org/stateofthecounty.

- Industry Development CTI Systems, a printed circuit board depaneling and load routers company, relocated its operations to Goldston.
- Autonetics, based in Cary, is relocating its operations to a new facility in Pittsboro.
- The NC Manufacturing Expansion Partnership awards six Manufacturing Leadership Awards at its annual conference. Chatham County was represented by two excellent employers: Alotech and 3M.

Progress & Possibilities

Building Boom

Single family construction remains strong in Chatham County, although down about 10-20% from a couple of years ago. Multi-family construction has increased substantially, and nearly 400 dwelling units were permitted in the past year; another 400+ are in permitting as of the fall of 2020. Commercial construction has increased steadily with a variety of projects from restaurants, retail and manufacturing to utilities. Mosaic has permitted several shell buildings which are being constructed and will soon be permitting end users such as UNC Healthcare and other retail and food/beverage businesses. Manufacturing plants such as Autonetics in Pittsboro and Floorazzo in Siler City are both nearing completion.

Article 46 to Bring Revenue

During the 2020 Primary Election, Chatham County voters approved the one-quarter cent (0.25%) sales tax referendum to take effect in the fall of 2020. The sales tax will be used to mitigate the county’s need for future property tax increases. Non-residents pay sales tax, too, lessening the burden on property owners and elderly homeowners on fixed incomes. The one-quarter cent (0.25%) sales tax is estimated to generate 1.6 million in revenues. The revenue is expected to be a source of funding that can grow as Chatham County grows and could benefit these key areas: Education, Affordable Housing, Parks & Recreation, and Agricultural Preservation & Enhancement. Chatham County was represented by two excellent employers: Alotech and 3M.

Spotlights: 2020 Census, Broadband, Chatham Together

2020 Census—Making Chatham Count

Chatham County’s response rate for the 2010 Census was 81%, so the county is doing everything it can to surpass that and reach 100% completion for the 2020 Census.

Chatham County Outreach Efforts

- The Chatham Complete Count Committee (CCCC) was formed in the summer of 2019 to bring awareness and educate the community about the importance of completing the 2020 Census. The CCCC is made up of county, municipal, church, organization, the Hispanic Liaison and business leaders across Chatham County.
- Outreach materials were created in English and Spanish.
- Committee members participated in numerous community outreach efforts for more than a year including:
 - Media outreach
 - Chatham County Census web page chathamnc.org/2020census
 - County social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and Nextdoor)

Broadband—Building a Connected Future

Ensuring that all Chatham County residents have access to reliable internet service is the county leadership’s top legislative goal. While overcoming the power of the big service providers has been a tough road, and the county is restricted in what it can do to promote more options, county leaders remain committed to meeting this need and build a connected future for the community.

#ChathamTogether

Throughout the challenges and uncertainties with COVID-19, one thing is more evident than ever—Chatham County’s resiliency. Whether it’s county staff going above and beyond to help others or residents stepping up to volunteer, the people of Chatham County are making a difference all around. Stories of partnership, hope and inspiration demonstrate that the community is #ChathamTogether! Inspiring stories can be found online at chathamnc.org/chathamtogether.

County Leadership News

Public Health – Mike Zelek was appointed interim public health director in June 2020, succeeding the retiring Layton Long. Prior to becoming interim public health director, Zelek served the Chatham County Public Health Department for nearly eight years first as social research associate for the Department and then as Health Promotion & Policy Division director.

Management & Information Systems (MIS) – Nick Haffele was appointed interim MIS director in June 2020 after longtime director Darlene Yudell retired. Haffele also serves Chatham County as the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) manager, a role he has served in since February 2015. Haffele has held GIS roles in both the public and private sector including time with Geo-Comm, Branch County MI (911), and Atos North America.

Public Information Officer – Kara Lusk Dudley joined Chatham County as public information officer in August 2019 with 23 years of communications experience. Dudley began her career as a broadcast journalist in 1996 and served communities across North Carolina as an anchor/reporter for 15 years. In 2011, Dudley continued her passion to make a difference in her community through public relations—first serving in communications roles at the American Red Cross both regionally and nationally, and then at her alma mater, UNC-Chapel Hill.

OBITUARIES

KATHLEEN NELSON LEMONS



Kathleen Nelson Lemons, 92, of Siler City passed away on Wednesday, October 14, 2020, surrounded by loved ones at her home.

Mrs. Lemons was born April 9, 1928, a native of Chatham County, the daughter of Austin and Carrie Trogdon Nelson.

Kathleen was very active and served on various committees at Edward Hill Friends Meeting. She loved anything to do with flowers, tending to her houseplants and spending time in the garden. She spent time reading, traveling, and enjoyed her word puzzles and search books. Kathleen loved spending time with her grandchildren. She was employed by Tie Rite for a few years, then worked at A.J. Schneierson for 10 years before retiring from Mastercraft. She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, Frank Hoyle Lemons, and brother, William Earl Nelson.

She is survived by her sons, Richard Lemons and wife Sue-sie of Siler City; Barry Lemons and wife Mary Lois of Siler City; grandchildren Jeri Powell, Richard Lemons Jr., Chris Harris and Tammy Harris, and great grandchildren Ashley Harris and Mollie Lemons.

Mrs. Lemons laid in repose from 1 to 5 p.m. on Friday, October 16, 2020, at Smith & Buckner Funeral Home, 230 North Second Avenue, Siler City. A graveside service was held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, October 17, 2020, at Edward Hill Friends Meeting Cemetery with Josh Conrad officiating.

Memorials may be made to the Liberty Hospice, 401 East Third Street, Siler City, NC 27344 or the Edward Hill Friends Building Fund, 92 Ed Leonard Rd., Siler City, NC 27344.

Smith & Buckner funeral home assisted the Lemons family.

Online condolences may be made at www.pughfuneral-home.com.

GERALDINE STRICKLAND SCOTT

Geraldine Strickland Scott, 79, passed away on Saturday, October 17, 2020 at Chatham Hospital Siler City.

Mrs. Scott was born April 17, 1941, a native of Durham, the daughter of the late Oliver and Trecie McLeory Strickland. Geraldine loved spending time with her family and friends. The love she had for her sons was untouchable. She was at peace with God. In addition to her parents, she is preceded in death by her husband, Sherman E. Scott, and son, Timothy Oliver Scott.

Mrs. Scott is survived by her son, Steve Scott of Siler City, and a sister, Ann Buckner of Burlington.

A private graveside service will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to a charity of your choice.

Smith & Buckner funeral home is assisting the Scott family.

Online condolences may be made at www.pughfuneral-home.com.

ROLAND MANLEY PERRY

Roland Manley Perry, 91, of Siler City passed away on Thursday, October 15, 2020, at Chatham Hospital.

The funeral was held at 2 p.m. Sunday, October 18, 2020, at Smith & Buckner Funeral Home Chapel with Josh Conrad officiating. Burial followed at the Perry Family Cemetery.

Mr. Perry was born December 21, 1928, a native of Chatham County, the son of Elmer and Myrtle Lindley Perry. Roland was an Army veteran serving from 1954 to 1956, and farmer for many years after, raising poultry, cattle and hogs. He was preceded in death by his parents, his wife, Shelby Jean Turner Perry, two sisters and five brothers.

Survivors include his daughters, Kay Perry and Kelly Watson, both of Siler City; sons, Freddy Warren of Liberty, and Kevin Perry; three grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

Online condolences may be made at www.pughfuneral-home.com.

ESTRELLA VILLA PENA

Estella Villa Pena, 19, of Cameron passed away on October 11, 2020, in Broadway.

Funeral services were held at 11 a.m. Friday, October 16, 2020, at St. Stephens Catholic Church in Sanford. Interment followed at Priest Hill Presbyterian Church Cemetery.

REYNALDO OSORIO GOMEZ

Reynaldo Osorio Gomez, 52, of Siler City passed away on Wednesday, October 7, 2020, at his home.

Visitation services were held Saturday, October 17, 2020, at Knotts Funeral Home in Pittsboro.

JAMES LEONARD ABRAHAMSON

James Leonard Abrahamson, 83, of Chapel Hill passed away Monday, October 12, 2020.

Arrangements by Cremation Society of the Carolinas, Raleigh, www.CreationSocietyNC.com.

THOMAS (ROCK) CLYDE ROCKRIVER

Thomas (Rock) Clyde Rockriver passed away from a sudden illness on August 4th, 2020.

He is survived by four children: Shane, Crystal, Ryan, and Mimi, seven grandchildren, brothers John and Pat, and his sweetheart of over 20 years, Mary Earls.

He was born October 17, 1948, in Los Angeles, California, to Clyde and Frances Rockriver, the oldest of five brothers. Rock served in the Marine Corps earning the National Defense Service Medal, a Good Conduct Medal, and the rank of Corporal. While in the Marines, he was a computer programmer for the early models of computers in Quantico, Virginia. He gleefully obtained an honorable discharge four years later.

After a very brief stint as a computer programmer at IBM, he decided that programming was not for him and he would much rather be outside working with his hands. He ventured on to become a union pipe-fitter, steam-fitter, and a master welder; of which, he was introduced to as a child by his father, Clyde. He was known as the best industrial, architectural, and repair welder in the Chapel Hill area. He had an additional genius in the creative use of pulleys to move extremely heavy objects single-handedly.

Living on the Ken Strowd dairy farm, he was dedicated to their dairy while it was in operation for many years. Beloved by all who knew him for his generosity, gentle nature, intelligence, and Irish humor, Rock told riveting and ironic stories of his extensive, and sometimes dangerous, work experiences.

Rock loved his children and grandchildren probably more than they will ever know. There was almost nothing that he would not do for his family. Rock believed in peace, harmony, and treating everyone with dignity, respect, and kindness. He would happily give you his last dollar or the shirt off his back if you needed it. Rock lived a full and diverse life, and he will be missed by all who had the great fortune to have known him.

BILLY RAY WOMACK JR.

Billy Ray “Peanut” Womack Jr., 55, of Sanford, passed away on Wednesday, October 14, 2020, at his home.

The family received friends from 3 to 5 p.m. on Saturday, October 17, 2020, at Bridges Cameron Funeral Home.

He was born in Lee County on June 27, 1965, to the late Billy Ray Womack Sr. and Margaret Lawson Womack. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a brother, Claude Ray Womack. Billy worked as an electrician.

Survivors include his children, Michael Womack, Matthew Womack, Brittany Womack and Michelle Williams, all of Sanford; brother, Jeffrey Womack of Sanford; sisters, Deborah Beal of Sanford and Pam Oldham of Siler City and two grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, please consider contributions to Bridges-Cameron Funeral Home, 600 W. Main Street, Sanford, NC 27332 to assist family with final expenses.

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

RONNIE LEVERN PULLEY

Ronnie Levern Pulley, 58, of Sanford, passed away Wednesday, October 14, 2020, at Central Carolina Hospital.

Funeral services were held at 2 p.m. Wednesday, October 21, 2020, at Knotts Funeral Home.

VERONICA ELAINE (MINTER) MORGAN

Veronica Elaine Morgan, 73, of Broadway, passed away on Monday, October 19, 2020, at Liberty Commons Rehabilitation Center, Sanford.

Services Entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home, Sanford.

RICHARD GREGORY MCNEILL

Richard Gregory McNeill, 69 of Broadway, died on Saturday, October 17, 2020, at his home.

Private family services will be held at a later date.

He was born in Lee County, son of Jane Howard Shaw and the late Bragg McNeill.

Surviving is his mother, Jane Howard Shaw of Bladenboro; sister, Beth McNeill Lee of Myrtle Beach, S.C.; brothers, Jerry McNeill of Raleigh, and Steve McNeill of Broadway.

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

Arrangements are by Smith Funeral Home of Broadway.

RICHARD MONROE BUCHANAN

Richard Monroe Buchanan Sr., 67, of Sanford, passed away on Saturday, October 17, 2020, at his home.

Graveside services will be held at 2 p.m. on Thursday, October 22, 2020, at Jonesboro Cemetery. The body was viewed at Bridges-Cameron Funeral Home on Wednesday, October 21, 2020, from 2 to 5 p.m.

He was born on July 16, 1953, to the late Thomas and Winnie Johnson Buchanan. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a daughter, Rebecca Buchanan. Richard was a farmer.

Richard is survived by his son, Monroe Buchanan of Sanford; daughters, Ginger Grant of Maryland and Melanie Buchanan of Sanford; brothers, Thomas Buchanan and Sammy Buchanan, both of Sanford; nine grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

Arrangements by Bridges-Cameron Funeral Home.

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

MICHAEL FOSTER LITTLE

Michael Foster Little, 30, of Cameron died Wednesday, October 14, 2020, at Central Carolina Hospital.

The visitation will be held from 1:15 to 1:45 p.m. in the fellowship hall on Thursday, October 22, 2020. The funeral will be conducted at 2 p.m. at Morris Chapel United Methodist Church. Burial will be held at a later date.

Mr. Little was born in Richmond County, S.C., on July 15, 1990, to Michael Wayne and Andrea Lynn Harding Little.

Surviving relatives include his wife, Chloe Sable Nivar Little of the home; his parents, father, Michael Wayne Little and Kimberly Little of Sanford, his mother, Andrea Lynn Harding of Myrtle Beach; sons, Lucas Little of Sanford and Jason Morton of the home; brother, Lance Little of Japan; sisters, Carolyn Little of Darlington, Heather Hockenberry of Clayton, and Krystle Ray of Spring Lake.

Arrangements are by Bridges-Cameron Funeral Home.

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

JAMES ALFRED LAWRENCE

James Alfred Lawrence, 78, of Sanford, passed away Wednesday, October 14, 2020, at his home.

A graveside service was held Saturday, October 17, 2020, at 11 a.m. at Poplar Springs Church Cemetery with Pastor Dale Sauls officiating.

He was born in Lee County on November 14, 1941, to the late Lynn McIver Lawrence and Tula Mae Hinesley Lawrence. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his sister, Peggy L. Fulton Bradshaw and brothers, Billy, Bobby and Marvin Lawrence.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to CUOC, PO Box 2217, Sanford, NC 27331.

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

BETTY JEAN (HATCHER) LIPFORD

Betty Jean Lipford, 67, of High Point passed away on Sunday, October 11, 2020 at Moses Cone Hospital.

Funeral serices were held at 2 p.m. Saturday, October 17, 2020, at Knotts Funeral Home in Sanford, with burial following in the cemetery at Mt. Herman AME Zion Church in Goldston.

WELDON GLOVER

Weldon Glover, 79, of Ramseur, passed away on Thursday, October 15, 2020, at his home.

Services entrusted to Knotts and Son Funeral Home in Siler City.

INFANT JALIYAH MURCHISON

Infant Jaliyah Murchison passed away Saturday, October 17, 2020, at Central Carolina Hospital.

Services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home in Sanford.

Siler City P.D. outfitted with new badges

BY D. LARS DOLDER
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — The Siler City Police Department held a brief ceremony last Wednesday to present its officers with new badges. It was a small gesture symbolic of systemic changes within the agency and a revitalized commitment to progress.

To some onlookers, a police badges may seem mundane — akin to a name tag. They consist of a small shield embossed with the officer’s name, his or her rank and the town seal.

To officers, however, their badges embody a commitment to upholding a weighty mission.

“The badge is symbolic,” Siler City Police Chief Mike Wagner said. “It entrusts you with the trust of the community. And so, the badge of authority, as people will say, is a segue to trust, a segue to enforce state law and a symbol of courage.”

To receive a new badge is momentous; it typically only happens three times in a policeman’s career.

“The first time you get the badge is when you become a police officer, when you graduate from the basic law enforcement school and embark upon a new career of public

trust and public service,” Wagner said. “The second time you get a new badge is when you are promoted to a different rank or you obtain the position of detective. And the third time you get a badge in law enforcement is when you retire. You get your retirement credentials. So, it really is symbolic over the tenure of your career.”

But the badge represents more than just one’s own accomplishments and length of service. It is an outward marker of belonging to a team — of membership in a unique fraternity. If badges differ in style and design between officers in the same department, it undermines their sense of unity.

“In my 14 years here, we’ve never had uniform badges,” Sergeant Josh Moore said. “Everybody has had different badges, different styles ... So, we have never had a uniform badge across the department which defeats the purpose of a uniform — to have uniformity.”

By some estimates, it may be more than 20 years since Siler City police have had uniform badges.

“My major says it’s been at least since 2000 that there haven’t been matching badges,” Wagner said. “So, it’s been quite some time.”

The new badges thus signify in a small way a big push from Wagner to rebrand the department. It was especially meaningful because the officers were allowed to select the badge design themselves.

“As an agency, it was an inclusive decision,” Moore said. “We had examples of the badge that were passed out to the officers and the officers were allowed to take a vote.”

Democratic decision-making is not standard practice in many police departments, but it is a hallmark of Wagner’s leadership, his officers say, and they appreciate the gesture.

“I’m not bashing anyone,” Moore said, “but it was totally different in past times coming up in the agency. There was pretty much one or two people who made the decisions and that’s what you got; you really didn’t have a say.”

Since arriving in Siler City just more than a year ago, Wagner has ushered in a new era for Siler City’s police department. In his brief tenure as chief, he has worked hard to improve the small-town agency. According to Wagner, there is no reason the department should operate to a lower



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Siler City P.D.’s new badges. For the first time in more than 20 years, all officers’ badges will match.

standard than any big-city organization just because of its size and scope.

“We’re not going to settle for mediocrity,” Wagner said. “We’re going to move into a proactive, professional agency that provides services just like a bigger agency. And we’re not going to curtail ourselves or cut ourselves short just because we have a smaller area of service or smaller population. The expectation of our community is just the same, right? They expect the same professional, consistent police services that they get anywhere else in the region, and we are making strides to ensure that.”

Imbuing his officers with a revitalized pride in their work is a funda-

mental step in Wagner’s plans for the agency. Even to new officers, it is clear that Siler City PD is making strides toward more effective operation.

“We want to look good and professional,” Officer Seth Tillman said. “But I think (the badges) also show that we’re trying to

make changes.”

Tillman joined the department in May, amid nationwide anti-police rancor. It is his first job as a police officer after graduating from the Basic Law Enforcement Training program at Randolph Community College.

“I haven’t been here for a while,” he said. “But I can tell things are moving forward, I think it’s a big step for this agency and it allows the community and the citizens to see that we’re making a change. And change is good.”

He continued: “It makes me very proud. This is something I’ve always wanted to do, and to get to that point, and to see us grow as a department... I’m just very proud.”

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

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Opposite Smith & Buckner Funeral Home

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo

ACROSS			DOWN		
1 Agents, informally	43 Tiny flash of light	88 Gorbachev's wife	129 Playwright Clifford	40 Ark builder	74 Chair piece
5 Wombs	45 Light classical orchestra	89 "Count" of jazz	130 Eve's garden	43 Moo goo — pan	78 Roman 1,501
10 Soccer great Mia	51 Flips out	90 The "Simpsons" airer		44 Lovers' get-together	81 Go — (kid's racer)
14 Warms up	53 Met again, as a legislature	93 "Lorna —"		46 "You can't — train"	82 Certain Indian believer
19 Fix up copy	55 Painful spots	95 — cone		47 Sports drink brand	83 Kindle buy
20 Condor claw	56 Mendelssohn orchestral piece in A minor	98 U.S. spy org.		48 Art of paper folding	84 Violet variety
21 Emollient plant juice	99 Part of OTC	101 Platform for iDevices		49 Waddling bird	85 Purpose
22 Incandescent	62 Merlot, e.g.	102 Entr'— (interludes)		50 Opposite of NNW	87 Podiums
23 Good occasion to buy securities	63 "Yentl" actress	104 Dispute go-betweens		51 Didn't leave the house	91 Stadium part
25 After-hours	64 Paranormal gift, for short	109 Very sleek		52 To the — degree	92 Frigate, e.g.
26 Youngest of Chekhov's "Three Sisters"	65 Frankster's messy missile	112 Maine and Montana, to Canada		54 Ones who can sense others' feelings, in sci-fi	94 Engine
27 Davenport, e.g.	66 Frankster's messy missile	115 Fact fudgers		55 Didn't leave the house	95 Really raged
28 Dish of melted cheese on toast	67 Hunt quarry	116 Firefighter		56 Engine additive	96 Web location
31 Small marsupial with long hind limbs	68 Pack animals around Lhasa	117 Residence		57 Jockey Angel or baseballer	97 — Kosh
35 Doubters	73 Actor Julia	118 Crossbreed		58 Burden too heavily	100 Suffix with Vietnam
36 Dutch painter Jan	75 "Dr." of rap	123 Resolved to accomplish		59 Lay eyes on	102 Luc's gal pal
37 Actress Thurman	76 Lean red meat source	124 Fairway club		60 Suffix with neat	103 Vulgar
38 Depot: Abbr.	77 — Bo	125 At the zenith		61 "Absolutely!"	104 Embarrass
41 Financier Onassis	78 Eisenhower's wife	126 Org. looking for aliens		68 Novelist Josephine	105 Calif-roping competition
42 Rocker Nugent	79 On Soc.	127 Party givers		69 "I believe ...," in texts	106 Little imps
	80 Popover served with roast beef	128 Annoyer		70 Small donkey	107 — proof
	86 Thin as —			71 Water nymph	108 Place to shop
				72 — darn tootin'!	110 Retort to "It ain't so!"
					111 Ice mishaps
					113 "Famous" cookie guy
					114 Teepee
					119 Purpose
					120 No. on a road sign
					121 Decay
					122 Mark, as a ballot square

Solution for the puzzle in last week's edition.

S	A	K		S	O	R	E	N	E	S	S		E	B	B		T	O	P
A	S	I		O	P	E	R	E	T	T	A		Y	O	U		R	I	V
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A	L	L	E		T	U	N		A	D	O	R	N	E	R	S		E	R
N	E	L	S		P	D	A		N	O	W	A	D	A	Y	S		R	Y

HOLLAND CHAPEL A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

The Rev. Dr. Orlando R. Dowdy and Mrs. Marie Dowdy drive-thru Appreciation Service will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 24, at Holland Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church, 360 Burgess Road, Apex. For more information, call the church office at 919-362-7831.

PITTSBORO CHURCH OF GOD

You are invited to join us from 1 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 24, as we celebrate the 2nd pastoral

CHURCH NEWS

anniversary of Reverend Dr. Ophelia Livingston, in the church parking lot at 89 Milliken Road, Pittsboro. This will be a drive-through event. If you wish to be a part of this occasion and cannot attend, you may send your contributions to the Pittsboro Church of God, Post Office Box 1284, Pittsboro, N.C. 27312.

MARTHA'S CHAPEL CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The Gospel Singing scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 31, at Martha's Chapel Christian Church has been cancelled due

to the ongoing risks of COVID-19 exposures. We hope to get back to our regular schedule soon.

EVANS CHAPEL A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

On Sunday morning, Oct. 25, at 10 a.m., Evans Chapel will celebrate the 6th anniversary of Rev. Lorinzer Johnson at the church, on the lawn. The speaker will be Minister Kent Burnett. This will be a drive-by service with all staying in your car or under tents with 6 ft. distancing requested. Be sure you are wearing a mask!

SILER CITY COMMISSIONERS

Ordinance amendments, coronavirus funds, meeting time discussed in town board meeting

BY D. LARS DOLDER
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — Siler City's board of commissioners considered several potential amendments to town ordinances, an update on coronavirus relief funds and the option to adjust its future meeting time in its biweekly meeting Monday.

Planning and Community Development Director Jack Meadows kicked off the agenda with a series of proposals to change sections of Siler City planning code in response to various citizen requests. Proposed amendments included:

- An adjustment to accessory building setback requirements in response to a resident's petition to build a carport that would violate current acceptable standards. Meadows pointed out that many older Siler City homes "already have carports that are attached to their homes that probably are within (current setback requirements) or even closer. So, this is certainly not unusual."

- Changing street entrance and parking area aisle with requirements to accommodate plans for the affordable housing project on Campus Drive and adjustments to the Deep River Missionary Baptist Association facility. The amendment could also permit Montaire Farms to proceed with street modification around its property, which Mayor Pro Tem Cindy Bray worried might add to "how congested that area is going to be, especially when school starts back up."

The board did not discuss the proposals at length; with three commissioners in attendance at the meeting

via Zoom, the board was "not permitted to vote on the matters until the following meeting," Bray said.

Meadows supported the amendments but offered a qualification.

"I have to point out, if you make this available," he said, "it'll be available to every property owner in Siler City."

Setting a precedent of frequent concessions concerned the board. Commissioner Chip Price was especially apprehensive at the prospect of property owners eventually acting in violation of town ordinance with the expectation of lenience from the town.

Coronavirus funds

In his report, Town Manager Roy Lynch revisited the coronavirus relief fund which Siler City Finance Director Tina Stroupe explained at length in the board's previous meeting.

"The town of Siler City recently received COVID relief funding, as Tina and I had mentioned," Lynch said. "The CARES Act requires that the payments from the Coronavirus Relief Fund only be used to cover the expenses that are within the following guidelines: necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to the coronavirus ... Other allowable expenses are payroll and benefits costs for front line public safety employees."

The commissioners were quick to suggest potential uses for the \$381,000 fund.

"Is there any way that we can use it for providing water?" Commissioner Lewis Fadely asked. "It is a necessary

utility, and it is a health and well-being issue, so is it covered under this \$381,000?"

"I'm wondering about UV sanitation for the police," Commissioner Curtis Brown said. "I'm just thinking about the police department because they have to haul people in the back and you never know what you're going to pick up."

Lynch agreed with the commissioners' sentiments, but he was not sure to what extent they could be covered with these funds.

For the sake of time, CRF was tabled for discussion at a future meeting.

For future notice

If you plan to attend Siler City board of commissioners meetings in the future, take note: starting on Nov. 2, the board will start meeting half an hour earlier.

"There's been discussion about changing the regular meeting time of the board of commissioners from 7 p.m., moving it up to 6:30 p.m. to align with the same meeting time as the planning board," Lynch said.

If you would expect a public hearing to precede such a change, your thinking is not unprecedented.

"Originally," Lynch said, "we thought the process would be best served by holding a public hearing as some local governments do when changing the time of meetings ... But the board can elect to make the change through approving an ordinance amending the town code."

The commissioners elected to proceed with the latter option and voted unanimously to change their future meeting times.

NEWS BRIEFS

HOPE program offers rent, utility assistance

The Housing Opportunities and Prevention of Evictions (HOPE) Program is a new statewide initiative that may provide rent and utility assistance to eligible low- and moderate-income renters experiencing financial hardship due to the economic effects of COVID-19.

The new program will help prevent evictions and utility disconnections in order to promote housing stability during the ongoing pandemic.

HOPE is an initiative of the N.C. Office of Recovery and Resiliency, a division of the North Carolina Dept. of Public Safety. The HOPE Program is funded by the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant program — Coronavirus and the U.S. Department of the Treasury Coronavirus Relief Funds. If you are concerned about being evicted, click here to learn how the temporary eviction moratorium may be able to help you.

For information, call 1-888-892-1162.

— CN+R staff reports

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CHATHAM CHAT | DR. ANDY HANNAPEL, CHATHAM HOSPITAL

Serving, and surviving, on the pandemic’s front line

‘We started this like a sprint and quickly moved into a marathon, and now we’re in an ultramarathon. This is life for the foreseeable future.’

The coronavirus pandemic continues around the world, but here at home a focal point in the battle has been Chatham Hospital in Siler City. This week, we speak with Dr. Andrew C. Hannapel, Chatham Hospital’s Chief Medical Officer, about what it’s been like on the front lines.

Dr. Hannapel received his Doctorate of Medicine from George Washington University in 1992. He did his internship and residency at the Womack Army Medical Center Fort Bragg and served in the U.S. Army until 1998, when he joined the Department of Family Medicine at UNC.

Since then, he’s served as faculty for the family medicine residency program, training and teaching medical students, physician assistant students and family medicine residents.

He did shifts in the old Chatham Hospital Emergency Room until 2009, when he started to work close to full-time in the Chatham Emergency Department and later as a hospital physician, developing the hospitalist service and family medicine rotations at Chatham Hospital.

In 2016, Dr. Hannapel became the first Chief Medical Officer at Chatham Hospital. The following year, he began the work that has resulted in a family medicine residency training tract opening June 2019 at the Piedmont Health Services Siler City Community Health Center, and the opening of the Maternity Care Center at Chatham Hospital last month.

It’s becoming clear, seven months into the COVID-19 pandemic, that it’s not going away anytime soon. We’ll go back to the beginning in just a minute, but for now ... can you share with us how you’re looking at the pandemic today, and how you and your staff have had to adjust your thinking about it, particularly as we move toward another winter (and with cases on the rise in some places)?

COVID-19 is not going away anytime soon. In fact, North Carolina is on the rise again with new cases topping 2,000/day and total cases approaching 250,000 and deaths 4,000. While all these are very concerning, the most predictive number is that hospitalizations are increasing and above 1,100, and quickly approaching the peak numbers we had at the end of July.

The predicted peak of this surge is in six to seven weeks, IF we continue with the current measures of physical distancing, mask wearing and current closures. However, we know winter is coming and that means people will be inside more and that increases the spread. The models cannot take this into account.

We started this like a sprint and quickly moved into a marathon, and now we’re in an

ultramarathon. This is life for the foreseeable future.

Chatham Hospital has been a focal point throughout the pandemic, but probably in ways most of us can’t imagine. For a time Chatham County was a hotspot for cases, and in addition to treating those affected, you were also doing COVID-19 testing — all the while trying to keep your staff safe. Looking back, what part of all of this has been the most difficult for you, personally, as a physician, since the first case was reported in Chatham County back in March?

The most difficult part of this for me is keeping our people safe while they provide care for those sick with the virus. Also, the people, our patients, sick with the virus, were the ones suffering. In seeing this we are constantly aware of the burden to patients and families — whole communities, and what they carry when disasters like this pandemic are upon us. The courage of our staff to come to work and continue to render care to the sick, and in doing so, risk their own health and the safety of their families, is a constant reminder of the need to look out for them, protect and support them.

Remember that there has been a lot of new information in the beginning and throughout the pandemic. Putting that into place with confidence that all of our staff and healthcare providers would be safe while providing the best care for our community was difficult. The information changed constantly as we learned more about the virus and how to treat it. Also — how best to protect our staff with masks and eyewear ... the concern that we would not have enough PPE to protect our people. The measures that we had to take to keep patients and healthcare workers safe meant no visitors for our patients.

This was very difficult. Mostly for our patients and families — but also for our staff. We know that patients need their families and support of loved ones to affect their recovery. I was privileged to see our staff provide high quality, professional and real care — empathic and supportive to all our patients during this time.

Let’s talk about care. This is such a complex problem because the learning curve for COVID-19, specifically treatments, probably hasn’t been easy to follow for medical professionals. What was foremost in your mind and effort during the spring months, when things were so complicated and healthcare providers were learning on the go? Your charge is to help people get well, so it must have been an extraordinary time ...

Chatham Hospital benefits from being part of UNC Health. We are directly supported by a healthcare system, medical center and medical school that is at the forefront of research and understanding of SARS-COV2. The up to date information flowed from UNC in a regular fashion. How to take care of our staff, our patients, our com-

munity ... The access to this information and the transparency of data was revolutionary.

You saw the Johns Hopkins website — phenomenal information at many levels — all the way down to county and zip codes. Well, UNC developed similar dashboards for UNC Health that gave us patient data, materials and supply chain data (PPE). Also N.C.’s Department of Health and Human Services has been providing this data — transparency, really remarkable.

The other benefit of UNC Health is that by mid-March they had developed their own COVID-19 PCR test. Dr. Melissa Miller and her lab are responsible for that. We had access to that resource early on. The Chatham community had the ability to have testing that not all systems had.

So, it is information and knowledge dissemination and tools (testing) to affect major decisions for patient care...

Also — the medical experts at UNC, infectious disease and critical care specialists. The UNC AirCare team that transports the sickest patients. When we were in the midst of the surge of COVID-19 cases in Chatham County, UNC Medical Center had our back. They took our most severely ill patients to their COVID floor and COVID ICU. Remember that at one time, more than one-half of the ICU patients were from Chatham County and Chatham Hospital.

We tend to forget that, in the midst of increasing numbers of cases, Chatham Hospital was also, number one, caring for the needs of patients with other health challenges, and number two, working toward the opening of the new Maternity Care Center. How did you and your staff make all that work?

We had a plan, a tiered approach for handling increasing numbers and acuity of patients presenting to Chatham Hospital. We are linked to the UNC Health system through UNC Medical Center. This allowed us to transfer the critically ill patients to UNC.

This tiered system is separated into the inpatient department and the emergency department. We progressed to the 2nd tier for inpatient care (opening up the pre- and post-surgical areas for acute and subacute hospitalized patients) and stayed at the 1st tier for the ED. We still have those plans and procedures available and ready to use in the coming months.

The construction of the Maternity Care Center began Feb. 28. We had a dedicated general contractor who put into place safety measures that kept his workers safe. They worked with our infection control team and physical plant engineering to keep the workplace and patient space separate. Sounds like an obvious, “no-duh” type of thing to do. But this is complicated. Air flow and air quality is monitored. Hepa-filters filter the air in the construction area

to make sure that particulate matter does not get into patient care areas. AND the air in patient care cannot mix with the work place area.

These people are the heroes. They made sure the construction could continue and allowed us to open on time — Sept. 8, 2020.

We have an ill patient population in the hospital — acute inpatient, and a sub-acute patient populations. Subacute patients receive medications, physical, speech and occupational therapies to aid in their recovery from their acute illness. Sub-acute patients were moved to the pre- and post-surgical areas to remove them from potential exposure to COVID patients. Our surgical cases are mostly elective. These were shut down from late March through June to accommodate the anticipated and realized higher volumes of acutely ill patients.

Chatham Hospital is a service provider, ultimately, but the community’s needs necessitated you collaborating and integrating your work with other entities in and around Chatham. Can you talk about how you’ve partnered and teamed up?

I am so pleased that you asked this question. The team at PHS — Piedmont Health Services and the Chatham County Health Department — really worked together to ramp up and provide the community with services that were needed. The outbreak of COVID-19 at Mountaire took a tremendous effort by our community partners and Mountaire to take the necessary steps to manage and control this outbreak.

This was the first major outbreak in NC. It took UNC Health time to stand up a Respiratory Diagnostic Center at Chatham Hospital for testing. Especially, the work by PHS to provide the testing at their clinic and sound the alarm bells that brought the state health department and state government and their resources for mass testing to bear. Remember that a civilian test team of the N.C. National Guard came on site at Mountaire to conduct that testing. This was not easy. This became the model for testing at animal processing and meatpacking plants in the state.

There’s probably no way to adequately describe what these months have been like for your staff — not just the frontline care providers and doctors, but staff who keep the hospital clean, who help handle family members of sick patients, and who do other things that might not be noticed by anyone stepping into the hospital. What can you say, or share, about what your staff has been through?

Courage. Devotion to and care for our patients. Steadfastness. Adaptability. Situational awareness. Looking out for each other. Teamwork.

I already spoke to the courage it takes to come to work and care for the sickest of patients with the potential to

impact their own health as well as their family. This is more than just punching the clock and getting a paycheck. These nurses, doctors, physician assistants, medical and nursing assistants, registration clerks, cafeteria and dietary personnel, plant engineering and maintenance, environmental services, materials and supply chain, security, OTs, speech and PTs, department directors, administration and executive teams — ALL OF OUR TEAM — each contributed and executed their part in the plan to stand up Chatham to care for our community during this COVID-19 pandemic.

How has COVID changed, or how is it changing, how hospitals work?

It is changing everything. There isn’t a place in the hospital or healthcare in general that has not been changed.

Where do you see all of us and our relationship with the coronavirus a year from now?

Coronavirus will still be with us, next year and the years to come. So much depends upon the response of this country to unity of purpose. Nothing will ever be the same or go back to “normal.” Never. But how we adjust and come to agreement on priorities in this country and develop and implement a plan to affect those priorities is paramount to where we will be in a year — or two years.

Let’s wrap up with two topics. First: masks. How important are face coverings now?

Masks are the SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT ACTION that the American public can do to protect themselves and, most importantly, each other. I know and believe that individual freedom is a guiding principle in America. But individual freedom stops being so when its action directly infringes on fellow Americans’ freedoms. To wear a mask is a gesture of respect, a community service and our patriotic duty to protect fellow Americans.

And second: what can you tell us, from your perspective, about potential vaccines?

From what I have read and heard from our UNC infectious disease specialists, there are many in various stages of development. The process of the COVID-19 vaccine development has been accelerated by doing several steps of this development at once without sacrificing safety.

Prior vaccine development was limited by doing each step separately and consecutively. The federal government support through funding guarantees and grants allows these companies to do these individual steps concurrently. This cuts down the amount of time from development to approval without affecting safety. I have confidence that the FDA will not grant approval unless the vaccine(s) are safe and effective.

NEWS BRIEFS

State board offers 10 tips for in-person early voters in North Carolina

RALEIGH — North Carolina’s 17-day, in-person early voting period began last Thursday and ends Saturday, Oct. 31.

The State Board of Elections offers the following 10 tips for early voters:

- Voters may cast a ballot at any early voting site in their county. For sites and hours, use the One-Stop Early Voting Site Search tool: <https://vt.ncsbe.gov/os-site/>. All 100 counties will offer weekend voting options throughout early voting.
- Sample ballots are available through the Voter Search tool: <https://vt.ncsbe.gov/RegLkup/>. For more information on judicial candidates, view the State Board’s Judicial Voter Guide: <https://www.ncsbe.gov/mailers/2020/judicial-voter-guide>. Knowing your candidate choices in advance and being familiar with the ballot will help your voting experience go more quickly.
- Individuals who missed the regular voter registration deadline may register and vote at the same time during the early voting period. Same-day registrants must attest to their eligibility and provide proof of where they live. For more information, visit <https://www.ncsbe.gov/voting/vote-early-person>. Individuals who missed the regular voter registration deadline may not register to vote by mail. Their only option at this point is to register in-person at an early voting site in their county.
- Voters are strongly encouraged to wear masks, use hand sanitizer and adhere to social distancing guidelines at the polling place. For more COVID-19 precautions at voting sites, visit <https://www.ncsbe.gov/>

voting/voting-and-coronavirus.

- Voters who receive an absentee ballot by mail may deliver their completed ballot to an election official at an early voting site in their county. Ballots will be kept securely and delivered to the county board of elections for processing.
- Voters who requested an absentee ballot but have not yet returned it may vote in person during the early voting period or on Election Day, Nov. 3. Voters may discard the by-mail ballot and do not need to bring it to a voting site.
- To avoid long lines, voters should keep in mind that the busiest early voting days typically are the first and last days of early voting. Voters may find shorter lines during regular business hours.
- The State Board asks that all voters respect the rights of others to participate in the election. Intimidating any voter is a crime. Voters who feel harassed or intimidated should notify an election official immediately.
- Voters at one-stop early voting sites are entitled to the same assistance as voters at a voting place on Election Day. Curbside voting is available for eligible individuals at all early voting sites. For more information, visit <https://www.ncsbe.gov/voting/help-voters-disabilities/curbside-voting>.
- North Carolina law prohibits photographing or videotaping voted ballots. Voters may use electronic devices in the voting booth to access a slate card or candidate information, provided they don’t use the devices to communicate with anyone or take photographs of their ballot.

For more information about early voting, please visit <https://www.ncsbe.gov/voting/vote-early-person>.

– CN+R staff reports



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‘THIS IS A PERVASIVE QUALITY-OF-LIFE ISSUE’

BOC delays NNP Briar Chapel vote, to decide at November meeting

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — The Chatham County Board of Commissioners decided nearly four hours into its regular session meeting on Monday to delay a vote on a request on behalf of NNP-Briar Chapel LLC for its Final Plat review.

According to the county’s website, an approved Final Plat is a permanent record of a subdivision as constructed that is filed with the Register of Deeds and shows important dimensions such as property lines. Following presentations from multiple stakeholder groups and ensuing discussion, the board opted to make a final decision regarding approval of NNP’s Final Plat at its November meeting, following the advice of the county attorney Bob Hagemann.

“Bringing it back in November may be the prudent thing to do given that its 10:30 and you still don’t have a clear understanding ...” Hagemann told the board. “You don’t have to have an answer tonight, you’re not required to.”

These proceedings follow months of troubles for NNP-Briar Chapel, the company which owns Briar Chapel at Newland Communities and has experienced delays on approval of its final plats, consisting of Phase 13 Section 3 and Phase 14. The county has approved approximately 75 or more requests from NNP for preliminary or final plats for Briar Chapel, but the approval of its last two single family residential plats has been delayed by a major issue: wastewater and sewage concerns in Briar Chapel.

“The past 10 months of my life have been dominated by issues surrounding the Briar Chapel wastewater treatment plant as an inhibitor to my daily

life,” Briar Chapel resident Patricia Van Hoy read during the board’s public input session. “Once the commissioners approve the two plats, Briar Chapel will have no leverage. Please delay Newland plat approvals until Old North State stabilizes the system and implements odor control.”

Another speaker added: “This is a pervasive quality-of-life issue for so many of us in Briar Chapel.”

Multiple residents spoke of a nauseating odor from sewage spills, as well as actually seeing and walking through spills on the trails near Briar Chapel.

Old North State Water Company in Briar Chapel and Envirolink, the company which manages its operations, have been plagued with problems of sewer spills in the Briar Chapel community in the last few years. The News + Record reported in August that since 2016, Briar Chapel’s sewer lines have spilled more than 47,000 gallons of raw sewage with nearly 39,000 gallons estimated to have reached surface water, according to the N.C. Dept. of Environmental Quality. This year alone, more than 15,000 gallons of sewage has made its way to surface water from the community’s sewer lines.

Though county staff recommended approving both of NNP’s requests, the county’s planning board unanimously suggested denying approval because of wastewater concerns. Nick Robinson, presenting on behalf of NNP, emphasized many times that NNP was legally entitled to final plat approval due to meeting the county’s Subdivision Ordinance requirements.

Robinson thanked all the county staff and folks from the Briar Chapel Home Owners Association for their collective efforts to come to an agreement in moving forward. StopChatham North, a group work-

ing to stop Briar Chapel from becoming a regional wastewater treatment plant, also made a presentation to the board, but disagreed with Briar Chapel Home Owners Association regarding the board’s approval.

“This agreement is monumental after months of deliberation,” Robinson said, adding that the sooner the final plats are collaboratively approved, the better off the community will be. “When you take a step back and look at what’s been accomplished in Briar Chapel over the last 15 years ... it’s astonishing really.”

Neither NNP nor Old North State Water Company denied the wastewater problem during their presentations, but instead insisted that continuing to address solutions for sewage spillage could and would happen as operations expand.

The board will make its final decision to approve or deny the request at its November meeting, likely at a regular session meeting on Nov. 2. Indications from the county staff and attorney make it seem likely the board will approve the request, unless evidence is found in Chatham’s Subdivision Ordinances as grounds for denial.

“We’ve been watching this show for a very long time,” Commissioner Jim Crawford said during the presentation by Dwight Allen, on behalf of StopChatham North. “It’s going to get harder and harder to fix it ... What’s the end game for the community here as you see it?”

More reporting on NNP-Briar Chapel’s request and the issue of wastewater will follow in weeks to come in the News + Record.

Reporter Hannah McClellan can be reached at hannah@chathamnr.com.

Feeling safer back home, UNC’s Chinese students ride a pandemic roller coaster

BY RANYI CHU & BUCK RYAN
Citizen Kentucky

CHAPEL HILL — Ah, wait a second for the WiFi connection.

NANJING, CHINA — That’s better.

Confused? Well, you don’t know the half of it. The pandemic has turned some Chinese students’ college education upside-down. Nonetheless, they are wrapping up midterm exams in the fall 2020 semester at the University of North Carolina, even if a noon class means a midnight Zoom session in China.

For those Chinese students stuck on campus who wish to return home, their concerns include the high cost of airfares, quarantine accommodations and fees, and the availability of technology.

“Although my parents are worried about me, the cost is still too high,” said Yunzhe Qian, 20, of Shanghai, a junior majoring in quantitative biology, who lives in an off-campus apartment.

“Also, since we need to use the VPN for lots of assignments, the internet would be unstable in China. Besides, I have lots of courses in the afternoon, which means that I will need to tackle the time difference if I go back to China.”

Yufei Dong, 19, a sophomore studying information science and journalism, was able to return home to Nanjing, which is 186 miles up the Yangtze River from Shanghai.

“Most of my friends are back in China,” she said, “for I don’t feel the university’s measures have lowered the risk enough for us to return to campus safely.”

According to UNC’s COVID-19 dashboard, positive cases for students topped out at 91 back on Aug. 19, two days after an abrupt shift to online classes, then dropped steadily over several weeks to two student cases on Oct. 15.

Joyce Mei, 19, a sophomore studying statistics and computer science, was also able to return to her home in Wuxi, a city with 3.5 million people known as “Little Shanghai,” which is about 80 miles northwest of downtown Shanghai.

“I think it is great for the university to keep its pass-and-fail policy from last semester,” Mei said. “I have a history course this semester, which made me worried very much. Now it won’t be a problem anymore! Especially since my history course requires lots of in-class discussions, and it is hard for me to participate as well as I would in the U.S. due to the time difference.”

International undergraduate students at UNC will pay a university-estimated \$56,476 a year for tuition and fees, health insurance, books, personal expenses and room and board if they are on campus.

They generally do not qualify for federal financial aid and will pay four times what an in-state student pays for tuition and fees (\$37,968 versus \$9,018) as a “non-resident.” As work rules are restrictive, the university adds, “Therefore, you should not plan to support yourself through employment while at UNC-Chapel Hill.”

Chinese students and their international counterparts paid a different price this summer, suffering a double whiplash.

In July the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Department of Homeland Security rescinded guidance that had prevented international students on a required F-1 visa from taking full online course loads during the fall semester while in the U.S.

Then on Aug. 17, just a week after the start of the fall semester, the university abruptly announced that it was shifting to all online courses for its 30,000 students after a coronavirus outbreak quickly spread across campus. UNC-Chapel Hill was one of the largest universities in the country to open school with in-person classes.

An estimated 360,000 Chinese students are currently enrolled in schools in the U.S. For these students, their education includes understanding cultural differences, especially during a pandemic.

“In China, the national power is centralized,” Mei said. “The government could control the whole nation and lock down a city when the pandemic becomes worse. The federal government could never do that because of the unique political structure in America.”

She saw something that got her thinking about the importance of freedom in the U.S.

“When the government published the stay-at-home order,” she said, “people chose to protest on the street instead of following the protocol ... In China, people may feel what is the worth of freedom if we lose our lives. Yet in America, people may think what is the worth of life if we don’t have freedom.”

Dong sees a difference on the issue of trust in government and official health organizations like the CDC.

“I feel that Chinese people are gener-

‘When the government published the stay-at-home order people chose to protest on the street instead of following the protocol ... In China, people may feel what is the worth of freedom if we lose our lives. Yet in America, people may think what is the worth of life if we don’t have freedom.’

JOYCE MEI, who is a sophomore studying statistics and computer science



Submitted photo

Ranyi Chu, 20, a UNC sophomore, on whether she would return from China to Chapel Hill for the spring semester or continue to take classes remotely: ‘No, no, no. I look forward to spending the spring festival with my family!’ UNC will start the spring semester on Jan. 19. New Year’s Eve in China, which begins the weeklong spring festival, is Feb. 11.

ally more willing to conform to government orders,” she said. “You can easily persuade most people to do something with the reason ‘it’s good/necessary for the society/other people,’ even if it’s inconvenient for them.”

Although Qian said she thinks “China is so much safer than in America,” she is willing to take the risk to stay in North Carolina.

The value of higher education, particularly when instruction moves all online, is the topic of conversations around kitchen tables both in North Carolina and in China, and beyond.

The American Council on Education predicted that enrollment will drop 15%, including an expected 25% drop for international students, resulting in a \$23 billion loss of revenue for colleges and universities.

Last month, UNC’s public relations office offered this about value: “UNC-Chapel Hill ranks fifth among national public universities for 20th consecutive year. U.S. News & World Report names Carolina Best Value among public universities for 16th time.”

If fear of COVID-19 did not create enough stress, some Chinese students who saw UNC shut down in-class instruction in spring were stuck on campus through the summer.

With limited dining hall options, campus-area restaurants closed and restrictions on cooking in the dorms, one Chinese student expanded his English vocabulary to include a new experience: “food insecurity.”

The turmoil this summer, ranging from visas to pandemic shutdowns, affected students and scholars from around the world, but particularly those from China.

A UNC Global site on 2019 Profiles of International Students and Scholars lists 2,335 international students with 1,049 of them, or 45 percent, from China.

Students from India (281), South Korea (137), United Kingdom (64) and Canada (52), combined, number about half the students from China. After Denmark with 42 students, next on the list is Taiwan with 38 students.

The total number of foreign scholars listed for the 2018-19 school year was 1,360. Of those 601, or 44 percent, came from China.

The pandemic’s impact at UNC includes the postponement of a winter commencement and the loss of the traditional spring break “to limit any potential spread of the virus caused by travel during an extended break,” according to an email to students from UNC’s chancellor, Kevin Guskiewicz.


Instead of Spring Break, students like Qian will get five “wellness days” as breaks, the email said, and “faculty will be instructed to avoid scheduling exams, quizzes and other major assignments on days following these breaks.”

Qian said one reason she decided to study in America was that the U.S. has been a leader in “scientific development in multiple areas in the world.”


“It is worth the risks,” she said. “After all, the Chinese population is many times larger than that in America. The extremely competitive environment and insufficient resources convinced me to study in the U.S.”



Buck Ryan, a journalism professor and director of the Citizen Kentucky Project on civic engagement at the University of Kentucky, taught Ranyi Chu when she was a 16-year-old international high school student in Hohhot, the capital of Inner Mongolia, in a summer 2016 seminar on English reading and writing. Chu, now 20, is a sophomore at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, studying journalism in Shanghai at Fudan University, one of China’s premier universities, as part of UNC’s “Exchange in China” program. Ryan has been conducting a case study of the Chatham News + Record, which he sees as a model of success for community newspapers here and abroad.

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‘YOUR NAME GETS OUT THERE’

At Swepsonville Ballpark, Northwood baseball players get a fall showcase event

BY CHAPEL FOWLER
News + Record Staff

GRAHAM — Nate Ortiz made Northwood’s varsity baseball team as a freshman, and when the coronavirus shortened his 2020 season to just three games, he tried to keep the momentum going on his own. Hitting. Fielding. Strength training. Anything, really, to mimic the reps he would have gotten.

“But nothing really compares to seeing an actual pitch on an actual mound,” the sophomore said.

So, count Ortiz as one of the many local players and coaches thrilled to hear about the Old North State League Futures Invitational, a month-long fall baseball showcase happening just a county above him.

The pop-up event for high schoolers, a spin-off of the statewide summer Old North State League for college-age players, wraps up its final games this week at Swepsonville Ballpark in Graham.

And as a member of the Chatham Chargers — a team made up exclusively of Northwood baseball players and coached by two Northwood baseball alumni — Ortiz has gotten plenty of those live at-bats he spent his summer trying to mimic this September and October.

“You’re a little bit nervous,” he said, “but once that first pitch comes, you get settled and it gets easier.”

Ortiz spoke with the News + Record last Tuesday as his teammates filtered out of the ballpark, with the Chargers’ 5 p.m. game that night canceled minutes before it started because of unsafe field conditions.

Still, he and others had plenty of good things to say about the ONSL Futures Invitational and their team, which outside of uniform colors — powder blue, white and gold; more Los Angeles Chargers than North-



Staff photo by Kim Hawks

The Chatham Chargers are made up exclusively of Northwood baseball players, including, from left, Landon Johnson, Seth Davis, Ben Maness, Walker Johnson and Nathan McWilliams.



Former Northwood baseball players Justin Szczypinski (left) and Zizzy Newell (middle) are the co-head coaches of the Chatham Chargers. Current Northwood sophomore Nate Ortiz (right) feels like he has improved with every rep with the team this fall.



Staff photos by Kim Hawks

wood Chargers — is essentially a transplant of their Pittsboro high school and friend group.

“It’s cool,” sophomore Lucas Smith said. “I haven’t seen

them since the middle of last year, basically.”

The Chargers’ co-head coaches are Justin Szczypinski and Zizzy Newell, both of whom

played baseball at Northwood and graduated in 2019. Because of COVID-19, their fall plans had been altered: Szczypinski was taking online classes via

Southeastern Community College in Whiteville (he’s also a pitcher on its baseball team) and Newell was taking a gap year. More importantly, they were close to home.

So when Northwood’s current head baseball coach, David Miller, caught wind of the ONSL Futures event, he knew exactly who to call on. He reached out to Szczypinski and Newell with a simple message: “You guys want to coach?”

Antsy for any and all baseball action, they didn’t need much convincing.

“This year has been crazy,” Szczypinski said. “It was nice to get another escape from sitting at home.”

The Chargers’ opening game, on Sept. 8, was a reality check. Although the baseball was low stakes and designed more for exposure than final results, Szczypinski and Newell found themselves scrambling: for the first time in their lives, they had to think about the game from an all-encompassing team perspective — pitching changes, adjustments, playing time — rather than an individual approach.

“As a coach, I have to be responsible for all 14, 15 guys out there,” Szczypinski said. “I’ve gotten a lot better at it, but it’s definitely tough.”

Plus, there’s the youth factor. Newell, 20, and Szczypinski, 19, are coaching a bunch of 15-, 16- and 17-year-olds. Two Chargers players, Mason Bae and Landon Johnson, were actually teammates with them on Northwood’s 2019 roster. Have the players received them well? Szczypinski laughed.

“I think they have,” he said. “We try to keep it light because, like I said, Zizzy and I played with two of the guys. We’re not trying to be authoritative, necessarily. We’re trying to keep it loose.”

See **BASEBALL**, page B2



Submitted photo

From left, Central Carolina Community College cross country runners Colby Day, Navelly Martinez, Marilynn Richardson and Anna Trotter at the NJCAA Region 10 Championships in Spartanburg, South Carolina, last fall.

‘I JUST DIDN’T THINK IT WOULD HAPPEN’

CCCC coaches, runners grapple with the lack of a 2020 cross country season

BY CHAPEL FOWLER
News + Record Staff

Next weekend, runners from junior and community colleges across the southeast will flock to Martinsville, Virginia, for the Region 10 Championships and a chance to qualify for nationals.



Briggs

But the Central Carolina Community College Cougars, who’ve sent three runners to the Division III championships in two years, won’t be represented at either. A canceled season will do that to you.

“Everything happens for a reason,” head coach Richard Briggs said. “I firmly believe in that. What that reason is right now? I’m not sure.”

It’s been three months since CCCC — which has Chatham, Lee and Harnett county campuses — decided it wouldn’t

field a cross country team this fall, despite its parent organization, the National Junior College Athletic Association, announcing the sport could continue as scheduled in 2020.

The school’s administration and athletic department “just didn’t feel comfortable putting our student-athletes at that risk,” athletic director Jonathan Hockaday told the News + Record then.

“We hated to do it to our (cross country) student-athletes who committed to come here,” he said.

As postseason competition approaches, Briggs and sophomore runner Anna Trotter are both staying positive. But as schools around them march on, they can’t help but hurt a little, too, when they think about what could’ve been for the Cougars — if it weren’t a decision made above them.

“It really broke my heart,” Trotter, a 2019 Northwood graduate, said.

See **COACHES**, page B2

NCHSAA AND CORONAVIRUS

Capacity limits, mask guidelines for events and more announced in latest update

BY CHAPEL FOWLER
News + Record Staff

With less than a month until the first official competitions of the 2020-21 athletic year, the NCHSAA last Thursday released its most comprehensive coronavirus guidelines and sports protocol to date.

In the first copy of a 45-page “modified sports manual” that will be continuously updated via Google Docs, the association laid out detailed instructions for spectators and volleyball, cross country and swimming and diving events, among other changes.

The biggest news isn’t much

See **LIMITS**, page B2



Staff file photo

NCHSAA cross country teams can resume official practices/tryouts Nov. 4 and official competitions Nov. 16.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Chatham Charter hosting basketball camps next month

Are you an elementary or middle school parent with a kid desperate to get on a court?

Starting Nov. 7, Chatham Charter’s varsity basketball teams are hosting five camps at their home gym in Siler City. Boys and girls of all skill levels are welcome; the age range is 2nd through 8th graders. Each session is limited to 20 participants, costs \$30 and runs 9 a.m. to noon on a Saturday.

The Knights are using the camps as a fundraiser, and participants can sign up for as many as they’d like. Concessions will be available at each camp, too. The five sessions are on Nov. 7, Nov. 14, Nov. 21, Dec. 5 and Dec. 12. Forms must be filled out beforehand and won’t be accepted at the door.

For more information, contact varsity men’s basketball coach Jason Messier at jmessier@chathamcharter.org or varsity women’s assistant coach Jamar Ross at jaeross10@gmail.com. You can also access a form at this link: cutt.ly/chathamchartercamp.

Northwood’s Morgan gets college offer

Tucker Morgan, a senior who should be among Northwood men’s basketball’s top contributors this winter, has received an offer from Fayette-

ville Tech, he announced on Twitter Sunday.

It’s the first offer for Morgan, a 6-foot-3 stretch forward who averaged 1.5 points and one rebound as a junior. He’s also been playing extensive summer basketball with his AAU club, the Durham Hurricanes.

Fayetteville Tech is a two-year community college that competes in the National Junior College Athletics Association’s Region 10. The Trojans’ men’s basketball team went 15-16 in 2019-20.

NCISAA sports start playoffs this week

By the time NCHSAA schools begin official volleyball practice, the NCISAA season will be over.

Volleyball teams in the North Carolina Independent Schools Athletic Association, which started fall sports significantly earlier than its public school counterpart, started playoff competition Tuesday.

Quarterfinals will be held Oct. 23, semifinals Oct. 27 and championships Oct. 31 for the 1A, 2A, 3A and 4A classifications. Men’s soccer and women’s tennis will also crown champions on Halloween, while 11-man and eight-man football continues this week across the association.

NCHSAA volleyball and cross country teams will hold their first official competitions Nov. 16.

— CN+R staff reports



Newell (left) and Szczypinski are coaching Northwood baseball players just a few years younger than them, including two former teammates.

BASEBALL

Continued from page B1

That was the general vibe at Swepsonville Ballpark, a cozy stadium with wooden bleachers tucked behind the town's main street and bordered by a small pond and the Haw River. A fading red and white sign up front proudly reminds visitors the Alamance County ballpark — which hosted the Old North State League's college summer league playoffs in August — has been around since June 26, 1926.

Reggie Allred, the ONSL commissioner who owns The Factory, a baseball training facility in Siler City, partnered with Prep Baseball Report North Carolina to put on the fall invitational, branded as a chance for the "future stars" of the ONSL to get six weeks of games in under COVID-19 protocols.

Outside of the Chargers, there are teams from Orange County and Alamance County, including the Wolves, Hogs, Tigers and Patriots. The Chargers usually played three or four times a week, including a double-header, with all games scouted by PBR. That's another perk.

"It's a good element," Smith,



Swepsonville Ballpark in Alamance County is bordered by a small pond and the Haw River.



The Old North State League Futures Invitational held showcase events at Swepsonville Ballpark from September to October.

who plays catcher, said. "Your name gets out there more."

The games, he added, are a chance for "simple fundamental work." For Smith and Ortiz, both of whom have played in other showcase events this summer and hope to play college baseball, that's a welcome opportunity. Their 2021 season won't start until

April 26, so they'll take whatever they can get.

"It feels great, man," said Ortiz, who plays third base. "I feel like I'm getting better every time I step on the field."

Reporter Chapel Fowler can be reached at cfowler@chathamnr.com or on Twitter at @chapelfowler.

LIMITS

Continued from page B1

of a surprise: when it comes to fans, the NCHSAA will defer to Gov. Roy Cooper and the state Department of Health and Human Services. That means, for now, high school events will operate under Phase 2.5, with 25 spectators allowed at indoor events and either 100 spectators or 30% of the venue's stated fire capacity allowed at outdoor events, whichever is fewer.

Notably, though, "players, coaches and support staff" don't count against those capacity limits, and local policies by individual school districts or charter/parochial schools can restrict attendance further.

According to the NCHSAA, cloth face coverings "must be worn at all times by any individual not actively participating" during contests. That includes all student-athletes (presumably on the bench), coaches, spectators, officials and event management staff.

For in-season practices, coaches and staff are "strongly recommended" to wear masks at all times, as are athletes "when not actively engaged in physical activity."

Any athlete actively engaged in "high aerobic" physical activity — basically, anyone who's on the floor, in the game or competing — doesn't have to wear a mask, a policy the NCHSAA has had for months.

Cross country and volleyball are the first two sports to begin official practices/tryouts on Wednesday, Nov. 4, and competitions on Monday, Nov. 16. For those two sports, plus swimming and diving (first practice

Nov. 23, first competition Dec. 7), the NCHSAA even more provided detailed instructions on game-day operations and specifically tailored strategies to limit the spread of COVID-19.

In volleyball, for example, the NCHSAA explicitly banned the usual pregame ritual where the two teams run parallel to the net, in opposite directions, for a line of high-fives. Athletes are encouraged to "honor/promote sportsmanship in a creative way" instead.

And in cross country, the association provided diagrams for a "spaced mass start" and "multiple finish chute," two strategies to make sure all runners stay six feet apart even in the parts of a race that are most usually crowded.

In an open letter near the top of the document, NCHSAA commissioner Que Tucker said high school athletics leaders are "uniquely positioned to be role models of understanding, hope, and clarity" as the association fully ramps up for its first official competitions since mid-March.

"We do not know what tomorrow will bring; however, we can reassure others that a time will come when our lives will regain some normalcy — at home, at school, in the playing arena, and in the community," Tucker wrote. "Yes, there will likely be more disruptions, inconveniences, hardships and maybe even fears; but we can and we will overcome this crisis! After all, we are one team strong and all in this together!"

To read the modified sports manual in full, visit cutt.ly/nchsaamanual.

Reporter Chapel Fowler can be reached at cfowler@chathamnr.com or on Twitter at @chapelfowler.

COACHES

Continued from page B1

"This year, I really believe, was going to be our breakout year," Briggs added. "So to see it not come together the way I was thinking it would, it's definitely disappointing."

Briggs, 45, is a self-made coach from New Jersey who used previous stops at UNC-Wilmington, Mount Olive and Fayetteville State to land the CCCC head coaching job last March.

He inherited a program that, in its inaugural 2018 season, saw Jordan-Matthews graduate Britt Lehman qualify for the NJCAA Division III men's championships. Briggs hit the recruiting trail hard in the spring and kept his 2019 squad busy with summer workouts and a preseason team-bonding kayak trip.

And the results showed. After three regular season meets, CCCC burst onto the scene at the Region 10 Championships in Spartanburg, South Carolina, last November. Trotter finished first in the Division III women's 5K race, with a time of 23:34, and Colby Day finished fourth in the Division III men's 8K, with a time of 32:59.

Both freshmen qualified for the NJCAA Division III championships in Westfield, Massachusetts, too.

"And when I made nationals, I thought: 'Wow, I can't wait to see what this whole team can do next year,'" Trotter said.

Since CCCC doesn't have an indoor track or outdoor track team, Briggs encourages his athletes to use the winter and spring to focus on other interests: academics, clubs, other sports. He usually ramps up formal preseason training in the summer — this year, despite COVID-19, that was still the case.

"I was going along as if we were going to have a season," Briggs said. "I was sending out my training to everyone. I had the in-season training ready to go. I had a full schedule as far as competition. I had a team (bonding) meetings set to go. Everything like that."

In the team's group chat, Trotter said she remembered one message from Briggs, alerting his players that canceling the season remained an option for CCCC. But still, she said, his mid-July message that the season had been canceled felt "really out of nowhere."

"It was an option," she said, "but I just didn't think it would happen."

Outside of the obvious impacts, CCCC's status as a community college also added a wrinkle.

Most students, including athletes, attend the school for two years before transferring. "Sophomore night" is to a community college what "senior night" is to a standard high school or college. And although CCCC's 2020 runners can all return next season, it's not logical for many.

"Unfortunately, we're going to lose some people," Briggs said.

Trotter, for example, is in the Carolina Student Transfer Excellence Program, which guarantees her admission to UNC-Chapel Hill if she meets certain criteria, which she's well on track for.

A 2021 CCCC cross country season doesn't mesh well with her plan to spend her junior and senior years of college at UNC. Other sophomores,

such as Day and Jordan-Matthews graduates Eddy Dominguez and George Jacinto, are in the same boat, riding a wave of uncertainty.

"I was really looking forward to a second year," Trotter said. "What more can I do? Can I get my time down to 21 (minutes)? Can I get even faster? Who else am I going to meet? I'll really miss that."

The changes have Briggs, optimist he is, embracing what's essentially a dual recruiting challenge.

He's actively seeking runners for his class of 2022, as per usual. But he's also staying in touch with his class of 2021 runners, who were supposed to run for him as freshmen in 2020.

Since that never happened, and the team hasn't formally met in months, it's almost like he's "starting over" with them, he said. And if he pulls together the full 2021 roster he's expecting to, Briggs thinks the Cougars can compete for a regional championship and more in their third season.

"It's all coming together the way it is for a reason," he said. "I'm really excited for next year."

Trotter never thought she'd miss the team's 7:30 a.m. runs at Kiwanis Family Park in Sanford. But as she works through a heavy academic load this semester, she sometimes does. At least, she said, her final race as a Cougar was a good one: she represented CCCC at 2019 nationals — the

first woman runner to do so — and finished 46th out of 122 runners.

"I found such a wonderful meaning in running," Trotter said. "At CCCC,

running wasn't about the awards or the times. It was about working as team while pushing yourself ... it's nice I got to leave cross country on

a positive note."

Reporter Chapel Fowler can be reached at cfowler@chathamnr.com or on Twitter at @chapelfowler.



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Chatham's N.C. Cooperative Extension welcomes two new agents

CN+R Staff Report

PITTSBORO — The N.C. Cooperative Extension has welcome two passionate extension professionals based in the Chatham County Center, with one being the first agent based at N.C. A&T State University's staff of field faculty.



Gregory



Lawing

Kaley Lawing is the new Community Resource Development/4-H Extension Agent for Chatham County, offering Community Resource Development and 4-H Youth Development programming provided by N.C. A&T State University. Previously, she served as the 4-H Extension Agent for Mitchell County. Lawing earned her Bachelor of Science in Animal Science from N.C. State in 2016.

Lawing grew up on her family farm in northern Moore County. She and her husband, Adam, now reside on the family farm in Moore County with hopes to start their own farm in the near future. Her husband is also an Extension Agent and serves as the Livestock Agent in Randolph County. Lawing is looking forward to bringing new programming to Chatham County and getting to know the folks in the area.

Tara Gregory has joined Chatham County Cooperative Extension as the Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Agent. Gregory is a registered dietitian who has nearly seven years of experience working with the Chatham community as part of the Chatham County Public Health Department. She has experience providing nutrition counseling and health and wellness-focused programming, as well as collaborating on community initiatives as a member of the Chatham Health Alliance.

Gregory completed a Master of Public Health degree from the UNC-Chapel Hill in 2011 and began work with the Chatham County Public Health Department

to provide practical, evidence-based nutrition guidance to individuals and families. From its importance in people's health to how they enjoy time with one another, food plays a significant role in the community's quality of life. Gregory helps individuals find what healthy eating and living looks like for them while also striving to identify ways in which the community and its environment can support healthy lifestyles. Gregory looks forward to incorporating these interests into her work as the FCS Agent.

To contact Kaley Lawing or Tara Gregory for technical assistance or to inquire regarding educational programming opportunities offered through the NCCE-Chatham County Center, please contact them via phone or email at the Extension website's staff contact page: chatham.ces.ncsu.edu/people. For additional information regarding other Extension programming opportunities offered through the county center (in the areas of 4-H or agriculture), please visit the main website located here: chatham.ces.ncsu.edu.

Trick or Treat! Halloween Express Train



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

A 'haunted' train rides by with its undead skeleton crew waiving at neighboring passengers. It's a part of the New Hope Valley Railway's 'Track or Treat: Halloween Express' spooky, kid-friendly train ride in Bonsal.



Blake and Everett Smith watch the train pass by the spooky pop-ups along the rail, located in Bonsal.

Staff photo by Peyton Sickles



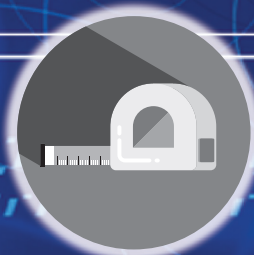
Families on the train watch the haunted train ride by with severed heads, and skeletons.

Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

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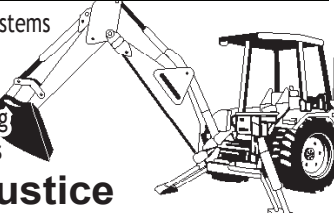


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NEWS BRIEFS

Chatham Cider Works part of N.C. Cider Week

The annual celebration of North Carolina Cider scheduled for Oct. 19-25 will stretch from Asheville to Charlotte to the Triangle as local cideries showcase each other’s ciders in a celebration of the quality and diversity of ciders being made across the state.

“N.C. Cider week celebrates the rich tradition of cider in the Carolinas,” says Lyndon Smith, co-founder of Botanist and Barrel in Cedar Grove and president of the newly established N.C. Cider Association. “With so many styles of cider and talented producers, cider week provides a unique opportunity to explore the vibrant NC cider community with cider enthusiasts and casual cider drinkers alike.”

N.C. Cider Week flights featuring ciders from around the state will be served in Western N.C. at Noble Cider and Urban Orchards Cider Co. in Asheville, in Charlotte at Good Roads Ciderworks and Red Clay Ciderworks, and in the Piedmont at Botanist and Barrel in Cedar Grove, Bull City Ciderworks in Durham and James Creek Cider House in Cameron.

Those Piedmont cidermakers will also join Chatham Cider Works and Dingo Dog Brewing, for a socially-distanced, ticketed N.C. Cider Sip and Meet from 2-5 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 24, at The Beverage District in Pittsboro. Guests will get five bottles of cider and be able to sip and stroll around the grounds to chat with local cidermakers. The event will be moved indoors if the weather is inclement.

Chatham Cider Works opened four years ago and has grown its fan base each year. Owners Maureen Ahmad and Jim Crawford say this year has been a unique challenge as traffic at festivals, bars, and restaurants have all greatly slowed down.



Photo courtesy of Chatham Cider Works

Chatham Cider Works is participating in N.C. Cider Week.

But the silver lining, they add, has been the newly formed N.C. Cider Association and our collaboration to find ways to support each other in this very tough year.

“There are 16 cideries in the state, and we’re glad to support each other and see this small industry succeed,” Ahmad said. “Cider is delicious and it’s surprisingly varied. People who enjoy different ciders will appreciate getting to know the cideries in the Piedmont at our tasting event on the 24th.”

Crawford said they started Chatham Cider Works after seeing orchards in the mountains that were going unpicked. “We enjoyed cider and

wanted to find a way to support growers in the state,” he said. “The N.C. Cider Association is working to create even more interest in cider, and we look forward to people getting involved during NC Cider Week.”

North Carolina, one of the top apple-growing regions in the country, also has a handful of wineries, breweries and meaderies that also produce cider, resulting in a great variety of apple blends and fermentation styles across the state. Cideries are donating the proceeds from the sales of cider flights to the new association to support future endeavors.

—CN+R staff reports

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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.

October’s winner will be drawn from eligible entries provided by 10/31/2020. The October winner will be announced in a November issue of the Chatham News + Record. One entry per household, per week. Employees of the COA and their dependents not eligible.



Chatham COA Helpful Happenings October 22nd – 28th

Thursday, October 22nd

- [Virtual Visit to the Alpaca Farm](#) at 11:15 AM
- **PUBLIC HEARING** - [Transportation Funding](#)

Friday, October 23rd

- [Body Conditioning Exercise with Jackie](#) at 9:00 AM
- [Update Call with Director Dennis Streets & Musical Guests, Gene & Marian](#) at 10:15 AM

Monday, October 26th

- [Tai Chi for Arthritis](#) at 9:00 AM
- [Arthritis Foundation Exercise](#) at 10:00 AM
- [Bingo with Joe](#) at 11:15 AM

Tuesday, October 27th

- [Body Conditioning Exercise with Jackie](#) at 9:00 AM
- [This Day in History](#) at 11:15 AM

Wednesday, October 28th

- [Tai Chi for Arthritis](#) at 9:00 AM
- [Science with Alan](#) at 10:00 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/>

Join the Trivia Hunt!



Each week the Council on Aging will offer a Chatham-themed 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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(Presentation for ladies groups on “FAITH, FAMILY, SCHOOLS, JOBS, SUCCESS”) by Jimmy Pharr

I’m a bible professor, former owner of 3 businesses, and a Personnel Manager ... I’m not a politician. I am governed by biblical and conservative principles, whose priorities are the God who created me, the wife He gave me, the children He loaned me, and a desire to serve them all and others put in my path.

Ida and I have 3 (grown) children, 2 with Special Needs – both attended Chatham public schools. Two grandchildren are attending them now. So, I am a strong advocate for school safety, quality, and choice. In my 14 years teaching at CCCC, every private and home schooled student made A’s and were at the top of my classes – others did too, but ALL of those were. But, my hardest school battle was trying to get my son with CP into our PUBLIC elementary school. They were ok with it but all the professionals were not. After 2 IQ tests scores of 68, which we rejected, and other criteria, their “expert” view was that Trey was totally incapable of ever succeeding academically, socially, physically, mentally, and emotionally. We had a fight on our hands and an uphill battle, but we were adamant. The experts eventually and reluctantly backed down and Trey, despite many surgeries, went to Pittsboro Primary. Many 4-6 hour homework sessions that would normally take 1-2 followed. By middle school he was doing it on his own and making good grades. By high school at Northwood, he made all A’s, won numerous awards, was basketball manager, socially well-liked by all, and earned Eagle Scout !! At NC State, Trey made the Dean’s list 4 of 8 semesters, all while working in the basketball and football offices. Today, he has a successful career in the IT field. So I’m big on parents knowing their kids and what’s best for them. He also had great teachers and a supporting church family.

I firmly support Law & Order, Law Enforcement and 1st Responders - safety of citizens is government’s top duty. By listening, I’ve learned we hire & train deputies (and jailers), only to lose them to counties with higher pay. I want them paid more.

JOBS. Chatham has been a “bedroom community”, but many want to work HERE and have good jobs. That is only possible by attracting business and industry HERE, rather than them choosing elsewhere. When we looked for a second location for our retail business, taxes, rents, and regulations affected our decision. (We chose Sanford.) They are attracted by lower taxes and reasonable regulations.

SUCCESS. Parents want their children (and themselves) to succeed. Life has always had, and will have, adversity, suffering, obstacles, roadblocks. If anyone has not yet faced severe adversity, they will. Two options will emerge. One is very tempting as water runs downhill, taking the path of least resistance - we want our pain stopped !! Some will encourage and promote what a victim you are; then how they can help you live in it by giving you what you need to survive. Then push the absurd notion of eliminating the source of it.

There is a second option.

While persuasion might change some minds, only God can change the heart. Mankind’s biggest problem has always been PRIDE – a heart problem. Pride’s only remedy will always be HUMILITY. God will change a heart that humbles itself to Him. While programs give some relief, there IS a better life out there. That opportunity IS achievable. It requires a certain ATTITUDE. Adversity, suffering, obstacles are real, are hard and painful, but millions HAVE overcome them and will continue to do so. Helen Keller said, “Although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it”. “Safety nets” are essential for those physically and mentally unable to do for themselves; and seniors on fixed incomes and the elderly. Others may at times need temporary help until back on their feet, but remaining in a meager existence instead of being productive will not get that better life; a rich, fulfilling, successful one dreams are made of. Getting it is to be elevated up to it and out of just getting by. True self-esteem comes from achievement, from accomplishment.

Once a heart change and an attitude change that dreams and goals CAN be realized; an important step for overcoming life’s obstacles is to WISELY PICK ROLE MODELS. Ones who fit your particular circumstance. And, if money is your issue, adopt the attitude that, “being broke is temporary, being “poor” is a state of mind”.

A next step is that “Success is when Preparation meets Opportunity.” One must PREPARE. That requires the biblical (and secular) models of Willpower, Free Will – freedom to make choices, and Work – hard work. Studying, researching, learning, acquiring skills, abilities and knowledge; are necessary but doable. Hard work, making choices and applying willpower to stay the course and avoid the temptations to not work hard or to succumb to poor choices.

I’ll close by adding that this “preparation” tool is in two parts. One is for our kids of school age for getting ahead of the game. The other is for adults past that who have either made poor choices and/or been dealt unfortunate blows. My 14 years at the community college has seen many of those, and they are courageously attempting to rebuild their lives or start over. Many have baggage, but they HAVE understood that there IS that better life, that it CAN be realized; and regardless of the obstacles, they ARE determined to overcome. **They are setting goals, dreaming dreams again, keeping their eyes on the prize, AND THEY WILL SUCCEED !!!** Attitude, proper role models, goals and dreams, a preparation plan – and ALL include surrounding yourself with a positive, supportive “circle of influence”, of which God is at center.

Finally, we must recognize our REAL enemy. Ephesians 6:12, “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against powers, rulers of darkness, spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm.”

Again, I’m Jimmy Pharr ... Thank you all for your time.

Paid for by CTE Jimmy Pharr

Pittsboro's Thales Academy campus accepting applications for 2021-22 school year

CN+R Staff Report

PITTSBORO —Thales Academy, a college preparatory network of K-12 independent schools, will be opening its newest campus in the Vineyards neighborhood of Chatham Park in July 2021 — the first school to open in the Chatham Park community — and is now accepting applications for grades K-4 for the 2021-2022 school year. Subsequent grades will be added in the future to ultimately serve grades K-12. Applications are first-come, first-served and will be open until seats are filled and a waitlist is created. Enrollment is open to all area families, not just Chatham Park residents. Tuition at Thales Academy Pittsboro will be \$5,300 per year, and scholarships, discounts, and payment plans are available to further reduce this cost. “Our campuses typically fill up quickly due to our reasonable price, strong curriculum, and safe, wholesome environment, so interested families should reserve their space by applying early,”

said Bethany Bateman, Thales’ admissions counselor. “Families can apply right from our website, ThalesAcademy.org, and if they have any questions, they may contact admissions@thalesacademy.org.” Thales Academy has named Johanna Murphy as the campus administrator for the new Pittsboro campus. Murphy has most recently served as assistant administrator at Thales Academy Raleigh and brings more than a decade of elementary-level teaching experience across many grades as well as specialized educational work with elementary-aged children. “I am thrilled to be a part of introducing our wonderful Thales Academy education model to the Pittsboro community and am so honored to help lead the first school opening in Chatham Park,” Murphy said. “I cannot wait to welcome students to our newest campus in July!” Hallmarks of Thales Academy include rigorous, college-prep academics that emphasize learning to mastery; character formation; real world



Photo courtesy of Thales Academy

The inside of a typical Thales Academy classroom.

skills development; personalized attention and affordable tuition with no extra fees or fundraising. In addition to the low cost, other tangible benefits include: a stable, proven educational approach, a consistent calendar, and a simple dress code. The school strives to cultivate critical thinkers by teaching how to think, not what to think; fostering often forgotten skills such as writing and grammar;

and developing confident leaders with strong character. The Thales Academy Pittsboro campus will be similar to existing Thales Academy facilities with an emphasis on beautiful, natural-light-rich, secure design and outfitted with the latest safety and security features, including controlled-access doors, security cameras, and background

check systems for all visitors. The facilities will feature a modern, yet classical aesthetic, which will allow students to learn in an environment modeled after beauty and order, and large floor-to-ceiling glass windows will flood classrooms with natural light. Ensuring students are well-versed in technology, the new campus will have Apple TVs in every classroom as well

as shared iPad carts for student use. Thales Academy currently operates 10 campuses across North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia, instructing more than 3,500 students, and continues to add campuses as demand for its successful school model grows. For more information on Thales Academy and to apply for admission online, visit www.thalesacademy.org.

North Chatham Elementary’s Murray emerges as district’s top principal

From Chatham County Schools

CHAPEL HILL — North Chatham Elementary School Principal Carla Murray would tell you that every job assignment on her campus is vital. So it’s not perfunctory

when she’s out there in front of the school meeting and greeting families, opening and closing doors for car riders. As the school’s principal, she essentially is North Chatham’s chief executive officer. Murray, though, respectfully edits

the CEO acronym — chief engagement officer is more like it. “Personal competence skills are just as important as professional knowledge and skills,” Murray explained. “The staff wants to know that their leader can and will do the

tasks that are required in a school. “I model what I advocate.” That approach had Chatham County Schools Superintendent Dr. Derrick D. Jordan in October presenting Murray as the Chatham County Schools Principal of the Year. The award puts Murray in regional competition. Moving beyond that would have her vying for a shot as the state’s top principal. Murray, a Jordan-Matthews graduate, is extremely organized and is the type who knows a lot without insisting on knowing it all, according to North Chatham curriculum coach Mandy Evans. “Incredibly data driven

while keeping a realistic understanding about teachers knowing their students. All our teachers are always digging into data for our conversations,” Evans said. “Check out our teacher working conditions survey — the growth is amazing, and numbers are in the 90% (range) for things related to staff and parent involvement.” “Leadership requires service to others. Leaders are responsible for tending the collective vision and values,” said Murray, North Chatham’s principal since 2015. “I listen to concerns. I listen for the information — good and bad — that enables me to lead.” Instead of occupying an inordinate amount of

staff time with general meetings, Murray prefers tailored conversations with pertinent individuals. She respects people’s schedules too much to send email after email, even though that would be more convenient for her, just rattling off whatever comes to mind whenever it comes. No, Murray organizes what she has to say in weekly newsletters. “Consummate advocate for teachers,” Evans said. “I know that I cannot lead without the eyes and ears, minds and hearts of staff,” Murray said. “My office door is open. I promote staff competence, enabling others to fulfill their full potential. I let people be naturally who they are.”



Submitted photo

North Chatham Elementary School Principal Carla Murray.



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Kale as part of your lasagna? You betcha.

I'm an Aries, which is a fire sign, so according to every horoscope I've ever read (actually, TBH, I'm not that into it, so really, not many) the clothes I wear, the polish on my nails, my lipstick, the colors of my walls, even my hair should be one specific color.

DEBBIE MATTHEWS
The Curious Cook

Red.
I will agree that red lips and nails have their place, I own both and occasionally wear them, usually for festive events. And, in the 80s, I had hair the red of diner ketchup (a thoroughly bad idea that I'll never repeat).
But you could look through my entire closet and dresser and the only red clothing you'd find is a scratchy red sweater and a clingy red sweater dress that I've only had the nerve to wear once.
There is though, a red that I avoid even more than scarlet clothing.
Old school red spaghetti sauce. My mom is half Italian, and when I was growing up she made it two or three times a week. The recipe's from her fa-



Photo courtesy of Debbie Matthews

Browned and bubbly lasagna, ready to be served.

ther, who, ironically was not the Italian parent.
I just never liked it. Or any red Italian sauce. Apparently, though, my mom's is the bomb because every time she made it people came running. One of my friends had spent time in Italy and said my mom's sauce was better by a mile. She used to make it for lunch each year for the crew of my friends that helped frost about twenty dozen of her Christmas cookies. Each year we'd have a waitlist for frosting elves.



Photo courtesy of Debbie Matthews

A plate of steaming lasagna, ready to eat.

Other than the Parmesan family (veal Parmesan, eggplant parm ...) there's one other dish made with spaghetti sauce that I love. It's the beef cannelloni at Marco Polo's Marketplace, the Italian/Chinese restaurant at Bush Gardens Williamsburg.
It's not that the park's red sauce is better than every other red sauce. It's because before covering the pan of stuffed pasta with red sauce, the whole thing is drenched in bechamel sauce (cream sauce).

And let's face it — cream sauce is the frosting of savory foods. It's rich, fatty, delicious, and makes everything you put it on taste better.
But not liking one type of pasta sauce absolutely does not mean I don't love the pasta that goes under it. We eat pasta a few times a week. Heck, we had it tonight.
So, I came up with a lasagna made with a modified cream sauce. There's chicken, peas, and kale in an herbaceous bechamel. Then the whole thing is topped with Swiss cheese and bread crumbs. It's also a wonderful make-ahead dish. You can even freeze it.
When I do freeze it, I wrap the whole thing in foil, then plastic wrap. I drop the bread crumbs in a zip-top bag, lay it on the wrapped dish, then wrap it in plastic a second time. Then you can bake your non-freezer burned product in the two stages it needs. Wrapped this way it's also the perfect dish to take to a friend or neighbor (just add a note with cooking directions).
So Petey and The Kid may have to leave home and get their red sauce fixes on the streets, but when it comes to pasta, I've got 'em covered.
Thanks for your time.
Contact me at debbie@bullcity.mom.

Chicken Lasagna with Kale and Peas

15 no-boil lasagna noodles, or more, if necessary
3-4 cups shredded rotisserie chicken meat
12 ounces frozen peas
1/2 cup finely grated Parmesan cheese
1 cup coarsely grated Swiss or Gruyere cheese
1 cup chicken stock
1/4 cup panko breadcrumbs
Preheat oven to 400°.
Melt butter in a large saucepan over medium heat.
Add garlic and shallots, saute about 1 minute stirring constantly.
Add flour, herbs, and salt. Whisk and cook for 1-2 minutes.
Add milk, one cup at a time, whisking after each addition, and allowing it to thicken before adding the next cup. When all the milk is in, and it starts to gently bubble, remove from heat, stir in drained kale, and set aside.
Grease a 9D13 pan with cooking spray (or 2 8x8's).
Cover bottom of the pan with lasagna noodles, half of the chicken, half the peas, 1/4 cup Parmesan, 1/3 cup water, and 1 1/2 cups sauce (if using 8x8's just cut all measurements in half and fill both dishes at the same time).
Repeat this layer once more.
Lastly, top with a third layer of noodles, 1/3 cup water, 1 1/2 cups sauce, and Swiss cheese.
Spray the underside of the foil with cooking spray. Cover the casserole with foil and bake for 40 minutes.
Remove foil, sprinkle evenly with breadcrumbs, and bake for an additional 10-15 minutes, or until top is golden brown and bubbly.
Let stand at least 20 minutes before cutting and serving.

For the Sauce:
6 tablespoons butter
8 large cloves of garlic, diced fine
1 shallot diced
1 tablespoon fresh rosemary, minced
1 teaspoon dry thyme
1/4 teaspoon fresh nutmeg

6 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon kosher (or to taste)
1/2 teaspoon pepper
3 cups skim milk
2 cups half and half
1 1/2 cups frozen chopped kale, thawed with all the water squeezed out.

‘A SOLDIER’S SOLDIER’ Late husband of Pittsboro woman inducted into veteran’s hall of fame

CN+R Staff Report

PENSACOLA, Florida — Florida’s governor and cabinet have honored late Army Brigadier General Michael (Mike) Lambert Ferguson, a Pensacola native, the for Induction to the Florida Veterans Hall Of Fame.
General Ferguson’s widow Jane now resides in Pittsboro with her daughter Catherine Ferguson.
Ferguson, a well-known Pensacola attorney who died in January at the age of 81, was among the 20 people selected for induction into the Florida Veteran’s Hall of Fame.
A 1960 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, Ferguson was an Army Ranger and a Vietnam veteran who also served in West Germany and at the Pentagon.
Following his retirement from the Army, Ferguson attended law school at the University of Florida and became part of the McDonald, Fleming, Moorhead and Ferguson law firm.
But even, or perhaps especially, as a civilian, Ferguson was focused on the needs and issues of active-duty military personnel and veterans. He was appointed as a civilian assistant to the Secretary of the Army in 2003, a post he held for more than 12 years. He was very active in supporting the Army’s 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne), which moved to Eglin Air Force Base from Fort Bragg in 2011. And as a former Army Ranger, he also maintained a considerable interest in the 6th Ranger Training battalion, also headquartered on Eglin.
“He was a soldier’s soldier. He was not hung up on rank at all,” retired Army Reserve Brig. Gen. Patt Maney, who succeed-

‘He was a soldier’s soldier. He was not hung up on rank at all. He was very focused on helping the Army.’

PATT MANEY, retired Army Reserve Brig. Gen.

ed Ferguson as the CASA for northern Florida, said following Ferguson’s death. “He was very focused on helping the Army.”
Maney also was particularly impressed by the level of Ferguson’s investment in helping military personnel and veterans.
“He was all over the place, on his own time and his own dime,” Maney said in January.
Ferguson was nominated for Florida Veterans’ Hall of Fame induction by Tom Rice, a retired Army first sergeant and Fort Walton Beach, Florida, restaurateur who served as Ferguson’s non-commissioned officer during Ferguson’s service as a civilian assistant to the Secretary of the Army.
Like Maney, Rice earlier this year remembered Ferguson as “a soldier’s soldier.”
“He was a role model for me,” Rice said at the time.
Nominations are reviewed each year by the Florida Veterans’ Hall of Fame Council, whose members subsequently forward a report to the governor and Cabinet. Gov. Ron DeSantis and Cabinet officials announced their selection of the latest inductees earlier this week.
Ferguson is one of 20 veterans chosen for induction into the Hall of Fame’s Class of 2020, and is the only posthumous inductee. The time and date for this year’s induction ceremony have not yet been announced.



Submitted photo
Ferguson shown earlier in his military career.



Retired Army Brig. Gen. Michael Ferguson (right) is shown with a World War II veteran and an active-duty Marine during an Emerald Coast Honor Flight, which sent World War II veterans to Washington, D.C., to see memorials to that war. Ferguson, who died in January at the age of 81, will be inducted into the Florida Veteran’s Hall of Fame.

Photo courtesy of the Northwest Florida Daily News



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Fall garden preparation



DOLLY R. SICKLES
The Optimistic Gardener

All good things must come to an end, and with night-time temperatures dipping into the 40s, it's time to bid this Optimistic Gardener farewell for the year. Before I go, though, I wanted to share a checklist for closing out your victorious summer gardens and preparing for fall and winter. Gardening is the long con, after all.

Annuals

Clean out your flower beds and pots of past-their-prime annuals. If you're so inclined, harvest the seeds from the annuals in your flower beds. Look for flowers with brown seed pods still attached. Remove the pod during the warmest part of the day so they're dry (not after rain or on a dewy morning); drop them in a paper envelope and label them, then put them away in a box until next spring.

Perennials

We're a little past the time for deadheading perennials since they won't have showy flowers or leaves for much longer. Go ahead and divide them in the next two weeks so you can spread the loveliness around your garden. Be sure to hydrate them well as we begin to hedge toward freezing temps. Now is also a great time to do a socially distanced plant swap with friends and neighbors.

Bulbs

Plant bulbs in the fall when the nighttime temperatures stay between 40 to 50 degrees Fahrenheit,

but six weeks before the first hard freeze (the ground will be too hard for the bulbs to get substantial root growth). Plant them root-side down (duh!). I generally plant them the depth of my fingers, so they're totally buried but not too deep. Your garden centers and bulb packaging will have instructions specific to your bulb variety. I find that spring flowers are more attractive in clusters than as single flowers in a straight row.

Since you don't have blooms in hand when planting, you'll have to think about what your garden will look like and plant the bulbs accordingly. Mulch your bed to keep the bulbs protected. Many fall bulbs will perennialize (return for several years) and naturalize (multiply). Some varieties include Daffodils, Grape Hyacinth, Day Lilies, Hosta, tulips, Crocus, Iris (my mother's favorite), and Bluebells.

Trees and shrubs

Trees and shrubs love to join your garden in the fall. The warmer days and cooler nights are great for establishing root growth. Plus, they can take advantage of winter snow and melting, and they don't run the danger of burning up in the oppressive direct summer heat. Make sure you're planting your tree or shrub in the proper space — and anticipate what the sun will look like in the hottest part of the summer. Full sun will kill a shade-lover, and sun-lovers will complain about the shade. Also avoid planting under power lines. Mulch around the base of your plant to hold in moisture and protect it from the elements (sun and snow). Water your plant well, particularly during its first year.

Pruning is a prickly topic and often a choice of personal aesthetic. The Chatham County N.C.



Photo courtesy of Dolly Sickles

Putting down new mulch is a good way to transition into fall.

Cooperative Extension Office has great information for pruning (<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/general-pruning-techniques>). Shrubs like knockout roses and other deciduous shrubs can be pruned in the fall but do it sparingly. Any plant's dormant season is the time to give it a haircut, so be sure you know what you're pruning before you start. Otherwise, you may prune it at a time that encourages new growth on warmer days or you might create wounds that enable fungi and spores to grow.

Vegetables

Plan for late fall and winter crops now. If you've still got any vestiges of your summer Victory Garden, pull out the old plants, amend the soil with fertilizer and till it all under. Add your cold weather crops like kale, collards, and Swiss chard. If you're going to leave the plot until the spring, go ahead and pull out the summer crops and prep the soil. You'll be happy it's neater looking for the next few months, and it'll be less fuss in March and April when you begin planning for the summer.

Herbs

Harvest your herbs before they die out. If you don't use them in the

next day or so, there are a handful of ways you can use them long-term. We love to have cilantro on hand, so I'll trim off the leaves, wash and dry them, and spread them in a single layer on a baking sheet. Into the oven the go at 200 degrees Fahrenheit for about 10 minutes. I use lavender to make simple syrups for coffee and tea; rosemary is hardy; basil gets buzzed into a vegan pesto, and then frozen in ice cubes (with a sprinkle of citric acid to keep it from turning so brown). Thyme and oregano get snipped, washed and bundled together, nosegay-style, and hung upside down in the pantry to dry.

Mulch

The two main reasons you need mulch is to retain moisture and to hold down weed growth. Years ago, Tam Cloer of Cloer's Nursery in Green Level told me that most gardeners liked to mulch twice a year, to keep everything looking fresh and vibrant. I never forgot his advice for waiting until early June to mulch in the first half of the year — even though most folks find it hard to resist the warmer days in March and April, when temps start heating up. But it's important to let the ground warm up



Photo courtesy of Dolly Sickles

Colorful mums can dress up a fall day.

because it encourages root growth.

If you're going to mulch this fall, choose a mulch that works for your destined bed. Pine straw works well in natural areas, but I tend to avoid it because I'm not a fan of its aesthetic and I always feel like it's crawling with ticks. Triple-shredded hardwood works well in refined and formal beds, and pine bark mulch works well for perennial and annual beds. There's also no reason that you can't combine types, either.

Be mindful of how much mulch you add to an area. Don't pile it on too high — thicker layers of mulch keep the air out of the soil, and in Chatham County's clay-based soil, can mean the root growth on your plants won't be as strong.

We just got a beautiful load of shredded hardwood from Country Farm & Home.

Grass

I'm going to just give you a link for grass and lawn maintenance, because that is 100% Mr. Sickles at our house. Check out the NCSU Extension office's thorough information: <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/general-pruning-techniques>.

Houseplants

If you put out any of your houseplants to get fresh air and sunlight during the summer and fall, be sure to bring them back indoors before the first freeze.

Until next summer, y'all ... so long, and thanks for all the fish!

COVID 19 vaccine trials: The only side effect is hope

Everyone wants the world to go back to normal — these are the people making it happen

BY HANNAH TOWEY
UNC Media Hub

It's 6:30 a.m., her alarm is blaring, and all



Gay

Dr. Cindy Gay wishes for is a couple more hours of sleep. But there are eggs to scramble, blueberry pancakes to cook and two young kids to wake, dress and feed.

Gay and her husband take turns making coffee for the long day ahead and log the kids in for virtual learning. The babysitter arrives and Gay hops in the car, just in time for her first phone call.

By now she's on her second cup of coffee, ready to lead a team of infectious disease experts administering Phase 3 of Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine trial. With 1 million deaths around the world, medical professionals are in a life or death sprint to provide immunity against the virus.

Sleep, Gay knows, will have to wait.

"I felt like I needed to do my part," Gay said. "So it's a lot more work, but totally worth it given what we're trying to do ... It's asking yourself, what did you do when you saw something that needed to happen or a situation that wasn't right?"

Six months into the COVID-19 pandemic, life appears permanently changed. Time has been rendered meaningless. Daily life alternates between virtual interaction and isolation, a slow-moving and monotonous haze.

That is, for everyone except the patients and medical professionals

working at extraordinary speeds to combat the deadly virus. In the race for a COVID-19 vaccine, time has never moved quicker for Gay and her team.

"I think it really hit home when my kids were no longer going to school, to be perfectly honest," Gay said. "That really changes your daily life."

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where Gay specializes in infectious diseases, is one of 89 testing sites for Moderna's phase 3 clinical trial for a COVID-19 vaccine. Because of its quick response and extensive research, UNC-CH has become among the most cited universities in the U.S. for coronavirus expertise.

With pressure from the federal government to distribute a vaccine before election day, Moderna and eight other COVID-19 vaccine developers released a pledge in early September reaffirming their commitment to "high ethical standards and sound scientific principles."

Even still, 78 percent of Americans worry the vaccine approval process is being driven more by politics than science. In a rare bipartisan sentiment, 72% of Republicans and 82% of Democrats expressed such worries, according to a survey from STAT and the Harris Poll.

Despite concerns of a rushed approval process, thousands of volunteers across the nation have stepped up as patients for the COVID-19 vaccine trials.

"The biggest motivator is that people are taking a vaccine not for themselves but for their loved ones," Gay said. "I had a working mom who en-

rolled in the study, she's trying to do her job and homeschool her kids. So, like me, she really wants her kids to be able to go back to school."

After multiple medical examinations, participants receive either the vaccine or a placebo. In the weeks that follow, any symptoms are monitored through an E-diary mobile application and follow-up appointments as patients continue with daily lives.

"There's going to be 30,000 participants — that's 30,000 people willing to step up to get a vaccine," Gay said, referring to all Moderna trial sites. "It's really just tremendous."

Louise Stephenson, a senior at UNC-Chapel Hill from Wilmington, was one of 600 participants to receive the Moderna vaccine in phase 2 of the clinical trials.

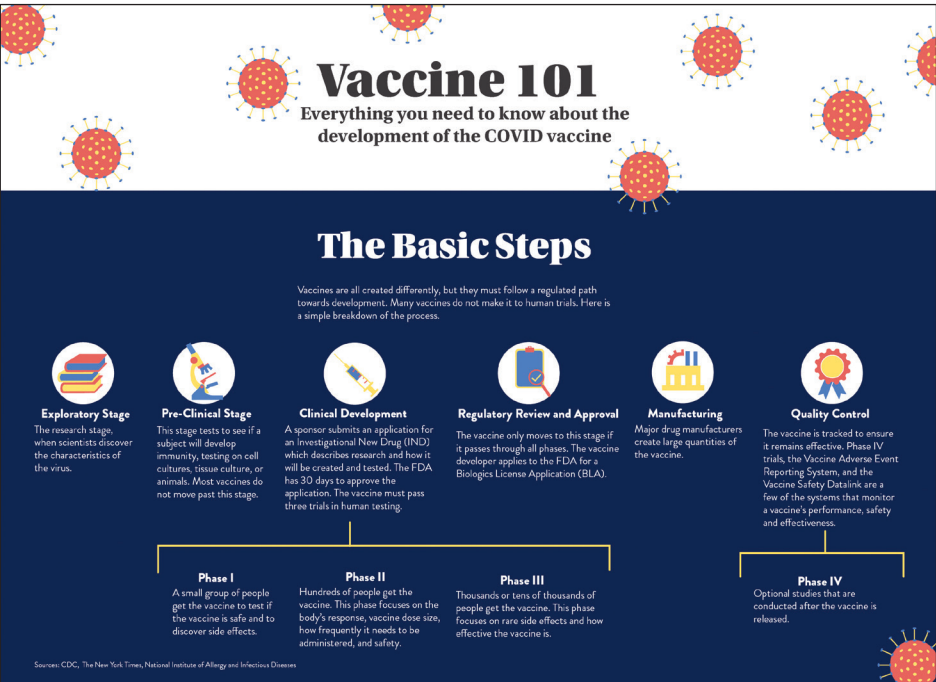
She said her main motivation for enrolling was to help expedite the development of a vaccine, and that she looks forward to telling her future children and grandchildren that she helped in the small ways she could.

"I hope it works so I can say I'm one of the founding members of the Moderna vaccine trials study," Stephenson said, laughing. "I'm optimistic about it. My only fear is that it's just a lot of wasted time."

Stephenson's hopes remained high as COVID-19 clusters spread across UNC-Chapel Hill's campus. Her roommate was infected with the virus, along with three other people she had direct exposure to. She tested negative more than four times.

Gay Kayye, a professor at UNC-Chapel Hill, volunteered for Pfizer's stage 3 accelerated trial, administered by Duke University.

"I had somebody in my office who worked for me for 15 years die from it," Kayye said. "So it certainly affected me directly.



She had been a big part of my life for such a long time."

Neither Kayye nor Stephenson has experienced any side effects, a concern that escalated among participants after an AstraZeneca vaccine patient suffered from adverse neurological symptoms. The symptoms were consistent with a rare but serious spinal inflammatory disorder called transverse myelitis, causing the trial to pause immediately.

However, both volunteers felt one concrete change after receiving the vaccine: a strong sense of hope.

"It was a great educational experience for me because it was very frustrating living through the news cycle of all this," Kayye said. "I felt like there was so much emphasis put on everything bad that was happening, it was hard to find the good stuff."

Gay didn't always know she wanted to be a doctor. After graduating college, she returned to school to take several pre-med classes, eventually completing residency at Vanderbilt University.

In the years that followed, Gay fell in love with infectious diseases, in the way that only medical professionals can. With both a Doctor of Medicine and a Masters in Public Health, Gay has spent years studying HIV treatment and prevention.

"It's all about the human condition in one way or another," Gay said. "I think a lot of infectious disease physicians have a calling to the profession, to address gaps and new things like the COVID-19 pandemic."

Those who are at a higher risk of contracting the virus, such as essential workers, minorities and the elderly, are preferable vaccine trial patients. Moderna recently slowed enrollment to ensure minority representation in the study, with 24% of their participants coming from communities of color.

"I would rather we have higher diverse participants and take one extra week," Moderna CEO Stephane Bancel said. "Diversity matters more to us than speed."

At the local level, recruiting diverse patients comes with unique chal-

lenges. In North Carolina, Hispanics make up 44% of COVID-19 cases where ethnicity is known, despite making up just 9.3% of the population.

Gay said the Latinx community in North Carolina faces logistical concerns in regard to trusting the public health system. Undocumented immigrants, many of whom are essential workers, fear that seeking medical care could make them vulnerable to deportation.

"I totally get why they would be hesitant," Gay said. "So that's a challenge, and it's an understandable one. We really just want to provide information."

Throughout it all, Gay said the highlight of each day is getting to talk with the trial's volunteer participants, who bring with them a spectrum of experiences and backgrounds.

"It's very interesting to see who decides to participate in the study and why they do it. It's uplifting," Gay said. "I'm thanking them. They're thanking me. I think hard times sometimes truly do bring out the best in people and I love that."

POLICE REPORTS



Submitted photo

Bear Creek Arsenal makes donation

Bear Creek Arsenal of Sanford recently made a donation to Montgomery Community College for its Gunsmithing Program. In addition, Bear Creek is making a donation of firearms and components to be used in training. Pictured from left are, from MCC, Mark Dye, Gunsmithing Program department head; and from Bear Creek Arsenal, Account Manager Jim Hill, President Eugene Moore, Plant Superintendent Chad Moore, and CFO Ruby Moore.

CHATHAM COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

On Oct. 13, Kyuana Tena Reaves, 41, of 215 Horton Rd., Goldston, was arrested by Deputy Reggie Griffin for larceny. Reaves was issued a Written Promise to Appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on Oct. 27.

On Oct. 13, Camden Hunter Spinks, 21, of 3819 Old U.S. 1, Moncure, was arrested by Deputy Shannon Parker for Simple Assault. Spinks was issued a Written Promise to Appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on Nov. 10.

On Oct. 15, Kiana Janese Davis, 23, of 131 Johnson St., Chapel Hill, was arrested by Deputy Olivia Sturdivant for Larceny by Employee and Possession of Stolen Goods. Davis was issued a Written Promise to Appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on Nov. 16.

‘WHY DO YOU TRAVEL SO OFTEN?’

My encounters with ICE

BY PATSY MONTESINOS
News + Record Staff

An ICE officer-in-training stopped me in Denver on my way back from Mexico City this month.

It was a familiar and unwanted routine: Because of my travel history and my frequent trips to Mexico to visit my family, I always — *always* — get stopped and escorted to a different room for extra security. This time the officer was polite as he asked me questions and rifled through my luggage. “Make sure the deodorant is actually deodorant,” his supervising officer told him as I sat wondering how long it would take this time.

He continued to ask me all the questions you’d expect — but then he asked, “Why don’t your parents live with you in the United States?” I looked at him with disbelief as I stuttered, “My dad got deported when I was 7 years old.”

“I’m sorry to hear that,” he said. I’m sorry, too, that an officer just like you took my dad, I thought to myself.

ICE — U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement — says that its agents are forbidden from racial and ethnic profiling and are refreshed on training every six months. But that doesn’t seem to hold any water when I constantly have to explain why I travel so often and watch time and time again as ICE agents go through every single item in my bag and private life — from opening tampons to unwrapping the candy I bring back for my friends.

I thought I’d never have to see ICE again after they deported my dad, and yet I’ve since had more encounters with ICE than I can count. They all seem to follow the same line of questioning. “Who are you visiting?” “Why do you travel so often?” “What’s the reason for your trip?”

Two years ago, I felt so violated after a Cuban officer in Florida googled my name and found my website. “So you wanna be a journalist?” he said



with a mocking tone. Last year as I was on my way back to North Carolina, I had a layover in San Antonio, where I got stopped again. It took so long for them to go through every single item in my luggage that I missed my connecting flight and had to stay in a hotel to wait for the next one available. I was so upset I went on an Instagram rant about how unfair it was. Not only did I miss class but I got no sleep that night thinking about how unjust the situation was.

This month I was coming back after surprising my dad for his 65th birthday. As I turned the street corner back in our homeland Valle de Vazquez, his head was already peeking out the door. As I ran to his arms, tears rolled down both our faces. It was the longest hug we’ve ever shared, and it felt like it made up for the past seven birthdays I had missed.

It was the first time I spent his birthday with him since I left at age 15. Since school’s online, I was able to go and celebrate it with him. The four-day trip was so meaningful that I almost forgot about the hard time ICE would give me when I stepped foot on American soil.

It doesn’t matter whether you were born in America. Latinx people will always be foreigners in a foreign land. Stereotypes will always haunt us. To ICE I will always be a suspicious Latina who travels too much because being a self-supporting UNC student and journalist who just wants to see her family can’t be it.

Being stopped and profiled by ICE always brings me so much trauma even as an American citizen. It makes me relive the day my dad was taken from me over and over again. It reminds me that no matter what my passport says, to ICE I am just another Latina who is red-flagged because I travel to Mexico way too often. And it doesn’t matter how many times I tell them that I

travel a lot because my family is in Mexico — they don’t care.

But no matter what they see or think, I am more than that. I am a Latina who left everything she knew in Mexico to get an education. I am a Latina who self-supported herself through college — sometimes even while working up to three jobs. I am a Latina who must straddle both sides of the borders to have both a family and opportunities for a better future.

Patsy Montesinos, a senior at UNC’s Hussman School of Journalism and Media, is a part of the News + Record’s “La Voz” team, which is reporting on Chatham’s Hispanic/Latinx community and funded by a grant from the Facebook Journalism Project.

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N.C. counties process ballots with wary eyes on court fight

Some counties not providing for virtual observation of ballot processing because state doesn't mandate it

BY JORDAN WILKIE & CASEY MORRIS
Carolina Public Press

Already in this election, more than twice as many absentee-by-mail ballots have been returned to North Carolina county boards of elections as in the 2016 presidential election.

The state is on track to have over 30% of the ballots cast this year be voted by mail, compared with 5% in 2016.

That sheer increase in volume has changed how county elections offices are running the election. In June, the state passed a law that changed some of the rules around absentee-by-mail voting to make it easier for voters to cast their ballots and for counties to handle the increase.

One such change is that the legislature allowed counties to meet earlier and more often to begin processing by-mail ballots. The point of starting weeks in advance is to have the ballots ready to be counted on Election Day.

The 453,489 ballots returned as of Friday morning are spread across all 100 counties, and each county is responsible for reviewing and preparing its ballots for counting.

For a ballot to be accepted, and therefore processed, the ballot envelope that it comes in needs to have information from the voter and a witness who is required to watch the voter mark the ballot. If certain informa-

tion is missing or incorrect, the voter will either need to sign an additional certificate for the ballot to be accepted or to request a new ballot.

Carolina Public Press is observing the process in some counties.

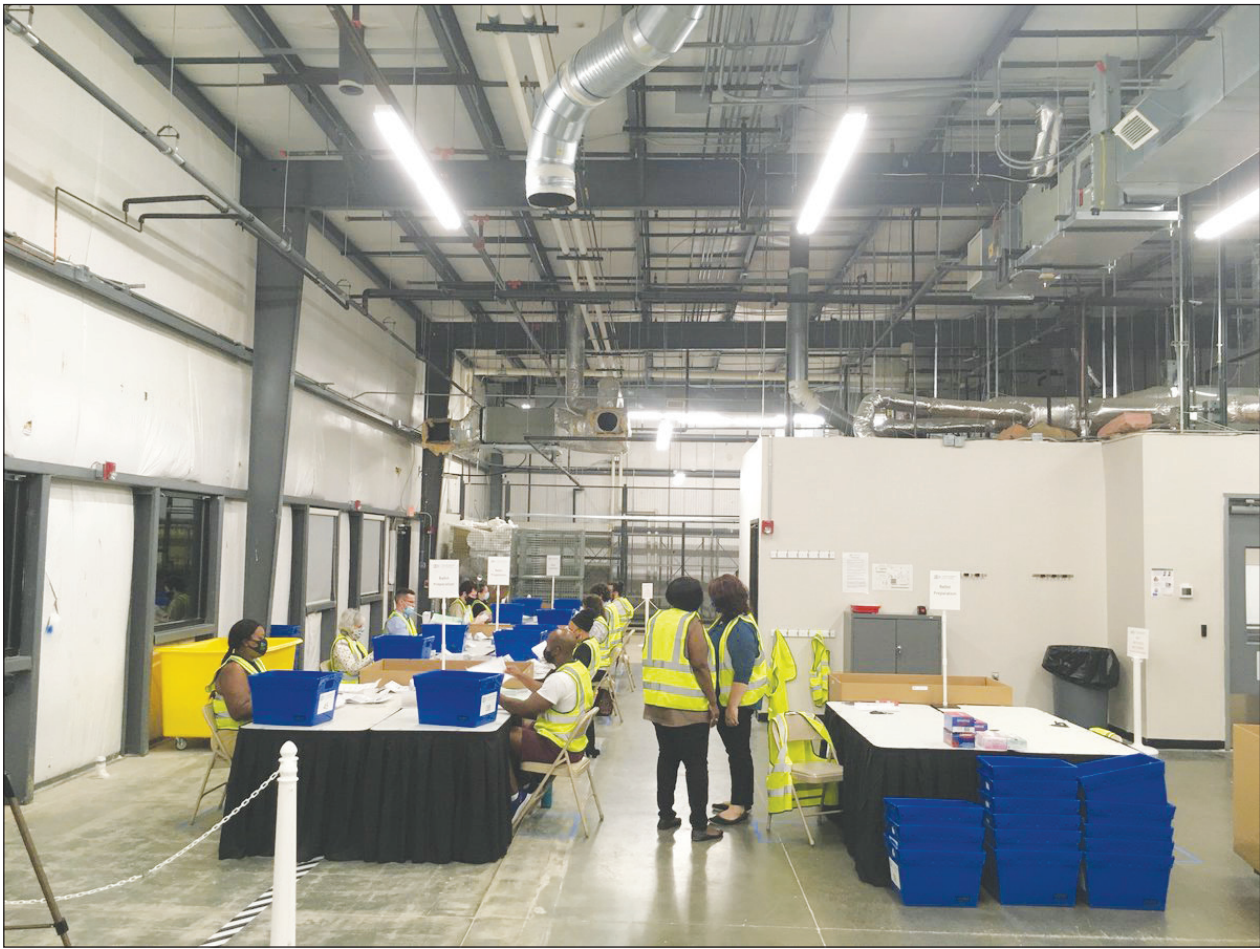
When counties first met on Sept. 29 to process absentee ballots, Durham County processed the almost 14,000 ballots it had received back since ballots first went out to voters in early September.

Now, the weekly lift is a bit lighter. On Tuesday, Durham had 5,891 ballots to process, all of which had arrived in the last week.

If the counties did not keep pace with the ballots coming in, they would have to process and count all of the ballots after Election Day, which could take weeks. Though that is a problem in states around the country, which could mean that the national results for the presidential election remain unclear well into November, it is not so in North Carolina.

When polls close on Nov. 3, North Carolina will upload the votes from all the early voting and absentee-by-mail ballots that they have received through the day before. Karen Brinson Bell, the director of the N.C. State Board of Elections, expects that could be 80% of the total votes cast in the election.

Most of the remaining votes will come in on election night, leaving a small percentage of absentee,



Submitted photo

Durham County Board of Elections staff process absentee ballots at the agency's warehouse on Sept. 29. Each blue bin holds ballots from a different precinct. The workers are removing ballots from absentee-by-mail envelopes and flatten them, to be scanned in batches later on.

provisional and military or overseas ballots to be counted by Nov. 13, when counties are scheduled to make their vote counts official.

County boards of elections, however, are hard-pressed to keep up. So far, Durham's meetings to process ballots have started at 5 p.m. and gone late into the night, putting the meeting in recess after 11 p.m. only to finish the job later in the week.

"It really feels like election night," one of Durham's Board of Elections members, Pamela

Oxendine, said in the Sept. 29 meeting.

Questions remain about which ballots to accept

County boards of election follow rules set out by the state legislature and the NCSBE. Right now, some of those rules are in question.

The NCSBE sought to settle a lawsuit in state court and proposed rules around what to do with absentee-by-mail ballots that have errors or omissions on the required voter and witness information on the ballot envelope. The proposed rules would allow voters to cure every error, including the lack of witness information.

The state legislature did not like those rules and moved to stop them from going into effect, both in state and federal courts.

That means that 6,838 ballots around the state are in limbo. Since Oct. 4, counties have not been able to take any action on ballots with errors on the return envelope. Voters cannot fix those errors or cancel their ballots, which would allow them to request a different vote-by-mail ballot or to vote in person, which begins next week.

There is also confusion about another set of ballots — ones brought back in person to county elections offices by people who are not the voter or an immediate family member.

Technically, if anyone possesses someone else's ballot and is not their close relative, that opens the person up to possible prosecution for a Class I felony, the lowest class of felony in North Carolina's criminal codes.

But the fact that the ballot is returned improperly is not a reason to reject the ballot, absent errors on the return envelope or evidence that the ballot was voted fraudulently, according to guidance from the NCSBE's legal counsel.

Derek Bowens presented that information to his state board on Tuesday. The week before, Durham's board members voted to postpone accepting ballots received from "unauthorized returners" until they received clear, written instructions from

Chatham Votes



the state.

Board member Dawn Baxton, who is also an attorney, said she was concerned about accepting ballots that would later be challenged and about putting people who did not know any better in harm's way.

So far, Durham has had 13 absentee-by-mail ballots returned by people not legally authorized to bring them in. Bowens calls or emails each of the voters whose name is on the ballot.

"In a few instances, the voter is like, 'There is no other option,'" Bowens said.

He told the board members about one such voter who is disabled. Her niece is her closest family member, and that is who turned in the ballot, but nieces or nephews do not count among "immediate family members" as defined in state law.

In other instances, the possibly illegal return of a ballot is the result of inconvenience and unawareness of the law.

One voter returned her ballot and her boyfriend's ballot. They live together, but that also does not qualify as an immediate family member. When Bowens called the voter and told him the situation, the voter requested that his ballot be spoiled so he could vote a new ballot.

Bowens said the ballot as is would be accepted, but the voter was concerned that litigation down the line might cause his ballot to be challenged. That is why he wanted to start the process over again, he told Carolina Public Press and requested that his name not be used over concerns of potential prosecution.

Around the state

Boards of elections meetings are open to the public. Because the boards are meeting to process absentee-by-mail

ballots, and that can only be done in person, counties have to let the public into the buildings to watch the meetings.

Some counties, such as Durham, Forsyth, Guilford and Wake, are also putting their meetings on live video feeds, though the extra step is not required. Other counties, such as Cabarrus and Mecklenburg, the county with the state's second-most registered voters, are not.

It's not required, so the board doesn't, officials told Carolina Public Press.

In Forsyth County, the board used its meeting to prepare for early voting and Election Day.

The usual concerns over polling place security have been heightened this year, particularly since President Donald Trump called for his supporters to watch voting sites and began recruiting people through his campaign to do just that.

Political parties have observers and electioneers at polling places every year. Trump's call for observers is unusual because local party chapters, at the state and county levels, typically organize observers for the elections.

Trump also called for a group called the Proud Boys, who have shown up heavily armed at pro-Trump rallies across the country and who are associated with the white supremacist gathering at Charlottesville, Va., in 2017, to "stand back and stand by" during the election.

The Forsyth County board was told that police and sheriff's officers would patrol the areas near voting sites during the Oct. 15-31 early voting period and on Election Day, Nov. 3. The officers, however, are not allowed to be in uniform and stationed at the polling place, as that could be an issue of voter intimidation.

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LEGALS

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Robert Terrell III hereby notifies **General Shale Brick Inc.**, all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said estate; to notice by the adjustments of the court to determine the orders and judgment of claims preceding conditions. The mandated trial merits are fulfilled formulating issues as their prerogative writs. Robert Terrell III
126 West Presnell Street; Apt C Asheville, North Carolina 27203 (910) 580-9261
Robertintel.o@gmail.com
Self-Represented
Jy2-D24,25tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS 20 E 423 NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
Having qualified as Executrix of the Estate of **JAMES ROBERT HINKLEY**, deceased, of Chatham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before January 4, 2021 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to the said estate will please make immediate payment. This the 1st day of October, 2020.
Christine Marie Hinkley Barone, Executrix
c/o Hemphill Gelder, P.C.
PO Box 31205
Raleigh, NC 27622
01,08,015,022,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
HAVING QUALIFIED as Executor of the Estate of **DENNIS ALBERT TALLY a/k/a DA TALLY**, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned on or before the 30th day of December, 2020, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. This the 23rd day of September, 2020.
Kevin Lynn Tally, Executor of The Estate of
Dennis Albert Tally a/k/a DA Tally
Post Office Box 1806
Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312
MOODY, WILLIAMS, ROPER & LEE, LLP
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
BOX 1806

PITTSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA 27312
(919) 542-5605
01,08,015,22,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
The undersigned, Donald R. Moffett, Jr., having qualified as Executor of the Estate of **MARK STEVEN JACOBSON**, Deceased, late of Chapel Hill, Chatham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having any claim against the Estate of said decedent to present such claims to the undersigned c/o Howard L. Williams, Esq., Brooks, Pierce, McLendon, Humphrey & Leonard, L.L.P., P.O. Box 26000, Greensboro, NC 27420 on or before January 2, 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 Executor. This, the 23rd day of September, 2020.
DONALD R. MOFFETT, JR.
Executor of the Estate of Mark Steven Jacobson, Deceased
Howard L. Williams, Attorney
Brooks, Pierce, McLendon, Humphrey & Leonard, L.L.P.
PO Box 26000
Greensboro, NC 27420
01,08,015,022,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 20 E 312
Having qualified as Administrator CTA of the Estate of **ELLA MARSH WOMBLE**, deceased, of Chatham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before January 1, 2021 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to the said estate will please make immediate payment. The 24th day of September, 2020
Judy G. Headen, Admin CTA
1815 Glovers Ch Rd

Bennett, NC 27208
01,08,015,022,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
Having qualified as Co-Executors of the Estate of **LESSIE RITTER MANESS aka LESSIE MAE MANESS aka LESSIE M. MANESS**, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, the undersigned do hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of the decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned at the office of Ivey & Eggleston, Attorneys at Law, 111 Worth Street, Asheville, North Carolina 27203, on or before January 4, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms or corporations indebted to said estate should make immediate payment to the undersigned. This 1st day of October, 2020.
Hazel Ritter Reich and Levis Charles Ritter
Co-Executors of the Estate of Lessie Ritter Maness aka Lessie Mae Maness aka Lessie M. Maness
S. SCOTT EGGLESTON, Attorney
IVEY & EGGLESTON, ATTOR-

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01,08,015,022,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
ALL PERSONS, firms and corporations having claims against **JAY CARSON LANGHURST**, deceased, of Chatham County, N.C., are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before January 4th, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.
This 1st day of October, 2020.
Margaret McGatha, Executor Estate of Jay Carson Langhurst c/o Roberson Law Firm 1829 E. Franklin St., Ste. 800C Chapel Hill, NC 27514
01,08,015,022,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
20 E 462
NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
Having qualified as Executrix of the Estate of **PHIL E. SENTER**, deceased, of Chatham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before JANUARY 1, 2020 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to the said estate will please make immediate payment.
The 28th day of September, 2020.
Wilda E. Senter, Executrix 511 West 8th St. Siler City, NC 27344 c/o The Law Office of Lewis R. Fadely 119 North Fir Avenue Siler City, NC 27344
01,08,015,022,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
HAVING QUALIFIED as Administrator of the Estate of **CHERYL IRENE GOULD**, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned on or before the 6th day of January, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.
This the 30th day of September, 2020.
Mark L. Gould, Administrator of The Estate of Cheryl Irene Gould Post Office Box 1806 Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312
MOODY, WILLIAMS, ROPER & LEE, LLP
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
BOX 1806
PITTSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA 27312
(919) 542-5605
08,015,022,029,4tc

PUBLIC NOTICE
The public will take notice that pursuant to G.S. 160A-299 the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Goldston will on the 7th day of December, 2020, at 7:00 o'clock p.m. in the Town Hall consider a resolution to close the following streets or portions thereof as follows: All of Camden Road depicted upon the plat entitled "Survey for Lane Poultry of Carolina, Inc." recorded in Plat Book 30, Page 20 of the Chatham County Registry from its intersection with Colonial Avenue as depicted upon said plat and running thence southerly to its intersection with West Goldbar Avenue.
All abutting property owners are hereby notified to appear at this meeting to present any objections that they may have with respect to the closing of the street.
This 5th day of October 2020.
Annie King Gaines, Town Clerk
08,015,022,029,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
20 E 466
NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
Having qualified as Co-Executors of the Estate of **LINDA JONES BRADY**, deceased, of Chatham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before January 8, 2020 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to the said estate will please make immediate payment.
The 5th day of October, 2020.
Co-Executors, Anita Brady 2658 Fall Creek Church Road Bennett, NC 27208 Marta Brown Purvis 688 Putnam Church Rd. Carthage, NC 28327
08,015,022,029,4tp

RESOLUTION OF THE CHATHAM COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
Be it hereby resolved, that in accordance with section 163-234(2) of the General Statutes of North Carolina, the Chatham County Board of Elections will begin counting absentee ballots for the General Election on Tuesday, November 3, 2020, at 2:00 p.m. in Suite F of the Board of Elections office at 984 Thompson Street. The results of the absentee ballot count will not be announced before 7:30 p.m. on Election Day. Be it hereby resolved, that, in accordance with sections 163-234(2) and 163-234(11) of the General Statutes of North Carolina, there will also be a meeting on Thursday, November 12, 2020, at 4:00 p.m. for any eligible ballots received pursuant to General Statutes 163-231(b) and 163-258.12. The results of

this absentee ballot count will be included with canvass. Any elector of the county may attend these meetings and observe the counts by live stream video at [TaTalk.com/YouTube Address: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLOWi.zdAZt2sMngC6CHOGQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLOWi.zdAZt2sMngC6CHOGQ)
Approved this October 6, 2020.
Signatures attached: Laura Heise, Chair Charles Ramos, Secretary Robena Meek, Member Frnk Dunphy II, Member Mark Barroso, Member
015,022,2tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
HAVING QUALIFIED as Administrator of the Estate of **WALTER FARRAR**, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned on or before the 13th day of January, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.
This the 6th day of October, 2020.
Walter M. Farrar, Administrator of The Estate of Walter Farrar Post Office Box 1806 Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312
MOODY, WILLIAMS, ROPER & LEE, LLP
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
BOX 1806
PITTSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA 27312
(919) 542-5605
015,022,029,N5,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
HAVING QUALIFIED as Administrator of the Estate of **MARY HENRIETTA FARRAR**, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned on or before the 13th day of January, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.
This the 6th day of October, 2020.
Walter M. Farrar, Administrator of The Estate of Mary Henrietta Farrar Post Office Box 1806 Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312
MOODY, WILLIAMS, ROPER & LEE, LLP
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
BOX 1806
PITTSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA 27312
(919) 542-5605
015,022,029,N5,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
NORTH CAROLINA CHAHAM COUNTY
20 E 441
All persons, firms, and corporations having claims against **SHARON L. ROBINSON**, deceased, of Chatham County, NC, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before January 15, 2021 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.
This the 12th day of October, 2020.
Diana Robinson Denton, Administrator CTA c/o M. Cory Howes, Attorney Forrester Firm, P.C. 3700 Glenwood Ave, Ste 240 Raleigh, NC 27612
015,022,029,N5,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
20 E 478
NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
Having qualified as Executrix of the Estate of **JENNIFER ELAINE BARTLETT**, deceased, of Chatham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before January 15, 2021 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to the said estate will please make immediate payment.
The 15th day of October, 2020.
Rebecca Lynn Rupp, Executrix 8839 Cameron Meadow Circle Salida, CO 81201 Howard, McCoy & Bolton, L.L.P. PO Box 10305 Raleigh, NC
015,022,029,N5,4tp

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF VALUES
CHATHAM COUNTY 2021 PROPERTY TAX REAPPRAISAL
The Chatham County Board of Commissioners will hold a **PUBLIC HEARING on Monday, November 16, 2020, at 6:00 pm., at the Chatham County Agriculture and Conference Center, 1192 US 64 W, Pittsboro, North Carolina.** The purpose of the PUBLIC HEARING is to solicit public comment on the proposed Schedules, Standards and Rules to be used for the Chatham County 2021 Property Tax Reappraisal. A copy of the proposed schedules, standards and rules will be available for public inspection in the County Tax Administrator's Office located in the Annex Building at 12 East St, Pittsboro. The proposed schedule of values will be posted on the Tax Department Webpage; <https://www.chathamnc.org/government/departments-programs/tax-office/2021-revaluation>.
022,1tc

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
TOWN OF PITTSBORO
The **Pittsboro Town Board of Commissioners** will hold the following **Public Hearing on Monday, October 26, 2020 at 7:00 pm.** The Public Hearing will be conducted remotely via Zoom,

a teleconference software, for the following item: Legislative Public Hearing for a Rezoning Request: John & Denise Mitarotondo are requesting a General Use Rezoning of an approximate 3.61 acre parcel, located at 2539 US 64 Business West (Parcel 6216), from RA-2 (Residential-Agricultural – 2 acres) to RA (Residential Agricultural). 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 October 26, 2020. 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 October 26, 2020 if you wish to participate.
022,1tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
20 E 506
NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of **MARJORIE K. STEPHENSON**, deceased, of Chatham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before January 22, 2021 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to the said estate will please make immediate payment.
The 16th day of October, 2020.
Bruce C. Sargent, Administrator 140 Ridge Top Drive Chapel Hill, NC 27516
022,029,N5,N12,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
20 E 511
The undersigned, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of **DELLA MARGARET FARRELL**, 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 the address P.O. Box 421, Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312, on or before the 22nd day of January, 2021, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make payment.
This 13th day of October, 2020.
Patricia F. Batchelor, Executor PO Box 421 Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312
GUNN & MESSICK, LLP
P.O. BOX 880



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27312-0880
022,029,N5,N12,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
20 E 455
NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
Having qualified as Executor of the Estate of **CHERIE L. WEISS**, deceased, of Chatham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before January 22, 2021 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to the said estate will please make immediate payment.
The 16th day of October, 2020.
Thomas E. Cameron, Executor 3821 Knickerbocker Pkwy. Raleigh, NC 27612
Cameron Advisors, LLC 231 Inwood Forest Drive Raleigh, NC 27603
022,029,N5,N12,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
20 E 515
NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
HAVING QUALIFIED, as Administrator of the Estate of **LAURA JANE MOSS**, 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 January 25, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.
This the 22nd day of October, 2020.
Carol Elaine Moss Johnson, Administratrix of Laura Jane Moss, Estate 955 Green Level Rd Apex, N.C. 27523 919-413-6013
022,029,N5,N12,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
HAVING QUALIFIED, as Administrator C.T.A. of the Estate of **MICHAEL LEE LINDLEY**, 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 January 25, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.
This the 22nd day of October, 2020.
RONALD P. COLLINS, Administrator, C.T.A. Estate of Michael Lee Lindley 117 West Raleigh Street Siler City, NC 27344 919-663-2533
022,029,N5,N12,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
The undersigned, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of **SHIO SAEKI NORTHUP AKA SHIOKO SAEKI NORTHUP**, Deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate to exhibit them to the undersigned at the offices of Tillman,

Whichard & Cagle, PLLC, 501 Eastowne Drive, Suite 130, Chapel Hill, NC 27514, on or before the 22nd day of January, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the estate will please make immediate payment.
This 22nd day of October, 2020.
CHRISTOPHER KEN NORTHUP, EXECUTOR ESTATE OF SHIO SAEKI NORTHUP AKA SHIOKO SAEKI NORTHUP Tillman, Whichard & Cagle, PLLC 501 Eastowne Drive, Suite 130 Chapel Hill, NC 27514
022,029,N5,N12,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
HAVING QUALIFIED, as Administrator of the Estate of **ATLAS LEE BOONE**, 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 January 27, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.
This the 22nd day of October, 2020.
RONALD P. COLLINS, Administrator

Estate of Atlas Lee Boone
117 West Raleigh Street
Siler City, N. C. 27344
919-663-2533
022,029,N5,N12,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
The undersigned, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of **PEGGY ANN PERLMAN**, Deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate to exhibit them to the undersigned at the offices of Tillman, Whichard & Cagle, PLLC, 501 Eastowne Drive, Suite 130, Chapel Hill, NC 27514, on or before the 22nd day of January, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the estate will please make immediate payment.
This 22nd day of October, 2020.
MICHAEL KENNEDY SCHMITT, EXECUTOR ESTATE OF PEGGY ANN PERLMAN Tillman, Whichard & Cagle, PLLC 501 Eastowne Drive, Suite 130 Chapel Hill, NC 27514
022,029,N5,N12,4tc

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N.C. among last states to make death records electronic

Deaths in North Carolina will soon involve a lot less paperwork.

BY NC WATCHDOG REPORTING NETWORK

RALEIGH — At Haywood Funeral Home, every service triggers a bureaucratic process that’s been largely unchanged across North Carolina since 1914, when the company pulled its hearses along Raleigh’s streets with horses. More than 100 years later, staff members at Haywood — just like every other funeral home in the state — produce a physical copy of every death certificate. They hand-deliver the form, printed on 100% cotton paper, to the right doctor and wait. When they pick the form up again, they drive it to the local health department and wait again. “We’re talking substantial time,” said Orrin Ray Haywood Jr., president and funeral director of Haywood Funeral Home. “We’re talking hours of time in a week. You mul-

tiply that times 52 — good gracious.” It can take days or weeks for the death certificates to complete their journey back to the family, and even longer for the forms to migrate by mail to the state’s vital records office, which must hand-enter each field into a database. The death certificate process is identical for the 100 to 150 services Haywood Funeral Home conducts every year, as well as for the roughly 95,000 deaths annually across the state. But that will soon change. Over the next few weeks, North Carolina is set to pilot a new electronic system to register deaths. Only two other states — West Virginia and Rhode Island — still lack such systems, making North Carolina one of the last in the country to modernize its death reporting process. “The biggest change is that instead of it taking somewhere between two and three months to tell you who died in North Carolina last week, I should be able to do that within five to six days,” said Delton Atkinson, interim director for the State Center for Health Statistics and project manager for the upgrade. For families, waiting for an official death certificate can mean financial



Photo by Frank Taylor / Carolina Public Press

Death certificates from North Carolina residents who died since March 1 show many who died from symptoms similar to those who died from illnesses related to COVID-19, but without any record of them having been tested for the virus.

More than 3,800 North Carolinians have died from Covid-19.

Source: USAFacts.org



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and legal delays. It puts cremations on hold. And in the aggregate, the current paper-based system means data on how people in North Carolina die can languish for months in bureaucratic limbo. That matters to public health experts working to analyze everything from cancer and birth defects to the novel coronavirus in real time. “For some things like tracking long-term trends, it may not make that much of a difference,” said Melissa McPheeters, co-director of the Center for Improving the Public’s Health through Informatics at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. “But when we have situations like COVID or when there are quickly moving crises, like overdoses, you want to get that information as fast as you can.”

Upgrading from ‘brute force’

The pilot, starting Monday, will include eight of the state’s most populous counties, including Wake, Durham, Guilford and Mecklenburg. Atkinson said other counties will join in groups of about 20 before the system is fully implemented by summer 2021. The N.C. General Assembly authorized about \$2 million for the project — a priority of then-Gov. Pat McCrory — back in 2015, and additional funding comes from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the state’s Division of Public Health. The bulk of that funding will go to VitalChek, a firm that specializes in vital records management software either already operating or coming on-

line in eight other states. Instead of printing the physical forms, funeral directors, doctors and medical examiners will access the new N.C. Database Application for Vital Events through a web-based portal. That will mean training for funeral directors like Haywood, who said he expects the system to save his operation a lot of time. But Atkinson said the new system will mean broader benefits for public health, too. Once deaths are complete in the state’s system, they’ll be transmitted daily to the CDC’s National Center for Health Statistics, which codes each cause of death based on an international standard. The data can then flow to more specific registries tracking issues like cancer or birth defects. “We’re using the power of technology, the power of systems to be able to automate the processes,” Atkinson said. “The thing that we’re trying to do is minimize the human interventions that are necessary that we have lived with forever.” Atkinson said the current system relies on “the brute force of people doing things.” And as the COVID-19 pandemic has made clear, the data lags woefully behind as a result. As of Friday, the number of deaths from those testing positive for COVID-19 approached 4,000, according to data from the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services. DHHS gathers that information directly from labs and clinicians via a separate electronic system. But the state’s most recent public release of its death database from Oct. 2 tallies only 2,100 deaths linked to COVID-19, a shortfall caused by data entry that’s fallen months behind. The backlog has created something of an information vacuum for North Carolina on questions of excess mortality, a measurement of a larger-than-expected number of deaths used in

As of Friday, the number of deaths from those testing positive for COVID-19 approached 4,000, according to data from the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services. DHHS gathers that information directly from labs and clinicians via a separate electronic system. But the state’s most recent public release of its death database from Oct. 2 tallies only 2,100 deaths linked to COVID-19, a shortfall caused by data entry that’s fallen months behind.

recent months to quantify the true toll of the novel coronavirus and its related effects. An Oct. 12 study in the Journal of the American Medical Association, for example, found that U.S. deaths increased by 20% overall from March to June compared to previous years. North Carolina was one of two states excluded from the study because of missing data.

No ‘panacea’

Other states that have upgraded to electronic death reporting systems have seen turnaround times for data drop significantly soon after the switch. That’s true of Tennessee, where Vanderbilt’s McPheeters saw the transition away from paper firsthand as the state health department’s assistant commissioner for informatics and analytics. Before the change, she said it took about 15 days to register deaths and 30 days to produce even basic data. Now, deaths are registered on average within 10 days. Health officials currently get basic data within 12 days, and a complete dataset with standardized cause-of-death codes in two to three weeks — a “tremendous improvement,” McPheeters said. Although she called electronic death registration systems a huge step forward, she added that a nationwide public health system that has long been inadequate. “It’s not a complete panacea for everything,” McPheeters said.

Across the country, she said, health experts have been dogged by a failure of interoperability — how well their systems can efficiently merge data from disparate sources like labs, funeral homes, hospitals and doctor’s offices. “It’s a whole complex system of systems, really, that need to be able to speak to each other better,” McPheeters said. And those problems, she said, have meant an “absolute breakdown” in the U.S. response to the COVID-19 pandemic. “You can’t act without good data,” McPheeters said. “And you can’t have good data without good systems.” At his funeral home in Raleigh, Haywood said he’s looking forward to the upcoming training and rollout of the system starting next week. Less time driving around the county means his staff can focus on more personalized services in times of grief, and get families what they need faster. “We’ve been hearing and hoping and praying about this coming to fruition,” he said. “Only because we can see — gosh — the amount of time that it would save.”

This story was jointly reported and edited by Kate Martin and Frank Taylor of Carolina Public Press, Ames Alexander of The Charlotte Observer, Tyler Dukes and Dave Hendrickson of The News & Observer, Nick Ochsner of WBTV, Emily Featherston of WECT, Travis Fain of WRAL, and Jason deBruyn of WUNC.

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NEWS BRIEFS

Siler City Parks & Rec hosts ‘Supper with Santa’

SILER CITY — Santa and Mrs. Claus are coming to Siler City on Dec. 4. Traditionally, Siler City Parks and Recreation offers the annual special event as a dine-in experience; however, out of an abundance of caution, the 2020 event will feature a special visitation and picture opportunities with Santa and ticket-holders will receive a delicious catered “to-go” dinner and a fun Holiday craft kit to take home and enjoy. Supper with Santa will be held from 5:30 - 8 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 4, at the Paul Braxton Gymnasium; the facility will magically be turned into a winter wonderland where fun festive family memories are sure to be made. This is a floating event and pre-registered tickets are required to enter as space is limited. Event tickets are available online at www.silercity.org or in City Hall (311 North Second Avenue, Siler City). Adult tickets are \$10 and tickets for children age 12 and younger are \$5. The deadline to register is Nov. 27. No tickets will be available on the day of the event. Siler City Parks and Recreation seeks to offer exceptional experiences in a variety of ways and Supper with Santa will bring joy to the community through a festive recreational opportunity families can enjoy this Christmas season. The safety of participants and community members is a top priority. Operations are subject to change to adhere to COVID-19 guidelines. For more information, please contact Daniel Spivey with the Siler City Parks and Recreation Department at 919-742-2699, email recreation@silercity.org, or visit us online at www.silercity.org.

– CN+R staff reports

chathamlife

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