



Chatham News + Record

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CHATHAM'S CYBER ATTACK

Stolen files reveal severity of breach; manager briefs commissioners on \$708K ransomware attack

Data includes personal info about local residents, current and former county employees

BY BILL HORNER III, D. LARS DOLDER AND HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

Chatham County Manager Dan LaMontagne told commissioners as part of a report he made on the attack at the board's regular meeting Monday evening.

The county is encouraging anyone who believes they may have been impacted to "remain vigilant and monitor their accounts for any suspicious activity," and to consider placing a fraud alert and/or security freeze on their credit report.

The stolen data files were posted after Chatham County failed to pay a 50 bitcoin ransom — the cryptocurrency was worth roughly \$708,000 on Nov. 4, a week after

the attack — to DoppelPaymer, the "threat actor" responsible for the breach, LaMontagne told the News + Record after Monday's meeting.

Cybersecurity experts routinely warn businesses and entities not to pay ransomware demands, saying it incentivizes cybercrime. But not paying the ransom poses the threat of stolen files being made public in retaliation, as happened in Chatham County's case.

The News + Record reviewed many of the more than 14,000 documents posted by the interna-

See **ATTACK**, page A12

A GROWING CONCERN

Testing the waters: Chatham leaders plan utility's capacity growth

BY D. LARS DOLDER
News + Record Staff

Editor's note: In this first of a series, the News + Record looks at Chatham's intricate water utility system — how the county develops and maintains water infrastructure, and how it plans to address growth demands over coming decades. Later installments will explore details of infrastructure development at the municipal level, and how sewer capacity demands are addressed.

Chatham County is barreling toward a new identity. In its eastern parts, aggressive real estate development — led by Chatham Park Investors in Pittsboro — promises to swell the local population 10-fold over the next 20 years.

In the west, impending Siler City industry — especially at the 1,802-acre Chatham-Siler City Advanced Manufacturing (CAM) Site — will introduce new companies operating major facilities. With them will come thousands of new residents settling in to join the town's burgeoning heavy industrial market.

See **WATER**, page A6

Gov. Cooper says school staff eligible for vaccine Feb. 24, but that date's not certain in Chatham or across state

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN

News + Record Staff

North Carolina will expand vaccine eligibility to Group 3, starting with educators and school personnel on Feb. 24, Gov. Roy Cooper announced last Wednesday, with other frontline workers set to become eligible March 10.

"Starting with a smaller number of Group 3 frontline essential workers helps providers streamline vaccine distribution effectively and efficiently," Cooper said, adding that the educators included in the Feb. 24 eligibility window includes teachers, principals, childcare providers, bus drivers, custodial and cafeteria staff and more — about 240,000

estimated people.

"Essential workers are just that — essential," he tweeted later in the day. "We know educators can continue to work safely before being vaccinated as long as schools follow state health guidance. Students can be back in schools safely now. That's what I want them to do."

Cooper's announcement does not guarantee that school staff can receive a vaccine starting the 24th, across the state or in Chatham. That date represents when the state has said K-12 education personnel and child care workers become eligible, but counties must still offer vaccinations to all people in the current phase who wish to receive one before moving on to the next group.



Laurie Paige teaches students both in-person and virtually last week at Chatham Central High School. Hybrid learning started for high schoolers in Chatham County Schools Feb. 1.

Staff photo by James Kiefer

Chatham County Public Health Director Mike Zelek said the department will continue to focus its vaccina-

tion efforts on individuals in Groups 1 and 2 who have not yet been vaccinated.

"Thousands of Chatham resi-

dents in these groups remain unvaccinated, and we are ex-

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COVID-19 VACCINE



Courtesy of CCPHD

From left, Cynthia Reives, N.C. Rep. Robert Reives II and Chatham County Environmental Health Director Anne Lowry assist with the check-in process Friday afternoon during a COVID-19 vaccination event at Roberts Chapel Missionary Baptist Church in Goldston.

Chatham works to address vaccine inequity

BY D. LARS DOLDER
News + Record Staff

As vaccine distribution efforts accelerate across the state and around the world, minority populations remain woefully underrepresented among the inoculated population.

In North Carolina, recent data suggest "significant racial and ethnic disparities in urban, suburban and rural counties, and from the coast to the mountains," according to an analysis by The Charlotte Observer.

In 77 of N.C.'s 100 counties, Black residents were under-

represented, the Observer found. Hispanic residents were underrepresented in 93.

It's not a novel issue, though. Since vaccine dispensation began, concerns have proliferated that minority groups — statistically the most impacted by COVID-19 — would lag behind the general population in getting the vaccine.

In a press conference earlier this month, Gov. Roy Cooper said vaccine inequities are decreasing, "but there is more work to be done."

About 22% of the state's

See **VACCINE**, page A6

JARROD LOWERY

Meet Mountaire Farms' 'new' Community Relations Manager

BY VICTORIA JOHNSON
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — For many years, Mark Reif served as Mountaire Farms' only North Carolina community relations manager — so his successor, Jarrod Lowery, 32, knows he has some big shoes to fill.

"Everyone thought the world of Mark, and Mark did a great job of building relationships," Lowery said. "It's a really awesome opportunity that the company is putting the trust in me the way they did put trust in Mark. I feel the weight, I feel the responsibility, but I have the confidence that I can deliver just as well as he did."

Lowery joined the community relations department of Mountaire Farms, the nation's sixth largest poultry company, in July 2019. Mountaire employs about 10,000 employees across five states, including North Carolina, where the company has invested at least \$200 million in expansions since 2016.

Siler City's Mountaire Farms poultry processing plant officially opened in April 2019.

Before joining Mountaire, Lowery worked in N.C. state



Staff photo by Kim Hawks

Jarrold Lowery, 32, is the Community Relations Manager for Mountaire Farms in Siler City and Chatham County.

government for about seven years as a regional field director with the Office of Gov. Pat McCrory and the N.C. Dept. of Insurance — but he said he felt like he just wasn't serving the community in the way he'd hoped.

As a regional field director, he worked with community nonprofits and civic organizations.

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IN THE KNOW

Pandemic may force delays in Siler City's elections. **PAGE A11**

J-M swimmer Jennah Fately secures record-setting state title. **PAGE B1**

Meet CCS Interim Supt. Randy Bridges, 'an educator for life.' **PAGE B6**

A look at Chatham's Community Remembrance Coalition. **PAGE B7**



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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

The Friends of the Chatham Community Library has cancelled its Spring Book Sale, due to the continued lockdown of government offices and businesses, ordered by federal, state, and local government. More information can be found on the website: friends-cl.org.

Chatham County Council on Aging: Both centers are closed at this time until further notice. If you need to pick up supplies, call the Siler City or Pittsboro location or check our website at chathamcoa.org.

ON THE AGENDA

THURSDAY

The Chatham County

Board of Education will convene a special session Feb. 23 for continued discussion on K-5 schools moving to Plan A as recommended by the N.C. General Assembly and N.C. Gov. Roy Cooper. The 5:30 p.m. meeting in the Horton Middle School multipurpose room will stream in real time at <https://bit.ly/CCBOElivestream>. The district will follow all health and safety requirements, including face coverings, six feet of physical distance between individuals and symptom screenings for those entering the meeting room.

- **The Woods Charter School Board** will hold its regular meeting Feb. 18th at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom and will discuss reopening plans for the school.
- **The Pittsboro Board of Commissioners** will meet at 7 p.m. Feb. 22 via Zoom.
- **The Pittsboro Farmers Market** is open with seasonable items year-round from 3 to 6 p.m. on Thursdays. It is located at 287 East St., Pittsboro.
- **St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church** provides a healthy, meal at no cost

to those who come to us hungry at noon on Thursdays. We provide a place of hospitality and fellowship for everyone. All are welcome, regardless of race, sex, age, national origin, religious preference, handicap, or income.

OTHER

- **Smith & Buckner Food Drive:** now through Feb. 19, Drop off non-perishable items during regular business hours to their facilities at 230 N. Second Avenue, Siler City.
- **The Chatham Historical Museum** is open Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. Masks required and groups will be distanced. Adult and kid friendly; no admission fee. Our current special exhibit is vintage toys. Don't miss it! Our permanent exhibits cover all aspects of Chatham's unique history. The Museum is located in the historic Chatham County Courthouse in the circle. More info: <https://chathamhistory.org>

- **Second Bloom of Chatham Thrift Shop** has made the move to Chatham Commons, at 630 E. St., Pittsboro, in the Food Lion shopping center. We will be accepting donations when we reopen. Our hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. All proceeds provide support for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and promote community education in collaboration with Chatham County.
- **Chatham Community Library:** While the library is closed, all classes will be offered online. Class descriptions and a registration link can be found at www.chathamnc.org/ComputerClasses. -- Available in February: Microsoft Excel Basic, Microsoft Excel Basics, Part 2: February 23, Tuesday, 3 p.m.
- With COVID-19 sweeping the country, artists' livelihoods are being challenged like never before. The Chatham Arts Council has put together a relief effort specifically for artists and arts-workers called

- CAARE: Chatham Artist and Arts-Worker Relief Effort.** For more information on CAARE, or to donate, visit ChathamArtsCouncil.org.
- **JMArts** hosted a **JMACoronaConcert** via Twitter featuring performances submitted by JM students and faculty. Concerts can be viewed on its Twitter account @JMArts and by using the hashtags #JMACoronaConcert performances and #JMACoronaConcert program.
- **Foster and/or adoptive information:** Give children a safe place to grow. Interested in becoming a Foster and/or Adoptive parent? Call 919-642-6956 to learn more.
- **Alcoholics Anonymous** — North Carolina District 33, call the Help Line at 866-640-0180 for the meeting schedule for this area.
- **Motorcycle Association** — The Motorcycle Association for Chatham, Western Wake, Lee, Orange and Alamance counties meets in Pittsboro and is open to all riders. For information, call

- 919-392-3939 or visit www.chathamCBA.com.
- **Narcotics Anonymous** — For drug problems in the family, Narcotics Anonymous helps. Call 1-800-721-8225 for listing of local meetings.
- **Al-Anon Meeting** — Pittsboro Serenity Seekers Al-Anon Family Group meets at 7 p.m. Mondays at Chatham Community Church, in the lower level of Chatham Mill, Pittsboro.
- **Scout News**
- Boy Scout Troop 93 in Pittsboro meets 7 p.m. Wednesdays at the Harold Boone Scout Park on Hwy 64W, just past CCCC. Open to boys, ages 11-17. Visit www.bstroop93.org for more information.
- Pack 924 of Siler City First U.M.C. meets on from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesdays for boys, grades 1 through 5. Come join the Cub Scouts.
- Pack 900 in Bear Creek meets at 7 p.m. Tuesdays at Meroney's U.M.C., following the school calendar. See <http://pack900.com> for more information.

CHATHAM BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

County's Vicki McConnell recognized for 45 years of service, reports on quarterly budget and cyber incident

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Chatham County Deputy County Manager and Finance Director Vicki McConnell will retire Feb. 19 after 45 years of service with county government.

"When you love what you do, it doesn't feel like work," she added. "Thanks, everyone, for making me want to come to work, almost every day, it's been a pleasure working with such a special group of people."

During her time with the county, McConnell played "an instrumental role" in the computerization of county finance records, said the county's Tuesday release regarding her retirement. While she was finance director, the department received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada for 30 consecutive years.

At the meeting Monday, she credited her staff for making her job enjoyable and successful.

"They say all good things must come to an end, and I'm looking to whatever lies ahead for me," she said, telling staff in the news release

that included completing home projects, spending more time at the lake and playing pickleball. "Working here has been both an honor and a privilege. Thank you all very much."

Assistant Finance Officer Hope Tally has been appointed as interim finance director, according to the release. She has worked with the county for 19 years. On Monday, County Manager Dan LaMontagne, who's been with the county since 2010, thanked McConnell not only for her work, but for her friendship.

"Thank you for your counsel and for your friendship and for the hard work you've done for the county," he said, "and I wish you the very best in retirement."

The rest of the meeting

During Monday's meeting, the board also heard legislative public hearings, approved a request for subdivision

Final Plat review, heard a quarterly budget update and presentation on the Oct. 28 cyber incident.

The board heard two public hearings. The first — general use rezoning request by Brendie Vega, on behalf of Moncure Holdings LLC & Moncure Holdings West LLC, to rezone in full or a portion of approximately 249.036 acres total of multiple parcels located off Old U.S. 1, Pea Ridge Road, Christian Chapel Church Road, and Moncure Flatwood Road in Cape Fear Township — was closed referred to the county's planning board, which will discuss the request at its March meeting.

The second hearing was also closed and referred to the Environmental Review Advisory Committee/Watershed Review for its March meeting. That request, also by Moncure Holdings LLC and Moncure Holdings West LLC, is to amend Section 302 (E) (2)(b) of the Watershed Protection Ordinance, to establish an overlay district where the 10/70 rule applies in the Cape Fear WS-IV Protected Area watershed district and amend the Watershed Protection Map to establish the boundaries of the overlay district.

The board also approved a request for subdivision Final Plat review by Mark Ashness, P.E., on behalf of Laurel Ridge Development Inc. as well as approval of Laurel Ridge Phase 2B, consisting of 14 lots on 67 acres, located off Old NC 87.

COVID-19 update

Chatham County Public Health Director Mike Zelek provided the board with a COVID-19 update.

"This week we've kind of changed the format," LaMontagne said of the COVID-19 update

portion of the meeting, "because the funding, the outreach, and the health concerns are all within the vaccination clinics that are very successful right now, and I'll turn it over to Mike to tell you more."

Zelek said the department is continuing to work to distribute vaccinations, and reminded the board that the department receives one-third of vaccines that come to Chatham, with Piedmont Health and Chatham Hospital receiving other supplies. He estimated that about 5,000 Chatham residents in Groups 1 and 2 (healthcare workers and individuals 65 or older) still needed to be vaccinated before the county could begin vaccinating school staff and childcare workers eligible on Feb. 24 under Group 3. About two-thirds of vaccinated Chatham residents received a vaccine outside of Chatham, Zelek said, adding that many healthcare workers were vaccinated in their counties of work and older residents likely made appointments in other locations as well.

Budget update

Budget Analyst Darrell Butts presented a revised second quarter budget update, which he said contained much of the same information presented at the board's January retreat. He stressed

that revenue from the county's sales tax was strong and continued to "exceed all of our expectations."

"I think the takeaway is we are in a good spot due to careful management of expenditures, and continued healthy sales tax collections and property tax collections," he said.

The board unanimously approved a one-time payment to permanent employees — \$100 a month from March to December — working out to a \$1,000 bonus, in consideration of this fiscal year's budget elimination of employee pay adjustments and in recognition of employees' efforts during pandemic response. Part-time employees will also receive a bonus based on the time they've worked, LaMontagne said.

"Absolutely, we want to do that," Commissioner Karen Howard said.

The board concluded with a presentation by LaMontagne on the Oct. 28 cyber incident and an effort by Commissioner Franklin Gomez Flores to have the county avoid publishing its tax listings with the News + Record. For that report, see this week's front-page cyber attack story update.

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

Chatham County Council on Aging

WEEKLY TRIVIA HUNT!

Q: What teacher and principal of Horton School helped lead the integration of Chatham County Schools?

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

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'SHE'S FULL OF LOVE'

J-M's Vicky Tobar provides interpretation, support to Siler City's Spanish-speaking families

BY VICTORIA JOHNSON
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — Growing up, Virginia "Vicky" Tobar had always wanted to be a school nurse. She'd even started studying to be one in the early 2000s, too — at least until Jordan-Matthews High School got in the way.



Tobar

"Of course, in a good way," she added with a laugh.

In 2004, Tobar joined Jordan-Matthews as a Spanish interpreter after applying on a whim. Sixteen years later, she's still there, faithfully serving J-M's Spanish-speaking families — a service record that education associations have recently recognized in Chatham County and throughout North Carolina.

For her work and dedication, the Chatham County Association of Educators named Tobar their Educational Support Professional (ESP) of the Year in late last year; shortly after the North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE) Education Support Professionals Council also named her 2021's Education Support Professional of the Year in mid-January.

"Virginia provides a vital service to her students and the families in her community," said Tijuana Greene, president of the NCAE Education Support Professionals Council, in a January press release. "She cares deeply about the children with which she works and ensures their educational needs are met in the best possible way."

Interpretation may not have been what younger Vicky dreamed about doing, it wouldn't have surprised her either; after all, she's been interpreting and translating

all her life for her mother, who's from Mexico.

"I grew up speaking Spanish because of my mom," Tobar said. "My mom to this day doesn't speak English, so I have to be her interpreter, and I've been her interpreter."

Tobar, 43, grew up in Los Angeles. She called it a "fun place" to grow up, but she and her family faced many challenges. Tobar dropped out of high school to help her mother take care of her little brother while she worked to provide for her children. Since her mother couldn't speak or read English, Tobar said she also "had to be there" for her to interpret.

"It's something that I chose to do because it was just so easy to say, 'Mom, I'll help you. I don't want to go to school,'" Tobar said. "But I look back on that and I'm thinking, 'Well, that wasn't the best choice.'"

She decided to revisit her education over a decade later on the other side of the country — and that decision unintentionally brought her to J-M.

Tobar met her now-husband, Mario, in 1993; in 1995, he moved with her and her family moved to Siler City, seeking better opportunities. Two children — the Tobars' daughter, Michelle, and son, Robert, came after the move. Both are now young adults and have children of their own.

In the late 1990s, she started working in Glendale Hosiery Outlet Store in Siler City, but after working there five years, she knew it wasn't where she wanted to be. So, with her husband's support, she decided to go back to school. She earned her GED in 2003; soon after, she enrolled in classes to become a certified nursing assistant.

"Of course, we were struggling because the only one working was my husband at that time," she said, adding that he'd been working a third

shift and taking care of their two children.

He needed help, she said, so she decided to put her nursing education on hold and looked for a job. In 2004, her husband stumbled across several openings with Chatham County Schools, including one for an interpreter at J-M.

"And I said, 'Awesome.' I got my GED. I got some kind of college background, a little bit," she said. "I didn't have any office experience or anything like that, but I figured, 'Well, you know, I speak English. I speak Spanish. Why not?'"

J-M's principal at the time, David Moody, interviewed her, and after they bonded over high school sports games — which she and her family attended regularly — he offered her the job on the spot.

"After that, it was basically like, 'Oh, my gosh, like, am I going to start working?' He says, 'When can you start?' And I said, 'Tomorrow!'" she said, laughing. "That's how soon I needed a job. And there it is — 16 years later, I'm still there."

Tobar is the only school interpreter at J-M, which serves about 870 students, most of whom are Hispanic. She's not the only Spanish speaker, though; the school also employs Spanish teachers, ESL teachers and a bilingual secretary, who Tobar called her "partner-in-crime."

As an interpreter, Tobar works with everyone — families, students, administration and teachers. She's the messenger: she'll call or email families on behalf of the school, often translating teacher or staff comments word by word, and then she'll translate parents' responses back to English. Parent-teacher

conferences work similarly — just in real time.

"We do it consecutively," she said. "The teachers will say something, and then I'll translate it, and then we just keep going back and forth."

But for her, especially during the pandemic, interpretation goes beyond answering phone calls, bridging communication gaps and explaining concepts in a language others will understand.

"As far as my job and what I do, it's far beyond just being an interpreter or translator," she said. "I feel like in my field, you have to have a lot of empathy, a lot of patience. You have to be able to give our families, our students, our parents, all the attention they require."

Sometimes, she added, it's tough and she may hear things she never wished to know, but she makes sure that she's always there for families to offer support however she can.

"It's just making sure that nobody falls behind," she said.

Even before the pandemic, Tobar worked to advise and empower "her" families. She makes sure that parents and students know to check their emails constantly — and if parents didn't have emails, she helped them set up accounts. Other times, she'd have parents come to the school, help them set up the right apps and show them what they needed to know.

"Let me tell you when it comes to assisting a parent in our community, it doesn't mean I'm going to send you a link, so we can Zoom in and I can assist you that way," she said. "People are more hands-on. They're not going to read all that information, so it's a lot easier to sit down with the family."

COVID-19, after all,

didn't much change how she works; in fact, up until the week high school students returned under Plan B, she'd been going to her office every single day.

"How can I help my parents if I was at home?" she asked. "How can I help the office if I was at home? ... I couldn't leave my families — just, you know, I felt like I was going to abandon them if I wasn't at school."

The work pace has always been "nonstop, nonstop, nonstop," she said, but the pandemic has swelled the amount of work she now has to tackle.

"As of now, it's just so overwhelming," she said, adding, "With the pandemic going on, it seems like it would be easier, but it's not. It's just like a volume of calls, emails and communicating with our parents."

It's hard work, she said, and receiving recognition from education associations for 16 years' worth of it meant the world to her. While parents and families had recognized her work before, Tobar said, but no education association ever had.

"Can you believe it?" she said, smiling. "I feel so good that all my hard work has paid off, and it's made it even sweeter to get recognized for the state. I mean, I'm telling you, I was just so happy."

Throughout November and December, the Hispanic Liaison and others congratulated Tobar on Facebook.

"We get the privilege of working with her through our youth program and know how much work and dedication she puts into our Siler City community," the Liaison's staff wrote in December. "Thank you, Ms. Tobar, for the love you put into your work! We appreciate you so much!"

Nearly 50 people also commented on Jordan-Matthews' Facebook posts about Tobar's awards in English and Spanish.

"Congratulations, Mrs. Vicky Tobar," Vilma Sandoval posted in Spanish. "Thank you very much for all the support for our children and parents. You have done a great job. You deserve it."

"My kids were better for knowing her," wrote another parent, Raymond DeCristofaro, in a later post. "Thank you."

Maria Soto, who leads Communities In Schools' Family Advocacy Program, worked with Tobar for three years, when Tobar worked part-time as Soto's assistant from 2012 to 2015.

"We worked very close together," Soto said. "... Vicky is always willing to help and also learn and grow. She's a great advocate for the families, for the community."

Even after a full day's work at J-M, Tobar would still enter CIS' office with a "big smile" and lots of energy, Soto said.

"She's full of love," she added. "... I feel that sometimes she doesn't even give herself the credit (for) all the things she does for others and how she has helped a lot of youth, a lot of them, go through a lot of hard times in their lives."

Though she appreciates and feels humbled by others' recognitions, Tobar said the best reward has been helping others and seeing the positive impact she's made. She's especially proud that many Hispanic families in Siler City now feel comfortable enough to reach out to her and trust her with what's going on in their lives.

"It's not just interpreting, you know what I mean?" she said. "Like, you have to have just that willingness to want to help people, the passion to say, 'You know what — I love my job, and I love what I do. I just have to help the best way I can.'"

Reporter Victoria Johnson can be reached at victoria@chathamnr.com.

SCHOOL

Continued from page A1

hausting our weekly vaccine allocations to work through these groups as quickly as possible," Zelek told the News + Record. "Vaccine supply continues to be the limiting factor, and it is unlikely that we will be able to move to Group 3 as soon as the group becomes eligible per this updated guidance from NC DHHS."

"That said," he continued, "we have been working for weeks to prepare for Group 3 vaccinations,

including gathering contact information for schools and childcare staff who are interested in receiving the vaccine. We already have a list of more than 1,000 individuals in this group who are ready to get vaccinated, and will work with the other vaccine providers to do so when the time comes."

In the coming weeks, Zelek said the health department will work closely with Chatham County Schools, along with childcare facilities and private and public charter schools, to plan for these vaccinations. The district sent out another

interest survey to staff for getting a vaccination this week, after previously sending one in January.

Efforts to increase in-person instruction

Cooper's announcement last week followed his own emphasis on N.C. schools offering in-person learning just the week before, and came just two days before the C.D.C. urged that K-12 schools can reopen with the right measures on Friday. That guidance said middle and high school students can attend school safely (following

recommended protocols) at most lower levels of community transmission, adding that schools could be safer at higher levels, too, if schools test staff and students weekly to identify asymptomatic infections. Middle and high schools should switch to virtual learning, the agency said, only when community transmission reaches the highest level.

His announcement also came as a bill that would require all K-12 public schools to offer an in-person learning option worked its way through the N.C. General Assembly. On Thursday, the North Carolina House passed that bill, which would also require special needs students to have daily in-person learning. Though the Senate already approve the measure, it will vote again because of changes the House made to it before it goes to Cooper, who is likely to veto it, the Raleigh News & Observer reported.

Last week, Cooper "strongly urged" North Carolina public school districts to offer in-person instruction at a press conference, stopping short of mandating schools to reopen. He's recommended Plan A for elementary schools and Plan B for middle and high schools — the difference between the two plans being the requirement of six feet of social distancing. Previously, many people thought Plan B meant attending on a hybrid schedule, but state officials have recently said some school systems could offer daily in-person

learning under Plan B for middle and high school students, if six feet of distance can be maintained.

"We have learned much more about this virus, and now it is time to get our children back in the classroom," Cooper said at that meeting.

'We do not have enough supply'

In Chatham, prior to Cooper's announcement, the CCS Board of Education unanimously voted at its Feb. 8 meeting to write a letter to Cooper urging the prioritization of teachers in receiving vaccinations. When board members asked when teachers could expect to get vaccinated, Zelek said at the time that he couldn't estimate exactly when the county will move to Group 3 — which includes school staff as a part of essential workers — due to not knowing the county's vaccine supply on a week-to-week basis. County and state health officials had previously said teachers would be up for vaccines in the next "weeks to months."

Currently, all CCS students have the option of attending in-person hybrid learning, but the board will meet Feb. 23 at 5:30 to continue discussion on K-5 schools moving to Plan A — as recommended by Cooper and the state's general assembly. County teachers and staff have previously expressed concern about teaching in-person prior to being vaccinated.

At that BOE meeting, Zelek said that 11,414

Chatham residents have received the first dosage of the vaccine, or 14.9% of the population. The health department has administered about 2,000 of those first dosages, he said, and is using up all of its vaccinations it receives.

The state has received about 150,000 doses a week for everyone, N.C. Dept. of Human Health Services Secretary Mandy Cohen said at Cooper's Feb. 10 conference. Since healthcare workers and people who are at least 65 still need to be vaccinated, Cohen said not everyone who wants a vaccine in Group 3 will be able to get it the day the eligibility window opens.

Cooper seconded this, citing concerns that the frontline workers in Group 3 "all of a sudden crashing into the system" could create problems. Cohen and Cooper said vaccine distribution to frontline workers could take place in a range of ways depending on what options work best for local health departments.

"We do not have enough supply and that is exactly why as we move to our frontline essential workers, we want to do that in a thoughtful and gradual way," Cohen said.

Other frontline workers will be eligible for the vaccine on March 10, which includes first responders, farm workers, restaurant and grocery store workers and more.

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



Building a Brighter Future
Locally Owned. Locally focused.

VIEWPOINTS

GUEST COLUMN | GARY PEARCE, NEWDAYFORNC.COM

School-reopening debate strains old ties

One of North Carolina's most enduring political alliances — teachers and the Democratic Party — is being tested by today's debate over reopening schools.

The ties, which go back decades, have been strained before, and survived. But this may be the toughest test.

I was surprised recently when three Democrats, in separate conversations, complained about the "teachers' union" resisting reopening schools. The N.C. Association of Educators isn't a union; that's prohibited by state law. And "teachers' union" is a term you usually hear from Republicans — never as a term of endearment.

The NCAE supported Gov. Roy Cooper and Democratic legislative candidates in 2016, 2018 and 2020. Teachers marched on Raleigh to protest what they considered meager pay raises from the Republican General Assembly.

When Gov. Cooper declared on Feb. 2, "It's time to get our children back into the classroom," an NCAE leader said teachers were "very disappointed, surprised." The NCAE said teachers should get vaccinated before schools reopen.

The Governor made clear he wouldn't mandate a return to classrooms for all students. He said the decision should be left to local school boards and school district administrators. He signed a bill providing \$1.6 billion for schools to reopen safely. He moved educators and school staffers up in the priority line for vaccinations.

The real crunch comes this week. Republicans in the General Assembly pushed through a bill requiring school districts to offer in-person instruction. Cooper opposed it; if he vetoes it, will Democrats sustain the veto?

Cooper and Democratic legislators are feeling pressure

from parents — parents who worry that their children are falling behind academically, parents who worry about emotional and psychological impacts on kids, and parents who are tired of children being home all the time.

When the pandemic closed schools a year ago, public-school advocates hoped parents would come to appreciate teachers more than ever — and realize how underpaid they are. Instead, this year may have opened a gulf of resentment between parents and teachers.

Democrats like Gov. Cooper are in the middle. And Republicans are happy to use school reopening as a wedge issue to turn both teachers and parents against Democrats.

I've seen Democrats and teachers fall out before. In 1982, with a national recession raging and state tax revenues dropping, then-Gov. Jim Hunt

froze teacher salaries. The NCAE, which had endorsed Hunt in 1976 and 1980, felt betrayed. Teachers marched on the Executive Mansion. The NCAE refused to endorse Hunt against Senator Jesse Helms in 1984.

But Hunt lives on a farm. He knows how to mend fences.

After he left office in 1985, he led the development of a national board-certification system for teachers. He chaired the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards for 10 years. It's still going strong. More than 126,000 teachers nationally are board-certified; nearly 23,000 are in North Carolina, more than any other state.

Hunt worked closely with teachers through those years. He came to have a new appreciation for them; and they, for him. In the 1990s, during his third and fourth terms, Hunt pushed teachers' pay to the

national average — and into the top 20 among the states. Students' performance improved significantly, too.

Teachers in North Carolina today feel underpaid, underappreciated and overwhelmed. The pandemic exacerbates their stress. They hear promises from Raleigh about COVID-19 safety precautions, but they fear the promises won't be kept in their districts and their classrooms.

Teachers want to be in school with their students, but they want to be safe and they want their students to be safe. Yes, reopen schools. But do it safely.

Gary Pearce was a reporter and editor at The News & Observer, a political consultant, and an adviser to Governor Jim Hunt (1976-1984 and 1992-2000). He blogs about politics and public policy at www.NewDayforNC.com.

Taxing patience may be next thing

"Time flies" has become more than just a saying for me lately as I experience significant events in life that require the accumulation of years for them to come to pass. They range from my birthdays to the birthdays of significant others to anniversaries of all sorts of things.

I thought about the swiftness of time some few days ago as I turned the calendar page from January to February and realized it won't be long until the agony of April 15. By now I've come to realize April 15 comes around more than once a year, something more like once a quarter. It's apparently becoming more necessary to fund federal government deficit business by taxing this and taxing that.

The whole thing is beginning to tax my patience and pretty soon the folks who are looking after us will figure out how to tax that.

Taxes and paying them have been around almost as long as Walmart. The Bible is full of stories about taxes and taxpayers. One day some folks tried to trick Jesus by asking him if they should pay money to Caesar or spend it in the service of God. The Master called for a coin and asked the assembly whose picture was on the piece. "Caesar's," they said, so Jesus told them to pay Caesar what was his and pay God what was his.

I guess that means that if that happened today and somebody produced a \$5 bill, we would have to give it to Abraham Lincoln.

In the day and age of the New Testament, the Roman government sold the office of tax collector to the highest bidder. That means if you paid Rome a gazillion rupees for the office then you had to recover that much before you started turning a profit. The Roman government basically didn't care what you did to get your money back as long as you paid them.

Sort of like it is today. That little business deal meant that most taxpayers really did try to get blood out of a turnip and as far as I know not many folks were growing turnips in Palestine 2,000 years ago.

Today we've got all kinds of taxes and often I feel torn in considering the issue. This land of ours really is still the best place to live. One reason is because we can talk and discuss and gripe and moan and nobody is going to do anything unpleasant to us as long as we don't take it too far, at least so far. It's really not a good idea to threaten bodily harm to elected officials, for instance, although in my apparently feeble-brained way of looking at things it seems some folks can and do get away with it while others can't and don't.

To help pay for the US of A, we have taxes and the logical sensible ones I don't think anyone should mind. I still think a flat sales tax on what you buy is the fairest kind since it touches everyone and doesn't kill the initiative that made our country great. Back in the Dark Ages of the '60s (the 1960s, not the 1860s) when Terry Sanford was sitting in Roy Cooper's chair in Raleigh, he proposed the food tax. People hit the ceiling, as well as the walls and floors over that, but it was fair in that everyone had to pay the same percentage. If I couldn't afford rib eye steak at the Pig that week, I paid the same rate of tax on my pound of bologna.

Somewhere along the line, though, something went off course and we have a tax on living and dying and everything in between. And there is one, among many, that gripes me to the fullest. I was going through some papers some time ago, noting that upcoming April 15 event, when I ran across an old greeting from my friends at the N.C. Dept. of Revenue in Raleigh.

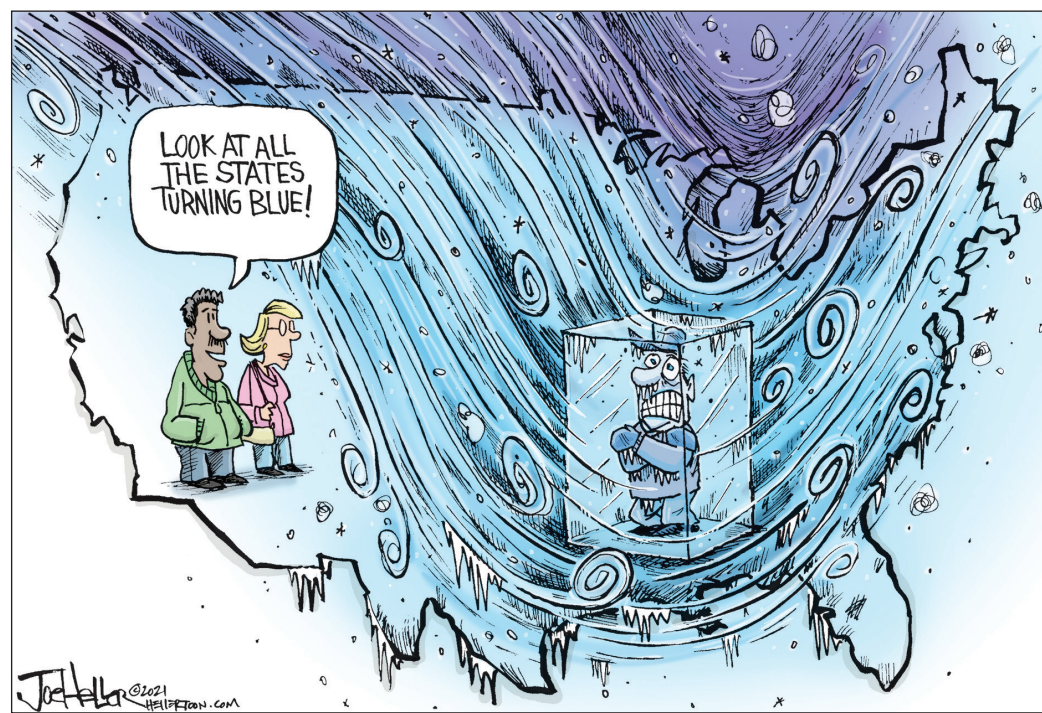
They told me I had to tell them and Uncle Sam that something like \$200 of my money the state refunded me one year on taxes I paid on income for the previous year was "new" income. As I remember the whole thing, I earned the money that was the subject of taxes — and paid tax on it to start with once already when Raleigh took it away from me without even asking if it was OK to do that, which really it wasn't especially so. Apparently, it was my fault I paid too much tax, especially since I was going by Raleigh's tables.

The good folks in the revenue department kept my money that year without paying me any interest on it. And even though savings account interest isn't what it once was, I could at least have gotten that amount by putting it in the bank — if I could have kept it. Then at the end of the year they told me that they had taken too much of my money and said, "Here is some of it back," but I needed to pay tax on it again. Had I, of course, withheld it from them for that period you now would be writing me, if you chose, at my new address under the jail. (Unless, of course, I was the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury.)

I guess I should be thankful, however, that they kept it because if I had received the \$1.49 in interest I would have gotten on it by saving it, then I'd have to pay tax on that, as well.

Our forefathers threw tea into the ocean in Boston to protest what they called "taxation without representation." I'm pretty sure that's what we have going on today. Often I wonder not only whether the inmates are running the asylum, but why we keep giving them the key.

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.



To clean our house, we must name the mess

Only seven Republican senators voted to convict former President Donald Trump for inciting the mob attack on our Capitol building Jan. 6. Yet, there is widespread disapproval of the rioters.

The violence on that day was appalling. At least 140 police officers and security guards were injured. Those men and women were beaten and bloodied, pepper-sprayed and trampled. Their fingers were snapped, their eyes gouged and they suffered heart attacks as a result of repeated tasing by rioters. Five people died, including one security guard. And the insurrectionists intended more bloodshed, even the assassination of elected officials like Vice President Mike Pence.

Numerous photos and videos documented rioters waving Confederate flags, brandishing neo-Nazi insignia and yelling racial slurs. Despite this clear evidence that groups were affiliated with white supremacist and nationalist groups, some Americans still believe the false claim that the attack was carried out by members of leftist groups like antifa — meaning "anti-fascist," a term that describes far-left-leaning militant groups.

Let the record show: The arrests of actual rioters have linked these individuals to far-right groups such as the Three Percenters, the Oath Keepers and the Proud Boys. Those who attacked our fellow citizens and threatened our very democratic process were homegrown terrorists. We must condemn not only the attack but the toxic ideology of white supremacy that motivated them.

Long ago, Jesus of Nazareth said that the truth would set us free (John 8:32). I am reminded of how this same rabbi compared a person's inner life — thoughts and motivations — to a house (Matthew 12:43-45; Luke

11:24-26). The metaphor holds that an "unclean spirit" may be removed from a house as if taking out the trash. But Jesus added that each of us must remain vigilant after the initial spring cleaning, for that same unclean spirit will return with more spirits. If they find the house neat and in a good order, they will cause even more disarray than the original mess!

It is true that Americans have addressed injustices in our past. In the 150-plus years since the Civil War, we have abolished slavery and legislated equal rights. Trailblazing men and women of color have integrated nearly every aspect of our common life, contributing to the general welfare with their genius and talent as well as raising their own stations in life.

But on Jan. 6, we witnessed a racist mob invade our Capitol. They more than made a mess of things. There was blood on the floor. In this case, the unclean spirit was white supremacy. This hateful ideology has come back with a vengeance, and it is the responsibility of every person who calls this nation home to name and denounce this evil that has arisen in our midst.

In modern culture, we do not think of unclean spirits in the same way our ancestors did. Yet, ancient advice remains relevant. We must remain vigilant about cleaning out malevolent ideologies.

The truth is, racism is not a thing of the distant past. We are neither a post-racial nor colorblind society. Such falsehoods, even if they are well-intentioned, still prevent us from recognizing the real and present threat of white supremacist terrorists.

As we witnessed Jan. 6, we avoid the truth at the peril of our national soul.

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

What's on your mind?

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

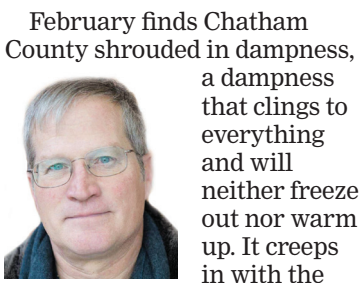
At our discretion, we may edit letters for clarity. We reserve the right to refuse letters and other submissions that promote a commercial product, contain either libelous material, personal attacks on individuals or vulgar language. Consumer complaints and letters containing unverifiable factual claims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

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

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

VIEWPOINTS

To be seen on my walk...



DWAYNE WALLS JR.
The Roundabout

February finds Chatham County shrouded in dampness, a dampness that clings to everything and will neither freeze out nor warm up. It creeps in with the chill, keeping the days cold and clammy under warm sun. Moisture seeps through exterior doors and windows, swelling the frames and sashes, making them squeak and groan and stick. Idle tools rust in the shed. Shaded boards glow green with mold.

Winter air sneaks into our house through the dog door. I discovered this when I heard the magnets in the plastic flap beating time with the wind chimes hanging outside off our back deck. Not that I hold it against the mutt; no one wants to be caught short in the middle of the night, and giving the animal its own private access

to our fenced in backyard lets me enjoy long winter naps.

Our dog is a rescue, and with her brown fur coat she looks like a smaller version of Santa's Little Helper, the dog from TV's The Simpsons. I am convinced that rescued animals always make the most loyal pets because they remember how bad they had it. Ours ran loose around the neighborhood playground for weeks before we caught her. The veterinarian said someone probably dumped her there and that she survived by eating garbage and the things that eat the garbage. My wife lured her through the open gate of our back yard with a can of tuna fish. Once inside the house she made a lair underneath our bed, and after some months she trusted me enough to come when I called.

Like all dogs everywhere she loves going for a walk, and since both my vascular surgeon and my wound specialist gave me the green light to walk as much as I can, the dog has found a new apprecia-

tion for the big scary man with the deep voice. A retractable leash I bought at Pittsboro Pet Supply lets the wee beastie dash ahead of me, linger momentarily over one of the more delectable smells, then race after me and catch up in a sprint, all without me having to breaking stride. I recommend it to all dog walkers, and I am sure the dog would concur. My goal is to walk as much as I did when I lived in Brooklyn.

The dog and I venture farther and farther each day, me pushing the envelope of recovery, it engaging in an olfactory orgy. The sidewalks are now open on Vine Parkway where it T-bones into Thompson Street, so we turn and walk uphill into Pittsboro's very own version of Levittown, passing houses in various stages of construction as we climb.

Judging by Kenneth Jackson's book, "Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of America," Chatham Park has four of the five major characteristics of any post-war

suburb. First, peripheral location; I think we can all agree that Pittsboro is no metropolis. Second, relatively low density; it might look crowded to someone from out in the county, but these are freestanding structures, not row houses. Third, architectural similarity; all the structures are essentially single family homes. Fourth, easy terms of acquisition; one need not be rich to buy a one- or even a two-storied structure. The fifth, and perhaps most striking characteristic of the suburban subdivision is its income and racial homogeneity. Whether or not Chatham Park becomes an enclave of upwardly mobile whites remains to be seen.

I also wonder if this planned development is merely the penultimate culmination of 20th Century design. The only nod to the new millennium I see from the sidewalk is a couple of charging stations for electric cars.

At the top of the hill unbroke wind slaps me in the face, giving my nose a treat, too.

Somewhere through the trees is a home with a fireplace or a woodstove. The damp air has a distinct tinge of wood smoke; not the dirty odor of locust or the sharp sting of evergreen, but the softer aroma of hardwood like ash or hickory or oak. The damp, smoky air back brings a flood of memories, all of them good. I hope that place through the woods will be spared the bulldozer.

I hear my dog's tags jingling. I look down too late to stop her from rolling in something. I should have been paying more attention. If it stinks I will have to wash it off. Luckily for me, our dog's fur coat is the same brownish orange color as Chatham County clay. Maybe Ms. Walls will not notice the smell.

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

Left is damaging public education

"One of the most unhappy series of events in the state's history began in 1835," stated a textbook used in elementary schools across North Carolina. "As more and more white people came into their territory the Cherokee Indians had been driven further into the hills, but white settlers looked with greed on all their territory."

The book went on to explain that only "a small group of Cherokee" signed a treaty to sell their land and move west. But the federal government enforced the sham treaty, anyway. "Families were seized at the dinner table or dragged from their beds to the stockades where the Indians were cruelly rounded up to wait for their journey into exile," the book observed. "Of the seventeen thousand who started, over four thousand died on the Trail of Tears!"

Am I quoting some anti-American screed just published by a woke-Left activist? No. The book is entitled North Carolina: From Its Glorious Past to the Present. It was published in 1965.

Earlier this month, the State Board of Education approved a new set of standards to guide the social-studies curriculum. It's entirely appropriate to revise academic standards to ensure accuracy, promote rigor, and challenge our educators and students to excel.

Alas, that's not what happened here. As my John Locke Foundation colleague Terry Stoops put it, some board members "railroaded the social studies standards adoption process last year, asking Department of Public Instruction staff to infuse the standards with language that reflected their left-wing ideology."

Instead of striking "a balance between competing visions of the nation," Stoops said, the new standards "sought to convey one vision, clumsily placing race, class, and gender conflicts at the center of the story at the expense of seeking to ensure children possess a satisfactory understanding of our social, political, and economic systems."

If you read or watched recent news coverage of the issue, you may think it was all about the choice of a few disputed terms — whether students should be taught about "systemic racism" or just "racism," for example. You may also think that with the new standards, our schoolchildren would finally be learning the true, unvarnished history of their state and nation for the first time.

It's utter nonsense. The roles that slavery, segregation, prejudice, and other injustices have played in our history have been embedded in North Carolina's curriculum for decades. Look at the texts our children read. Watch what they watch. Ask what they're learning. As I note above, even a schoolbook commonly used in 1965 — while problematic in some ways, and not at all reflective of today's curriculum — was explicit and vivid in its description of the American government's sins during the Trail of Tears.

What really happened at the State Board of Education this month was a successful effort by activists to smuggle political propaganda such as critical race theory into North Carolina's official academic standards. It's why Republican board members such as Olivia Oxendine and Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson objected so strenuously — objections that earned the two, a Lumbee and an African-American respectively, a grotesque characterization as Klansmen by a cartoonist for WRAL-TV.

Unfortunately, such caricatures are nothing new. For decades, when conservatives argued for education reforms based on academic rigor, parental choice, and performance pay for teachers, progressives went beyond questioning our interpretation of data or the likely effects of our proposals. Instead, they questioned our motives. They accused us of wanting to "destroy public education."

If I were truly out to destroy public education, you know what I'd do? I'd insist that public schools remain closed to in-person instruction, with all its catastrophic costs for children and families, even though open schools are clearly not a significant source of COVID infections. And I'd swap out a balanced, standard course of study in American history for a "1619 Project" style scheme.

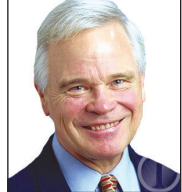
That's how I'd infuriate parents and drive them away from public schools they might otherwise like. But, of course, I'd never do such a thing.

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



Workhorse or show horse

Do you want your congressional representative to be a "workhorse" or a "show horse"?



D.G. MARTIN
One on One

Representatives Sam Rayburn distinguished the "show horses" from the "work horses" who served in Congress. According to Price, Rayburn expressed his clear preference for the latter.

Price has all the credentials to write about Congress and who serves there, how they get things accomplished, what they have to do to get elected and then reelected, how they work with colleagues, constituents, outside groups, and their fellow representatives to get things done.

Price, the representative from North Carolina's Fourth District, has served in Congress since 1987, with only a two-year break after losing an election in 1994. Before his first election to Congress, Price studied theology at Yale University, served as a political science professor at Duke University and chaired the state Democratic Party.

In short, he brings a professional lifetime of dealing with the institution of Congress that blends into his teaching and research a viewpoint influenced by a longstanding spiritual commitment.

As the publisher's introduction points out, "Congressman David Price is uniquely qualified to guide readers through the labyrinth of rules, roles, and representatives that is Congress. As a trained political scientist, he connects the practical politics on the Hill with the theories of the discipline. He is equally focused on the ethics of public service at a time when politics seem to have reached a new low. Through it all, he conveys a clear sense of the challenges, disappointments, elations, and deep concerns implicit in serving as a member of Congress, especially at a time of national and international fragility."

Price begins his book with a chapter on campaigning. In 1984, as party chair he was disappointed that the Fourth District incumbent Ike Andrews was defeated by Bill Cobey, former UNC-Chapel Hill athletic di-

rector. "Deeply stung" by his party's defeat, Price decided to run for the seat. Then came the hard parts. Running against other attractive Democrats in the primary. Raising money. Organizing. Disappointments every day before finally winning.

Anyone considering a Congressional campaign should read this chapter before making a decision. Getting elected is hard. But the harder tasks, Price explains in a chapter titled "At Home in the House," might come after an election victory.

"The immediate challenge," he writes, "is to secure a desirable committee assignment, a challenge heightened by both the knowledge that it can decisively shape one's subsequent career and uncertainty as to how the assignment decisions are going to be made. It is a rapid and jarring transition, from the electoral areas to the arena of house politics, equally political, equally challenging, but often quite dissimilar in the skills it requires and the behavior it rewards."

Jockeying for preferred assignments on and within committees such as Appropriations is a skill an ambitious "workhorse" representative must master. Price did not get a chance for appointment to that committee until 1990 when there were four openings. The appointment leaders ranked Price second, ahead of Nancy Pelosi, who was third. Both were appointed.

In a chapter titled "Our Broken Electoral System," Price chronicles his efforts to push for election reforms and funding for the states to acquire modern and accurate voting equipment. Although progress was disappointingly mixed, the ability of state election officers to demonstrate the validity of their results against powerful challenges from the former president's campaign proved the value of Price's and his colleagues' work.

"The Congressional Experience" should be required reading for anyone considering a run for Congress and for the rest of us who just want to try to understand how our government works. Whoever reads even a part of the book will be happy North Carolina has a workhorse congressman.

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.

LETTERS

Can we please get a grip?

TO THE EDITOR:

My goodness. We just last month witnessed American democracy come within an inch of its life via a violent assault on our Capitol, our Congress, and on Vice President Mike Pence at the hands of domestic extremists, led in part by known white supremacists. Shockingly, it was our then-president who incited the mess in his desperate attempt to become our republic's first-ever autocrat.

Yet last week's letter to the editor writer ("Once upon a time," Carol Gene Good, News + Record, Feb. 11-17) is apparently riddled with fear by widespread misinformation about BLM and our Democratic politicians! Wow. FDR's famous quote bears repeating now, in 2021, like a mantra: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

Americans, can we please get a grip?! We ALL share this country. It would behoove us to start rediscovering our common ground, ASAP.

To combat false information, we all need to get at least some of our news from reliable sources going forward. And we need to get to know our fellow countrymen and women again, the ones we now imagine we fear so darned much.

Honestly, I don't think they bite.

A.R. Bloomfield
Siler City

VACCINE

Continued from page A1

population is Black, but only 13% of vaccine recipients have been Black through most of the distribution effort. In the week preceding Cooper's press conference, that figure improved to 18%.

Often, reports have attributed the disparity to hesitancy among minority communities to volunteer for vaccination. Black Americans especially don't necessarily have limited access to the vaccine, some conclude, they just don't want to take it.

But at least one Chatham resident strongly disagrees.

"I've heard the conversation so often that Black people are refusing to get the shot, that they just refuse to get the vaccine," said Delphine Womack, a long-time Goldston resident. "... Well, I think that may be an issue in other areas where you're saying the minorities aren't taking it or won't take it. But here it goes back I think to the initial problem of not being able to reach them. When you speak of minorities there is still a large number that the digital divide has caused problems for."

Womack is intimately familiar with the challenges that minority groups — and especially their older members — face in navigating limited accessibility to government resources. For almost 35 years she worked with the Social Security Administration in public relations, public affairs and management.

"I've always worked with the elderly," she said, "and I've always worked with the disadvantaged."

So, when she heard that Chatham's

Black residents might be underrepresented among the county's distribution, she took matters into her own hands.

"I called the health department and they were so very helpful," Womack said. "And once I started talking to one lady, she got me to another one who got me to another and so on."

Soon, Womack had organized the rough details of a vaccine drive to be hosted by her church, Roberts Chapel Missionary Baptist Church in Goldston.

The timing was perfect. Recognizing the state's vaccine inequities, the N.C. Dept. of Health and Human Services recently began allocating COVID-19 vaccine doses to providers and counties to be used among "historically marginalized populations and areas with less access to healthcare," according to a press release from the Chatham County Public Health Dept.

"She was already registered for her shot to get the vaccine, but realized that there wasn't anything on the western side of the county," Rep. Robert Reives II (Dist. 54-D) said about Womack — who happens to be his mother-in-law. "Within a week, she'd gotten in touch with the health department, and in three days she'd done a registration drive."

With her husband, James, and partners from the CCPHD, Womack fielded hundreds of calls from interested local residents from eligible groups. Other church members contributed their services, as well, along with the Chatham County Emergency Management, the Chatham County Sheriff's Office and the Goldston Fire Dept.

"I think it is great when the church can serve an integral role in the com-

munity, that we may come alongside people to provide the services and the assistance that they need," said Rev. Joshua T. Jones, Senior Pastor of Roberts Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, in the CCPHD press release. "In this case, we're talking about the COVID-19 vaccine. I think we should send a message — not only to our seniors, but to everyone — that this is something we all need to do. It helps our immune system to fight COVID-19. This is a great thing that we want to continue until everyone gets the vaccine. I thank God for the opportunity, and I look forward to our continued partnership. I want to give a special thank you to all of our church members who volunteered, including James and Delphine Womack who worked on getting everyone registered."

In total, 210 vaccines were administered at the event on Feb. 5. To Womack, it was a resounding success, but only the first event in what she hopes will become a trend.

"I guess you have to start somewhere," she said. "But I think I would advise anyone that the health department is so helpful, they were so helpful to us. And a couple of times, I mean, I called them and I was almost apologizing for this or that, and the response would be, 'Continue what you're doing, it's OK.' And we did ... I would encourage anyone thinking about doing this sort of thing that the health department wants to hear."

Future plans are tentative while vaccine allocation remains scant, CCPHD representatives say, but the department is working hard to meet demand. More than 11,000 names are listed in the

county's contact database, but progress is steady.

"We know there continue to be many more who are eligible and eager to get the vaccine than there are doses available," said CCPHD Director Mike Zelek. "When we schedule appointments, we are sorry that not all are able to get through and that slots are limited. We know that this is frustrating, and share the hopes of the Chatham community that vaccine supplies will increase in the future."

To learn more about how Chatham County is distributing the COVID-19 vaccine, visit chathamnc.org/coronavirusvaccine. The Chatham County Public Health Department can be found online at chathamnc.org/public-health and facebook.com/chatham-health.

Other local vaccine providers include UNC Health which is offering the COVID-19 vaccination at its site behind Chatham Hospital in Siler City (Medical Office Building) and at nearby options such as Chapel Hill. Interested individuals should visit www.unchealthcare.org/schedule or call (984) 215-5485 to schedule an appointment when available.

Duke Health, based in Durham, is also scheduling vaccinations when available. To learn more, visit <https://www.dukehealth.org/covid-19-update/covid-19-vaccine-update> or call (919) 385-0429.

For a full list of options in North Carolina, visit <https://covid19.ncdhs.gov/findyourspot>.

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

WATER

Continued from page A1

But what happens behind the scenes to ensure that critical infrastructure can support the county's bid for dramatic population growth and commercial expansion?

"A lot," says Chatham County Assistant Manager Bryan Thompson.

"Chatham County's future water supply planning efforts ... help the county ensure that the necessary improvements, partnerships, and resources are in place to meet the public water demand of today," he said, "and for those that will be realized in the future."

The first step in understanding how the county's intricate water utility system functions, Thompson said, is to understand who's in charge of what.

"I think that's something that we see with some frequency," he said, "that some people don't understand who has authority under what systems and who's ultimately, you know, in responsible charge."

A common misconception: thinking the county government has ultimate jurisdiction over Chatham utilities, including water. Often, that responsibility starts and ends at the municipal level (the subject of future articles in this series). But Chatham County itself still cares for a vast network of systems.

A breakdown

Chatham's water allocation is unusual. Most counties don't own and operate their own water systems.

"A lot of times it's the larger municipalities that extend their infrastructure out to some of the areas of the county," said Larry Bridges, Chatham County's utilities director. "So, Chatham County is unique in that respect."

Yet more unique is that Chatham operates not one, but three distinct water systems across the county.

The first encompasses much of eastern Chatham, excluding Pittsboro and its jurisdiction and the northeastern corner of the county. Water to this region — known as the North water distribution system — comes from Jordan Lake, but Chatham doesn't facilitate water collection itself.

Cary, who owns the intake on the lake," Bridges said. "And then we take that raw water and treat it at our water plant."

In the Asbury water distribution system, covering south-central Chatham County, water comes pre-treated from the Cape Fear River via the town of Sanford. Sanford also supplies about 90% of the water used in the Southwest water distribution system which directly abuts Siler City.

In the past, much of this area was serviced through an agreement with Siler City, but now only about 10% of the water supply is directed from the municipality. Siler City draws water from the Rocky River.

"We used to, up until about two and a half years ago, actually get more water from Siler City to supply water to this area," Bridges said. "But with the Mountaire chicken plant coming online, they needed to meet that additional demand. So to do that, we had to actually no longer use that interconnection with Siler City, so that they could use that demand to supplement for the addition of the chicken plant."

So far, Chatham's three water systems are adequately supplying resident needs.

"But water is a fleeting source and natural resource," Bridges said, "and we need to all work together to ensure that everyone has the water supply that they need to meet future growth projections."

Future growth

Much of the county's anticipated growth over coming decades will come within incorporated municipalities which have dedicated water systems.

But "the county can anticipate some ancillary growth pressures as a result of these primary growth factors," Thompson said.

To keep pace with escalating demand, the county is pursuing a regional water system in collaboration with other government and private entities, together known as the Western Intake Partners.

The group includes Chatham County, Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA), Durham and Pittsboro.

"Those four partners have come together to start doing the initial design of a regional plant that will be on Jordan Lake," Bridges said.

The facility would have an initial processing capacity of 33 million gallons per day with a plant expansion capacity of up to 54 million gallons per day. The cost will be about \$80 million.

The project has been under consideration for some time, Bridges said, but it's "finally getting some traction."

"This is a long and tedious process," he said. "You've got to go through permitting, environmental impacts, you got to go through easement acquisitions, you got to first establish the governance piece, who's kind of going to be responsible for what from an ownership and maintenance standpoint ... Then you've got the physical design and construction of the plant, and then all the distribution lines that get it to all the different partners."

It's an ambitious undertaking, but hastening demand doesn't permit the county much time for deliberation. If all goes according to plan, the plant will be operational in 2033.

Other possible infrastructure expansion plans include a partnership with Holly Springs, Fuquay-Varina and Sanford to expand the latter's water plant and intake capacity, thereby allocating more for distribution across Chatham County.

Another proposal would introduce new interconnections between county sources and with strategic partners along the county lines to better distribute currently available water.

"We're trying to exhaust all options when it comes to water supply," Bridges said.

Where does funding come from?

Rumors about whenever governments initiate big projects. The perennial fear among residents: "Will my taxes go up?"

With respect to water supply, the answer is "No."

"Almost exclusively, that would never be the case," Thompson said.

"Some systems, if you look around North Carolina and at the various local government enterprise utility systems, you might see where a utility is operating in less than a sustainable way," he said, "and so you may see contributions from the general fund. But that's not the case in Chatham."

Counties manage money and expenses via different funds. The primary — a "general fund" — is

where tax money pools. Utilities, however, are funded from the appropriately named "utility fund" which collects money from utility rates.

"The largest source of revenue for operating is water sales," said Darrell Butts, Chatham County's budget director. "That's across the board — residential, commercial and industrial. The rates vary based on usage, but that is the vast majority."

Since usage will only increase to meet demands of a growing

population, individual rates are likely to remain about constant.

"As far as infrastructure for future projects, future growth," Butts said, "much like we do in the general fund, we have a utilities capital reserve, where we put money aside where we can and when we can to fund those projects that we know are coming up or coming online."

"So whenever we talk about costs, usually to the public, we're not talking in terms of taxes,"

Thompson added. "We're talking about rates and things along those lines. So it's easy to get those mixed up in the conversation. So having that kind of delineated out is probably really useful."

Next week, we look closer at what municipal governments are doing to prepare for increased water demand — notably in Pittsboro and Siler City.

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

Protect Benefits for Children with Special Needs

If you have a child or other family member who has special needs due to physical or mental conditions, you face a variety of challenges planning for their care, including financial ones. You may also have some well-meaning relatives who want to help, but who may not realize that their moves could actually result in some serious lifestyle and monetary problems for your loved one. Fortunately, by planning ahead, you can avoid these potential traps.

As you probably already know, individuals with special needs are eligible for a variety of government benefits and local programs that provide assistance with housing, medical needs, specialized equipment, independent living, job training and other services. You may also know that some of these programs require participants to meet financial criteria to qualify for benefits. Usually, this isn't a problem if your loved one has little income and few assets.

Difficulties can arise, though, when other relatives, such as grandparents, include loved ones with special needs in their estate plans by naming them as beneficiaries of insurance policies or retirement assets, or as beneficiaries of any trusts the grandparents have established. In these situations, loved ones who receive or inherit a sizable amount of assets may then be ruled ineligible for some important services.

Hopefully, your relatives will have informed you of their plans. If so, let them know that although you appreciate their generosity, the way they've chosen to show it could have unanticipated — and harmful — effects. You could then suggest ways they could structure their gifts to be more valuable.

Specifically, they can help through a special needs trust, either one that's already been created or one they create for their gift. A special needs trust is designed to help people with special needs use financial gifts or inheritances for a variety of purposes while keeping their eligibility for some government programs and other services. There are two main types of special needs trust:

• First-party special needs trust

An individual with special needs, their legal guardian or the court can establish a first-party special needs trust benefiting that individual. The first-party special needs trust is funded by the individual's own assets, either through earnings or an inheritance or a personal injury award. A first-party trust contains a "payback" rule, which means that when the individual beneficiary with special needs dies, the trust must pay back the state for certain benefits received.

• Third-party special needs trust

A relative or person other than the individual with special needs who wants to include that individual in their estate plan can set up a third-party special needs trust. The third party trust is funded with assets from someone other than the individual with special needs. With a third-party trust, no "payback" provision is required.

Many issues are involved in establishing an appropriate special needs trust. Consequently, you'll need to consult with your legal advisor to determine your next steps. Afterwards, you'll want to involve everyone in your family who could contribute to a trust, so they'll all know what to expect and how they can participate. Once the arrangements are made, you can all feel like you've done your part to make things easier for the loved one in your life with special needs.

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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

RANSOMWARE ATTACK

Chatham County manager's report to the commissioners outlines events of Oct. 28 'cyber incident'

CN+R Staff Report

Forensic analysis revealed that ransomware entered the County network through a Phishing email with a malicious attachment. The threat actor, identified as DoppelPaymer, acquired data from a limited number of County systems although the data that was acquired could not be specifically determined.

The Impact

As a result of the incident, the County lost the use of its computers, internet access, office phones and voicemail. The County acquired loaner laptops from other counties, towns and Chatham County Emergency Management.

"Securing these critical resources did not result in additional expenses being incurred by the County and were instrumental in the process of getting us back on our feet as quickly as possible," said LaMontagne.

Emergency Management was able to provide temporary internet access points and phones. Staff set up temporary email addresses for internal communication and access to the public, and the County created a cyber incident web page

to inform the public.

Recovery Efforts

Chatham County Emergency Management coordinated daily briefings with stakeholders during the initial weeks of the incident. MIS staff and agency partners conducted a full rebuild of County network infrastructure. The County worked with its existing software vendors to restore business systems. MIS staff wiped and reimaged the County servers and more than 550 employee computers.

"The commissioners and I are grateful for the work that all of the County staff has done across every department in dealing with the numerous challenges that resulted from this incident," said Chatham County Board of Commissioners Chair Mike Dasher. "We appreciate their commitment to serve the public and their adaptability to ensure that our residents continue to receive the programs and services that they count on."

The process of restoring business systems, phones, network connection and returning County computers to staff is nearly complete. Full

system recovery efforts are estimated to continue through early 2021.

The County had the foresight to mitigate its exposure to such an incident through the procurement of cyber insurance. "We are collaboratively working with our cyber insurer on this incident and anticipate that the bulk of the direct costs associated with this incident will be covered," said LaMontagne. "We are thankful for everyone's dedication and efforts to minimize the impact of this incident."

Breach Notification

On February 8th, the County discovered that the cyber actor(s) responsible for the October 2020 ransomware event against the County released certain data acquired by the cyber actor(s) from the County's servers. The County's investigation of this event remains ongoing. This includes efforts to identify and notify every individual whose personal information may have been impacted.

"Once the Sheriff's Office received a tip off regarding the data breach, we acted quickly to notify all victims — mostly our

own employees — whose sensitive information was copied from Sheriff's Office files," said Sheriff Mike Roberson. "All victims identified in our review of the stolen Sheriff's Office data were notified and provided with Identity Theft guidance within 24 hours of confirming the contents of the appropriated files."

The County will release information about any resources it assembles to assist individuals in protecting their information. In the meantime, the County encourages any individuals who believe they may have been impacted to remain vigilant and monitor their accounts for any suspicious activity. The County also encourages individuals who believe they may be at risk to consider placing a fraud alert and/or security freeze on their credit report. Information about these safeguards is available on the Federal Trade Commission's website at: www.FTC.gov. The NC Department of Justice (NCDOJ) provides a free security freeze. More information can be found at: <https://ncdoj.gov/protecting-consumers/protecting-your-identity/free-security-freeze>.

"While I am disappointed that we are faced with this additional challenge during our recovery process, I know that our resilience will get us through this time," said LaMontagne.

Improvements

Along with the extensive mitigation efforts taken by the County during the cyber incident, Chatham County MIS also evaluated the existing security protocols in an effort to further build upon the security of the County network. The County is evaluating and implementing additional security measures and reinforcing employee training.

"The threat from outside individuals is constant, and Chatham County aims to take all reasonable actions to secure our data and infrastructure," added LaMontagne.

During this time, the County also took the opportunity to improve and update some of its software. These actions include upgrading to Office 365, changing from .org to .gov domain for emails, replacing

See **CYBER**, page A12

LOWERY

Continued from page A1

"I would always show up and say, 'Hey, I'm from the government and I'm here to help,'" he said with a laugh. "But really, there wasn't any way that

I could really help. There wasn't any way other than me putting together a proposal and sending it up. There wasn't a way I could really touch the individual community."

The state, he said, didn't really have the capacity or resources to

truly make a difference in the same way a privately owned company or foundation could.

"I'm a person who believes in community, I believe in supporting home, and I believe in taking care of those around you," he said, "and Mountaire gives

us the opportunity to find ways to help people in the community. We put our chicken where our mouth is. We donate chicken. We donate dollars. We donate manpower and volunteer hours."

In North Carolina, Mountaire Farms partners with community institutions and nonprofits to raise money, volunteer and feed thousands, he said. The company's food pantry program invites food pantries across the state — including the Second Harvest Food Bank and the Central Carolina Food Bank — to pick up chicken from Mountaire twice a month. Another feeding program, Thanksgiving for Thousands, provides 10,000 boxes of Thanksgiving meals for countless numbers of families in North Carolina.

Mountaire also donates chicken to churches. Last year, they partnered with St. Julia's Catholic Church to distribute chicken in the church's parking lot. They have also partnered with Chatham Habitat for Humanity, the Boys & Girls Club of America and lately, the Salvation Army of Chatham County.

It's the community relations manager's job to coordinate all of that, Lowery said, and to ensure that the company gives back to the communities in which they operate.

"Mountaire Farms, we're a family-owned company," Lowery said. "We're a Christian-owned company, and we really believe in giving back. Our creed is to be good stewards of the assets God has provided us."

Shortly after joining Mountaire, Lowery spent about a year learning the ropes from Reif, who retired at the end of 2020. He described his journey with Mountaire as "an awesome ride," though it was a bit difficult to adjust at first.

"At the beginning, I felt like I was drinking water from a firehose," he said. "Everything, I mean, everything was coming at me. It was, 'OK, Jarrod, you know, you've never been a part of the poultry industry. So, let's tell you what we do. Let's show you what we do.'"

With support from Reif and company leadership, he steadily began to get

the hang of things; as part of that, he spent time at every Mountaire facility in North Carolina, including the company's facilities in Chatham and Robeson counties.

"I started spending more time in Siler City, and Siler City's very, very important to our company," Lowery said. "... I'd say Siler City is a big part of our future, and so when Mark thought I was ready, he said, 'Come on up.'"

Finally, in November, Lowery said he began assuming Reif's responsibilities in Siler City, about a month before Reif had planned to retire. Now, he's North Carolina's only community relations manager, though as Mountaire expands further into the state, he said that could change.

"Mark and I used to joke and say this is the best job in the company," he said. "We are able to interact with the community. We're able to interact — number one — with our employees all over the state and in every role from the processing plant in Siler City, the two hatcheries in Siler City, our truck drivers, our farmers, feed mills."

In Chatham County, what Lowery is most looking forward to is expanding Mountaire's feeding programs, especially Thanksgiving for Thousands, and its community service involvement. He'd particularly like to see Thanksgiving for Thousands expand to Easter and Christmas.

Once the pandemic ends, he'd also like to begin partnering with organizations like Chatham Habitat or the Love Creek Watershed Stewards to lead two community service projects a year. With luck, he added, they'll launch a service project this fall. Ideas so far include cleaning up a neighborhood, helping Chatham Habitat build homes and helping to renovate a park.

In particular, he said he hopes that Mountaire will be able to throw another "Rock-the-Block" event with Chatham Habitat this year, an effort they first organized in 2019 and intended to replicate in 2020 before COVID-19 struck. Volunteers from Mountaire and Chatham Habitat went

More About Lowery:

- Served as a tank technician in the U.S. Marine Corps from 2006 to 2012.
- Graduated from UNC Pembroke, Class of 2012.
- Worked in N.C. state government for nearly seven years as a regional field director.
- Originally from Robeson County
- Is a member of North Carolina's Lumbee Tribe and served on the tribe's council.

into neighborhoods and helped with minor home repairs, yard work, cleaning — anything that was needed, Lowery said.

Since many of Mountaire's employees in Siler City are Hispanic, Lowery added that Mountaire's always looking at opportunities "to touch them and give back to their community as well." The 2019 "Rock-the-Block" event took place in a predominantly Spanish-speaking neighborhood.

"We think that if we continue to do projects like that in community, as community service projects, we're going to touch everybody," he said. "We're going to touch everybody of every background because Mountaire is made up of everybody of every background."

So far, he said he's enjoyed getting to know the Siler City community as well as Chatham County.

"There's a lot of good folks," Lowery said. "I've met a ton of good people and a ton of folks who really care about the community, people who are lifelong members and people who've only been there a few years. It's a really neat, diverse community, and I'm glad to have the opportunity to work in Chatham County."

Reporter Victoria Johnson can be reached at victoria@chathamnr.com

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OBITUARIES

JACK GOANS JR.



Jack Goans Jr., age 68, of Moncure, died Sunday, at 11 a.m., February 14, 2021, Valentine's Day at Wake Med Cary Hospital. This was his greatest gift of Love to his wife Lisa.

Jack was born in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina on December 25, 1952, to the late Jack Lester Goans and Helen Peeler Goans. He was also preceded in death by two brothers, Jim Goans, Bob Goans, and god daughter, Cassy.

Surviving relatives include his wife, Lisa Goans; two brother-in-laws, Jeff and Brad of Salisbury, N.C.; one brother, Bill Goans and wife Joann of Greensboro; several nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews, and many friends were part of his family.

Lisa and Jack were married in 1997 in Key West, Florida, and visited twice a year with a special group of friends.

Jack had so many special friends in the Pittsboro Community who loved him greatly. He exhibited so much love, honesty, and generosity throughout his life.

A memorial service will be held Thursday, February 18, 2021, at 2 p.m. at Donaldson Funeral Home & Crematory Griffin Chapel with Pastor Chris Gambos presiding.

In lieu of flowers the family asks for memorial contributions to be made in Jack's memory to New Salem Church, 5030 Old Graham Road, Pittsboro, N.C. 27312.

Condolences may be made at www.donaldsonfunerals.com.

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

JERRY DEAN WILLIAMSON



Jerry Dean Williamson, age 82, of Southport, North Carolina, passed away peacefully surrounded by his family on Sunday, February 14, 2021.

Jerry was born January 26, 1939, in Randolph County to the late John Tate and Corilla Brower Williamson. Jerry is survived by his wife of 59 years, Brenda Moore Williamson; his sons, Jerry Duane Williamson of Winnabow, N.C. and John Darrell Williamson and wife, Gina, of Randleman, N.C.; his daughter,

Heather Deane Williamson Whitworth and husband Bryan of Southport, N.C.; his grandchildren, Michael Williamson, Jessica Williamson, Alex Williamson, Grace Williamson, Mason Whitworth, Liam Whitworth, Laurel Whitworth; and his brother, Gail Williamson and wife, Trudi of Mira Loma, California.

Jerry served in the Navy aboard the USS Antietam and 22 years in the Coast Guard Reserve and was called to active duty during Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Jerry was of the Baptist Faith and began as a textile printer at Randolph Mills, going on to graduate from Appalachian State University, eventually retiring as Director of Public Safety and Police at UNC-Greensboro after a career spanning over two decades. While at UNCG, he served as President of the N.C. Association of Law Enforcement Administrators and was advisor to the Gamma Sigma Sigma Sorority. After retirement, Jerry served as Chief of Police at Brunswick Community College. After leaving the police department, he became deeply involved with helping both students and inmates obtain their GEDs.

A Celebration of Life service will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that contributions be made to the Jerry Williamson Scholarship to help GED students further their education. Donations may be sent to Jerry Williamson Scholarship, Brunswick Community College Foundation, P.O. Box 30, Supply, N.C. 28462.

Fond memories and expressions of sympathy may be shared at www.peacocknewnamwhite.com for the Williamson family.

Peacock-Newnam & White Funeral and Cremation Service, 1411 N Howe S., Southport, N.C. 28461.

MARY LOUISE WHITE BURKE

Mary Louise White Burke, 91, formerly of Siler City, passed away Sunday, February 14, 2021, at Belmont Village Assisting Living Center, Carol Stream, Illinois.

A service will be held at a later date.

Mrs. Burke was born in Chatham County on October 3, 1929, the daughter of John W. and Eva Scott White. Louise was a member of the First Baptist Church, where she attended the Rachel Allred Sunday School Class, and was a member of the Highfield Mission Group. She spent her working years as a teller at Centura Bank. In addition to her parents, Louise is preceded in death by her husband Clyde Houston Burke, and half sister, Kathleen W. Petty.

She is survived by her daughter; Deborah Burke Buff of Carol Stream, Illinois.

Smith & Buckner is assisting the Burke family.

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

QUENTIN TRAVERS BLACKWELDER

Quentin Travers Blackwelder, 47, of Sanford, died Saturday, February 13, 2021, at his home.

The funeral service will be held Thursday, February 18, 2021, at 1 p.m. at Bridges-Cameron Funeral Home and officiated by Pastor Greg Long. Friends and family will be received one hour prior to the service. Burial will be at Asbury United Methodist Church Cemetery.

Mr. Blackwelder was born in Lee County, on September 8, 1973, to Thomas Dave and Sherry Lemons Blackwelder. He was part owner in B&B Construction Company. He is survived by his parents; two sons, Anthony Blackwelder of Sanford and Jacob Moore of Oak Island; brother, Troy Blackwelder of Sanford; and sister, Dawn Blackwelder of Sanford.

Arrangements are by Bridges-Cameron Funeral Home.

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

MELVIN VILLALTA SANTAMARIA

Melvin Villalta Santamaria, 46, of Sanford passed away on Wednesday, February 10, 2021, at Central Carolina Hospital.

Funeral services were scheduled from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 17, 2021, at Knotts Funeral Home. Burial followed at Lee Memory Garden.

JOHN RALPH CHALMERS

John Ralph Chalmers, 71, of Sanford, passed away on Monday, February 15, 2021, at Central Carolina Hospital.

Services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home.

MARY 'FANNIE' LOPOSSAY BURKE

Mary "Fannie" Lopossay Burke, 73, of Siler City passed away on Wednesday, February 10, 2021, at UNC Hospitals, Chapel Hill.

A graveside service was held Monday, February 15, 2021, at 10:30 a.m. at Chatham Memorial Park with Rev. Mark Richardson officiating.

Mrs. Burke was born in Chatham County on January 23, 1948, the daughter of Marvin Buck Lopossay Sr. and Virginia Shusky Lopossay. She was a member of the Siler City Pentecostal Holiness Church. Fannie retired from Glendale Hosiery as a knitter, then spent years working at Mountaire. In addition to her parents, she is preceded in death by her husband, John Larry Burke, and brother Marvin B. Lopossay Jr., and sister, Frances.

She is survived by her sons, Michael Burke of Bear Creek, and Jeff Burke of Siler City; sister, Doris Lopossay of Liberty; 11 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to ARC of N.C., 353 E. Six Forks Rd., Suite 300, Raleigh, NC 27609. Online condolences may be made at www.pughfuneralhome.com.

MERLIN GEORGE TEELING

Merlin George Teeling, 71, of Siler City passed away on Tuesday, February 9, 2021, at Chatham Hospital.

The funeral service was held at 2 p.m. on Friday, February 12, 2021, at Hickory Grove Baptist Church Cemetery with Rev. Darrell Garner officiating. Burial followed in the church cemetery.

Mr. Teeling was born in Schenectady, N.Y., on December 25, 1949, the son of George Redmond and Irene Chase. Merlin attended Hickory Grove Baptist Church. He was a farmer. In addition to his parents, Merlin is preceded in death by his sons, James and Cody Teeling, and brother, Gary Teeling.

Survivors include his son, Lucas Teeling of Siler City; brother, Alfred Teeling of Tampa, Florida; four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

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

SHELBY (PERRY) HARRINGTON

Shelby Harrington, 76, passed away Thursday, February 4, 2021, at Sanford Health and Rehabilitation Center.

Graveside services were held at 11 a.m. Friday, February 12, 2021, at Taylors Chapel Missionary Baptist Church in Sanford.

LEONARD HERNDON JONES, SR.

Leonard Herndon Jones Sr., 94, of Sanford, passed away on Sunday, February 14, 2021, at Central Carolina Hospital.

Services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home.

JASPER SYLVESTER (VET) MATTHEWS

Jasper Sylvester (Vet) Matthews, 72, of Siler City, passed away on Friday, February 12, 2021, at Duke University Hospital in Durham.

Services entrusted to Knotts & Son Funeral Home.

MARIA LYNELLE RIMMER POE

Maria Lynelle Rimmer Poe, 45, of Bear Creek passed away on February 12, 2021, at her home.

The funeral service was held at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, February 17, 2021, at Brush Creek Baptist Church with Pastor Frank Taylor, Rev. Kyle Green and Rev. Robert Kidd presiding.

Maria was born in Moore County on October 24, 1975, to Chesley and Carolyn Kidd Rimmer. She was a member of Bear Creek Baptist Church and an office administrator for Edward Jones in Lillington.

Maria is survived by her husband of 23 years, Charlie "Dennis" Poe of the home; parents, Chesley and Carolyn Rimmer of Bennett; and sister, Ellen Rimmer of Carthage.

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

EDWIN LAWRENCE MATTHEWS

Mr. Edwin Lawrence Matthews, 94, of Sanford, passed away Thursday, February 11, 2021, at his home.

Graveside funeral service was scheduled for 2 p.m. Wednesday February 17, 2021, at the Shallow Well Church Cemetery with Rev. David Priddy officiating. Due to COVID-19, masks are requested for all services.

He was born in Harnett County, son of Lammie Lawrence Matthews and Lura Wilbon Matthews. He was preceded in death by his parents; sisters, Virginia Baird, Louise Williford, Janet Stephenson; brothers, Truitt Matthews, Jacob Lynn Matthews; and his wife of 68 years, Mildred Cummings Matthews. Edwin was a Veteran of the United States Army, serving during World War II. He retired from Heins Telephone Company.

He is survived by his daughter, Gilda M. Burns of Sanford; son, Barry Matthews of Sanford; five grandchildren, six great-grandchildren and one great-great grandchild.

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

MARION BIONDA FONSECA

Mrs. Marion Biondo Fonseca, 90, of Pittsboro, passed away on Tuesday, February 9, 2021, at the Laurels of Chatham.

Graveside services were held at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, February 17, 2021, at the National Cemetery in Salisbury.

Mrs. Fonseca was born in Garfield, N.J., on November 22, 1930, daughter of Jack Carmine Biondo and Mary Tuminelli Biondo. She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, Ernest Eladio Fonseca, and a son, James Ernest Fonseca.

She is survived by her daughter, Anita Harrell-Fiks of Monure; a son, John Ralph Fonseca of Crossville, Tennessee; seven grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

On line condolences may be made to smithfuneral-homeoncure.com.

KAREN JOAN GEYER MCGRAIN

Karen Joan Geyer McGrain, 86, of Pittsboro, died Tuesday, February 9, 2021, at the Jim & Betsy Bryan UNC Hospice Home.

The family is planning a virtual service with details to follow. An in-person service will be planned as soon as circumstances allow.

Karen was born in Racine, Wisconsin on April 22, 1934, to the late Theodore F. and Florence Olsen Geyer. She was also preceded in death by sisters Sue Jones and Cyndi Nitz, and brother, Gordon Geyer.

Karen graduated from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, with a bachelor's degree in English Literature. Later Karen became a 5th grade teacher for 20 years. She then started her own business, English Plus, wherein she had contracts with large companies to teach English to foreign born scientists and to advise them in communicating effectively through speech and writing.

Survivors include her husband of 61 years, David McGrain; daughters, Anne McGrain of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Beth McGrain of Livingston, N.J., Nina Decker of Cohasset, Minnesota, and Lisa McGrain of Waukegan, Illinois; seven grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren:

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made in Karen's memory to the Dementia Society of America at demntiasociety.org.

Condolences may be made at www.donaldsonfunerals.com

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

GARY F. SVIHULA

Mr. Gary F Svihula, 82, of Chapel Hill passed away Thursday, February 11, 2021, at SECU/UNC Hospice in Pittsboro.

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

STELLA ANN STREET

Stella Ann Street, 69, passed away on Friday, February 12, 2021 at her residence.

Services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home in Sanford.

JAMES DONELL DOWDY

Mr. James Donell Dowdy, 81, of Ramseur passed away on Tuesday, February 9, 2021, at the Beacon Place Hospice in Greensboro.

Funeral services were held at 1 p.m. Monday, February 15, 2021, at Knotts Funeral Home in Sanford.

HOBERT THEADORE SHEFFIELD

Hobert Theadore Sheffield, 87, of Sanford, passed away on Sunday, February 14, 2021, at his home.

Funeral services will be private.

He was born in Moore County on June 14, 1933, to the late Kenneth and Rosie Morgan Sheffield. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife, Grace Herring Sheffield; three sisters and two brothers. Mr. Sheffield worked for many years at Trion.

He is survived by sons, Michael Sheffield of Sanford, Lacy Sheffield of Goldston, Gary Sheffield of Sanford; daughters, Veanas Ward of Harpers Crossroads, Carol Sheffield of Southern Pines, Becky Haywood of Sanford; step-son, John Wayne Hudson Jr. of Sanford; two step-daughters, Diane Thomas of Lemon Springs and Jane Hudson of Sanford; and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Arrangements are by Bridges-Cameron Funeral Home.

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

GLORIA JEAN (FOXWORTH) MARKHAM

Gloria Jean Foxworth Markham, 67, of Sanford, passed away on Saturday, February 13, 2021, at Central Carolina Hospital.

Services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home.

Worth knowing.

Worth reading.

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‘THERE’S A BALANCE’

Vaccine providers’ equity emphasis might allow some to ‘skip in line.’ But Chatham providers, organizations say it’s worth it.

BY VICTORIA JOHNSON
News + Record Staff

Many Chatham vaccine providers don’t require ID to ensure that it’s not a barrier to vaccination — a decision which could allow some to misrepresent their eligibility and “jump the line.”

Even so, several Chatham providers and community organizations say they think it’s worth the risk.

“There’s a balance,” said Mike Zelek, Chatham County’s Public Health Director. “In an effort to catch a few potential cases of misrepresentation, we don’t want to cause a barrier to access, especially to our historically marginalized communities.”

The CCPHD and Chatham Hospital — which together administer over half of the county’s allotted doses — don’t require ID to give shots, a decision based both in equity concerns and the state’s own recommendations for providers. North Carolina does not require residents to present government-issued ID or any other form of documentation to get vaccinated, spokesperson Sarah Lewis Peel of the N.C. Dept. of Health and

Human Services told the News + Record.

“Some vaccine providers may ask for a way to confirm your identity (name, date of birth) to make sure they are vaccinating the right person, so it is important to bring an item with your name on it (utility bill, faith ID, passport, matrícula consular, credit union member card, etc.),” she said. “Vaccine providers should not withhold vaccinations or appointments for vaccinations because you cannot not present identification.”

But not requiring ID may have some unwanted consequences, the N.C. Watchdog Reporting Network found last week. Some vaccine providers in North Carolina, they reported, have been vaccinating people who aren’t yet eligible under current guidelines, including New Hanover county commissioners. Reporters also found that many providers rely on people to provide accurate information about their vaccine eligibility since they don’t require ID.

“In short, the vaccine distribution system operates largely on the honor system,” the Network concluded, “and a few have taken advantage

of it, risking the health of other North Carolinians.”

Has this happened in Chatham?

Not that we’re aware of, said the CCPHD’s Zelek and Chatham Hospital’s chief medical officer, Andrew Hannapel.

“I can’t tell you that it hasn’t been an issue at all,” Zelek said, “but I don’t anticipate that we’ve had hundreds of people come through our clinics that have not fit the profile, because we do have that process for data entry and then scheduling.”

In Chatham, the CCPHD and Chatham Hospital determine and verify eligibility based on the information residents provide themselves via online registration tools and call centers. To get vaccinated through the CCPHD, residents call the department’s COVID-19 call center or register online in English or Spanish via its online Vaccination Information Tool. Among other things, this form asks people to provide their contact information, name, date of birth, address and type of employment.

“(For) those 65 and older, we’re asking for their date of birth, and

that would be our process to validate,” he said. “We don’t require documentation. We don’t want that to be a barrier to folks.”

The form doesn’t require people to fill out everything, though; among required items — items “starred” on the form — are residents’ names, contact information and date of birth, but not employment information.

“It is helpful that we have complete information,” Zelek said, “as this is used to determine eligibility and the information is required by NC DHHS during the vaccination process, so it speeds up the registration process.”

According to Hannapel, Chatham Hospital likewise asks for a resident’s name, date of birth, race and ethnicity.

“We are required to input required information of your name and date of birth,” he told the News + Record in early February. “Optionally, the state asks that you provide gender, race and ethnicity and we input it into the Coronavirus Vaccine Management System (CVMS) to track your immunization and make sure that you receive your second shot.”

If they have extra doses, he added that they reach out to “eligible recipients” nearby, such as their health care workers who’ve yet to be vaccinated, so that they don’t waste any doses.

“Is it possible that some have slipped through the cracks and misrepresented their information? Yes, it’s possible,” Zelek said. “But the Chatham community, I think, is a very understanding and honest community in my experience, and it’s important that the folks out there understand that there’s a reason for the prioritization of vaccines.”

If the health department finds “strong evidence” that someone registered for an appointment wasn’t eligible, Zelek said they’d then follow prioritization guidance. But if the health department were to find out after the vaccination appointment, he said they currently have no mechanism to penalize people for misrepresenting themselves and touting guidelines.

Though not requiring ID may present problems in enforcing the state’s prioritization guidelines, Zelek said it’s an important piece of the state’s — and providers’ — efforts to equitably distribute the vaccine, especially to minority communities who may not have government-issued ID and may choose not to get vaccinated if they had to present it.

“If somebody doesn’t have a driver’s license, for whatever reason, should that be the barrier to get a vaccine?” Zelek asked. “I think most of us would agree that it shouldn’t.”

Chatham County Council on Aging’s executive director, Dennis Streets, agrees with Zelek.

The COA has devoted a lot of effort to ensuring vaccine equity and access for Chatham’s seniors. They’ve been collecting information from seniors without smartphones or laptops and passing it on to the CCPHD. They also partnered with Chatham Transit and the CCPHD to provide homebound seniors with transportation to vaccination clinics.

Streets said he’s heard stories nationwide about people “skipping in line,” but he hasn’t heard any in Chatham — and he hopes that continues. Seniors are

at greater risk of dying from COVID-19, he said; any dose given to people ineligible for the vaccine under current guidelines is one less dose for the people he and his organization serve.

“Certainly, the intent here — and I think the practice — has been to give the real strong priority to those eligible,” he said. “I’m 68 ... I’m here every day, there was no effort on the part of anybody else or public health to say, ‘Well, we can work you in.’ When I’m talking 75 plus, I waited my turn as well. I was on the list. It’s the right thing to do.”

Streets said he thinks the benefits of not requiring ID outweigh the costs. He said he could see how an ID requirement might scare certain communities away from getting vaccinated.

“I could see for some people, mentally, they’d say, ‘Gosh, I don’t know,’” he said. “We want people to be vaccinated in our community; it’s important for them, and it’s important to the larger community. So anything like that could be seen as a deterrent, I think if at all possible we’d want to avoid (it).”

The Hispanic Liaison’s executive director, Ilana Dubester, also said she thinks the costs outweigh the benefits. Her organization serves Hispanic residents in Chatham County, including undocumented immigrants who may not have government-issued ID.

“I can’t imagine the majority of people trying to cheat the system to get a vaccine,” she said, “and everyone needs the vaccine in the end of it all anyway. ... Of all our troubles, that’s not one of them.”

Reporter Victoria Johnson can be reached at victoria@chathamnr.com.

Town of Siler City to Perform Annual Temporary Switch to Chlorine Disinfection

Beginning March 1, 2021, the Town of Siler City Water Plant will temporarily suspend the addition of ammonia to its water treatment disinfection process, as required by North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR). Siler City will resume the addition of ammonia to the water treatment disinfection process on April 1, 2021.

Siler City uses both ammonia and chlorine to form chloramines for its disinfection process. Ammonia is added to the water in a carefully regulated dose and reacts chemically with the chlorine to produce chloramines. Chloraminated drinking water is safe for drinking, bathing, cooking and many other daily uses. NCDENR requires all systems using chloramination to suspend the addition of ammonia for a one-month period annually.

During the changes in our disinfection process, three groups of people need to take special precautions for higher concentrations of chlorine – kidney dialysis patients, pretreatment owners and aquatic pet owners using City water. Dialysis patients and aquatic pet owners already treat the water they use for chlorine removal. Any customer who pre-treats City water for any process should be aware of their change and consult the manufacturer of any pretreatment equipment for recommendations.

There may also be flushing of water mains throughout the system during this time, causing some discoloration and/or chlorine odor to the drinking water. The city water, however, will still be safe for drinking, bathing and other daily uses. While there are no associated health risks with the discoloration and/or odor, you may want to be sure the water is clear of discoloration prior to laundering light-colored clothing during this time period. If you notice discoloration at the tap, allowing the water to run 5 to 10 minutes should clear up the problem.

Customers with concerns may contact the Town of Siler City at 919-742-4731 or cmccorquodale@silercity.org.

Ciudad de Siler Realizará el Cambio Temporal Anual a la Desinfección del Cloro

A partir del 1 de Marzo de 2021, la Planta de Agua de la Ciudad de Siler City suspenderá temporalmente la adición de amoníaco a su proceso de desinfección del tratamiento de agua, como lo requiere el Departamento de North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR). Siler City reanudará la adición de amoníaco al proceso de desinfección del tratamiento del agua el 1 de Abril de 2021.

Siler City utiliza amoníaco y cloro para formar cloraminas para su proceso de desinfección. El amoníaco se añade al agua en una dosis cuidadosamente regulada y reacciona químicamente con el cloro para producir cloraminas. El agua potable cloramiada es segura para beber, bañarse, cocinar y muchos otros usos diarios. NCDENR requiere que todos los sistemas que utilizan cloraminación suspendan la adición de amoníaco durante un período de un mes al año.

Durante los cambios en nuestro proceso de desinfección, tres grupos de personas necesitan tomar precauciones especiales para mayores concentraciones de cloro – pacientes de diálisis renal, propietarios de pretratamiento y propietarios de mascotas acuáticas que utilizan agua de la ciudad. Los pacientes de diálisis y los dueños de mascotas acuáticas ya tratan el agua que utilizan para la eliminación de cloro. Cualquier cliente que pre-trata el agua de la ciudad para cualquier proceso debe ser consciente de su cambio y consultar al fabricante de cualquier equipo de pretratamiento para recomendaciones.

También puede haber un enjuague de agua por todo el Sistema durante este tiempo, causando algo de decoloración y/o olor a cloro en el agua potable. Sin embargo el agua de la ciudad seguirá siendo segura para beber, bañarse y otros usos diarios. Si bien no existen riesgos para la salud asociados con la decoloración y/o el olor, es posible asegurarse de que el agua no tenga decoloración antes de lavar ropa de colores claros durante este periodo de tiempo. Si nota decoloración en el grifo, deje correr el agua de 5 a 10 minutos esto debería solucionar el problema. Los clientes con inquietudes pueden comunicarse con la ciudad de Siler City al 919-742-4731, or cmccorquodale@silercity.org

NEWS BRIEFS

FSA offering additional assistance for contract growers

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) will provide additional assistance through the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP2), expanding eligibility for some agricultural producers and commodities. Producers who are now eligible should contact the Chatham County FSA Office before Feb. 26 in order to apply for the program.

Contract producers of swine, broilers, laying hens, chicken eggs and turkeys who suffered a drop in revenue in 2020 as compared to their 2019 revenue because of the pandemic now are eligible for assistance. Producers could receive up to 80% of their revenue loss, subject to the availability of funds. Producers of pullets and turfgrass sod also now are eligible for CFAP payments. The commodities were not explicitly included in the initial CFAP 2 rule.

Newly eligible producers can submit a new CFAP 2 application and must do so by Feb. 26, 2021. Documentation to support the producer’s application and certification will be requested. There may be other eligibility forms required if you have not applied for any previous FSA program. For existing FSA customers, many documents are likely already on file. The Chatham County FSA Office remains open for business, however public access remains limited. We are happy to continue to serve our customers by phone, email, drop box, or regular mail. If you have any questions or would like to apply for the CFAP 2 additional assistance, please call or email the county office. Our phone number is 919-542-2244 ext. 2. If we do not answer, please leave a message and we will return your call as soon as we can.

Gov. Cooper honors North Carolina’s black health leaders during Black History Month

Gov. Roy Cooper recognized and honored North Carolina’s African American leaders and organizations in health

and medicine for their contributions to heal and care for their communities.

“I am grateful for all of the African American leaders who have served our state through their efforts in health and medicine,” said Governor Cooper. “As we celebrate their achievements, we must acknowledge that North Carolina still has work to do to ensure equitable health systems for all North Carolinians.”

Governor Cooper proclaimed February as Black History Month in North Carolina at the beginning of this month.

In June 2020, Governor Cooper signed Executive Order 143 which established the Andrea Harris Social, Economic, Environmental, and Health Equity Task Force. This Task Force is working to address the disparities in our health care and economic institutions for communities of color that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout the pandemic, Governor Cooper and top health officials have made equity a top priority. North Carolina has been recognized nationally for state efforts to track data about race and ethnicity in vaccinations and COVID-19 cases. North Carolina continues to reach out to communities of color with focused outreach and ensuring a portion of vaccines every week go to underserved communities.

Among the honorees is the late Maude Lee Bryant of Chatham County, recognized as a midwife whose birthing practices were known statewide. She also served as an instructor on traditional birthing to UNC Medical School students.

Chatham man appointed to state board

Gov. Roy Cooper announced new appointments to state boards and commissions Tuesday.

He appointed Ronnie Dunn of Siler City as an at-large public member to the North Carolina Board of Electrolysis Examiners.

Dunn works as a cosmetologist and has been a part of the cosmetology industry for nine years.

CARD OF THANKS

Thanks to all the volunteers that worked long and faithfully to service the COVID Vaccine Drives held at the Agriculture Center in Pittsboro. If you helped, you are appreciated regardless of the task that you performed. It meant so much to so many people. Thanks again...

CARD OF THANKS

The family of the late Callie "Bernice" Reives wishes to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to everyone for your sympathy, acts of kindness and support during the loss of our dear mother. Thank you so much!

Pittsboro's RAFI calling out antitrust violations in farming

BY D. LARS DOLDER
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — Antitrust legislation has made global headlines in recent months with free market advocates decrying big company domination of the technology and information industries.

But a Pittsboro-based advocacy group, the Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI-USA), is calling out antitrust violations in a different sector — farming.

"You think telecommunications with like the T-Mobile-Sprint merger, for example, or market power that a lot of tech companies like your Apple and your Google have in their space ..." said RAFI Program Manager Tyler Whitley. "But in agriculture it has happened for a while, too, but with fewer hearing about it."

Antitrust laws are designed to prevent monopolies, to facilitate and promote fair competition in a capitalistic society. Companies such as Facebook, Amazon and Google have been scrutinized for exceeding the legal borders of their market influence and creating environments in which potential competitors almost invariably fail.

Such companies, though, have gone largely unchecked despite claims of malfeasance because antitrust laws afford them too much leeway, according to Whitley.

"The issue is that for a very long time, there's been a very narrow definition used for determining if there are antitrust violations," he said.

Whitley says antitrust violations are common in the farming industry — though underpublicized — especially as big company mergers limit farmer options and homogenize local markets.

"It is certainly something that has intensified over the last 10 plus years in agriculture," he said. "It has really progressed more rapidly than in other sectors."

Options for seed purchase are dwindling, Whitley said, especially since the Bayer-Monsanto merger in 2018. And in Chatham County, where poultry farming has long been one of the area's staples, the fact that there are few integrator options — processing plants that buy chickens from local farms — strips farmers of their leverage.

A 2015 USDA Economic Research survey determined that about 25% of farmers nationwide have only one nearby integrator to whom they can sell chickens. Altogether, more than 50% had only one or two available integrators. Citing that study, Whitley said that farmer prospects are increasingly grim.

"So, you know, think of that — half the entire poultry industry only has two options available to them," he said. "That amount of consolidation really limits opportunities for farmers and for other small businesses that feed into those larger industries as well."

The problem is not that antitrust laws don't exist. They have been around for centuries. But many are antiquated by today's industry standards; they must evolve or be replaced.

"There are a lot of antitrust laws out there currently on the books," Whitley said. "And so, some of it just needs to be revamped for today's modern economy."

More specific enforcement standards are necessary, too, he says, to ensure that antitrust violations aren't over-

looked. "So I would say in a nutshell, that's kind of the bigger issue — it's the enforcement."

Whitley is the program manager for RAFI's Challenging Corporate Power program, advocating for family farms and helping vulnerable populations navigate their legal options. The CCP "fight(s) the egregious growth of corporate power by holding corporations and government accountable ..." RAFI's website says, and by "collaborating with a broad base of stakeholders, farmers, workers, environmental activists, animal welfare groups, and others, we will build an equitable food system."

To that end, RAFI is publicly endorsing Senator Amy Klobuchar's (D-Minn.) omnibus bill, the Competition and Antitrust Law Enforcement Reform Act, which was introduced earlier this month.

"For far too long, antitrust law in the United States has not kept pace with developments in our economy, creating unchecked growth in market consolidation and concentration," RAFI Communications Manager Beth Hauptle wrote in a press release last week. "For farmers and rural small businesses this means there are far too few companies selling seeds, only one poultry company in town, and farmers who are legally locked out of repairing their own tractors. Rural prosperity has withered on the vine as monopolies and monopolies reap all the financial benefits of industry consolidation and vertical integration. This legislation is a lifeline to America's rural communities."

But passage of Klobuchar's bill would only start the process of empowering local farmers to reclaim their industry from national and global companies, Whitley said.

"This is really just foundational legislation that is necessary to then expand into agriculture, livestock and poultry and other sectors to get at other issues that are affected by antitrust," he said.

In the meantime, while bills make their way through D.C.'s legislative channels, farmers are scrambling to adjust their practices to survive, if they can.

"Some are able to restructure or some are able to become more flexible and find new markets," Whitley said, "but some have to sell, and I think that's a real big issue that you see right now."

RAFI representatives hope the group's advocacy programs will register with D.C. and state lawmakers, but the most powerful voice, according to Whitley, is the public's.

"You can always contact your local representative, that doesn't cost anything," he said. "If you're able to send an email to your senator or your congressman, you can tell them, 'Hey, this is an issue I have.'"

Without a show of community support, farmers may not have their needs recognized.

"Most people who are going to read this publication aren't farmers," Whitley said. "So, if only farmers are talking about issues that affect agriculture, that's a very small percentage of the population. But all of us eat multiple times a day, so all of us need to become an advocate for a just food system."

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

NEWS BRIEFS

Chatham County Democratic Party announces 2021 precinct meetings

The 2021 Chatham County Democratic Party annual organizational precinct meetings will be held between March 6 and March 20.

Because of COVID-19, all meetings will be virtual via Zoom. While precincts may meet at other times during the year, this

is the meeting where precinct leadership is elected, precinct delegates to the County Convention are elected and resolutions from precinct members are considered and voted on. Resolutions may eventually become part of the NCDP or DNC platforms. All Democrats living in a precinct may attend and vote on business before the meeting. Interested individuals will be able to stream the precinct meeting.

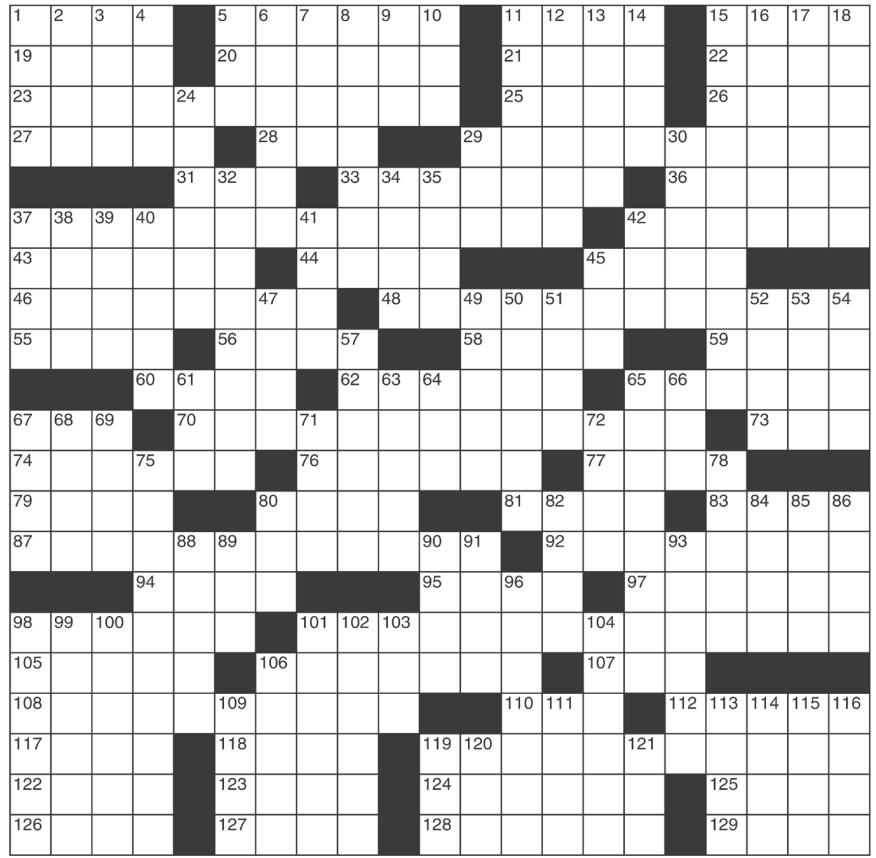
Details on the date and time of each meeting are available at https://www.chathamdemsnr.com/2021_precinct_meetings. Anyone interested in running for precinct leadership, becoming a county convention delegate or submitting a resolution should contact their precinct chair. A list of precinct chairs may be found at https://www.chathamdemsnr.com/precinct_officers.

— CN+R staff reports

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo

HARD-TO-SEE FEE

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|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ACROSS | 45 Work to get | 95 Potting stuff | 2 Aroma | 42 Ewe's call | 84 Window unit |
| 1 Suddenly | 46 Mimicking an angry dog | 97 TV journalist | 3 Destructive habit | 45 LGA guess | 85 Kazan of film |
| 5 Put stress on | 48 1993 event at Mount Carmel Center | 98 Mimicked Daffy Duck | 4 After a while | 47 Emperor before Galba | 86 Search for |
| 11 Volcano in Sicily | 55 Comic actor Danny | 101 A cut from the short loin | 5 In days past | 49 A la — (menu words) | 88 Green with Grammys |
| 15 Meadow songbird | 56 Spill the info, with "up" | 105 Playwright Fugard | 6 Carl Sagan book | 50 Hammond instruments | 89 Ill-bred man |
| 19 Supreme Norse deity | 20 Net-tending player | 106 Vocalists | 7 Roman censor | 51 Potential plant | 90 "Oh, woe —!" |
| 21 Donahue of TV | 22 Genesis garden | 107 Simile middle | 8 Blissful | 52 "Three Sisters" sister | 91 Jordanian queen dowager |
| 23 Very ornate designs of the 1700s | 25 Be mindful of | 108 University in northern California | 9 Nothing at all | 53 Tighten up a muscle | 93 Tile artwork |
| 26 Bill with Lincoln | 27 Sports site | 110 McKellen of "X-Men" | 10 One of 18 on a golf course | 54 Destiny | 96 Like some trading |
| 28 Apr. and Dec. | 29 Longtime metal alloy manufacturer | 112 Mosul native | 11 See 1-Down | 57 Under wraps | 98 Milk-related |
| 31 M.Sgt., e.g. | 33 Friz Freleng's real first name | 117 Aquarium | 12 One's wifey | 61 Kyoto sash | 99 Cornell University city |
| 36 Mean-spirited sort | 37 Fill-up sites with star logos | 118 One of 18 on the 2002 Humanitarian Bowl | 13 Nephew's sister | 63 Actress Kelly or Shearer | 100 Gives off light |
| 42 Crows | 43 Oscar winner Brody | 119 They're in eight answers in this puzzle | 14 Gucci of fashion | 64 Suffix with prophet | 101 Used a rotary telephone |
| 44 Like a straight line, in brief | 45 Water, humorously | 122 Slushy drink | 15 Unlike righties | 65 Andean llamas | 102 Puts in |
| | 46 Henna | 123 Superior to | 16 Farewells | 66 Quantity: Abbr. | 103 Big T-shirt size: Abbr. |
| | 47 Trail | 124 Works the rudder | 17 Go back to the way it was | 67 Little quarrel | 104 Some chair craftspeople |
| | 48 Read hastily | 125 Dimple site | 18 Belfry sounds | 68 Classic cookie | 106 Hot pot spot |
| | 49 Gibbons, e.g. | 126 Play roster | 24 Call off | 69 Kosovo native | 109 Movie or play |
| | 50 Something Plus White toothpaste claims to remove | 127 Joins in matrimony | 29 Footfaraw | 71 "No" votes | 111 "Zip- — -Doo-Dah" |
| | 51 Brief, humorously | 128 Cherished "Mother" | 30 Jeer at | 72 Apple device | 114 Tennis Arthur |
| | 52 Sports side | 129 Held on to | 32 Christmas trees, usually | 75 Opening in a parka, say | 115 Ear swab |
| | | | 34 Single-pot meal | 78 Lacks | 116 " — that special!" |
| | | | 35 Verdi heroine | 80 DeLuise of "Hot Stuff" | 119 1940s pres. |
| | | | 37 Job to do | 82 Large city in Colombia | 120 Suffix with Israel |
| | | | 38 Pulitzer winner Ferber | | 121 Hush-hush govt. gp. |
| | | | 39 Diagnostic | | |
| | | | 40 Ran on TV | | |
| | | | 41 Clothes, colloquially | | |



Solution for the puzzle in last week's edition.

P E E V E S T O E T A P F A S C I S M
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SILER CITY COMMISSIONERS

Pandemic may force major delays in municipal elections

BY D. LARS DOLDER
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — November’s election season was historic and unusual as COVID-19 restrictions forced nationwide protocol adjustments.

But 2021’s election season may be similarly upended by pandemic circumstances, at least in Siler City.

The town has two challenges to its election season: census data will arrive several months later than usual following pandemic delays, and the commissioners must nonetheless redistrict Siler City before municipal elections can begin.

At the board of commissioners meeting on Monday, two representatives from Tharrington Smith — a law firm that advised the town of Siler City 10 years ago during its previous redistricting — outlined the peculiarities of this year’s election timeline and some options for how the town could adapt.

“Redistricting is, as most folks are aware, the process of redrawing districts so that each district has roughly the same number of people,” said Blake Esselstyn, a

demographer working with Tharrington Smith in the town’s employ. “And in order to do that you need to have accurate numbers about the number of people in each census block.”

Districts need not change if the population has been largely inert over the previous decade, but “the city may need to redistrict if you have a change in your population that puts your districts out of balance for purposes of one person, one vote,” said Tharrington Smith attorney Deborah Stagner, referring to the principle that every person should have equal representation in voting.

Normally, census figures would have been delivered Feb. 18. That would permit town officials several months to redistrict and submit its modified districts to the county board of elections in preparation for end-of-year elections.

“Typically, what this scenario would look like,” Esselstyn said, “is the data would be delivered in February and March and candidate filing would start in July.”

Last week, though, the U.S. Census Bureau announced that population data will not

reach towns until the end of September.

“So, that’s beyond — that’s well after when the actual filing period would typically happen for odd-year municipal elections,” Esselstyn said.

What does that mean for Siler City and other towns with scheduled elections this fall?

“At this point, it is possible that the General Assembly will enact laws that will change or delay the filing and the elections for all municipalities across the state,” Stagner said.

A variant of that possibility is that N.C. legislators may postpone elections “just for municipalities with odd-year elections that also have election districts,” Esselstyn said, such as Siler City. “... There are many cities and towns that have odd-year elections but don’t have this redistricting requirement, so they wouldn’t be in the same boat.”

If the General Assembly does not take action, however, the town is still permitted under statute to delay its elections pending certain requirements: a public hearing followed by a vote to adopt a resolution re-scheduling elections for March 2022.

“But even with a March date for the election next year that still puts us in a bit of a time crunch,” Stagner said, “given the census data not showing up until this fall.”

If elections move to March, the board would have about five weeks to conduct its redistricting process, affording the BOE one month to “figure out the significance of these districts,” Esselstyn said.

That’s about half the time it usually takes for towns to effectively reshuffle their districts.

“It’s possible to potentially get redistricting done in a shorter period of time,” Stagner said, “but one of the things that we will be talking to you about as we enter into the process is whether and how much public input to have, whether you want to have a public hearing and that sort of thing.”

To permit the board of commissioners maximal time for due diligence in fulfilling its obligation to redistrict, the election could move deeper into 2022, with filing to begin sometime in February and the primary extended to May. But the General Assembly would have to make that decision, Esselstyn and Stagner indicated.

Some commissioners expressed apprehension at delaying the election season, but Stagner reminded the board that state law requires fair representation of every voter.

“You are obligated to respect in your districts one person, one vote,” she said, “and if elections were held with districts that were so far out of balance that they didn’t meet that, you would potentially be (in trouble) for not having constitutionally compliant districts.”

The board did not make any decisions with respect to election timing in its Monday meeting. If the General Assembly does not pass legislation to address the unique pandemic circumstances, commissioners will have to examine its options more closely in coming months.

“If it does turn out that a resolution is needed from the city to postpone elections,” Stagner said “... we’ll certainly be here to help and work with you through that process.”

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

When Old Man Winter hits, here’s how to stay safe

From the American Red Cross

RALEIGH — Winter weather brings its own challenges and the American Red Cross has steps you should take to stay safe should winter weather threaten your community.

Take immediate precautions if you hear these words on the news:

• **Winter Storm WARNING:** Life-threatening, severe winter conditions have begun or will begin within 24 hours

• **Blizzard WARNING:** Sustained winds or frequent gusts of 35 miles per hour or greater, plus considerable falling or blowing snow reducing visibility to less than a quarter mile, expected to prevail for three hours or longer

• **WIND CHILL:** Temperature: How cold people and animals feel when outside. As wind increases, heat is carried away from your body at a faster rate, driving down your body temperature and making you feel much colder. The wind chill temperature is not

the actual temperature but rather how wind and cold feel on exposed skin.

• **Winter Storm WATCH:** Winter storm conditions possible within the next 36 to 48 hours. Review your winter storm plans and stay informed about weather conditions.

What you should do

- Assemble an emergency preparedness kit.
- Protect pipes from freezing
- Caulk and weather-strip doors and windowsills to keep cold air out. Install storm windows or cover windows with plastic from the inside to provide an extra layer of insulation to keep cold air out.
- Make sure you have enough heating fuel on hand. Conserve fuel. Winter storms can last for several days, placing great demand on electric, gas, and other fuel distribution systems (fuel oil, propane, etc.).
- Stay indoors and wear warm clothes. Layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing will keep you warmer than a bulky

sweater. If you feel too warm, remove layers to avoid sweating; if you feel chilled, add layers.

- Check on relatives, neighbors and friends, particularly if they are elderly or if they live alone

Heat your home safely

It’s that time of year when many people resort to space heaters and other sources to keep their homes warm. Home heating is the second leading cause of fires in the U.S. To reduce the risk of heating related fires, the Red Cross recommends these steps:

- All heaters need space. Keep children, pets and things that can burn (paper, matches, bedding, furniture, clothing, carpets and rugs) at least three feet away from heating equipment.
- If you must use a space heater, place it on a level, hard and nonflammable surface (such as ceramic tile floor), not on rugs, carpets or near bedding or drapes. Plug power cords directly into outlets — never into an extension cord.
- Never leave a fire in the fireplace unattended and use a glass or metal fire screen to keep fire and embers in the fireplace
- Never use a cooking range, oven, charcoal or gas grill to heat your home

- Turn off portable space heaters every time you leave the room or go to sleep.

Stay safe outside

If you must go outside, protect yourself from winter storm hazards:

- Wear layered clothing, mittens or gloves, and a hat. Outer garments should be tightly woven and water repellent. Mittens or gloves and a hat will prevent the loss of body heat.
- Cover your mouth to protect your lungs from severely cold air. Avoid taking deep breaths; minimize talking.
- Watch for signs of hypothermia and frostbite
- Keep dry. Change wet clothing frequently to prevent a loss of body heat. Wet clothing loses much of its insulating value and transmits heat rapidly away from the body.
- Stretch before you go out. If you go out to shovel snow, do a few stretching exercises to warm up your body. This will reduce your chances of muscle injury.
- Avoid overexertion, such as shoveling heavy snow, pushing a vehicle, or walking in deep snow. The strain from the cold and the hard labor may cause a heart attack. Sweating could lead to a chill and hypothermia.
- Walk carefully on snowy, icy sidewalks. Slips and falls occur frequently in winter weather

er, resulting in painful and sometimes disabling injuries.

- If you must go out during a winter storm, use public transportation if possible. About 70 percent of winter deaths related to ice and snow occur in automobiles.

Winter driving safety

Stay off the road if possible during severe weather. If you must drive in winter weather, follow these tips:

- Keep a windshield scraper and small broom in your car. A small sack of sand for generating traction under wheels and a set of tire chains or traction mats. Matches in a waterproof container. A brightly colored (preferably red) cloth to tie to the antenna. In addition, have an emergency supply kit, including warm clothing.
 - Keep your vehicle’s gas tank full so you can leave right away in an emergency and to keep the fuel line from freezing
 - Make sure everyone has their seat belts on and give your full attention to the road
 - Don’t follow other vehicles too closely. Sudden stops are difficult on snowy roadways.
 - Don’t use cruise control when driving in winter weather
 - Don’t pass snow plows
 - Ramps, bridges and overpasses freeze before roadways
- If you become strand-

ed:

- Stay in the vehicle and wait for help. Do not leave the vehicle to search for assistance unless help is visible within 100 yards (91 meters). You can quickly become disoriented and confused in blowing snow.
- Display a trouble sign to indicate you need help. Hang a brightly colored cloth (preferably red) on the radio antenna and raise the hood after snow stops falling.
- Run the engine occasionally to keep warm. Turn on the engine for about 10 minutes each hour (or five minutes every half hour). Running the engine for only short periods reduces the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and conserves fuel. Use the heater while the engine is running. Keep the exhaust pipe clear of snow, and slightly open a downwind window for ventilation.
- Leave the overhead light on when the engine is running so that you can be seen

People can download the Red Cross Emergency App for instant access to weather alerts for their area and where loved ones live. Expert medical guidance and a hospital locator are included in the First Aid App in case travelers encounter any mishaps. Both apps are available to download for free in app stores or at redcross.org/apps.

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This Community ROCKS!

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



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

Thank YOU!

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

To DONATE:



For help or to help:





CYBER

Continued from page A7

CityView with OpenGov software for Chatham County Central Permitting and completing the Northwoods/Laserfiche upgrade at Chatham County Department of Social Services.

The cyber incident report can be viewed at www.chathamnc.org/cyberincident.

This incident summary was included in the agenda packet of Monday's meeting.

Cyber Incident Summary

The Incident
 • On October 28, 2020 Chatham County MIS staff identified a ransomware attack (DoppelPay-

mer) against our County network

• Chatham MIS staff quickly isolated the affected systems by stopping communication across our network and externally.

• Staff immediately enlisted assistance from state and local agencies with experience with this type of incident.

• Forensic analysis revealed that:

• Ransomware entered our network through a Phishing email with a malicious attachment.

• The threat actor acquired data from a limited number of county systems although the data that was acquired could not be specifically determined.

The Impact

• As a result of the incident, we lost the use

of computers, internet access, office phones and voicemail.

• We were able to acquire loaner laptops from other counties, towns, and Emergency Management.

• Emergency Management was able to provide temporary internet access points and phones.

• Staff set up temporary email addresses for internal communication and access to the public.

Recovery Efforts

• Chatham Emergency Management helped coordinate daily briefings with stakeholders during the 1st two weeks of the incident.

• MIS staff and agency partners proceeded with full rebuild of our network infrastructure.

• We worked with our existing software vendors to restore our business

systems.

• We had to wipe and reimage our servers and over 550 individual staff computers.

Current Status

• The process of restoring business systems, phones, network connection, and getting County computers back to staff is nearly complete

• Full system recovery efforts are estimated to continue through early 2021.

• We have been engaged with staff from the NC Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) and the NC Attorney General's Office (AG) to ensure we meet the notification/reporting requirements as it relates to disclosures of a breach of protected health information (PHI) and/or personally identifiable information (PII) data.

Breach Notification

• We continue to engage in with our breach counsel, DHHS, and the AG to ensure we respond in the most appropriate manner possible as it relates to the data accessed from our network during the ransomware incident.

• We are going through the files on the server that were impacted to collect the names and addresses of individuals whose PII or PHI may be at risk of exposure.

• Those individuals will be notified of the situation.

• A call center will be available to those individuals to answer any of their questions about this incident.

Improvements

• Along with the extensive mitigation efforts taken by the County during the cyber inci-

dent, Chatham MIS also evaluated the existing security protocols in an effort to further build upon the security of our network.

• We are evaluating and implementing additional security measures and reinforcing employee training.

• The threat from outside individuals is constant and Chatham County aims to take all reasonable actions to secure their data and infrastructure.

Improvements

• During this time, we took the opportunity to improve/update some of our software:

- Office 365 upgrade
- .gov domain change
- Changing from CityView to OpenGov software for permitting
- Northwoods/Laserfiche upgrade at DSS

ATTACK

Continued from page A1

tional cyber criminal group, provided to the newspaper by a cybersecurity expert on the condition of anonymity. Some of the most sensitive data files discovered included statements provided by Chatham County children who were victims of sexual abuse, performance evaluations and healthcare documents of current and former county employees and folders of files from criminal investigations labeled “closed” and “open.”

Non-employees whose data was posted include disadvantaged Chatham residents who relied on county services and those served with eviction notices, subpoenas or arrest warrants.

A ‘phishing’ attack

In his report Monday, LaMontagne confirmed that the county’s network was breached through a “phishing” email — a fraudulent practice intended to induce the recipient to open the message — with a malicious attachment back in October. The attack meant the county lost its computers and network, email, telephone and voicemail systems.

As a result, the hard drives of nearly all of the county’s desktop and laptop computers — more than 550 of them — had to be wiped clean, stripped down and reimaged. Employees improvised for weeks with hastily-created gmail.com email addresses and worked from their own personal computers, tablets and cell phones. Many tasks were performed “by hand” or using what LaMontagne described as “’80s technology.”

But as more and more of county government work infrastructure came back online, it wasn’t until last week that the county realized sensitive data files had been uploaded to publicly accessible websites.

“On February 8th, the County discovered that the cyber actor(s) responsible for the October 2020 ransomware event against the County released certain data acquired by the cyber actor(s) from the County’s servers,” LaMontagne’s report said. “The County’s investigation of this event remains ongoing. This includes efforts to identify and notify every individual whose personal information may have been impacted.”

The News + Record first questioned county officials about those posted files on Feb. 8, inquiring by email about the county’s knowledge of the public postings and what efforts had been made “to identify and notify every individual whose personal information may have been impacted.” Those questions were posed to the county within an hour of confirming files and documents the newspaper saw were, in fact, Chatham County’s.

In a response a day later, LaMontagne said: “Currently we are going through the files on the server that were encrypted to collect the names and addresses of individuals whose (personally identifiable information) or (protected health information) may be at risk of exposure. Those individuals will be notified of the

NC+R screenshots. All redactions were made by the News + Record.

Sensitive data including social security numbers and bank information for Chatham residents, employees and former employees were stolen during the county government’s Oct. 28 ‘cyber incident.’

situation and a call center will be available to those individuals for questions.”

Chatham County has continued to work with state officials, including those from the Attorney General’s Office, on notifying employees and others, according to statements from LaMontagne, to safeguard those affected.

Cybersecurity experts warn that stolen data files containing personal information are sometimes sold to criminal entities which, in cases of failed ransomware, use them to apply for credit cards and run up thousands of dollars of unauthorized purchases. Making those affected aware of the theft as soon as possible, one cybersecurity specialist who reviewed the contents of some of the stolen files said, is paramount.

LaMontagne sent an email message to county staff regarding the stolen data and a News + Record story that was published on Feb. 9, according to a county employee who provided the email message to the newspaper. That message contained some of the same language used in an earlier statement provided to the newspaper about the posting of the stolen files.

In that email to employees, LaMontagne said the county was reviewing files on the impacted server to collect the names and addresses of people whose “protected health information” or “personally identifiable information” may be at risk of exposure.

“We are concerned about any sensitive files that may have been accessed and published, and we are working diligently to address the situation while continuing our recovery efforts,” the email said, adding that county staff has worked with state-level officials to meet notification/reporting requirements of such a breach.

State law requires businesses affected by “a security breach” to notify any “affected person” of the breach “without unreasonable delay, consistent with the legitimate needs of law enforcement ... and consistent with any measures necessary to determine sufficient contact information, determine the scope of the breach and restore the reasonable integrity, security, and confidentiality of the data system.”

But the same law says the definition of business “shall not include any government or gov-

ernmental subdivision or agency.”

Prior to Monday’s meeting, some county employees had expressed concerns about not being notified of the data breach before the News + Record’s Feb. 9 article was posted; a Feb. 14 follow-up story, posted online, conveyed those concerns. LaMontagne revealed publicly on Monday that the county did not learn about the breach until Feb. 8, the day the News + Record first inquired about the stolen data.

He had previously declined to answer the News + Record’s questions about timeline of discovery of stolen information, but maintains the county’s response has been proper.

“We will continue to engage in these conversations with our breach counsel, NCDHHS and the AG to ensure we respond in the most appropriate manner possible as it relates to the data accessed from our network during the ransomware incident,” he said in the email to employees. “In the meantime, individuals who are concerned about their personal information being accessed may utilize a free security freeze, provided by the NC Department of Justice (NCDOJ).”

(More information can be found at: <https://ncdoj.gov/protecting-consumers/protecting-your-identity/free-security-freeze>.)

Increasing attacks

“The extent of the breach does not surprise me at all,” said David Delaney, former senior cybersecurity attorney for the U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security who now lives in Chatham. “Ransomware is an increasingly common attack not just against government entities like Chatham County but also in the private sector.”

Via the Oct. 28 attack, DoppelPaymer gained access to Chatham County’s government network and “resulted in the encryption of much of our County network infrastructure and associated business systems,” LaMontagne wrote in a report on the breach by included in the agenda packet for Monday’s meeting.

Ransomware is the deployment of malicious software — often through an email attachment opened by an unsuspecting recipient — to infect and lock computer networks or files until a ransom is paid. Upon payment, the victimized

entity typically receives a decryption key to unlock its data.

Brett Callow, a threat analyst at Emsisoft — a company which creates software to protect clients from malicious websites and malware — told the News + Record that the “only” answer to ransomware was simple: never, ever pay the ransom.

“It’s always the wrong decision,” he said. “It simply incentivizes the criminals and in no way guarantees that you will get your data back. The only way to stop this is to make it unprofitable. It’s going to continue to be a problem as long as it’s profitable.”

In the report, LaMontagne writes: “Ultimately, Chatham County took advice from all resources and proceeded with full system recovery” — which involved wiping the hard drives of those county-owner computers — “rather than paying the ransom demanded by the ransomware threat actors.”

There are no reporting requirements about ransomware attacks, Callow said. He estimated that between a quarter and a third of government entities and businesses subject to such attacks ultimately pay a ransom. He also estimated that fewer than 1% of ransomware cases are ever prosecuted.

On Nov. 4, a week after the breach and with the ransom not paid, DoppelPaymer released a selection of mostly innocuous county files on the “dark web” — encrypted online sites not found via conventional search engines — and the “clear web” via select key search criteria.

Almost three months later, DoppelPaymer demonstrated the extent of its acquisition, this time posting several hundred folders of files of compromising data on its site. The actual number of documents posted takes up more than six gigabytes of hard drive space.

A cyber expert who perused the data told the News + Record in response to the review, “This is ... terrible. It’s as bad as I’ve ever seen.”

Cyber crime experts suspect that DoppelPaymer is operated in Russia, headed by 33-year-old Russian national Maksim Yakubets. The Ukrainian-born hacker employs dozens of cyber criminals who target governments and companies around the world, potentially working on behalf of the Russian government, according to Newsweek and National Public Radio reports.

“This kind of crime is something that very much looks like (what) these criminal actors do throughout the world,” Delaney said.

The cyber expert who provided the News + Record access to the stolen files said that a review of criminal elements’ upload sites indicated ransomware attacks all across North Carolina — observing data from entities in Shelby and Rocky Mount, as well as Guilford, Haywood, Duplin, Person, Surry and Mitchell counties, just to name a few, on sites of the criminal actors known for ransomware and hacking.

LaMontagne praised his staff again on Monday for the work they’ve done to recover from the attack; he’d previously told the News + Record that many staff were working nights and weekends to ensure services to county residences went uninterrupted.

Gomez Flores questions tax lien advertising

Prior to Monday’s board meeting, Chatham County commissioners had not commented publicly about the breach of stolen data. However, at Monday’s meeting, Commissioner Franklin Gomez Flores raised the issue of penalizing the News + Record for its coverage of the incident by not paying for the publication of a listing of the county’s tax liens in the newspaper, as is required by state law.

N.C. General Statute §105-369 — entitled “Advertisement of tax liens on real property for failure to pay taxes” — states that a county’s tax collector “shall advertise county tax liens by posting a notice of the liens at the county courthouse and by publishing each lien at least one time in one or more newspapers having general circulation in the taxing unit. The municipal tax collector shall advertise municipal tax liens by posting a notice of the liens at the city or town hall and by publishing each lien at least one time in one or more newspapers having general circulation in the taxing unit.”

As part of the that process, commissioners must formally vote on a request to approve the tax lien advertisement; state statute requires the advertisement to appear between March 1 and June 30, with the cost of the advertising paid by the county.

Near the start of Monday’s meeting, Gomez Flores asked for the tax lien advertisement issue — which was on the board’s consent agenda — to be discussed separately. The consent agenda is a grouping of non-controversial items to be approved by a single vote as the start of the meeting; Gomez Flores wanted that issue to be decided separately.

After LaMontagne’s report, that question came before the board. Gomez Flores said community members had expressed concerns as to how “a statewide newspaper was able to get this information before they did,” referring to the Raleigh News & Observer’s publishing of the News + Record’s Feb. 9 story in full on its website.

“So it kind of falls off a domino effect,” he said. “Personally, me, I would much rather have been told, personally, approached before a major news was released. With that being said, I feel very uncomfortable doing business with an entity that our community members feel like side-blinded them in a way.”

Commissioners inquired whether the publication of the tax liens was required by state law; county attorney Bob Hagemann confirmed it was.

“The governing board must order the tax collector to advertise the tax liens,” he said, adding that there’s no discretion for the board on the matter.

The board ultimately passed the item by a 4-1 margin — with Gomez Flores casting the dissenting vote.

After the vote, Commissioner Karen Howard said she shared Gomez Flores’ concerns, but did not elaborate.

MAKING HISTORY

J-M's Jennah Fadely secures state swimming title with record-breaking performance

Captures title at NCHSAA 1A/2A Swimming State Championships

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
News + Record Staff

CARY — A Chatham County swimmer made history in Cary last week, etching her name into record books and sewing her name onto a banner.

And yet, she still isn't satisfied. Jennah Fadely, a senior swimmer for Jordan-Matthews, competed in the NCHSAA 1A/2A Swimming State Championships on Friday, winning the state title in the women's 100 breaststroke event with a 1A/2A state-record time of 1:02.11 (.03 seconds faster than the previous record of 1:02.14) and placing second in the women's 200 IM (2:04.46), earning her a silver medal.

"When I finished the (100 breaststroke), I was really tired so I was like 'Cool! I just want some water,' so then I got out of the pool and went over and talked to my dad and we were pretty happy," said Fadely, laughing. "When I was a freshman, I still had a long way to go. And so when I realized how

far I'd actually come, it just made me really happy, really proud of myself."

With her victory in the women's 100 breaststroke, Fadely became the first-ever Jordan-Matthews state champion in swimming, an achievement she deemed "the icing on the cake."

Started from the bottom

Just four years ago, a record-setting championship performance wasn't even on Fadely's radar.

As a freshman, she swam constantly, any chance she could get. She worked on improving her technique, perfecting her form and knocking off the portions of her strokes that slowed her down.

Even as a freshman, she qualified for states in the same events she would qualify for all four years of high school — the 100 breaststroke and the 200 IM.

In her first year at the state meet, she finished 13th in the women's 100 breaststroke (1:11.64) and 16th in the women's 200 IM (2:26.75). Her time in the 200 IM

was good for last place in the consolation finals.

From that point forward, she would shift to "dryland training," swimmers' version of weightlifting and strength training, to improve her times.

"It started out just plain swimming, then we started adding in these things to help me build strength ... making me stronger and faster in the water," said Fadely. "I made a pretty big jump from being towards the bottom to being really close to the top."

Her sophomore year, in 2019, she improved upon her 100 breaststroke time by more than five seconds, taking second place (1:06.04), and shaved 12 seconds off of her 2018 last-place 200 IM finish, coming in seventh (2:14.13).

Her junior year was even better as she again placed second in the 100 breaststroke (1:03.32) and fourth in the 200 IM (2:10.78).

The new training program — which focused heavily on strengthening her core — clearly worked.

This year, however, was a masterful finale that showcased just how much her hard work paid off.

See **FADELY**, page B2



Submitted photo

Jordan-Matthews' Jennah Fadely poses with the two medals she won at the NCHSAA 1A/2A Swimming State Championships on Friday in Cary. Fadely would take the state title with a record-setting time of 1:02.11 in the women's 100 breaststroke.

NORTHWOOD 51, NORTHERN DURHAM 43

Northwood extends winning streak to 5 games with conference title in sight

BY BRENNAN DOHERTY
News + Record Correspondent



Staff photo by Kim Hawks

Northwood freshman power forward Jarin Stevenson guards the perimeter during his team's 51-43 win against Northern Durham on Feb. 12. At 6-foot-8, Stevenson adds length to the Chargers' defense.

PITTSBORO — Last season was special for Northwood men's basketball, there's no doubt about it.

The team's 27 wins and a trip to the NCHSAA 3A semifinals is something nearly every team in the state would sign up for. But once the year ended, Northwood coach Matt Brown knew he had a big retooling project ahead of himself.

So far, it's going well. Despite returning just 9.3% of their offensive production from a season ago, the Chargers find themselves in second place in the Big Eight Conference, most recently defeating Northern Durham, 51-43, Friday night to extend their winning streak to five games.

Senior shooting guard Troy Arnold came off of the bench to co-lead the Chargers with 15 points, the same amount star freshman power forward Jarin Stevenson contributed. Dominant throughout the first half and the early stages of the third quarter, Northwood led by as many as 25 in the second half before the visitors trimmed the lead down the stretch.

"I thought we played pretty well on the defensive and offensive end for three quarters, and then the fourth

quarter, we took a couple bad shots here and there, which led to easy transition points for Northern," Northwood's Brown said.

The Northwood (9-2) win sets up a pivotal home rematch on Feb. 16 against conference leaders East Chapel Hill, which defeated Northwood 41-40 on a buzzer-beater on Jan. 22 and is ahead of the Chargers in the standings only by virtue of the head-to-head tiebreaker.

As of Tuesday's print deadline, this game against East Chapel Hill had not yet been played, though due to rules set in place by the NCHSAA to adapt to the evolving coronavirus pandemic, each team is only using only its first seven conference games as a measure for final conference standings. This means that Northwood (5-2 in its first seven conference games) has taken third place in the Big Eight, putting them just out of reach of an automatic conference playoff bid (top two spots). Now, the Chargers are fighting for an at-large playoff spot.

The idea that Northwood is potentially in a position to finish with the best overall conference record is a testament to the team's ability to gel as a largely new group amidst the pan-

See **NORTHWOOD**, page B2

WHEATMORE 1, JORDAN-MATTHEWS 0

Jordan-Matthews plans to use first-loss shutout as learning opportunity

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — The Jets' confidence may have been through the roof, but their offense remained trapped beneath it.

Jordan-Matthews' men's soccer team came up short in a defensive battle, 1-0, against the Wheatmore Warriors on Wednesday, resulting in their first loss of the season. While the Jets' defense was bordering on phenomenal all night long, their offense was underwhelming, as they were held scoreless for all 80 minutes.

"Offensively, we were just not on our 'A' game tonight," said Jordan-Matthews Head Coach Paul Cuadros. "I think that we were looking past this team and our confidence was probably much higher than it should've been and we weren't organized, we weren't communicating with each other and we weren't cooperating with each other."

Coming in, the Jets were 2-0

on the year and had put together complete performances on the road against Trinity, 4-1, and Eastern Randolph, 4-2.

Having scored eight goals in two games, and playing a team who had allowed at least three goals in two-thirds of their games this season — including a 4-1 loss to Eastern Randolph two days prior — it seemed safe to assume the Jets would be able to score. But assuming is often risky.

"We had success last week and we knew Wheatmore had lost on Monday," said Cuadros. "I think the boys thought this was going to be a different kind of game than it was, but hey, this is soccer, and the best team doesn't always win."

Throughout the game, especially in the first half, Wheatmore spent very little time putting together any substantial offensive possessions. The Warriors didn't even take their first shot until nearly 20 minutes into the contest.

While they had just six shots on goal all night, the one that truly

counted came in the final seconds of the opening half.

The Jets' Brian Hernandez attempted to dribble past Wheatmore's Jagur Williams just outside of the penalty arc, which Williams immediately knocked away, got possession of and made a beautiful, arcing pass across midfield, over the heads of three Jets defenders, to Collin Burgess, who speedily dribbled down the field and slipped the ball past the keeper for a breakaway goal. The score: 1-0, Wheatmore.

Just 1.7 seconds remained in the half.

"It was killer. I've been coaching almost 20 years, so I've seen everything," said Cuadros. "We still had a half in front of us, we still had 40 minutes in front of us to equalize and to win the game. That (goal) didn't really affect me that much other than this is a hill that we now have to climb."

On the other end, it looked as if the Jets were knocking on the door of a game-changing goal time

and time again, but Wheatmore held strong and never let them in.

Issues with communication and explosiveness plagued Jordan-Matthews, as potential scoring opportunities withered away thanks to ill-timed passes, narrowly missed shots and players holding the ball a little too long.

The Jets ended the day with 12 shots on goal, doubling Wheatmore's total, yet came away empty each time as Warriors goalkeeper Austin Poplin racked up 12 saves on the night.

"We did not have the intensity tonight and I think that's all a part of the attitude of teenagers," said Cuadros with a laugh. "We needed to talk to each other far more than we did and coordinate, through the communication, so that we're all on the same page."

A win over Wheatmore would have put Jordan-Matthews in sole possession of first place in the PAC 7 2A Conference. Now, the Jets are in second at 2-1, with Wheatmore (2-1-1) right on their

heels with the conference title "up for grabs," described Cuadros.

While the outcome wasn't in Jordan-Matthews' favor, Cuadros took solace in how the defense looked — including goalkeeper Ricardo Rocha, who had five saves in a game where he didn't have to make too many — and plans to use this loss as a learning opportunity.

After all, it's often said that one learns more in losing than in winning.

"Sometimes a loss is the best thing that can happen to a young team because then they learn," Cuadros said. "They learn that they have to show up every time, they learn that they have to have that intensity every time, they learn they cannot underestimate any opponent and then they bring all of those elements together. Now we get to find out what they're made of."

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

CHATHAM CENTRAL 60, JORDAN-MATTHEWS 59

THRILLER: Chatham Central downs Jordan-Matthews in final seconds during 16-point comeback

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
News + Record Staff

BEAR CREEK — The stands may not have been at full capacity, but the energy, excitement and tension of an old Chatham County rivalry refused to miss a game. The Chatham Central men's basketball team won a last-second thriller against rival Jordan-Matthews on Friday, 60-59, overcoming a 16-point first-half deficit. The Bears pulled ahead of the Jets with less than 30 seconds to go, holding on for a win that left one bench exhilarated, the other stunned.

"It was a heartbreaker for (Jordan-Matthews Head Coach Rodney Wiley) and it would have been a heartbreaker for me either way. Both teams fought hard and played solid," said Chatham Central Head Coach Robert Burke. "We ended up on the best end of it tonight."

To begin the game, Bears senior forward Parker Crowley hit a jumper from the free-throw line on the team's third offensive possession, making it 2-0 Chatham Central.

It would be the last lead the home team would see for the next 29 minutes, 49 seconds of game time.

Jordan-Matthews led 22-6 toward the end of the first quarter and it appeared that this may not be just an upset victory for the Jets, but a blowout one at that.

Throughout the second half, though, the Bears continued to fight back, often cutting the Jets' lead to single digits.

To start the fourth quarter, Chatham Central's star senior center Michael Moore — the team's leading scorer with 15 points — hit an elbow jumper in the Bears' first possession, then grabbed a defensive rebound on the other end, took the



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Chatham Central's senior center Michael Moore (4) shoots a short jumper in his team's 60-59 victory over the Jordan-Matthews Jets on Friday. Moore led the team in scoring with 15 points.

ball down the floor and dished it to Crowley for an easy layup, cutting Jordan-Matthews' lead to three.

The Jets extended their lead back to 11 after that sequence thanks to a few made free throws and physicality in the paint, but the Bears never went away.

Free throws can be costly

With two minutes to play in a seven-point game, Jordan-Matthews senior guard Huston Causey made two free throws to extend the Jets' lead to nine.

Then, it was all downhill from there.

"(It was) our inability to make free throws. I think if we make free throws, we win the game," an emotional Wiley said after the game. "Just not being able to make free throws cost us. I can't wait to see how many we missed in the last two minutes."

After Causey's two made free throws, the Jets were fouled six times in the final two minutes. They shot just 41.7% from

the line in those six trips, going 5-for-12.

And while Jordan-Matthews' ship was sinking, Chatham Central's was just beginning to leave the dock.

After five made free throws (out of six attempts) and a three-point-er by Moore, the Bears found themselves within three of the Jets, 58-55.

Then, in arguably the most impactful play of the game, Chatham Central junior Sawyer Elkins, who has battled an ankle injury this season and was playing in just his second game of the year, drilled a right-side three-pointer to tie the game at 58.

With the room's tension growing and excitement brewing for the small home crowd, Jordan-Matthews got fouled. Senior forward Eral Jones hit one of two free throws to take a 59-58 lead, then it was Moore's turn.

Moore, acting as a point guard, took the ball from one end to the other off of the inbound pass and drove to the basket, taking a layup and having his shot blocked. But as was typical for the con-

test, a foul was called. He drained two free throws that would ultimately be the game-winners.

Comeback complete.

"Michael Moore, you can't ask for a kid better than that. If he doesn't score 20, he's the reason everybody else scores, because they're collapsing on him," said Burke. "The one thing about having the depth of these nine seniors, they kept their heads in the game, kept it under control, didn't panic and inched back into it."

Whistles everywhere

Due to the craziness of the final two minutes and Jordan-Matthews' free throw woes, one major reason for the Jets' loss got lost in the shuffle: senior guard Jayden Davis fouling out.

Davis was on a tear in the first half, especially in the first quarter, where he scored 12 of his team's 23 points, outscoring the entire Bears team by himself.

In addition to the offense he brought to the game, he also did a fantastic job slowing down Chatham



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Jordan-Matthews senior Jayden Davis (12) draws contact against two Bears defenders as he shoots. Davis, having a stellar performance on both sides of the court, fouled out less than halfway through the third quarter.

Central, most notably his defensive lockdown of Moore, who had just six points in the first half, all in the first quarter.

He was one of the many victims, however, of the officials' whistles.

In total, there were 54 fouls called on both teams — 30 on Chatham Central, 24 on Jordan-Matthews — resulting in five players fouling out and five others who were within one personal foul of disqualification.

Davis, the team's leading scorer with 17 points, took his fifth foul coming on a questionable blocking call with a little over five minutes left in the third quarter. The team had to play the final quarter and a half without him.

"Our game plan was to put our best player (Davis) on (Moore) and he fouled out, so we had to go another route," said Wiley. "It was early in the third and we were trying to get him out of the game at the same time, we had a guy at the scorer's table and he just got called for that blocking foul."

The officials undoubtedly played a major role in the game, but despite the exorbitant number of fouls — which Burke said was "probably the most fouls I've had since I've

been up here" — the speed and physical nature of this rivalry were on full display.

It may have looked a little different without the wall-to-wall fans and the rowdy crowd on both sides due to the coronavirus pandemic, but where the game was lacking in attendees, it made up for in passion and competition.

Once the final buzzer sounded, the Bears' bench stormed the players near midcourt as they jumped around, cheered and celebrated their comeback win, while many Jets players walked away with tears in their eyes from the heartbreaking result.

While Chatham Central and Jordan-Matthews make up a long-time Chatham County rivalry, there's still a lot of respect between the two programs. And the two coaches.

"When my teams are celebrating, I want them out of here because I know how it feels for the other team," said Burke. "No matter who wins or don't, (Wiley and me) can just sit in this parking lot and talk it out all night long. There's a lot of love between us."

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

NORTHWOOD

Continued from page B1

demic, which in some ways has made building team chemistry tougher.

Having three freshmen step into the starting lineup and average double-figures helps, too.

Northwood's youth movement — fueled by Stevenson, small forward Drake Powell and point guard Frederico Whitaker — was on full display in the Chargers' win over Northern Durham.

Stevenson and Drake's athleticism and size — 6'8" and 6'5", respectively — give Northwood dynamism schematically. The versatile duo is proof of the concept of positionless basketball and provides Northwood the ability to press and jump passing lanes on defense and score in transition or off dribble drives on offense.

Whitaker, the Chargers' floor general, runs the offense and is also capable of hitting shots himself.

"Those three freshmen are pretty darn good," Brown said.

How good, exactly? According to Brown, if they were eligible as

8th-graders, each would have been key contributors on last season's 27-win team that featured eight seniors. It's not hard to see why.

Early in the first quarter, back-to-back Northwood possessions ended with the 6'8" Stevenson hitting a three-pointer from the wing and the 6'5" Drake slamming home a one-handed dunk in transition. If there was ever a sequence that tells the story of how Northwood has remained successful despite many new faces, that was it.

"We had to get our chemistry together," Stevenson said of himself and his fellow freshmen. "We play in the park sometimes, so that helps with our chemistry. I think the season's gone well so far, even with COVID."

Collectively, the three entered Friday's game averaging 35 points per game, about 60% of the team's production.

The Chargers do have some experience, though. Four seniors saw the floor on Friday, including Arnold, whose 15-point showing against Northern Durham marked the fourth time he's reached double-figures this season. A sharpshooter, 12 of his points came from three-point range.

Arnold's ability to help his younger teammates out might be just as big of a contribution.

"Honestly, it's kind of fun," Arnold said. "Teaching them the way and the culture of the team and stuff like that. My role has basically been (to) make them feel comfortable in the game and take the reins whenever it's needed and just allow them to play basketball."

Still, Friday's showing against Northern revealed there's room for improvement.

Early in the third quarter, the Chargers led 39-14 and looked like they could name the final score. But the visitors toughened up defensively, got easy looks in transition and closed the game on a 29-12 run.

Before the season, Brown warned that his inexperienced group would "take some lumps here and there," and the inability to completely put a game out of reach like the one Friday is an example of that.

But when you're 9-2, that's something you'll live with.

"We're still learning how to put away a team," Brown said. "We're learning how to pull away from them. But those are the types of lumps we were expecting. But (the players) are starting to get it."

FADELY

Continued from page B1

From freshman year to senior year, she jumped 12 spots in the 100 breaststroke, shaving over nine seconds off of her 2018 time to set the 1A/2A state record and take first place.

In that same span, she leaped 15 spots in the 200 IM, trimming over 22 seconds off of her freshman-year time, placing second.

Raising the bar

Despite taking home a state title, Fadely's goals weren't quite met at Friday's state meet.

"(In the 100 breaststroke), my ultimate time was to try and go under a minute — so 59 seconds or a minute flat or something like that would've been really nice," said Fadely. "But even though I wasn't able to reach my goal at the swim meet on Friday, I was still happy to see that I made more progress, because that's all I can ask for, is to continually be making progress."

Fadely plans to swim at Ohio's Kenyon College when she graduates, the most successful swim-

ming and diving program across all three NCAA divisions, with 57 national championships between the men's (34) and women's (23) teams.

She plans to use her time at Kenyon to improve upon her state-record 100 breaststroke performance, where she aims to not only knock her time under a minute, but also win an NCAA national championship as a team to add to her trophy case.

"After not really getting to my breaststroke goals this year, I think I'm probably going to set the bar higher (in college) because I really do think that I could've met those goals," said Fadely. "In my freshman year, it would be pretty cool to bring home an NCAA title for our team."

She partially attributes her narrowly missing her target breaststroke time to her exhaustion after the women's 200 IM, saying she hasn't "ever pushed myself so hard in one event."

In actuality, her performance in the 200 IM, while not a first-place finish, might be what she's most proud of.

"Placing second in the IM was

totally unexpected for me because the IM is probably my third- or fourth-best event ... so when I did, I think that's what made me the happiest at that swim meet," said Fadely. "I've been kind of stuck in a hard place, so to see it get so much faster on Friday, it just made me really happy."

Throughout her four-year Jordan-Matthews career, Fadely has been coached by both her father and her sister, who have helped her reach where she is today through dedicated practice and training.

While both coaches are tough, with her sister — her 2021 coach — she at least gets to joke around a little more.

"These last four years have just been a great learning opportunity for me. It helped me learn about myself, learn about the best ways that I work, the best ways that I swim and just the best ways for me to train and take care of myself," said Fadely. "I really couldn't ask for anything better."

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CHATHAM COUNTY ATHLETICS RUNDOWN

This week's schedule and last week's results

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
News + Record Staff

Trinity, 12 p.m. (scrimmage)

LAST WEEK

Monday, Feb. 8

Basketball: The Chatham Charter women downed the High Point Home Educators at home, 64-45. The Knights were led by junior forward Alexis Baldwin (15 points, 15 rebounds) and senior center Morgan Lineberry (14 points, seven rebounds).

Basketball: The Woods Charter basketball team lost handily to the Cornerstone Charter Academy Cardinals, 67-39.

Tuesday, Feb. 9

Basketball: The Chatham Central men won a road game against the Albemarle Bulldogs, 57-47, which included a dominant 24-point fourth quarter for the Bears. Leading Chatham Central was senior Jayden Gilliland (12 points), junior Nick Jourdan (12 points) and junior Colby Williamson (11 points).

Basketball: The Jordan-Matthews women snapped their six-game losing streak and earned their first win of the season with a 38-34 home victory over the Trinity Bulldogs.

Basketball: The Jordan-Matthews men lost a road game to the Trinity Bulldogs, 57-44, after a fourth-quarter collapse. At the end of the third, the Jets were down by just three, 35-32, but were outscored 22-12 in the fourth to lose by double-digits.

Basketball: The Northwood women continued their dominance with a 41-23 win on the road against the Orange Panthers. In a defensive gem, the Chargers held the Panthers to eight points or less in all four quarters. Leading Northwood was sophomore Te'Keyah Bland (14 points, 11 rebounds) and freshman Skyler Adams (12 points).

Basketball: The Northwood

men defeated the Orange Panthers, 52-43, to push their winning streak to four in a row.

Basketball: The Chatham Charter men kept their perfect season alive with a 37-point victory over the Woods Charter Wolves, 70-33. The Knights, now sitting at 11-0, have beaten the Wolves by a combined 87 points in just two games this year. Leading Chatham Charter was sophomore Adam Harvey (17 points, 14 rebounds, seven steals) and senior Trevor Golden (13 points, six rebounds, five steals).

Wednesday, Feb. 10

Basketball: The Jordan-Matthews women lost a close one at home to the conference-leading T.W. Andrews Red Raiders, 35-31. The Jets led at the end of the third, 31-29, but didn't muster a single point in the fourth quarter as the Red Raiders took — and held on to — a lead.

Lacrosse: The Northwood women won a thriller over the Wakefield Wolverines in Carrboro, 13-12. The Chargers scored with just 38.4 seconds left in the game with it tied 12-12, sealing the clutch victory. Northwood was led by sophomore Mia Collins (six goals) and sophomore Sophia Cremeans (four goals).

Soccer: The Jordan-Matthews men suffered their first loss of the season against the Wheatmore Warriors, 1-0. The Jets played stellar defense all night, but with 1.7 seconds remaining in the first half, Wheatmore broke away and scored, forcing J-M to play catch-up in the second half to no avail, despite multiple opportunities to score late in the game. The Jets are now 2-1 on the year.

Thursday, Feb. 11

Basketball: The Jordan-Matthews women lost a tough one

at home against the Wheatmore Warriors, 57-37. The Jets are now 1-7 on the season.

Swimming: The Northwood women finished in eighth overall (24 points) at the NCHSAA 3A Swimming State Championships in Cary. As a team, the Chargers finished fourth in the women's 400 freestyle relay (3:36.33) and sixth in the women's 200 medley relay (1:49.86). Individually, Suzanne Earnshaw finished sixth in the women's 100 breaststroke (1:07.02) and seventh in the women's 200 IM (2:11.65); Mia Corrado finished eighth in the women's 200 freestyle (1:55.92) and ninth in the women's 500 freestyle (5:07.75); Julia Earnshaw finished eighth in both the women's 50 freestyle (24.41) and women's 100 freestyle (53.05).

Friday, Feb. 12

Basketball: The Chatham Charter women earned a massive win, 63-56, against the Clover Garden Grizzlies, handing them their first loss of the season (11-1). The duo of senior forward Rebecca McLaughnea (17 points, 14 rebounds) and sophomore guard Tamaya Walden (14 points) led the Knights to the victory, improving their record to 7-2.

Basketball: The Chatham Central men won a last-minute home thriller against rival Jordan-Matthews, 60-59. The Jets led by nine with two minutes to go, but missed free throws plagued them and allowed the Bears to scrap their way back into the game, tying it at 58 apiece with 31 seconds to play. Chatham Central senior center Michael Moore then hit two free throws with 22 seconds left to give his team a one-point lead and sealing the game for the Bears. Leading scorers for Chatham Central were Moore (15 points) and senior forward Parker Crowley (13

points); leading scorers for the Jets were seniors Jayden Davis (17 points) and Huston Causey (15 points).

Basketball: The Northwood men earned their fifth-straight victory against the Northern Durham Knights, 51-43. While the game, an eight-point Chargers victory, looked close based on the final score, it doesn't reflect Northwood's true dominance. The Chargers were up by 25 early in the third quarter but allowed the Knights to end the game on a 29-12 run, trimming the deficit to single digits. Leading Northwood (9-2) was senior shooting guard Troy Arnold and freshman forward Jarin Stevenson, both with 15 points on the night.

Basketball: The Northwood women kept it rolling with yet another double-digit victory, 54-32, against the Northern Durham Knights at home, extending their winning streak to 10 games and remaining unbeaten on the season. The Chargers were led by sophomore forward Te'Keyah Bland (17 points, 11 rebounds) and junior guard Natalie Bell (14 points).

Basketball: The Woods Charter Wolves lost a close home game to the Cornerstone Charter Cardinals, 46-40, dropping their record to 1-7 on the season.

Swimming: Jordan-Matthews senior Jennah Fadely swam at the NCHSAA 1A/2A Swimming State Championships in Cary, where she won the women's 100 breaststroke with a state-record time of 1:02.11 (.03 seconds faster than the previous state record). She also took second in the women's 200 IM with a personal-best time of 2:04.46.

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

THIS WEEK

Wednesday, Feb. 17

Basketball: Jordan-Matthews vs. Providence Grove (women's 6 p.m., men's 7:30 p.m.)

Lacrosse: Northwood women at East Chapel Hill (played at Wake Forest), 5 p.m.

Basketball: Chatham Central vs. North Moore (women's 6 p.m., men's 7:30 p.m.)

Lacrosse: Northwood men at Chapel Hill, 7 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 18

Basketball: Woods Charter vs. Research Triangle, 6 p.m.

Football: Northwood vs. Wakefield, 6 p.m. (scrimmage)

Soccer: Jordan-Matthews men vs. Randleman, 6 p.m.

Soccer: Woods Charter men at Cornerstone, 4 p.m.

Soccer: Northwood men at Cedar Ridge, 5 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 19

Basketball: Northwood at Vance County (women's 6 p.m., men's 7:30 p.m.)

Basketball: Chatham Charter at North Rowan (women's 6 p.m., men's 7:30 p.m.)

Basketball: Chatham Central vs. Uwharrie Charter (women's 6 p.m., men's 7:30 p.m.)

Basketball: Woods Charter at Research Triangle, 5 p.m.

Football: Jordan-Matthews vs. North Moore, 6 p.m. (scrimmage)

Soccer: Northwood men at Orange, 6:45 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 20

Football: Chatham Central at

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PGA LEAD CLASS

Governors Club's Bejgrowicz-Lewallen one of 15 selected for PGA leadership path

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
News + Record Staff

CHAPEL HILL — Governors Club is well-known for its sprawling 1,600-acre property, its gorgeous landscape and its Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course.

Now, the Triangle's lone private golf club is being nationally recognized for something besides its beauty: its leadership in golf.

Last month, PGA of America announced the 15 professionals selected to its 2021-'22 PGA LEAD class, a development program "created to identify, mentor and progress PGA Members from diverse backgrounds into volunteer leadership positions within Association governance," according to a news release.

One of the 15 names on that list was Governors Club's Sarah Bejgrowicz-Lewallen, an assistant golf professional at the club for the last seven years.

"Late last year I got a phone call saying I was selected, so it was pretty exciting," said

Bejgrowicz-Lewallen. "I feel super honored and humbled to be selected, but I do want to use this platform to hopefully make the game of golf better."

The last couple of years, Bejgrowicz-Lewallen applied to be a part of the program but wasn't accepted. So she strove to take on more responsibilities and "reinvent" herself to show her commitment to being a leader in golf.

"She has that ability and that calm personality to relate to everybody and to make them feel comfortable," said Thomas Brinson, Governors Club's director of golf. "She makes (golf) welcoming to the point where people want to join and any stereotypes of it being hard, competitive, mean, whatever it is, she removes that barrier."

Ever since Bejgrowicz-Lewallen was 10 years old, growing up in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, she's loved golf. She played at both the collegiate and professional levels before moving

on to coach at Campbell University, her alma mater, and Gardner-Webb University.

Eventually, she found her way to Governors Club. One of her primary duties is leading the Women's Golf Association at Governors Club, which has about 180 members. She handles the association's different tournaments and functions throughout the year, along with providing instructional opportunities to help hone members' skills.

"We have some women who have joined here who have never touched a club in their life," said Bejgrowicz-Lewallen, "so I find it really empowering if I can help create their relationship to the game of golf because they'll be able to play it for the rest of their life."

One of Governors Club's primary goals, according to Brinson, is to grow the game of golf, helping those who move into the neighborhood or join the club to familiarize themselves with the game and become less intimidated by it.

"She's spent the better part of her time (at Governors Club) focusing on grow-the-game initiatives and events, whether it's men, women, juniors, it doesn't matter," said Brinson. "She's been instrumental in putting together instruction-based programs to teach people the game of golf, whether they're new to the sport or they've been playing for 30 years and just want to improve a little bit."

This desire to help others discover, learn and stick with the game of golf is what makes her a near-perfect fit for PGA LEAD.

The PGA LEAD program, created in 2016, aims to prepare PGA members like Bejgrowicz-Lewallen for leadership roles in the future, primarily within the chapter, section and national levels of the PGA.

The class of 15 will be tasked with attending monthly virtual meetings, where keynote speakers will mentor them through presenta-

tions on different topics.

Those sessions lead up to November 2-5, when the PGA hosts its 105th annual meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where the LEAD class will have a much more hands-on experience — though few details are known due to the uncertain nature of the pandemic.

Bejgrowicz-Lewallen said she hopes to garner as much information from PGA LEAD as possible to not only better herself, but those she works with in her current position.

"I'm currently reading this book called 'Atomic Habits' where the goal is to get 1% better every single day, and so I find this opportunity for PGA LEAD to kind of fit right along those lines of trying to better myself in every monthly meeting," she said. "I would love to see myself just kind of bolstering my goal here at Governors Club in order to make every program here a little more successful and hopefully try to make the game a little more

inclusive."

Not only does Bejgrowicz-Lewallen aim to make the game more inclusive, but she remains passionate about framing the game of golf into something a little more fun, mentioning that the golf course can be a place of fierce competition or fellowship with your friends. It's versatile in that way.

"I think if I can make the game more inviting to people, then to me, that means I am a leader within the golf industry," she said. "Some of the women's programs that I've helped kind of facilitate here at Governors Club, they have made the game a little bit more inviting, just keeping it fun, keeping it light. But at the end of the day, as long as people feel comfortable to come out and play and practice, to me, that's what it's all about."

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

Internal conflict of 'Nomadland' mars thematic promise

Lying somewhere between anguish and admiration, "Nomadland" couches itself as a sober tour d'horizon of the contemporary American condition and enduring American individualism. The finished product is earnestly conceived and expertly fashioned, examining the castoffs of capitalism and touching the raw nerve of economic despair in America's heartland. But like the nomads it spotlights, where the film thematically starts is not where it ends up.

The film's framing device is the real-life 2011 closing of the U.S. Gypsum factory in Empire, Nevada, a company town that quickly became a ghost town after the plant closed. Its hundreds of inhabitants had to move away; even the town's zip code was discontinued.

One of Empire's denizens was Fern (Frances McDormand), who worked for US Gypsum for years alongside her husband until his recent death. Fern now lives out of her dilapidated van, barely subsisting off of seasonal work at an area Amazon fulfillment center.

The aching backdrop of Fern's personal loss is starkly juxtaposed against the mechanized, antiseptic composition of her new work ecosystem. Fern has gone from a life in which family is stitched into the fabric of work to a hive of transient, interchangeable worker bees.

A friend and coworker named Linda May — playing herself — sug-

NOMADLAND
Grade: B -
Director: Chloé Zhao
Starring: Frances McDormand, David Strathairn, Linda May, Swankie, and Bob Wells
MPAA Rating: R
Running Time: 1 hr. 48 min.

gests that Fern follow her to Arizona to live in a roadside vehicle community inhabited by fellow "nomads," people seemingly left destitute by personal and/or professional travails. Organized by Bob Wells (also playing himself), the desert rendezvous is a commune for society's outcasts and in the best sense a throwback to the pioneering past of the American West.

It is there that Fern meets David (actor David Strathairn), a kindly vagabond who takes a shine to Fern. Fern has taken a job at a nearby RV park, while David is a part-time ranger at the Badlands National Park. Their burgeoning friendship suffers a setback when Fern excoriates David over an innocent mistake. Fern also befriends Swankie (another real-life nomad playing herself), who teaches Fern some hard lessons about survival, self-sufficiency, and making sure you properly maintain your van.

"Nomadland" then leans into its nomadic construct. After the ailing Swankie leaves the commune for final grand trip, Fern unexpectedly reconnects with David and the

two are suddenly shown working restaurant jobs in Wall Drug in South Dakota. When David's son tracks down his father and lures him back home, Fern takes another job at a beet farm before her van breaks down. Unable to afford the repairs — and both unable and unwilling to buy another one — Fern turns to her comfortably middle-class sister Dolly (Melissa Smith) for assistance. It is this segment that peels back the layers of Fern, as we discover that she has long been a rolling stone who left her childhood family to follow her love west on an adventurous future in Arizona. Suddenly, the life that has befallen Fern is recast as a continuum of her innate, longtime character.

That reconfiguration extends to the remainder of "Nomadland," a film that illuminates the victimization of its subjects while taking great pains to avoid branding them as victims. Perhaps this is what happens when filmmakers become attached to the actual people whose story they are telling. Regardless, the screenplay by the terrific writer-director Chloé Zhao develops a glaring internal conflict, as the nomadic existence of Fern and friends becomes less the sole consequence of forced misfortune and more the latest chapter in a lifelong predilection. Indeed, when Fern is twice afforded off-ramps from her hardship — invitations by Dolly and later David to live with each in comfort — Fern abruptly rebuffs their overtures in favor of the road.

"Nomadland" concludes back at the derelict remains of Empire, a metaphorical and etymological allu-

sion to the film's broader thematic promise. But the intervening journey has taken Fern, and with her the film's audience, to a much different and less audacious destination.

Eureka! You found the answer!

A: I.E. Taylor

To enter the COA's monthly drawing for a \$25 Visa Gift Card, call the COA at 919-542-4512, extension 223 and follow the prompts on the voicemail. February's winner will be drawn from eligible entries provided by 3/2/2021. The February winner will be announced in a March issue of the Chatham News + Record. One entry per household, per week. Employees of the COA and their dependents not eligible.



Chatham COA Events & Announcements February 18th - February 24th

Thursday, February 18th

- [Tai Chi for Arthritis](#) at 8:45 AM
- [Chair Yoga with Liz](#) at 10:00 AM
- [February Birthday Celebration](#) at 11:15 AM

Friday, February 19th

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

Monday, February 22nd

- [Tai Chi for Arthritis](#) at 8:45 AM
- [Chair Yoga with Liz](#) at 10:00 AM
- [Bingo with Joe](#) at 11:15 AM

Tuesday, February 23rd

- [Strong & Fit with Jackie](#) at 9:00 AM
- [Live "Yes!" with Arthritis](#) at 11:15 AM

Wednesday, February 24th

- [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/>

Virtual VITA Income Tax Preparation Assistance



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

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

Join the Trivia Hunt & Win!

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

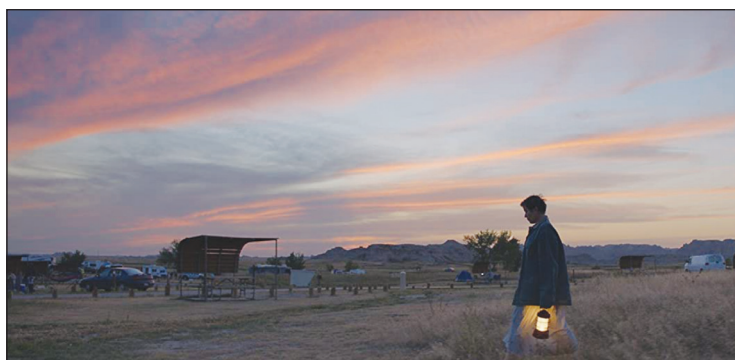
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Frances McDormand stars in 'Nomadland.'

Courtesy of Searchlight Pictures



CHANGING ROLES AT CCCC

Jon Spoon dreams big for college's continuing ed program

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

CCCC's Jon Spoon recently stepped into a new position as the director of



Spoon

continuing education — a move that will revitalize the college's continuing education program and allow work typically coordinated by a multi-person department to be headed instead by one person.

"This role change will give the college the ability to renew its focus on this programming area," said Mark Hall, the Chatham Provost for Central Carolina Community College. "Jon has some great ideas for upcoming courses, especially once the pandemic subsides."

The college currently offers some continuing education courses, but the pandemic has limited what can be offered, as some courses, such as pottery, are nearly impos-



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Spoon making a clay bird — a process he finds cathartic — in his Siler City Arts Incubator studio space.

sible to virtualize.

"We're kind of at a nadir with the programming currently, but we're going to be ramping back up," Spoon said, who served as the college's small business director for the last five years. "That's honestly one of the biggest challenges right now for me is narrowing my scope and focusing on a few core

things that we need to build back up." In the new role, Spoon will be working to plan industry training, career pathway augmentation for students and personal enrichment opportunities. Some specific areas, like HR development, medical courses or law enforcement and emergency training programs,

are handled by additional coordinators. Beyond those programs, continuing education encompasses the college's educational programs that do not lead directly to a degree, Spoon said, though many will lead to professional licenses or credentials.

A potter and sculptor himself, Spoon will be leading the college's ceramics program, along with the welding and woodworking courses. Before coming to CCCC, he was the director of the Arts Incubator in Siler City, and he's excited to use this new role to connect with more local businesses and artists. Other programming will range from sustainable agriculture to construction, chef programs and more.

"I enjoyed helping the people," Spoon said of his previous role, "but I'm glad to be transitioning into something that works in a wider array of different learning fields. I'm from Chatham County and so I feel like my biggest strengths that I'm bringing into this are knowing the county really well, and being able to start connect-

ing these dots."

For now, he's focused on trying to get through the remainder of the adapted period while looking for ways to incorporate the technology tools used this semester in the future too. He'll be spending a lot of time talking with the college's business and industry partners to offer additional courses and certifications to keep employees up to date on job qualifications.

This semester, he'll also be planning for the fall, trying to pick "a reasonable number" of continuing education and personal enrichment courses. About 40% of his planning time, he said, is spent talking with potential instructors and employees about teaching those courses and securing spaces for them.

"The other 60% is me, crushing it on the computer and writing course outlines and planning out budgets and putting it all together," he said, "so that we can hopefully, in the fall if we get the green light, come back with a strong effort, and one that's only going to expand from there."

Spoon has big dreams for the programming — he joked he's reigning in his own imagination, which leads him to courses such as making pickles, for instance — and ultimately, he thinks offered courses will be really rewarding for lots of people: retired folks attending weekly woodworking class, 18-year-olds wishing to learn a trade/craft or adults transitioning to a new job getting new certifications to move up in their current job.

"I think they're of huge importance, and they're important for lots of different people at different periods in their life," he said of the courses. "I mean, it's really a big job, but I'm excited for it. Because I do think it's the job that I was supposed to be doing in Chatham County, and I do know that we've got some really, really cool unique dots that could be connected. That'll be my job."

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

Chocolate is the answer



DEBBIE MATTHEWS
The Curious Cook

The question? Irrelevant.

There are two absolutes concerning this

confection.

Everyone who tastes it asks for the recipe.

And, every time someone makes it for the first time, they panic; baking old-timers and newbies alike.

You probably know of Ina Garten. She's the former owner of a famous specialty food store. When she sold it,

she kept the store's name, "Barefoot Contessa" as her own moniker.

She's actually having a moment right now. Garten isn't just a foodie with some cookbooks and TV shows. While living in Washington, D.C., where her husband worked for the State Department, Ina earned her MBA at George

Washington University. She then went to work for the White House in its Office of Management and Budget. She worked her way up and became a budget analyst, writing the nuclear energy budget.

While doing this she found time to purchase and flip houses in the uber-ritzy D.C. neighborhoods of Kalorama and Dupont Circle. In 1978, she used the profits from this very successful endeavor to purchase Barefoot Contessa specialty foods, where she did most of the cooking.

In her books and TV shows, she shares lots of classic recipes. But this is my absolute favorite.

If you close your eyes and think of chocolate cake, this is that cake. Her version is rich, moist, and delicious; and the frosting tastes like sweet chocolate butter.

This cake looks like the centerpiece of a genteel Victorian picnic where the men are wearing suits and boaters and the women all look like Gibson girls dressed in floaty white dresses. This cake should be set on the table next to an old-fashioned cut-glass pitcher of lemonade.

It is the absolute platonic ideal of a chocolate cake.



A chocolate cake is a wonderful complement to a meal — or by itself.

Submitted photo

When you mix up the batter ingredients, you will experience confectionary panic. The batter will be thin. I mean thin like the consistency of heavy cream thin. When you make the batter, you'll think you've screwed it up or the recipe has a huge typo. You haven't — you're doing it right and the recipe is correct, I promise. Every time I make this cake, I have to calm myself down because I forget how ridiculously thin it really is.

I can't count the number of anxious phone calls The Kid and I have received and the number of terrified bakers we've had to gently talk down, like a toddler with a hand grenade.

A word of caution about the frosting:

although I am always on the "more is better" bus, this philosophy will not work here. The amount of chocolate in the recipe is perfect. If you add more, as the frosting sets, it will get hard and crack, ruining the beauty of your work. Don't do it. If you have to add more chocolate, grate it on top, or make those glamorous chocolate curls. Or curl up in your jammies while you're waiting for it to cool enough to frost, turn on some reality TV, and eat it.

In the end, you could also call this a "get" cake.

If you make it, you'll get the praise, get the raise, or get engaged.

So, maybe "get" going. Thanks for your time. Contact me at dm@bullcity.mom.

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Beatty's Chocolate Cake

Recipe courtesy Ina Garten	2 cups sugar	1 cup buttermilk
Butter, for greasing pans	3/4 cup cocoa powder	1/2 cup vegetable oil
1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for pans	2 teaspoons baking soda	2 extra-large eggs, at room temperature
	1 teaspoon baking powder	1 teaspoon vanilla
	1 teaspoon kosher salt	1 cup freshly brewed hot coffee

Chocolate Buttercream, recipe follows

Preheat oven to 350. Butter 2 (8-inch) round cake pans. Line pans with parchment paper, then butter and flour them.

Sift flour, sugar, cocoa, baking soda, and salt into bowl of electric mixer fitted with a paddle attachment and mix on low speed until combined. In another bowl, combine buttermilk, oil, eggs, and vanilla. With mixer on low speed, slowly add wet ingredients to dry. With mixer still on low, add coffee and stir just to combine, scraping bottom of bowl. Pour batter into prepared pans and bake for 35 to 40 minutes, until cake tester comes out clean. Cool in pans for 30 minutes, then turn them out onto cooling rack and cool completely.

Chocolate Frosting

6 ounces semisweet chocolate	1 extra-large egg yolk, at room temperature	confectioners' sugar
1/2 pound butter, softened	1 teaspoon vanilla	1 tablespoon instant coffee powder
	1 1/4 cups sifted	

Chop chocolate and place it in heat-proof bowl set over pan of simmering water. Stir until just melted and set aside until cooled to room temperature.

In the bowl of electric mixer fitted with paddle attachment, beat butter on medium-high speed until light yellow and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add egg yolk and vanilla and continue beating for 3 minutes. Turn mixer to low, gradually add confectioners' sugar, then beat at medium, scraping down bowl as necessary, until smooth and creamy. Dissolve coffee powder in 2 teaspoons of hottest tap water. On low speed, add chocolate and coffee to butter mixture and mix until blended. Don't whip!

To frost: place one cake layer, flat side up, on flat plate or cake pedestal. With knife or offset spatula, spread top with frosting. Place second layer on top, rounded side up, and spread frosting evenly on top and sides.

POLICE REPORTS

CHATHAM COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

On February 9, Shyheem Vazquez Watson, 22, of 1021 15th Street, Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Jonathan Frazier for Second Degree Murder without Regard, Obstructing Justice, Driving with License Revoked, Reckless Driving to Endanger, Felony Hit and Run inflicting Serious Injury/Death, Possession of Marijuana from 1/2 to 1 1/2 oz and Possession of Marijuana Paraphernalia. Watson was issued a \$320,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on February 15.

On February 9, Shyheem Vazquez Watson, 22, of 1021 15th Street, Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Jonathan Frazier for Failure to Appear on charges of Felony Possession of Marijuana and Posses-

sion of Marijuana with Intent to Sell/Deliver. Watson was issued a \$5,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on March 1.

On February 10, Randy Steven Saunders Jr., 43, of 576 Tate Street, Ramseur, was arrested by Investigator Jedidiah Britow for Possession of Methamphetamine, Simple Possession of a Schedule III Controlled Substance, Carrying a Concealed Weapon, and Possession of Stolen Goods/Property. Saunders was issued a \$10,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on February 10.

On February 10, Tucker Grayson Bean Jr., 20, of 220 E 3rd Street, Siler City, was arrested by Lieutenant Joe Birchett for Second Degree Forcible Sexual Rape, Second Degree Forced Sex Offense,

Rape and Sexual Battery. Bean was issued a \$100,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on February 10.

On February 10, Heather Leigh Wells, 31, of 4567 Lambeth Mill Road, Bennett, was arrested by Deputy Olivia Sturdivant for Larceny of a Motor Vehicle and Possession of a Stolen Motor Vehicle. Wells was issued a written promise to appear in Randolph County District Court in Asheboro on March 5.

On February 11, Stephanie Renee Caviness, 38, of 7182 Howards Mill Road, Bennett, was arrested by Deputy Olivia Sturdivant for Felony Probation Violation. Caviness was issued a \$25,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Montgomery County District Court in Troy on March 15.

On February 11, Michael

Arthur Capone, 51, of 44 Dons Drive, Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Shannon Parker, for Conspiracy to commit Felony Breaking & Entering a Building, Felony Larceny after Breaking and Entering, Larceny After Breaking and Entering, and Possession of Stolen Goods/Property. Capone was issued a Written Promise to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on March 1.

On February 11, Teddy Leon Martin, 32, of 181 Alex Watson Road, Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Shannon Parker for Conspiracy to commit Felony Breaking & Entering a Building, Felony Larceny after Breaking and Entering, Larceny After Breaking and Entering, and Possession of Stolen Goods/Property. Martin was issued a Written Promise to appear in Chatham County District

Court in Pittsboro on February 15.

On February 12, Rita Annabell Overly, 55, of 1841 Old 421 South, Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Olivia Sturdivant for Conspiracy to commit Felony Breaking & Entering a Building, Felony Larceny after Breaking and Entering, Larceny After Breaking and Entering, and Possession of Stolen Goods/Property. Overly was issued a Written Promise to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on March 15.

On February 14, Keith Donald Wilhoit, 62, of 1841 Old 421 South, Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Olivia Sturdivant for Failure to Appear on charges of Passing a Worthless Check. Wilhoit was issued a \$500 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Davidson County District Court in Lexington on March 16.

CHATHAM COUNTY SCHOOLS

Meet CCS Interim Superintendent Randy Bridges, 'an educator for life'

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

Dr. Randy Bridges was sworn in as interim superintendent of Chatham County Schools on Jan. 11 at the CCS Board of Education's mid-year retreat. He replaces Dr. Derrick D. Jordan, who joined N.C. Superintendent Catherine Truitt at the Department of Public Instruction. Bridges will serve in the interim role until the board hires a permanent superintendent. He comes to Chatham with experience as both a long-time educator and superintendent, running school systems in Florence, South Carolina; Stafford, Virginia; Rock Hill, South Carolina; and Burlington and Hillsborough in North Carolina.

This week, the News + Record checked in with Bridges to see how his first month as superintendent has gone, how he's adapting to the pandemic and what his goals are for his time at CCS.



Dr. Randy L. Bridges was sworn in Jan. 11 as interim superintendent of Chatham County Schools. He replaces Dr. Derrick D. Jordan, who accepted a position with the N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction.

Courtesy of Chatham County Schools

You have quite the wealth of experience in leading school systems — what past experiences or lessons learned in former roles do you think will particularly assist you in your role at Chatham County Schools?

My experiences in leadership positions didn't involve a pandemic! We are all learning new and creative ways to educate our children. We needed an opportunity to think differently about public education. The pandemic has provided that opportunity, but I hope we never have another one.

Those of us in public education have experienced excitement and fear for almost a year, but the core business of any successful educational institution is teaching and learning. We may be using a different instructional delivery model during the pandemic, but the core business doesn't change.

In the time you're here, what are your main priorities?

In many ways, preparing the board and educators for the next superintendent. Being new to this school system and community provides an opportunity for me to ask questions about policies, programs and practices. I am in a great position to ask why we do things the way we do them. I'm not looking at things to determine if they are right or wrong throughout the organization, but, in some situations, sharing how they can be done differently. Occasionally, a different way might be more effective and efficient.

Obviously, I accept the responsibility of being in charge of day-to-day operations and enjoy working with educators to ensure we are aligning ourselves with the strategic direction the Board of Education has established.

Chatham County Schools is pretty widely recognized as a very strong school system. Coming in, what do you see as the district's biggest strengths? What about the biggest opportunities for improvement? How do you hope to maintain and

assist in furthering both?

I agree that Chatham County Schools has always been recognized as a quality school system. I consider three former superintendents of the school system as close colleagues. The strength of the school system is the attention paid to the core business of teaching and learning. To be successful in serving children, you begin with having quality people across the board, a school board and central services that supports the schools and ensuring that each school has a highly qualified and effective principal. The principals in turn should recruit, develop and retain highly qualified and effective teachers. With community input, the Board of Education has developed a directional system that is anchored by its vision, mission statements and beliefs. Chatham County Schools has been strong in these areas over time.

You're approaching the one-month mark of your tenure at CCS. How has the job been so far? What are your biggest takeaways?

I have interacted with both internal and external stakeholders who all support the school system and its commitment to serving all children. That is often easier said than done. Our Board of Education makes a concerted effort to work well together, as well as develop a positive relationship with the Chatham County Board of Commissioners. Our board members and commissioners are engaged in a joint effort of constructing new schools and a facility for central services while remaining focused on the academic outcomes of all children during a pandemic. There is clear evidence that positive things are occurring in Chatham County Schools.

What information can you give about the importance of in-person learning and Chatham County School's plans? Knowing that the board ultimately makes decisions about changing learning plans, could you

share a little about how you're conceptualizing the decision?

During my career, in-person instruction was the foundation of how we taught children. It worked for years for well over the majority of our students. Education has to evolve in order to meet the needs of all children. As educators began to allow student input on their learning styles, our instructional models started to shift. The pandemic has forced us to look at a variety of teaching methods to educate a diverse student population mainly by using technology. When we eventually arrive on the other side of the pandemic, it's critically important that we don't forget the successful practices we learned during the pandemic. We have the opportunity to do things differently, and I hope our educational leaders in Chatham County Schools will take advantage of what's before us. Support from the Board of Education is an important part of moving forward.

Speaking of in-person learning, throughout the pandemic we've seen many pre-existing disparities in learning outcomes exacerbated by the challenges of remote learning, along with more challenges across the board — such as more failing grades, absences etc. Could you talk about the importance of addressing those challenges as we move forward, and about some of the ways CCS is working to overcome them?

Not to be redundant, but the challenges we have experienced during the pandemic can be viewed as opportunities. Is it time to reexamine how we grade and classify students and how we define attendance. Should we seriously pursue designing a customized education plan for every child? Can we successfully maneuver in-person and remote teaching and learning? I don't believe we should rush to have schools return to what they were before the pandemic. Maybe

we should begin by taking the position of wanting students to return with the option of attending school each day. Having the option is key, because I believe we will have students and parents who want something different for their children based on what we have provided during the pandemic. We should form committees at the state and local levels to discuss both what has occurred over the past year and how we move forward using some of those successful experiences.

And finally, last but not least, if you could give a quick introduction to anyone in the Chatham community reading, what would you say?

I have been married to my wife, Vernetta, for 37 years. We have two adult children, Randi and Garrett. I have three perfect grandchildren, Bryce, Grey and Nova. In my spare time I play as much golf as possible.



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Inspired by ‘a conviction that our country was better than its worst days’

Group of locals is working for change through conversations and actions

During Black History Month, the News + Record is featuring discussions



Pearson

Chats. This week, we speak with W. Robert Pearson about the work of Chatham’s Community Remembrance Coalition. Pearson, who lives in Ferrington Village with his wife, Maggie, was an innovative diplomat, leader and crisis manager at the top levels of the U.S. government. He was U.S. ambassador to Turkey and completed a 30-year career in 2006 with the Department of State as Director General of the Foreign Service. He is a frequent writer and speaker on diplomacy, foreign policy, Turkey, NGOs and development, and served under six presidents (four Republican and two Democratic) and 11 secretaries of state.

The local committee you help lead, the Equal Justice Initiative Community Remembrance Coalition — Chatham, has its roots in the work of attorney and author Bryan Stevenson. How did your knowledge of the work of the EJI (which is based on Montgomery, Alabama) inspire the creation of the CRC-C?

I’m a trial lawyer by training, a negotiator by experience since I was 25 years old, and a senior American diplomat with service in China, Europe and Turkey. After that, I headed up an international humanitarian non-profit organization

working in difficult circumstances in eastern Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

I came to that work inspired by a conviction that our country was better than its worst days — a phrase often used by Stevenson. I saw how his meticulous, patient, persistent challenge to conventional wisdom and deep-seated bias dissolved what looked like an impenetrable web of law, culture, custom and hate to reach victory.

His book was a great inspiration to me. His work at the Legacy Museum in Montgomery showed me that truth has to be told no matter how painful in order to make progress. Otherwise, truth — and with it understanding — is lost. Six people died by lynching in this county from 1885 to 1921 without one person ever arrested, indicted, tried or convicted. That was truth that people wanted never to hear, but it was truth that had to be told.

What are the goals and objectives of the CRC-C?

Our mission statement is on our website (CRC-C.org) and aims to improve race relations, enhance comity, empathy and understanding across and within Chatham County’s races, faiths and communities. We aim to do this through conversations and actions. A full 99% of the issues in our lives are solved by conversation. To start with conversations about race, we have to know how we got to this point. History’s truth is our only reliable guide. Knowing the history of Chatham County’s Black community — and of

Black Americans across the country — gives us our starting point, our process and our goal.

It’s been seven months since the CRC-C’s large public event at the Chatham County Justice Center. Speakers described the gathering as a push for “an America that works for all,” economic justice and a public recognition and memorialization for the county’s six lynching victims. What’s happened with the CRC-C since?

Together with the critical support of the county NAACP branches, whose leaders are also our leaders, we’ve set up our EJI charity, recruited new members, organized a grants committee to look for funds and projects to carry out, and planned a day to participate in Chatham 250 in September to tell the Black history of Chatham County.

We’ve begun a conversation with the Urban League in Charlotte and other groups in the county to create jobs for Black and Brown citizens so that young Black and Brown men and women will stay here, raise their families here, and contribute to their community. Last spring, we pressed for a listing of all Black businesses in the county, and thank the CEDC and Chamber of Commerce, who have posted that list.

We have worked with the county’s education leaders to tell the whole history of the county so that today and tomorrow our young people can discuss and decide how to shape N.C.’s future.

We have interviewed the law enforcement agencies of the county, understanding that equal



CN+R file photo

In this file photo, members of Chatham County’s two NAACP chapters involved in an effort to memorialize the six victims of racial terror lynching in Chatham stand on the steps of the Pittsboro courthouse. This same group was involved in the creation of the Community Remembrance Coalition. Front row, from left: Armentha Davis, Mary Harris, Larry Brooks and Mary Nettles. Middle row, from left: Vickie Shea, Cledia Holland and Linda Batley. Back row, from left: Glenn Fox, Wayne Holland, Carl Thompson and Bob Pearson. Pearson, a retired attorney and diplomat who lives in Ferrington Village, was responsible for getting the effort started.

justice means reforms to and support for an open fair equal system of justice in the county. That work is still ongoing.

We are grateful to the Chatham County Historical Association for their work telling the Black history of the county in a number of articles.

Our website is CRC-C.org, and it features stories of interest and a blog to foster conversation in the community. We have no interest in blaming or shaming; our experience belongs to all of us, and the obligation to move forward belongs to all of us.

We have plans to launch another series of public events as soon as the pandemic conditions permit to commemorate the lives of the lynching victims and to memorialize them.

You’ve previously written that this period in American history is the “Third Reconstruction.” What do you mean by that?

We are in the middle of the third great movement in American history to achieve the commitment we made in 1776 that life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is a natural unalienable right that belongs to each and every one of us.

The first Reconstruction from 1865 to 1872 promised equal protection and equal voting rights but was swept away by the White power structure in the South and White abandonment in the North. The second Reconstruction in the ‘60s focused on integration in schools, the economy and voter protection but was not sustained. Now the third Reconstruction has arrived after the events of last summer, and is

our best chance yet to clear our legal system and society of systemic bias against Black citizens.

More White citizens have joined this effort, more young whites and Blacks have come to the effort, and our leadership in the county and in the country now is committed to visible, concrete and permanent achievements. The first two reconstructions shattered on indifference and opposition. Our challenge is to finally right what we see has been wrong for a long time.

We discuss this question every time we speak, but some who will read this (and no doubt many who will not, because of the subject nature) question the necessity for “remembrance,” and also suggest another “r” word — reconciliation — is unnecessary. Have you encountered that in Chatham County personally?

Sure, but there isn’t anything magic or mysterious about remembrance and reconciliation. Remembrance is the telling of the whole history of the county. I’m sure most people, thinking about it, will realize that they know very little about the 250 years of history for Black Americans in the county. Reconciliation is not about a religious conversion or an epiphany — it’s about acknowledging that our country, great as it is, did not do on the one hand and did do on the other hand things that made it very difficult, often even impossible, for Black Americans to be equal before the law and in economic opportunity. It should not be so hard to

say that those gaps must be filled. No one will suffer if a Black man, woman or child enjoys equal justice before the law and has the same opportunities in education, employment and wealth creation as the next person. We will all gain, and we all understand fairness.

Who makes up the group, and are you encouraging additional participation?

We have a number of members from around the county. We welcome new members and have a link on our website <https://www.crc-c.org/participate.html> to encourage new members to sign up. Dues are \$15 a year.

The CRC-C now has a website. Tell us about that, and how can people find out more?

Our website is CRC-C.org. It was set up before Christmas, and we are continuing to work on it. It includes articles and news of interest about Black history and events in Chatham County and the state. We feature the history of the Chatham Fairgrounds, the only Black-owned fairgrounds in the United States. We present all the names and biographical data of the lynching victims in the county. Currently we are asking Chatham Countians to sign a petition to name Horton Middle School the George Moses Horton Middle School to fully honor Chatham County’s famous Black poet. The website will be our outreach to the county and our open door to cooperation and conversation.

For more information, go to www.CRC-C.org.

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Siler City's new Dollar General



Staff photos by Kim Hawks

The new Dollar General store has opened at 610 N. Second Ave. in Siler City. Company officials say Dollar General is committed to providing area residents with a convenient store to purchase household essentials including food, cleaning supplies, paper products, over-the-counter medicines, hygiene products, baby items and more.



Francine Dowdy of Siler City browses through marked-down Valentine's Day items at Dollar General on Monday. About 75% of the American population lives within five miles of a Dollar General.



THE AWARD-WINNING PRINT & ONLINE FAMILY FEATURE

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CLOUDS

Have you ever laid on your back and stared at the clouds? Did you find shapes that looked like animals, or faces, or objects?

Three Kinds of Clouds

Most of the clouds you see fall into one of three groups.



Cirrus clouds are high clouds. They look like thin, wispy streamers. Cirrus clouds are usually white and predict fair to pleasant weather.



Cumulus clouds are the puffy white clouds that look like floating cotton balls. They usually mean good weather is coming. But if the cumulus cloud starts to get taller and taller, they can become thunderstorm clouds.



Stratus clouds are grayish clouds that often cover the entire sky like a big blanket. They make for dark, sometimes drizzly weather.

Cloudy Confusion

Here are three facts about clouds and one statement that is NOT true. Use a red crayon to cross out the false statement.



Rain, sleet, snow and hail falling from clouds is called **precipitation**.



Clouds form when water evaporates into the sky and condenses high up in the cooler air.



If you move slowly and carefully, you can sit on a cloud.



A cloud is a large group of water droplets that we can see in the air.

What do you see in these clouds?

Look outside today to find shapes in the clouds!

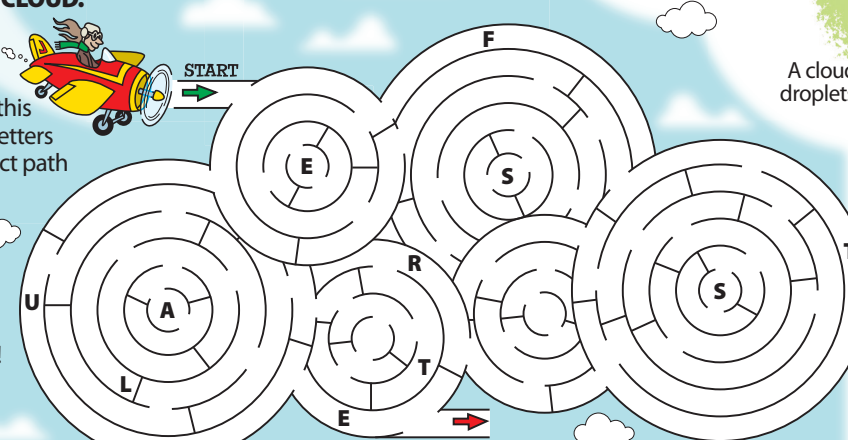


Fog Fact or Fog Fiction?

Fly high to discover if this statement is true or false: **FOG IS A CLOUD.**

Lupé DeLoops is flying her plane through this big cloud. The letters along the correct path will reveal if the above statement about fog is true or false.

Don't get dizzy!



How many clouds can you find on this page?

Extra! Extra! Weather News

Look through the newspaper for your local weather forecast. Based on the forecast, what clothes will you need to wear outside this coming week?

Standards Link: Research: Use the newspaper to locate information.

CLOUD COMPUTING: Have you heard about cloud computing? Or have you ever stored a photo or a file in "the cloud"? The **cloud** is a name that has been given to large warehouses full of computers that connect to the internet. When you need computer space or apps, you can get those by plugging into the internet which will connect you with the computing cloud.

Kid Scoop Puzzler

Magic Cloud Puzzle

The sum of every row, column and diagonal must be the same.

		8
9		1
	7	

Double Double Word Search


Find the words in the puzzle. How many of them can you find on this page?

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

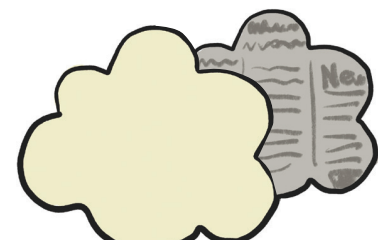
Standards Link: Letter sequencing. Recognize identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

Kid Scoop Together: Newspaper Clouds


Make some clouds with newspaper!



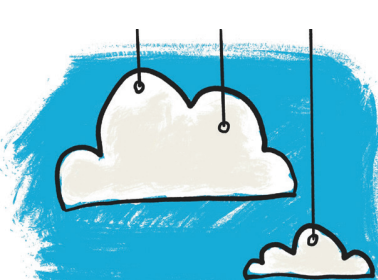
Paint some pages of the newspaper white and let them dry.



Then cut out shapes to make the different kinds of clouds. Make two matching shapes for each kind of cloud. Staple the matching shapes together.



Leave a space to stuff some crumpled newspaper inside then staple the cloud closed.



Hang your cloud from the ceiling. What kind of cloud did you make?

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CORONAVIRUS

Who is a 'frontline essential worker' in North Carolina?

Individuals from many industries will be included in the next group for the COVID-19 vaccinations, but protocols for determining who qualifies and how they will prove it remain unclear

BY LAURA LEE
Carolina Public Press

As North Carolina moves towards the next phase of COVID-19 vaccination, questions linger about the logistics of the rollout prioritization, especially for the state's frontline essential workers.

At present, only members of the state's first two priority groups, health care workers and people 65 and older, are eligible for vaccination by state providers. Long-term care facility staff and residents are eligible through a federal vaccination program run by Walgreens and CVS.

Beginning Feb. 24, the next group prioritized to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, frontline essential workers, will be eligible for the shot. This week, Gov. Roy Cooper announced that a subgroup of those workers, educators and child care staff, will be first ahead of other frontline essential workers such as grocery store employees and homeless shelter staff.

Noneducation group 3 members from other industries will be eligible for vaccination scheduling on March 10. Whether another subgroup will be prioritized at that time remains an open question, Cooper said.

It is unclear how local health departments or medical providers will determine if a person is in fact a member of group 3.

While documentation from DHHS defines frontline essential worker categories, state officials have not implemented a system requiring individuals to prove their employment as a group 3 member in order to get a shot.

"Obviously, you've got to rely somewhat on people's honesty," Cooper said.

Identification is not required, and "individu-

als can self-attest to the criteria (e.g., age, job role, health status, living situation) that they qualify for in eligible priority groups," according to DHHS Interim Provider Guidance for Vaccinating North Carolinians.

"Right now, we do not have an identification requirement," DHHS Secretary Mandy Cohen said.

"Again, we want to make sure that we are moving things along with speed and equity here and that is what we intend to do so there's no ID requirement, but you may have to show identification in a particular location, depending on that provider."

As priority status becomes tied to employment in group 3, some employers may form partnerships with vaccine providers to provide on-site vaccination clinics or designated days for particular employees to receive the shots, she said. But individuals who declare themselves frontline essential employees can receive a vaccine dose at any provider in the state.

From the clinic to the classroom

The prioritization of educators and other school staff within group 3 is a change from the vaccination plan announced in mid-January which did not prioritize any subgroups.

"I think there has been concern about all of these essential frontline workers in a big group in group three all of a sudden crashing into the system. That would be problematic," Cooper said.

The move comes after public outcry about the need for students to return to schools and resistance by some educators to returning to the classroom without vaccination.

The North Carolina

Association of Educators (NCAE), the state's largest teacher organization, called for vaccine prioritization of teachers and school staff against the backdrop of debate about when and whether students and teachers should return to in-person learning.

Through its "Shots for Safe Return" campaign, NCAE activists called for Governor Cooper to move teachers and other school staff to the front of the line.

"Twenty-six states are vaccinating educators. Why isn't North Carolina? If 26 other states can do it, why can't we?" Guilford County Association of Educators Vice President Kenya Donaldson asked at a gathering on Tuesday.

The state has about 240,000 education sector employees, including teachers, cafeteria staff and bus drivers, Cohen said Tuesday. The state currently receives approximately 150,000 vaccine doses each week, so opening the process to educators does not guarantee spots for teachers or other child care providers.

"I want to reiterate that just because folks become eligible on February 24, it does not mean that that is the day you're going to get an appointment," Cohen said.

"We know this is going to be a gradual process. We know the supply is low, and you'll see different ways in which teachers and child-care workers are going to access this vaccine."

Priorities after teachers

Two weeks after educators can begin scheduling vaccination appointments, other frontline essential workers will be eligible to register for a shot.

To be categorized as a

frontline essential worker, individuals must "be in person at their place of work" and fall into one of the eight essential sectors, according to DHHS guidelines.

To define essential employees, DHHS uses the sectors outlined by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security: critical manufacturing, education, essential goods, food and agriculture, government and community services, health care and public health, public safety and transportation.

Defining the groups and making sure that only those eligible employees receive vaccination appointments are challenges.

"We recognize that once you move away from age based, and get into what people do for a living, that it makes it harder," Cooper said.

State officials have not yet decided whether to prioritize other subgroups within group 3, but some industries have communicated their desire to be included as frontline essential workers to the department.

In early January, presidents of district bars from across the state sent a letter to Gov. Cooper and Sec. Cohen lobbying for all court employees and court-appointed lawyers to be categorized as frontline essential workers.

The letter asked for the inclusion of "judges, magistrates, clerks of court, judicial assistants, District Attorneys and assistant District Attorneys, public defenders, judicial assistants and judicial clerks, trial court administrative coordinators and staff, courthouse administration and facilities staff, and those in the office of the register of deeds."

N.C. State Bar President Barbara Christy sent a similar letter asking the administration "to be mindful of the significant number of persons who are not employed by state government and are essential to keeping the criminal, civil, and family courts functioning properly."

Workers supporting the judicial system are included in the CISA guidance thereby meeting the first requirement for inclusion in group 3, Cohen said in a letter to Chief Justice Paul Newby. In order to qualify as "frontline," however, court personnel's "work-related duties must be performed onsite and involve being close to members of the public or other co-workers," Cohen wrote.

Restaurant workers, a population whose work requires close proximity to the public, also fall under group 3.

"We have been waiting anxiously for our turn to get vaccine and so we're just thrilled that on March 10, restaurant workers, frontline workers who've been working tirelessly during this pandemic for nearly a year now, will finally be able to roll up their sleeves and get the vaccine," said Lynn Minges, director of the N.C. Restaurant and Lodging Association.

Before the pandemic, the state was home to 520,000 workers in the hospitality industry, she said, but the association is not seeking prioritization of their members as a subgroup.

There are currently no clinics established for restaurant employees, but Minges said they are considering ways to help workers prove their status as frontline essential employees even as it remains unclear if such proof will be necessary.

"One of the things

we're likely to encourage restaurateurs to do is ... to provide a letter validating that this employee is an employee of the establishment and is deemed to be an essential frontline worker, though that doesn't seem to be required," she said.

"But that might be helpful to some of our workers who are trying to navigate the system and make sure that they're not turned away."

The state's largest trade organization, N.C. Realtor, represents more than 53,000 members in the real estate industry who may qualify as essential under the CISA guidelines. They have not received notice about their status within group 3, said Mark Zimmerman, senior vice-president of external affairs.

Realtors, he said, have faced challenges in the pandemic but have been able to continue working by following safety protocols recommended to avoid transmission of the virus.

"Obviously, I think everyone in the state, including our members, would look forward to getting their opportunity to get to vaccination," he said.

"But we will wait our turn in line while those who are deemed more important or more essential will have priority."

Governor Cooper and Secretary Cohen said more guidance on frontline essential worker vaccination process will be forthcoming, including a portal for employers to upload employee information.

As the pandemic continues to cripple the state, logistical challenges and concerns about priority may take a back seat to the urgent need to get vaccines administered.

"At the end of the day, we need to get shots in arms," Cooper said.

THE NORTHWOOD OMNISCIENT

Northwood HS's student news magazine builds online presence during pandemic

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — When Grace Leonard stumbled upon the journalism class that produces the Northwood Omniscient, she didn't know much of anything about journalism or communications.

Two years of journalism experience — and nearly 20 Omniscient articles later — she now hopes to work in the communications field, and credits that goal to her experience at Northwood High School's award-winning student news magazine.

"My experience working for the paper was entirely positive," Leonard, who is a junior at Northwood, said. "I believe contributing to the school paper has given me a new perspective on journalism and how crucial it is to society. This experience has enabled me to improve upon communicating with others, developing stronger writing skills and collaborating for production."

During a normal year, Northwood English teacher and magazine adviser Eliza Brinkley said the Omniscient staff prints four to five magazines per school year — produced entirely by students in the journalism program. Usually, students are responsible for approaching local businesses to sell ad space in the magazine, with contributions from Northwood's PTA helping cover the printing costs, too. Under that model, students usually wrote two stories a semester.

This year, with remote learning putting a pause on print editions, the Omniscient staff wrote two stories per month,



Screenshot from Zoom call with the Northwood Omniscient staff in mid-December.

focusing on improving their online presence and producing more content.

"Part of the reason we call ourselves a 'news magazine' now rather than a 'newspaper' is because we are shifting more and more to an online platform, as is the case with many high school journalism publications across the country," Brinkley said, adding that they'll likely pivot back to print when possible. Being online, she said, means students can explore making videos, podcasts, graphic designs and other interactive media pieces in addition to traditional print articles.

"I was a little worried about keeping up the group's motivation as the semester wore on and remote learning became more and more monotonous," Brinkley said, "but I've never been more impressed by the sheer hard work and pluckiness

of a group of teenagers."

"I think the changes we've had this semester will have a huge impact on how we operate moving forward," added staff writer Ethan Westmoreland.

Torin Priddle, one of the editors for the magazine along with Ella Sullivan, helped manage their website's Google analytics page in order to see how much traffic their stories get — noting he saw a bump in advertising every Friday from viewership.

"...We've had a little over 300 users a week," he said of the website in mid-December. "According to Google, we have people from all over the world checking the site, which is neat."

Brinkley said the journalism class is a combination of two things: studying the fundamentals of journalism and producing the Omniscient. And while

she teaches lessons on audience engagement, types of newspaper elements, news deserts, multimedia storytelling and more, "working on the Omniscient is itself the primary 'teacher.'"

Even though several of her students last semester were in their first semester of journalism, Brinkley said they've produced some the "most in-depth, balanced and eloquent pieces" she's seen during her three years at Northwood. From construction on Pittsboro's traffic circle to podcasts on identities, and major school sports updates to reporting on Seasonal Affective Disorder, the Omniscient is producing quality journalism.

"I think they've been buoyed by the sense that The Omniscient has a unique opportunity to be a force for community building during these difficult times," Brinkley said of her students, prior to high schools returning to in-person hybrid learning Feb. 1. "It's a lot harder for students and staff to know what's going on at Northwood when we're all at home and don't get to see one another on campus every day. The Omniscient has been one of the main resources for closing that gap."

Sophomore staff writer Olivia McMurray isn't certain if she'll pursue a career in journalism. Still, she's really grateful for the skills she developed as a result of the work she did in the class and for the bonds she formed with the other writers.

"Taking the class has helped me engage with my community, improve my writing skills, and practice my critical thinking — all of which I find

important regardless of whether or not I become a journalist after high school," she said.

Last semester, McMurray chose to write about the increase in pet adoptions during quarantine for her first article. She spoke with a representative from SPCA International for the piece, along with other Northwood students about their experiences. Because it was her first semester in the class, she said she doesn't have an in-person newsroom experience to compare to the online one. For her, the twice-weekly Zoom brainstorming meetings helped her feel connected to the rest of the writers, and she enjoyed the freedom she had to explore graphic design as a result of the focus on online.

And even though she doesn't yet know if a career in journalism is for her, it seems one semester of working with the Omniscient has given her not only the confidence to see herself as a journalist, but the passion to "shine light onto people or things that are important."

"We journalists have the responsibility to tell stories that need to be told and give a voice to people who do not have one — and that is a powerful thing," McMurray said. "I feel lucky to be at a school where a journalism program is offered, because if not, I most likely wouldn't have gotten exposed to journalism and media and found out I enjoy it."

You can read the Northwood Omniscient at <https://www.nhsomniscient.com/>.

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

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LEGALS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 20E577 Having qualified as Executor of the Estate of JOAN E. BURTON, late of 510 S. 6th Ave., Apt. D, Siler City, NC, Chatham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned at 2800 Carrington Rd., Rocky Mount, North Carolina 27804 on or before the 4th day of May 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 to the undersigned. This the 28th day of January, 2021. Wade Burton, Executor of The Estate of Joan E. Burton David Scott Russ Pierce Law Group 9121 Anson Way, Suite 200 Raleigh, NC 27615 Attorney of Executor J28,F4,F11,F18,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 20-E-340 All persons having claims against NANCY E. CLEMENT, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 28th day of April, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 28th day of January, 2021. Coy L. Clement, Executor 72109 Mosley Chapel Hill, NC 27517 Meghan N. Knight Lynch & Eatman, L.L.P. PO Box 30515 Raleigh, NC 27622-0515 J28,F4,F11,F18,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 20 E 494 The undersigned, having qualified as Co-Administrators of the Estate of SALLY M. NORRIS, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned at their address, 196 Jasmine Drive, Hanover, Pennsylvania, 17331, on or before the 28th day of April, 2021, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment. This 20th day of January, 2021. Frank D. Norris, Jr., Co-Administrator 196 Jasmine Drive Hanover, PA 17331 Leola Maria Norris Ottinger, Co-Administrator 221 S. Melville Street Graham, NC 27253 GUNN & MESSICK, PLLC P. O. Box 880 Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312 J28,F4,F11,F18,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY HAVING QUALIFIED as Executor of the Estate of THOMAS MONROE ALSTON 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 28th day of April, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. This the 25th day of January, 2021. Margaret Alston Martin, Executor of The Estate of Thomas Monroe Alston Post Office Box 1806 Pittsboro, North Carolina 27344

MOODY, WILLIAMS, ATWATER & LEE, LLP ATTORNEYS AT LAW BOX 1806 PITTSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA 27312 (919) 542-5605 J28,F4,F11,F18,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY HAVING QUALIFIED as Executor of the Estate of WAYNE AUSTIN SIMPSON 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 28th day of April, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. This the 25th day of January, 2021. Sydney D.F. Farrar, Executor of The Estate of Wayne Austin Simpson Post Office Box 1806 Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312 MOODY, WILLIAMS, ATWATER & LEE, LLP ATTORNEYS AT LAW BOX 1806 PITTSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA 27312 (919) 542-5605 J28,F4,F11,F18,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21-E-20 All persons having claims against MAKE PEACE CHALMERS, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 28TH day of April, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 28th day of January, 2021. Rashawnda Benton, Executor 1365 Glovers Church Road Bennett, NC 27208 J28,F4,F11,F18,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 20-E-646 All persons having claims against MARGARET EMMA PAULSEN, A.K.A. MARGARET WHITEHILL PAULSEN, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 4th day of May, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 4th day of February, 2021. Charles Michael Paulsen, Executor C/O Steve Lackey, Attorney 410 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd Chapel Hill, NC 27514 F4,F11,F18,F25,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY Having qualified as Personal

Representative of the Estate of JOHN P. HOFSESS, deceased of Chatham County, North Carolina, on the 26th day of January, 2021, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against said estate to exhibit them to the undersigned at the office of the attorney for the estate on or before the 6th day of May, 2021, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned. This 4th day of February 2021. Glenn Hofsess, Personal Representative c/o Anthony D. Nicholson, Attorney for the Estate McPherson, Rocamora, Nicholson, Wilson, & Hinkle, PLLC 3211 Shannon Road, Suite 400 Durham, NC 27707 F4,F11,F18,F25,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21-E-57 All persons having claims against DONALD E. WOODY, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 4th day of May, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 4th day of February, 2021. Donald E. Woody, Jr., Executor 2705 Siler City Snow Camp Rd Siler City, NC 27344 F4,F11,F18,F25,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21-E-56 All persons having claims against MOLLIE W. WOODY, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 4TH day of May, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 4th day of February, 2021. Donald E. Woody, Jr., Executor 2705 Siler City Snow Camp Rd Siler City, NC 27344 F4,F11,F18,F25,4tp

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF CHATHAM EXECUTOR'S NOTICE The undersigned having qualified as Executor of the Estate of WILLIAM J. BUSBY, M.D., deceased, late of Chatham County, this is to notify all persons having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 31st day of May, 2021 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned. This the 3rd day of February, 2021. Charles T. Busby, Executor of the Estate of William J. Busby

P.O. Box 88 Maple, N.C. 27956 F11,F18,F25,M4,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 20-E-167 All persons having claims against BARBARA J. LOTT, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 12TH day of May, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 11th day of February, 2021. Charity Alston, Executrix PO Box 1093 860 East Alston Rd Pittsboro, N.C. 27312 F11,F18,F25,M4,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21-E-64 All persons having claims against DAVID K. LOVINGS, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 12TH day of May, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 11th day of February, 2021. Julia Dowdy, Administrator 300 So. Evergreen Ave Siler City, NC 27344 c/o Lewis Fadely, PLLC 119 West Fir Avenue

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Siler City, NC 27344 F11,F18,F25,M4,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of DOROTHY LOUISE TILLEY A/K/A DOROTHY G. TILLEY, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, the undersigned

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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 the 13th day of May, 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 to the undersigned. This the 29th day of January, 2021.
 Michael Ray Tilley, Administrator of the Estate of Dorothy Louise Tilley a/k/a Dorothy G. Tilley c/o Linda Funke Johnson, Attorney at Law P.O. Box 446 114 Raleigh Street Fuquay Varina, NC 27526 F11,F18,F25,M4,4tc

rations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 13th day of May, 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 to the undersigned. This the 29th day of January, 2021.
 Michael Ray Tilley, Administrator of the Estate of Ray Jack Tilley c/o Linda Funke Johnson Attorney at Law P.O. Box 446 114 Raleigh Street Fuquay Varina, NC 27526 F11,F18,F25,M4,4tc

decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 11th day of May, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms, corporations indebted to the said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned. This is the 11th day of February, 2021.
 Marie Elizabeth Stockstill and Barbara Layne Stockstill Weller, co-Executrices c/o Richard F. Prentis, Jr. Stubbs, Cole, Breedlove, Prentis & Biggs 4 Consultant Place Durham, NC 27707 F11,F18,F25,M4,4tc

against IRIS MAY SIMMONDS, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 12th day of May, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 11th day of February, 2021.
 Leslie A. Simmonds, Personal Representative 528 Legacy Falls Chapel Hill, NC 27517 c/o Hopler Wilms & Hanna, PLLC 2314 S Miami Blvd, Ste. 151 Durham, NC 27703 F11,F18,F25,M4,4tc

to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned. This 18th day of February, 2021.
 Tracey E. Parker and Scott R. Phillips, Co-Executors Estate of Hedrick Mitchell Phillips aka Hedrick M Phillips c/o J Alan Campbell Law PO Box 850 Hillsborough, NC 27278 J Alan Campbell 919-451-5441 F18,F25,M4,M11,4tp

the undersigned on or before the 19th day of May, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 18th day of February, 2021.
 Nathan Lott, Administrator 120 Lillie Lane Sanford, NC 27332 F18,F25,M4,M11,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
 NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
 Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of RAY JACK TILLEY, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms and corpo-

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
 NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
 Having qualified as co-Executrices of the Estate of GEORGE MCLEAN STOCKSTILL of Chatham County, North Carolina, the undersigned do hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate of said

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
 NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21-E-52
 All persons having claims against TIMOTHY JAMES GRINNELL, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 12th day of May, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 11th day of February, 2021.
 William James Grinnell, Affiant #1 149 Charlie Perkins Rd Pittsboro, NC 27312 F11,F18,F25,M4,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
 NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 20-E-647
 All persons having claims against EFROSENE JUFFRAS, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 12th day of May, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 11th day of February, 2021.
 Diane M. Juffras, Executrix 203 Rossburn Way Chapel Hill, NC 27516 F11,F18,F25,M4,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
 NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
 Having qualified as Executor of the Estate of JANICE RUTH HUSSEY COX, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of the decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned at the office of Ivey & Eggleston, Attorneys at Law, 111 Worth Street, Asheville, North Carolina 27203, on or before May 21, 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 18th day of February, 2021
 Beatrice Sue Kennedy a//k/a Beatrice C. Kenney Executrix of the Estate of Janice Ruth Hussey Cox, Deceased S. Scott Eggleston, Attorney IVEY & EGGLESTON, Attorneys at Law 111 Worth Street Asheville, NC 27203 (336) 625-3043 F18,F25,M4,M11,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
 NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21-E-88
 The undersigned, having qualified as Executrix of the Estate of STEVEN EUGENE OLDHAM, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, notifies all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned at her address, 3951 US Highway 15-501 N, Pittsboro, North Carolina, 27312, on or before the 19th day of May, 2021, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment. This 15th day of February, 2021.
 Vicky T. Oldham, Executrix 3951 US Highway 15-501 N Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312 GUNN & MESSICK, PLLC P. O. Box 880 Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312-0880 F18,F25,M4,M11,4tp

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NOTICE TO CREDITORS
 NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
 Having qualified as Executor of the Estate of JAMES WILLIAM HAYS, late of 303 Hoot Owl Ln., Siler City, NC 27344 in Chatham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned at the address given below, on or before the 12th day of May, 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 to the undersigned. This the 11th day of February, 2021.
 Patricia H. Hays, Executrix of the Estate of James William Hays c/o Jason R. Jones, Attorney 880 MLK Jr. Blvd, Ste. 105 Chapel Hill, NC 27514 F11,F18,F25,M4,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
 NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
 HAVING QUALIFIED as Executrix of the Estate of RONALD L. TEAGUE, 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 19th day of May, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. This the 9th day of February, 2021.
 Deborah Sue Y. Teague, Executrix of The Estate of Ronald L. Teague Post Office Box 1806 Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312 MOODY, WILLIAMS & LEE, LLP Attorneys at Law Box 1806 Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312 (919) 542-5605 F18,F25,M4,M11,4tc

JOINT NOTICE OF BRANCH OPENING
 Notice is hereby given that The Fidelity Bank, a North Carolina chartered bank headquartered at 100 South Main Street, Fuquay Varina, Wake County, NC 27526, has made application to the North Carolina Commissioner of Banks ("NCCOB") for authority and to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation ("FDIC") for its written consent to establish a de novo branch at 32 Industrial Drive, Suite 140, Pittsboro, Chatham County, NC 27312 to be known as the "Pittsboro Branch." Concerning the NCCOB de novo branch application, any interested person may submit written comment to the NCCOB. Comments received within 14 days of the date of publication of the public notice shall be considered by the NCCOB. Mail comments to NCCOB, 4309 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4309. The application will be processed in accordance with NCGS § 53C-6-15. Concerning the FDIC de novo branch application, any interested person may submit written comment to the FDIC Regional Director. Comments must be received within 15 days after the date of newspaper publication. Mail comments to FDIC Regional Director, 10 10th Street NE, Ste. 800, Atlanta, GA 30309-3449. The nonconfidential portions of the application are on file in the regional office and are available for public inspection during regular business hours. Photocopies of the nonconfidential portion of the application file will be made available upon request. F18,1tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
 NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21-E-91
 All persons having claims against ANNE MARIE ANTOINETTE RIETHER, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 19th day of May, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 18th day of February, 2021.
 Francine Marie Cracker, Executrix C/O Bagwell Holt Smith P.A. 111 Cloister Ct, STE 200 Chapel Hill, NC 27514 F18,F25,M4,M11,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
 NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21-E-78
 All persons having claims against JOHN DOUGLAS WILSON, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 19th day of May, 2021, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 18th day of February, 2021.
 Nancy Pritchard Wilson, Administrator 813 Sheffield Drive, Apt 3 Siler City, NC 27344 F18,F25,M4,M11,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
 NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21-E-84
 All persons having claims against LUTHER ISAAC LOTT, JR., deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to

NORTH CAROLINA - GUILFORD COUNTY
 IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE
 DISTRICT COURT DIVISION 18 JT 333
 IN THE MATTER OF: Baby boy Thomas, a minor child born on February 1, 2018 in Greensboro, Guilford County, North Carolina
 TO: DONALD RAY ALSTON, JR., FATHER.
 TAKE NOTICE that a Petition seeking to terminate your parental rights for the juvenile referenced above, was filed on April 24, 2020 with the Clerk of Superior Court, Juvenile Division, Greensboro, Guilford County, NC. You must answer this Petition within 40 days of February 18, 2021, exclusive of that date. You are entitled to attend any hearing affecting your rights. If you cannot afford to hire an attorney, you are entitled to a court appointed attorney. Your parental rights as to the juvenile will be terminated upon your failure to answer the Petition within the time specified. If you fail to attend any hearing in this matter, the Court may release your court appointed attorney without further notice to you. This the 18th day of February, 2021.
 Shannon Peterson (#20805) Deputy County Attorney PO Box 3427 Greensboro, NC 27402 F18,F25,M4,3tc



Photo courtesy of the Chatham Sheriff's Office

Pet of the Week: JOAN

The Chatham County Sheriff's Office would like you to meet Joan, a 1-year-old, spunky tabby girl who loves to meow with all her might! Joan, like her namesake Joan Jett, is a true rockstar and trendsetter who isn't afraid to throw her head back and belt out the songs of her generation. She would make a colorful, playful companion for an individual or family who admires her strength, beauty, and creative vision as a feline performer. For more information about how to meet or adopt Joan or another pet, please contact the Sheriff's Office Animal Resource Center (ARC) at 919-542-7203 to schedule an appointment for a visit at 725 Renaissance Dr., Pittsboro.

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CCS teacher attrition rates during Plan B consistent with last two years

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

Since the academic school year began in July, there have been 84 resignations or retirements at Chatham County Schools, according to approved personnel agendas, with 56 of those taking place after the Board of Education's Sept. 29 decision to begin phasing into Plan B.

School staff and residents opposed to returning to in-person hybrid learning have cited these numbers as one reason to delay in returning, but personnel agendas from the previous two years suggest this number of resignations is not abnormal. During the 2019-20 school year, there were 102 total resignations or retirements through mid-February; there were 49 from October to mid-February, slightly less than the same calendar period tracked this year, following the move to Plan B. In 2018-19, there were 107 total resignations through mid-February, with 58 taking place in that same October-February period.

CCS administration emphasized to the News + Record that the majority of listed resignations don't include a reason for the move. In the agendas listed for this school year — which include 74 resignations and 10 retirements — reasons listed included:

- three resignations related to teaching offers in another county
- two related to health
- one each related to family

responsibility, a declined position and continuing education, and two listed as "other."

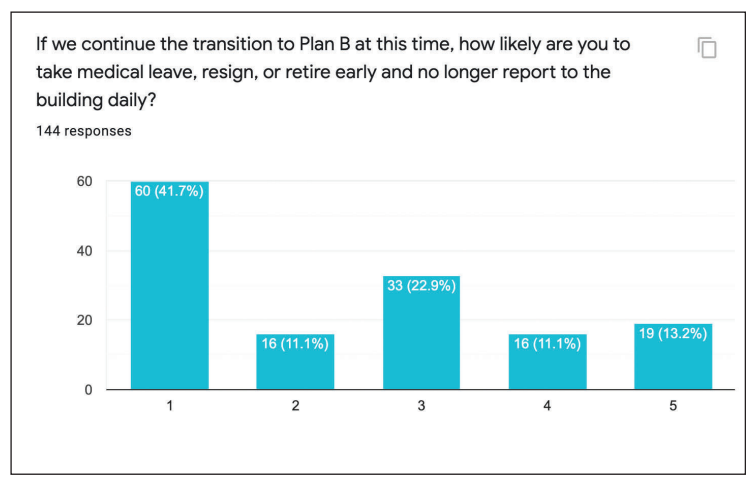
None of the other cases listed reasons for leaving the system.

Several CCS school staff members have told the News + Record they've resigned or retired early because of concerns related to COVID-19, but none were willing to speak on the matter publicly. Many expressed deep sadness in making the decision.

A Jan. 11 letter signed by 51 CCS high school staff members and sent to the BOE cited such resignations, expressing "grave" concerns over the safety of hybrid in-person learning and calls for the board to return to the fully remote Plan C. Of the staff surveyed for the letter, 35 respondents said they were likely or very likely to "take medical leave, resign, or retire early and no longer report to the building daily" if the district continued the transition to Plan B.

"According to personnel info released in school board minutes, 54 of our colleagues have already retired or resigned since September 2020," the letter said, using updated personnel agendas at the time. "The subsequent position vacancies combined with the existing substitute shortage and higher likelihood of staff calling out sick have added to our concerns about the safe supervision of students. Staffing issues are inevitable should Plan B be implemented."

Northwood teacher Edward



Screenshot from CCS high school staff survey sent with Jan. 11 letter to BOE members

This graph shows responses ranging from unlikely (far left) to very likely (far right) to 'take medical leave, resign, or retire early and no longer report to the building daily' if the district continued the transition to Plan B.

Walgate, a signer who spearheaded the writing of the letter, told the News + Record he planned to keep teaching even if Plan B continued as scheduled. High school students returned for in-person learning on Feb. 1. Before that return, Walgate said it'd been painful to see and hear about other teachers leaving. Only the week before, he said he watched a "really good teacher" and colleague wheel her personal belongings out of the building after resigning for health reasons.

At neighboring Wake County Schools, a staffing shortage led its BOE to implement a two-week pause on in-person learning in January, later extended to at least mid-February. However, that decision

was blamed on the number of teachers in COVID-19 quarantine, not due to retirements or resignations. Starting this week, Pre-K through 3rd grade and K-12 special education Wake students in regional programs will have daily in-person classes, and students in 4th through 12th grade will be on a rotation of one week of in-person classes and two weeks of online courses.

The state's newest annual "State of the Teaching Profession in North Carolina" report shows that 7.5% of teachers resigned or retired last year, the same as the previous school year. The report only covers the 2020 school year through March though, when schools began closing to slow the

spread of the coronavirus.

Though fewer teachers have quit working in N.C. public schools in recent years, the News & Observer reported in December, there are some concerns that the coronavirus pandemic could reverse the trend in the state.

"We will not see any anomalies in movement or attrition due to COVID-19 because we captured this data before any of those events might have occurred," said Thomas Tomberlin, director of educator recruitment and support at the state Department of Public Instruction, at a Dec. 3 State Board of Education meeting, the N&O reported.

"So next year's report possibly is going to be a lot more interesting in terms of how teachers moved or might have left the profession as a result of the pandemic."

In Chatham, the Jan. 11 CCS staff letter expressed concern over the district's position vacancies, substitute shortages and "higher likelihood of staff calling out sick," saying staffing issues would be inevitable if Plan B is implemented. Teachers and administrators have previously told the News + Record their workload has increased dramatically during remote learning, which will continue even as some form of in-person learning is implemented under Plan B.

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

SILER CITY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioners talk renovation projects after honoring a lost friend

BY D. LARS DOLDER
News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — The town's board of commissioners honored a former member at its Monday meeting before examining potential modification to its sewer infrastructure and agreeing to proceed with city hall renovations.

Helen Moody Buckner spent most of her life in Siler City. For 21 years, she served on the town's board of commissioners, the last four of which as mayor pro tem. She held a slew of other leadership positions in Chatham County including president of the Chatham Hospital executive board of trustees, first woman president of the Siler City Chamber of Commerce and membership on of the Chatham County Library board, the Occaneechee Council of Boys Scouts of America, the N.C. Museum of History Associates and the Siler City garden club.

On Jan. 30, Buckner's "life ... came to an untimely close," a board resolution in her honor said. The commissioners did not elaborate on the circumstances of her death.

"During her years of loyal service, she has earned the profound respect of area residents," the resolution says. "... She served faithfully with exemplary

conduct and a sense of fairness in furthering the growth of our community."

The commissioners voted unanimously to pass the resolution and present a copy "with our heartfelt sympathy to her family."

Sewer infrastructure

David Honeycutt of McGill Associates — an engineering firm with specialties in wastewater treatment and water resources, among other disciplines — attended Monday's board meeting to present a draft of the firm's proposed Siler City sewer system modifications.

The company was commissioned by Siler City staff to examine its water and sewer systems, but has only completed the latter review so far.

McGill concluded in its evaluation that to meet increasing demand and improve system reliability, the town must upgrade and expand its wastewater treatment plant.

The facility was last expanded in 1991 and is permitted to handle 4 million gallons of water (mgd) per day. In 2019, daily discharge averaged almost 3 mgd with usage volume increasing as development continues across town.

The main sewer interceptor is almost 60 years, Honeycutt said, and

"has surpassed its expected useful life." About 34 miles of sewer collection mains also require rehabilitation or replacement.

To remedy the situation, Honeycutt recommended several renovation and new construction projects to proceed over the next 20 years. The first and most pressing would be expansion of the water treatment plant capacity from 4 mgd to 6 mgd and upgrade of the main interceptor. The project could conclude by 2023, according to the McGill report, and would cost about \$22 million.

All suggested projects together would cost the town \$43 million over the next 20 years.

City hall renovation

The board of commissioners and town staff inched closer toward approving renovation plans for the city hall building on North 2nd Avenue in downtown.

The commissioners have deliberated in several meetings over what to do with city hall — whether appropriating funds for extensive renovation would be appropriate following a tough budgetary year amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Town Manager Roy Lynch, howev-

er, encouraged the board to approve renovation plans and assured them of the town's fiscal health. Renovations could begin with an initial cost of about \$660,000.

"I really think we should consider what Roy is putting before us," Mayor Pro Tem Cindy Bray said. "We can go ahead and do the repairs we need to do and as time goes by and things get better we can continue to upgrade the building."

Bray suggested the town should act quickly while it has adequate funds to proceed.

"We all know they say (the pandemic) is getting better," she said, "but we don't know what's going to happen in the future and we've got the money now, so I think we ought to consider doing something right now."

The commissioners agreed. "I think we're well within our ability to do this," said Commissioner Bill Haiges.

The board reached consensus to move forward with the proposed plans, but the contract will appear on the March 1 agenda for official approval.

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