

Chatham News + Record

Chatham County, N.C. | JANUARY 6 - 12, 2022 | www.chathamnewsrecord.com | \$1

21 STORIES THAT MADE 2021



Top left, Libdy Lopez, a nursing assistant at Chatham Hospital, pictured last May. Top right, Mary Nettles, president of the East Chatham Branch of the NAACP, opened the September remembrance service for Eugene Daniel at New Hope Baptist Church's cemetery, meant to commemorate the 100th anniversary of his lynching death. At bottom, students change classes in the hallway of Northwood High School last spring.

Staff photos by Peyton Sickles and Kim Hawks

10 people who made Chatham better, more interesting in 2021

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

There are more than 76,000 people who live in Chatham, according to 2020 Census results, and all of them contribute to making Chatham the place that it is — parents, children, teachers, students, government employees, elected officials, healthcare staff, Mountaire workers, school bus drivers and custodians alike.

If we only wrote stories on the special people of Chatham week in and week out for the rest of the News + Record's existence, it's not an exaggeration to say we'd never run out of good stories.

That said, we've compiled 10 of our favorite feature stories from 2021 — from Hubert West, the first Black head coach at UNC-Chapel Hill, to "Deadlock" film's Kelly Reiter, who made her major studio debut alongside Bruce Willis. We hope you enjoy revisiting some of our favorite stories with us, sorted in alphabetical order.

Tiana Brooks: one of 35 students featured in statewide art exhibit

The summer before her senior year at Jordan-Matthews High School, Tiana Brooks learned of George Floyd's death and decided to paint something to help her process yet another Black person killed by police officers.

The resulting mixed-media piece, "Say Their Names," features the names of Black women killed by police, to honor their lives and bring awareness to the issue.

Last spring, her piece was featured in the virtual Emerging Artists Invitational — an annual exhibition for high school artists sponsored by the Sechrest Gallery of Art and the High Point University School of Art and Design. She was one of just 35 artists selected across the state for the exhibition.

"I always knew I wanted this piece in an art show or gallery, just to shine light on this piece and the meaning that it held," Brooks said. "When I saw that it was in the Emerging Artists (Invitational), I knew right

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A look back at the CN+R's reporting on the last year in Chatham

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

From our breaking updates on Pittsboro's water and Chatham schools' COVID protocols, to our features on Chatham's reaction to the Jan. 6 Capitol attack and vaccinations and churches, 2021 was a long, messy, beautiful, challenging and newsworthy year.

Though COVID-19 is still with us and the Chatham community is still facing work, health and personal challenges, 2021 also brought some good news: COVID-19 vaccinations for everyone 5 and older, the reopening of in-person school five days a week, the groundbreaking of community resources like Pittsboro's Boys & Girls club, and much more. Revisit the last year with us through the stories that best capture 2021 in all its challenging but hopeful glory — ordered in alphabetical order by category: Around Chatham, Breaking News, Business, COVID, Education, Environment and Government.

Around Chatham

There are a lot of places, people and things that make Chatham special —

work by local organizations like Pittsboro Kiwanis Club's to fund college scholarships with 56 years of State Fair ham biscuits, budding athletic stars like Northwood's Caroline Murrell, and new and growing businesses with a mission, like Black-owned comfortable and fashionable clothing store, *geekchicfashion*.

We've covered a lot of important places and people across Chatham in the last year. Here's a smattering of some of the highlights of that coverage:

1. 'Tiger King Park' cats find refuge at Pittsboro's Carolina Tiger Rescue

In June, Lars Dolder reported that Carolina Tiger Rescue, located at 1940 Hanks Chapel Rd., was housing four celebrity cats among its newest residents: rescued tigers from Tiger King Park, the Oklahoma private zoo made famous in a Netflix true-crime series. (Our readers loved this story.)

At the time, Carolina Tiger Rescue cared for 44 total big cats. The facility is North Carolina's only federally and GFAS (Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries)-accredited big cat sanctuary. Carolina Tiger Rescue was caring for the four tigers in its possession while the Justice Department seeks their per-

manent forfeiture — it's not yet known whether a permanent home for the cats has been secured.

2. Chatham high school students collect over \$14,000 worth of donated hygiene products

Last May, Victoria Johnson wrote an inspiring follow-up story on the donation drive four high school juniors launched for menstrual and hygiene products earlier in the year. Though the students had low expectations, by May 5, they'd collected more than \$14,000 worth of products since March 14, inspired by a TikTok by the Chicago-based nonprofit called Her Drive.

Most donations — about 700 pounds worth in total — went to the West Chatham Food Pantry in Siler City; donations that the Food Pantry didn't accept, including used clothes, went to the Women's Center in Raleigh.

The group also gave a bundle of period products to the Silk Hope Catholic Worker, a small homeless shelter, and Chatham Middle received about 75 makeup bag kits loaded with scrunchies, deodorant, toothbrush, soap, pads and tampons.

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THE CN+R Q&A | COVID-19 UPDATE

Omicron variant drives higher numbers, questions about testing

BY BILL HORNER III
News + Record Staff

A week into our third year in a pandemic, record-high numbers of new COVID-19 cases and another surge in hospitalizations are dominating the conversations of health experts and observers — as is the severity of the Omicron variant and the reliability of tests for coronavirus.

North Carolina saw a second reporting — 19,174 new cases on Friday, beating Thursday's reported 18,571 cases, according to the N.C. Dept. of Health and Human Services. Across the U.S., the seven-day rolling average of new cases has tripled in the

last month, and those numbers are likely low, given that at-home test results aren't reported.

In Chatham County, more than 100 cases were reported on a single day — Dec. 27 — for the first time since the start of the pandemic, more than doubling the previous high of 52 set Jan. 12, 2021. The county's rolling 7-day case count was up nearly 55% with just under 12% of recorded COVID-19 tests coming back positive.

All told, 8,063 Chatham residents have had COVID; 99 have died from it.

In addition to the demand for tests, the Omicron-driven surge has also increased hospitalizations, despite reports that symptoms are

milder than those found with those infected by the Delta variant. Still, hospitals across the state are reporting that the vast majority of those admitted with COVID are unvaccinated, with Chatham Hospital in Siler City and Raleigh's WakeMed, among others, reporting that all COVID patients in intensive care — and all patients on respirators — are unvaccinated.

The time period since Christmas has also seen revisions in and updated guidance about isolation and more, but regarding vaccinations, the message from Chatham's experts is the same: if you haven't been vaccinated, you're endanger-

See **OMICRON**, page A10

Want to get a COVID test? Here's how.

As COVID-19 case counts continue to increase in North Carolina after the holidays, many people may find themselves scrambling to find a testing site in Chatham County.

With several types of testing available to the public — ranging from at-home testing options to administered tests — here's a list of locations in Chatham County offering free COVID tests. Some locations across the county offer both rapid and PCR testing; rapid testing offers results in 15 minutes but are not as accurate as the PCR tests, which come back with results in one to two days.

CHAPEL HILL, GOLDSTON AND MONCURE

- Avance Care - South Chapel Hill: This

See **TEST**, page A14

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

Siler City's City Hall is currently under renovation. The 1st and 2nd floors are closed to the public. The Planning and Community Development Department is located in the basement and can be accessed through the far left door facing E. 3rd St. Parking available at the 100 block of E. 3rd St.

ON THE AGENDA

The Pittsboro Board of Commissioners will meet at 7 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 10, via Zoom.
The Chatham County Board of Education's mid-year retreat will be held on Monday, Jan. 10, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Tuesday, Jan. 11, from 1 to 5 p.m., both at the Chatham Agriculture & Conference Center in Pittsboro. Written public comments should be submitted to Kristin Guthrie (kguthrie@chatham.k12.nc.us) by 3 p.m. on Jan. 7, 2022.

The livestream link is <https://bit.ly/CCBOE-livestream>.

OTHER

Chatham County Public Libraries to host a Winter Reading BINGO Challenge. Children and teens are invited to participate in the Winter Reading BINGO Challenge at all Chatham County Public Libraries branches from now through Feb. 14, sponsored by the Friends of the Chatham Community Library, is open to children ages 2-18. Readers participate by picking up a reading BINGO sheet at their local library branch and completing a 5-in-a-row BINGO to earn a free book (one book per participant, while supplies last). All readers who complete at least one BINGO will be entered into a drawing for a \$50 Gift Certificate to McNityre's Books. For more information about the Winter Reading BINGO Challenge, or other youth events with Chatham County Public Libraries, contact youth.services@chathamlibraries.org.
Chatham Community Library presents Celebrating Women of Chatham: Conversations with Women Making

a Difference. On Jan. 15, Chatham Community Library continues its series of quarterly discussions highlighting women change-makers in Chatham County. The series addresses areas of interest to county residents viewed from the perspective of women engaged in both traditional and non-traditional careers including agriculture, entrepreneurship, education, the arts, law enforcement, and social activism. **WHAT:** Celebrating Women of Chatham series; **WHEN:** Saturday, Jan. 15 from 1 to 2:30 p.m.; **WHERE:** Virtual Program. This virtual event is free and open to the public and will be presented via Zoom. Participants should register online to receive the meeting link. Visit the libraries' website, www.chathamlibraries.org, or contact the Library at 919-545-8084 or rita.vanduinen@chathamlibraries.org for more information. Carolyn Miller, Chatham County's assistant county manager for human resources, will moderate the panel. Panelists will discuss the challenges and rewards of being a businesswoman in Chatham County, among

other aspects.
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.
The Chatham Historical Museum is open Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. We will be following the governor's directive on occupancy, masks, and social distancing. Adult and kid friendly; no admission fee. 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 at <https://chathamhistory.org>.
Second Bloom has begun winter hours, 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. We are located at 630 E. St., Pittsboro, in the Food Lion Shopping Center. We are accepting donations of gently used men's and women's clothing and accessories. Credit cards are accepted. All proceeds provide support for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and promote community education in collaboration with Chatham County.

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 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesdays for boys, grades 1 through 5. Come join the Cub Scouts.
Pack 900 in Bear Creek meets at 7 p.m. Tuesdays at Meroney's U.M.C., following the school calendar. See <http://pack900.com> for more information.

SILER CITY COMMISSIONERS

Cheek honored with Long Leaf Pine award

BY TAYLOR HEEDEN
 News + Record Staff

SILER CITY — Commissioners gathered on Monday for their first regular meeting of the new year, where they honored former Mayor Pro Tem James



Larry Cheek

Larry Cheek, who died in office while serving on Siler City's Board of Commissioners.

Cheek — who served on the board of commissioners for over 17 years — was posthumously recognized with the Order of the Long Leaf Pine award, the highest award given to a civilian in North Carolina. According to the Order of the Long Leaf Pine website, the award is reserved for "persons who have made significant contributions to the state and their communities through their exemplary service and exceptional accomplishments."
 Cheek died on May 26, 2020.

Chatham's State Senator Valerie Foushee and state Rep. Robert Reives II endorsed Cheek's case for receiving the award. Reives presented the award to Cheek's widow, Alpha Cheek, during Monday's meeting.

"I think all of us were touched by Larry Cheek in some way," Reives said.

The state representative knew Cheek and his wife through Reives's family, and when Reives was sworn into office, he said Cheek became a mentor to him.

"He had to take another role with me at that point," he said. "He put me on

a crash course to learn something about politics here in Chatham County."

Reives was not the only one impacted by Cheek. He said the commissioner would always take time to listen to concerned residents, no matter the situation.

"I don't care where I saw him, I don't care where anybody saw him, it was not just for me — if anybody stopped and talked to him, he stopped, he sat and he listened," Reives said.

Cheek's wife, Alpha, also made remarks to the board Monday. She said her late husband had a passion for Siler City that motivated his work.

"He loved this town, and he loved this board," she said.

She thanked the members of the board and town staff who went on to write letters to Gov. Roy Cooper, urging him to bestow the posthumous award to Cheek.

"I know this is not an easy feat and it took recommendations and letters on the behalf of others to get such an amazing award," she said.

Letters to Cooper were sent by Foushee, Reives, Chatham County Commissioner Mike Dasher and Siler City Mayor Pro Tem Cindy Bray.

Bray said Cheek deserved the recognition for



his 17 years of service to Siler City.

"He would always say he took an oath for the whole town, not just District II," she wrote. "We have missed him so much and hope to honor him with this award."

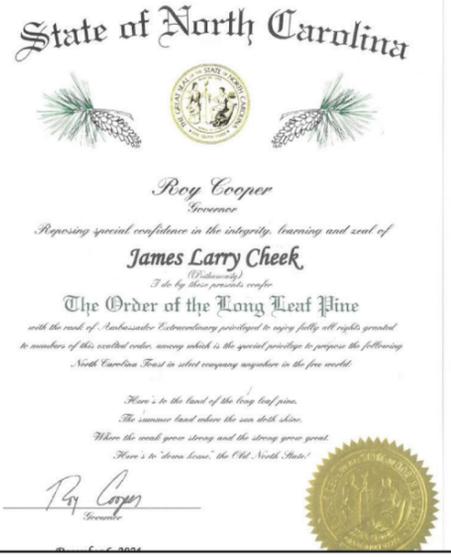
Alpha Cheek said honoring her husband with the Order of the Long Leaf Pine award was a perfect way to commemorate his service to Siler City, and that he would have loved to be able to accept the award.

"This is such a magnificent addendum to Larry's rich legacy, and everything that he did," she said. "He did everything with honor, he did

it with love, and honesty. He did love Siler City, and

he loved people." Reporter Taylor Heeden

can be reached at theeden@chathamnr.com



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BILL HORNER III, Editor/Publisher
bhorner3@chathamnr.com 919-774-2728

NEWSROOM

HANNAH McCLELLAN, Reporter/Web Editor
hannah@chathamnr.com
 TAYLOR HEEDEN, Reporter
theeden@chathamnr.com
 VICTORIA JOHNSON, Reporter
victoria@chathamnr.com
 VICTOR HENSLEY, Sports Editor
vhensley@chathamnr.com
 KIM HAWKS, PEYTON SICKLES & SIMON BARBRE, Staff Photographers
 MAX BAKER & HEIDI PEREZ-MORENO, News Interns

NEWSROOM INQUIRIES, PRESS
 RELEASES AND WEBSITE QUESTIONS
news@chathamnr.com

ADVERTISING

JASON JUSTICE
jjustice@chathamnr.com
 GLORIA MOCK, Advertising Specialist
advertising@chathamnr.com
 919-270-2021

OFFICE

KAREN PYRTLE
karen@chathamnr.com
 DORIS BECK
doris@chathamnr.com
 FLORENCE TURNER
billing@chathamnr.com

The Chatham News + Record (USPS #101-160) is published weekly, 52 weeks a year, by Chatham Media Group LLC, 303 West Raleigh Street, Siler City, N.C. 27344. Subscription rates: 1 year print + digital — \$52; monthly — \$5.99. Digital only — \$3.99 monthly. Periodicals postage paid at the U.S. Post Office in Siler City.

N.C. POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to The Chatham News + Record, PO Box 290, Siler City, N.C. 27344



Submitted photo

Jordan-Matthews Senior Tiana Brooks with her mixed-media piece, 'Say Their Names.' The piece was selected to be displayed at this year's virtual Emerging Artists Invitational - Brooks is one of 35 students in the state to be featured.



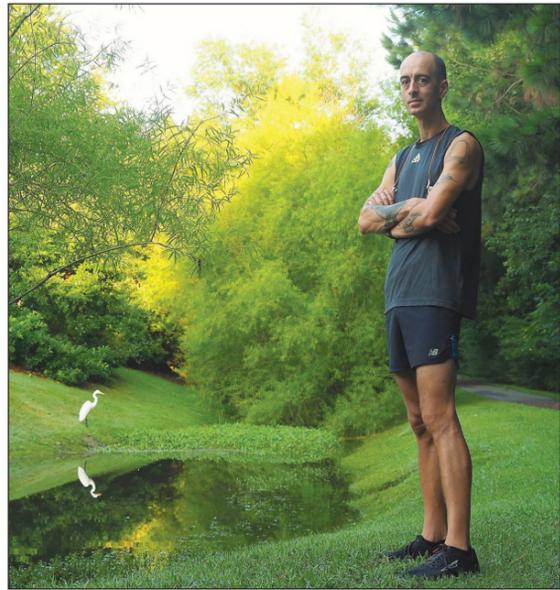
Jamaria Faucette poses with her mother Myranda Crump (left) and her legal guardian Shuranda Smith (right) before being honored at Northwood's Jan. 15, 2021, senior night.

Staff photo by James Kiefer



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Wesley Hart shows off his Bronze Star award, given for his exemplary service during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II. Knowing about the Bronze Star encouraged his daughters agree to a friend's suggestion that Hart, 102, agree to a request to apply for the French Legion of Honor.



Staff photo by Kim Hawks

Pittsboro runner and chronic lymphocytic leukemia survivor Corbie Hill poses near CCCC's Pittsboro campus, where he begins most of his near-daily running workouts. Hill's leukemia reappeared in May.



Courtesy of Saban Films

Chatham County native Kelly Reiter is in the cast of the film 'Deadlock,' which stars Bruce Willis (pictured) and Patrick Muldoon. The film was released Dec. 3.



Submitted photo

Vicky Tobar is an interpreter at Jordan-Matthews High School.



Staff photo by Peyton Suckles

Oliver Mitchum started playing piano when he was 7. Now, the Jordan-Matthews graduate is a junior at N.C. State and member of the marching band and basketball pep band.



Hubert West, shown here at Margaret B. Pollard Middle School, was the first Black head coach at UNC-Chapel Hill. Now a teaching assistant, West led UNC's track and field program from 1982-2011.

Staff photo by Peyton Suckles

INTEREST

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there — now's a chance to shine a light on this art piece and to show the story behind it. "I'm just grateful that I finally get to do that."

Jamaria Faucette: former Northwood student and athlete

Nearly five years ago, Jamaria Faucette took a leap of faith when she joined the Northwood JV women's basketball team as a freshman. And early on, she regretted it.

When Faucette subbed into games, opposing teams' fans latched onto her. More specifically, they latched onto belittling her amniotic band syndrome, a rare disability that affects her fingers and toes.

"When I got to high school, it really got worse for me," Faucette told the News + Record last January. "I became depressed about it. Parents would call out stuff about me: 'She can't dribble!' 'Look at her hands!' It would affect me."

It doesn't anymore. Faucette, 17 at the time, was a senior reserve on the Northwood varsity roster. She speaks comfortably about those tough days in 2017 and what they taught her: about herself, about her disability and about what really mattered in the long run.

Spoiler alert: the nagging naysayers did not.

"All you have to do is put your mind to it," Faucette said. "You can't let your pride get to you. You can't let what other people say about you get you down. You've got to use the negativity to push harder to do what you want to do — and be great at it."

Ronnie Gilmore: retired CCS bus driver and custodian

Five mornings a week for 22 years, Ronnie Gilmore woke up at 4:30 to start his day as a beloved custodian and bus driver at Perry Harrison Elementary. Now, after retiring earlier

this year, he gets a little more sleep.

"I get up a little later now," he said with a big laugh, then more seriously: "I gave them 22 years. I gave the best I could and I thought it was time to move on."

Gilmore, 58, started working at Perry Harrison in 1999. Over the years, he saw principals, teachers and students come and go, worked under new superintendents and faced the myriad challenges that come with being employed in a school during a pandemic.

Known for his boisterous voice, welcoming hugs and as "a great ambassador for goodness" among the Perry Harrison community, Gilmore also impacted many people during his years at the school. On Nov. 6, the school's PTA commended Gilmore's service to the school with a ceremony dedicating a tree planted in front of the school to honor him.

Now that he's retired from the school job, Gilmore spends most days working part-time with his son, Quentin Gilmore, who lives in Winston-Salem and works as a truck driver.

Still, these days he makes more time to watch TV, and hopes the future includes a lot of traveling to see the mountains and "some of the big cities" with his wife, Doris Gilmore, once she also retires.

"It's been good, but I miss the kids at Perry Harrison," he said of retired life. "But I'm not sitting at home every day, I'm out there with my son."

Wesley Hart: French Legion of Honor recipient

At 102 years of age, Chatham County resident Wesley Hart is in rare company — one of just a handful of surviving centenarians from among the 16 million U.S. servicemen who fought in World War II.

On Aug. 12, he joined an even more exclusive club — being awarded the French Legion of Honor for his meritorious service in France during World War II.

It's the highest French decoration of distinction for those in military and civilian life

in France, tracing its history to Napoleon Bonaparte, who established it in 1802. There are only about 92,000 Legion of Honor members, mostly French nationals, but 300 or so foreigners are recognized with the honor each year. You can't seek Legion of Honor recognition for yourself; French ministers identify potential recipients, who are in turn invited to apply.

Hart, who achieved the rank of Captain while in the Army, received the Bronze Star Medal for his service during the Battle of the Bulge in the winter of 1944-45. Knowing about his Bronze Star, given for heroic achievement or meritorious service in a combat zone, daughters Kathy Wakeman and Lynne Dyer agreed their father might be a good candidate. Two years after applying, the sisters heard their dad would be a recipient.

"...All the ways we knew him as a dad growing up, I can visualize that in him as a soldier, and as a younger man," Dyers said. "So I think that's kind of what this means to us — it brings it all together, and it's so appropriate, because this is our dad, and who he is, and who he was at that time and what he meant to everyone around him."

Corbie Hill: runner and cancer survivor

There was a time in his life, just four short years ago, when Corbie Hill would have found it difficult to envision himself as a runner — much less a fast one.

But the 39-year-old Pittsboro resident is definitely that, and a racer, too. And if you're around the Chatham Community Library around 7 most weekday mornings, and you spot a lean, tattooed man striding by with a receding hairline and two fashionable earrings, rest assured that it's Hill.

And as of last June, he's something else: a two-time leukemia survivor.

Hill, who had the lean build of a serious runner before he became one, works as a staff writer for Duke Magazine,

the official alumni magazine of Duke University. He's well known around Pittsboro, where he lives, for his writing skills — he worked as a freelancer for years before getting the Duke gig — and for gigs of another kind: as a songwriter and guitarist and vocalist, performing in local bands and working as a music producer.

He didn't start racing until his initial cancer diagnosis more than four years ago. And as of this summer, he's running again, despite harsh treatment that meant he wasn't running for a while.

"I was like, this is actually fun," Hill said of his foray into running. "And I got hooked."

Oliver Mitchum: musician at N.C. State

Oliver Mitchum started playing the piano when he was just 7 years old.

More than a decade — and hundreds of hours of practice — later, Mitchum doesn't just understand how to read and play music. He's become an artist. He started composing his own piano pieces when he was 10 years old, played piano at his church growing up and also picked up the saxophone — an instrument he earned honors for playing during his time at Jordan-Matthews High School.

Now a junior at N.C. State studying mechanical engineering, Mitchum is in his school's marching band — "The Power Sound of the South" — along with the basketball team pep band. Last summer, he ticked off another music accomplishment: playing his first solo concert, at his home church, Brown's Chapel United Methodist Church in Pittsboro. Mitchum's excited for the opportunity, but it wasn't his idea. He said a longtime family friend and fellow church member, Robin Brady, proposed the idea to him.

"Whenever I go and play, I've been asked probably hundreds of times, 'Hey, you're gonna keep playing the piano in college, right?'" Mitchum said. "Yes, I'm gonna keep doing that.' Because I don't think

they would let me stop if I ever quit. But really, I just enjoy it so much myself that I would not want to quit. It's a big part of my life."

Kelly Reiter: 'Deadlock' actor

Chatham native Kelly Reiter, now 23, moved to Los Angeles when she was 18 looking to jumpstart her acting career.

Despite initial setbacks, she decided she'd stay in California to pursue a career, and in short order found herself working on small independent films while working various side jobs to ensure she had enough money to pay her rent — all the while waiting for the proverbial big break.

Thanks to COVID-19, she got it. And last month, she made her major studio debut alongside one of Hollywood's most well-known actors — Bruce Willis — in the film "Deadlock," where she plays the role of Amy Rakestraw.

"I can always show this movie to my kids, and just to say 'I did that' — it makes everything worth it to me," she said. "I know that if I never work again, I will always have this movie."

Ella Sullivan: UNC student

A month after graduating from Northwood High School, Ella Sullivan wasn't taking a vacation.

Instead, she was completing her Girl Scout Gold Award project, which explores the history of Chatham County through 11 notable figures from Chatham's past.

The project — "A Look Into Chatham's Past," completed by Sullivan at the end of July — focuses on promoting community identity.

"I'm always interested in local history. I've grown up in Chatham since I was born, and my family's from around here, too. So I wanted to look into that," Sullivan told the News + Record. "The issue that I was addressing was loss of community identity in Chatham County, due to new people

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VIEWPOINTS

This year, I want to be more like my grandma.

My grandma's cursive is much like her: beautiful, hard to read and resourceful — making a home out of whatever space life, or in this case the medium of paper, provides.



HANNAH MCCLELLAN
Elevating Voices

It's a running joke in my family that most of us wait until we're alone to try to read her letters, both for the time they take to decode and for the emotional sentiments penned throughout.

So with a brave face this past weekend, I decided to read this year's Christmas letter in front of my grandma and the other members of my extended family. As expected, the letter brought several pauses and tears as I read it. Unexpectedly though, the letter told the story of my grandma's gift to me this year: two crystal flower vases.

I adore both flowers and beautiful vases, so this present was already lovely. Upon learning the vases were part of the wedding gifts my grandparents received 58 years prior, this gift became precious.

My grandma, Sylvia Gay Britt, and grandpa, Charles Donnie Britt, were married for 57 years before he died due to congestive heart disease nearly a year ago, on Jan. 10, 2021. This year, the first Christmas without him, we all wondered and worried how the holiday would feel without him with us. I worried especially for my



The author's grandmother, Sylvia Gay Britt, as a young woman.

grandma — who has certainly mourned the most among us, yet also aims to tend to the grief each of us carry.

My grandma's life has not been easy. She has buried two husbands — my grandpa, last year, and her first husband, Aldon Shelton, nearly 60 years ago, after a work accident left her a young and widowed single mother. She has buried a daughter, my aunt Allison Britt, and a beloved granddaughter, Candace Howlin Kay.

She's faced poverty and known hunger, as one of eight children growing up in the wake of the Great Depression. After marrying my grandpa, who worked over 50 years in the retail industry, she experienced financial stability. They were never rich, but lived comfortably — with my grandma always finding extra ways to save money. In recent years,

mounting healthcare bills and debt meant my grandma's penny-pinching skills were more needed — still, she'd be the first to tell you that she always had enough.

Though my grandma has never had much, she's always had an eye for curating the beautiful things she does acquire — whether through sales, saving or gifts. This talent is evident in her flower and wreath arrangements, which she used to do professionally at my grandpa's old Ben Franklin store, and also in the elaborate meal and dessert spreads she's made nearly single-handedly since I was a young girl. It's also apparent in her signature pound cake, which originated as a simple and cheaper recipe only requiring four ingredients (butter, flour, sugar and eggs), but in my opinion, holds its own among the most elegant of desserts.

As I reflect on 2021 and resolve for the year ahead, I keep coming back to the beauty and care represented in the two vases gifted to me by my grandma.

"In my generation and generations before me, crystal (genuine crystal) was the most desired wedding gift," my grandma wrote. "As I have accumulated several pieces, I wanted to give you two flower vases."

As a disclaimer, my grandma added that the two vases may not *actually* be genuine crystal — she's forgotten which pieces of her collection are authentic and which are not over the years — but she proceeded

to share some of her favorite memories with the vases, and with flowers generally, in her letter nonetheless.

That's just like my grandma. Anyone can recognize and covet beauty, but it takes a special and generous person to see value in what the world may or may not deem as technically valuable. And despite the hardships she's endured throughout her life, my grandma has never stopped acknowledging, creating and making space for beautiful things.

This year, I want to be more like my grandma.

In the wake of another year that felt chronically heavy with the weight of precedented things — heartbreak, financial woes, death — and unprecedented alike — a pandemic, political mayhem and climate change rearing its head — I want to take the time to appreciate and curate the beauty within and around me.

Some people, including the cynic in me, might look down on my grandma's positivity. After all she's gone through, she still believes in the fundamental good of people and that the God of the universe knows, loves and provides for her. She leans on her strong faith for comfort through grief, and will defend her Christian apologetics to anyone.

("As your future brings marriage and a home, may it be filled with genuine love for the Lord," she affectionately signed off in my card, "as He is the most 'real and genuine crystal ever.'")

Such faith is perhaps easy to

criticize, particularly in a time of so much justified pessimism and mistrust. But what do I, and all the other cynics among us, gain for our doubt in the goodness of the world around us? It certainly doesn't remove the chance of being hurt or sick, or experiencing loss; it often does remove the joy of reveling in often simple, beautiful things.

For 79 years now, my grandma has made much out of little. That's not an expression of support for the circumstances that created the difficulty my grandma faced, but one of admiration for the tenacity and zeal for life my grandma has fostered despite all the times she was dealt a bad hand.

2021 arguably dealt more bad hands than 2020, despite all the anticipation that it would be a magically better year. But last night, as I found a home for my new-to-me vases, I thought about what it would mean to commit to the hard but important work of looking for and stewarding beauty.

In the face of sickness, loss and disappointment, I am resolving to make much out of little this year.

Not like a person with their head in the sand, but like my grandma: resourcefully, generously and at the calculated risk of looking just a little bit foolish.

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

Help me do nothing at all

I still have my "Calvin and Hobbes" comics from my childhood. Now, I enjoy reading them out loud to my young sons before bed. If I had been asked as a boy, I would have said that I read them just for fun, not to learn anything!



ANDREW TAYLOR-TROUTMAN

Hope Matters

Hobbes replies, "Nothing."

The next panel illustrates Calvin, a bit bewildered, who wonders, "Nothing at all?" With his eyes closed in relaxation, Hobbes answers, "Nope."

In the final scene, Calvin sits down next to Hobbes and mimics his comfortable pose against the tree trunk. He says, "I'll help." And Hobbes responds with a big smile, "Please do."

Don't misunderstand me: I value hard work. I want my three kids to put effort into their schoolwork as well as extracurriculars. As part of our family's resolutions, each one of them has to try a new thing — something that he or she has never done before. It can be a sport, a musical instrument or other activity. And each child makes his or her own choice. They don't have to play baseball or ukulele like their father. They don't have to take yoga lessons or run races like their mother.

Though I ask each one of my kids to take up a new activity, I am aware of the danger of overscheduling. It's not only stressful on caregivers to schlep them from place to place, but children need downtime to explore their own creative energies. I was reminded of this need during the week after Christmas when my children spent hours playing with empty cardboard boxes that had contained their presents. From these discarded materials, they constructed suits of armor and built a rocket ship.

Bill Watterson, the creator of "Calvin and Hobbes," wrote, "There's never enough time to do all the nothing you want." By "nothing," I believe the cartoonist envisioned a definition of play as any activity that doesn't have a measurable goal. That's not the stuff of a new year's resolution ... or is it?

This year, I resolve to do more of nothing. Part of this involves taking time to relax and recharge. But another one of my goals is to make time to play. I am committed to driving my children to their activities and supporting this structured time. I also want to follow their lead and do things just for the fun of it. To look at a cardboard box and think of space travel!

I mentioned that, as a child, I did not read "Calvin and Hobbes" for spiritual teachings. But, thinking of the boy and his stuffed tiger under that tree, I'm reminded of ancient wisdom: "Be still and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10) Not "be busy." Not "be productive."

Perhaps being still is less of a resolution and more of a prayer: Help me to do nothing.



'Good to the last drop' fitting for drinks and life

A few days ago, I opened our refrigerator door to see what was hiding in there that I could turn into a snack. Since I've gone through a cardiac rehab program some time ago and try to watch how much sugar I take in, I've begun to pay attention to what foods to eat. That's not to say sometimes I don't fall off the wagon and choose wisely; at times the wagon even runs over me. (Like the just-completed Thanksgiving and Christmas.)

For instance, I've learned a plate of cold fried fatback is not recommended by my nurses, but 64 ounces of water are right on target — as is a bushel basket of fresh lettuce. So, needless to say, some of this has been a learning experience.

That day as I scanned the refrigerator shelves, I noticed a number of items. There was half a jar of salsa, a container of tomato juice (my favorite), some hoop cheese I bought at Farmers Alliance long ago before it closed and which I have kept so long that it's hard as a rock, and half a container of yogurt in which one of the little princesses who call me "Granddaddy" had lost interest.

There were also some items I couldn't identify. Some were wrapped in seasoned aluminum foil, meaning the wrinkles outnumbered the flat places. Others were in plastic containers, clear and otherwise; I thought I recognized a couple of them but wasn't sure. Others were in containers which previously had housed ingredients other than what they were then holding — for instance, half an onion was living

in the container which earlier had been home to deli sandwich meat.

I can't remember what I finally had for a snack. It may have been popcorn, which I know doesn't live in the refrigerator.

But something else also caught my eye. Sitting on the shelf next to the tomato juice and the milk was a plastic Coke bottle, the individual size, not the 2-liter. While that's something that happens often at our place, it was the amount of product in the bottle that caught my eye. There may have been two to three drops of beverage left.

I'm not going to call any names here but it was put into there by someone who lives daily at my place who isn't me. Now, that doesn't bother me; that's why we have refrigerators. My better half knows that; she saves items so there's very little waste at our house. My mother, however, somehow seemingly was opposed to that practice since often when, as a child, we had finished a meal and I had gorged myself, she would come back around with what was left over of something and put it onto my plate.

"Eat this," she'd say. "I want to wash the dish and there's not enough to save."

"But Mama," I'd respond, "I'm about to pop."

"Eat it anyway. I don't want to have to save it."

"Isn't that why we have a refrigerator?"

"Be quiet and eat it anyway."

That sort of routine through the years is one thing that helped me develop the physique I have today.

So, seeing the one swallow of Coke in the frig was no big deal food-wise but it did jog my memory about a childhood ritual. When

I was a mere lad, there were few drinks like Gatorade around. As a matter of fact, there were none of those. We did have Kool-Aid and we had our share of Cokes or Pepsis but mostly we drank water and we kept it cold in a glass jar Mama sat on the top shelf in the fridge.

The way it worked with my two brothers and me was that whomever had the last swallow of the cold water was required to refill the jar. And since none of us really wanted to stand at the kitchen sink to fill up the gallon jug, we each developed the ability not to empty the jar completely after taking a big pull. Obviously, that meant that someone would often get stuck with about 14 drops of cold water after slaving over a 4-hour yard-mowing.

"Let somebody else fill it up!" became our style, and when I saw that Coke bottle the other day, my mind went back to that youthful water jar.

Now, I know in this day and age we don't refill soft-drink bottles, although sometimes I use them for water but another thought came to mind. This one was staged from my advancing years and had nothing to do with who fills up the jar. Instead, I thought, it's a lesson in life — namely how often do we do as little as we can just to get by hoping someone else will pick up the slack? Don't empty the jar or bottle, and then no one can say you took the last morsel or drop; but what does that do to benefit our fellow human?

I think, if memory serves me correctly, on that day in question I took that last swallow of Coke to down the handful of pills that is my lot today. But ... I did put two, or maybe it was three, bottles of Coke in the frig.

Life lesson learned. I hope.

VIEWPOINTS

Worker shortage won't end soon

On a recent road trip through Western North Carolina and North Georgia, I had occasion to stop at service stations, restaurants, hotels and small businesses. Each establishment had a sign on the door conveying the same message: help needed.

Not help wanted. *Help needed.*

Although the worker shortage appears to be most acute in service industries, many different kinds of businesses find themselves short-staffed. They're struggling to serve their customers. And as demand pressures overwhelm supply, prices are soaring.

The problem began during the first few months of the COVID-19 crisis, but even jobs of (borrowed) federal money and the easing of pandemic restrictions have failed to rectify

it. North Carolina's labor-force participation rate was 59.3% in November. Two years ago, in November 2019, that rate was 61.5%.

That seemingly small difference translates into approximately 70,000 North Carolinians who under normal circumstances would be either employed or actively looking for work but are instead on the sidelines. Their reasons vary. Some are young, live with their parents, and lack motivation. Some in their 50s and early 60s, lost jobs during the COVID lockdowns, despaired of finding comparable positions, and decided to retire early. Others are still too busy taking care of family members to seek employment, or too afraid of the virus to risk reentering a workplace.

In retrospect, it was a mistake to close down schools. The transmission risk was low. The economic and educational toll from closure was, alas, huge. And it was a mistake to expand and extend unemployment-insurance benefits in ways that delayed reentry into the

workforce.

These effects are, however, increasingly visible only in the rear-view mirror. They can't fully explain our current predicament. Nor can wage rates. Some jobs that pay \$15 an hour or more are going unfilled.

Progressives prescribe another round of massive federal spending. They argue, for example, that expanding child-care subsidies will coax workers back. That might help in some cases, but proposals such as the now-stalled Build Back Better bill could make the problem worse, since they essentially mandate an increase in child-care costs for many households (in part by excluding lower-cost church providers from participation).

It would be better for policymakers to focus first on removing the structural barriers that separate prospective workers from productive employment. For example, some folks decided during COVID to leave jobs they felt were undercompensated and unfulfilling. They want to

change careers, perhaps even start their own businesses. But our state's archaic regime of occupational licensing stands in their way. We should make it easier for workers to enter new careers, allowing employers and consumers to sort out the mix of education and training required rather than imposing it through regulations and licensing boards.

Similarly, some North Carolinians aren't working right now because technological innovation has eliminated their jobs and created a mismatch between what they know how to do and what today's employers need done. Although community colleges, private firms and other providers may well be in a position to retrain them quickly and inexpensively, displaced workers often aren't aware of such opportunities. We need a robust effort by public and private institutions to fill that information gap.

For recent early retirees or those considering the idea, we ought to change the tax treatment of Social Security so older workers aren't punished

if they choose to continue to work part-time while receiving benefits.

Some policymakers think North Carolina and the rest of the country will have to get used to far-lower workforce participation. "We're not going back to the same economy we had in February of 2020," said Fed Chairman Jerome Powell. "The post-pandemic labor market and economy in general, and the maximum level of employment that's consistent with price stability, evolve over time."

Perhaps. But if North Carolina's participation rate has been permanently reduced by more than two percentage points, the economic consequences will be severe. We can only hope that reducing labor-market frictions can close a good chunk of the gap.

John Hood is a John Locke Foundation board member and author of the new novel "Mountain Folk," a historical fantasy set during the American Revolution (MountainFolk-Book.com).

The famous man from Tally Ho

Who is the most famous North Carolinian today? If you check the latest edition of the World



D.G. MARTIN
One on One

Almanac as I do this time every year, you will find a list of "Famous North Carolinians."

That list includes the following people but not today's most famous person from our state.

Read over the names on the World Almanac list and then I will tell you today's most famous person: David Brinkley, Shirley Caesar, John Coltrane, Stephen Curry, Rick Dees, Elizabeth Hanford Dole, Dale Earnhardt Sr., John Edwards, Ava Gardner, Richard Jordan Gatling, Billy Graham, Andy Griffith, O. Henry, Andrew Jackson, Andrew Johnson, Michael Jordan, William Rufus King, Charles Kuralt, Meadowlark Lemon, Dolley Madison, Thelonious Monk, Edward R. Murrow, Richard Petty, James K. Polk, Charlie Rose, Carl Sandburg, Enos Slaughter, Dean Smith, James Taylor, Thomas Wolfe.

But that list does not include the North Carolinian most talked about across the world these past few days: a man who grew up in the Tally Ho community of Granville County.

On Christmas Day a \$10 billion giant telescope to replace the aging Hubble scope was launched from French Guiana. So far, the launch has been successful. The device is already preparing to begin its observations by unfolding its antenna, mirror, and tennis-court-sized sunshield, as it moves toward a final orbit.

The Hubble, at work for more than 30 years, was named for Edwin Powell Hubble, an American astronomer who died in 1953. He was an important astronomer whose work provided evidence that the universe is expanding.

The new observatory-telescope will be about 100 times more sensitive than the Hubble. As described by Dennis Overbye in the Oct. 20, 2021, edition of The New York Times, "Orbiting the sun a million miles from Earth, it will be capable of bringing into focus the earliest stars and galaxies in the universe and closely inspecting the atmospheres of nearby exoplanets for signs of life or habitability."

So, what does all this have to do with Granville County and the most talked-about North Carolinian?

The new telescope is named the James Webb Space Telescope. Like the Hubble, the James Webb Space Telescope, or JWST, or Webb Telescope, or simply the Webb, will be in almost every news story about space exploration for many years. Every young person studying astronomy or reading about space will see his name. It will be everywhere.

Why is this critical device named for Webb? Lewis Bowling, who, like Webb grew up working in the tobacco fields and barns of Granville County, explained in his column in the December 30, 2021, edition of the Oxford Public Ledger, Granville County's twice-weekly newspaper: "James Webb, who grew up in the sticks like me, surrounded by great big fields of tobacco was the man most responsible for leading us to the moon. Let me clarify something: James Webb was born in Tally Ho near Stem, so he was a country boy like me, but obviously a lot smarter. Webb knew and worked for several presidents and was the National Aeronautics and Space Administration director under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. As North Carolina Congressman L. H. Fountain once said, 'for the first time since the beginning of the world there are now footprints on the moon, and the major share of credit goes to a distinguished son of Granville County, James E. Webb.'"

I would make a bet that there will be a new entry in the 2023 World Almanac's list of "Famous North Carolinians."

James Webb from Tally Ho.

D.G. Martin hosted "North Carolina Bookwatch," for more than 20 years.

To view prior programs: <https://video.pbsnc.org/show/nc-bookwatch/episodes/>.

Scout asks: What about a skate park?

TO THE EDITOR:

My name is David Stout, and I am 15 years old, and a member of local Boy Scout Troop 93 in Pittsboro. I am currently a Life Scout and working on my Communications badge, which is required for my next rank. This badge has many requirements, but one of them is to write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper, expressing my opinion on a subject that interests me. One of the issues I am interested in is having a skate park in the Pittsboro area. I have been skateboarding for the past couple of years and other than skateboarding on roads, the closest skateboard parks are in Chapel Hill or Apex.

I understand that skateboarding has been of interest in the Pittsboro area for a long time, and was told that for many years there was a sign near Pittsboro Elementary school, announcing that a new skate park was coming soon. In fact, my brother, who is six years older than I, told me when he was in 5th grade, and playing baseball with the East Chatham little league in 2010, his coach was trying to get a skate park started in Pittsboro.

Skateboarding is a great activity to keep kids busy and physically active and I have a lot of friends that would love to have a skateboard park in our area. This skate park could be used for all types of skating, such as skateboarding, roller blading, scooters, and so on. This would allow the kids without skateboards to still have fun, and try out new things. I think this would be an amazing idea for friends and families to either skate or help their kids learn to skate.

I will continue to research this to determine if and when a skate park will be built in our area, and thank you for this opportunity to express my interest.

David Stout
Pittsboro

How about some carbon reduction resolutions for 2022?

TO THE EDITOR:

I just dusted off my stationary bike. Yes, the most popular New

LETTERS

Year's resolutions are about self-improvement. Some of us may want to go the "extra mile" by adding carbon reduction resolutions this 2022 for Mother Nature's improvement! We need to decrease our greenhouse gas emissions by 7.6% each year (2020-2030) according to a 2019 United Nations Environmental Program declaration to limit our global warming increase to 1.5C by 2030. Here are the top 20 recommendations from Global Stewards Sustainable Living Tips to reduce your carbon footprint adding to your New Year's resolution choices (<https://www.globalstewards.org/reduce-carbon-footprint.htm>).

Of course, I especially like #18: "Vote like your future depends on it — because it does!" 2022 is a critical election year to urgently mitigate climate change for ourselves and our posterity. One in three Americans has been affected by extreme weather events of climate change. Support bipartisan candidates who prioritize economic and climate science evidence-based environmental policies such as carbon pricing. Also, ask your elected politicians at local, state, and federal levels to legislate a carbon fee and dividend policy to incentivize individuals and companies to reduce their carbon footprint emissions while supporting our middle- and lower-income households as 2030 will soon be here.

Minta Phillips
Julian

Haw River Assembly committed to keeping river clean

TO THE EDITOR:

It was great to see your informative two-part coverage of the problems of industrial contaminants in the Haw River, and in Pittsboro's drinking water (Dec. 23, 30 editions). I thought readers would like to know more about the actions the Haw River Assembly (HRA) has taken recently to address this issue, led by our Haw Riverkeeper Emily Sutton.

In November 2019, HRA, represented by Southern Environmental Law Center, brought a Notice of Intent to Sue the City of Burlington regarding their PFAS and 1,4 Dioxane discharges from

their wastewater treatment plant and land applied sludge fields. High levels of these chemicals had been found in the river and in Pittsboro's drinking water, as a result. In October 2020 we signed a Memorandum of Agreement with Burlington requiring them to investigate the sources of industrial pollution into its wastewater treatment systems. By conducting extensive sampling of the sewer lines, these chemicals are now being traced back to specific dischargers so that the pollution can be stopped at its source.

In April 2021, a legal challenge, was brought by the Southern Environmental Law Center on behalf of the Haw River Assembly concerning the state's Special Order of Consent for Greensboro, which allowed discharges of cancer-causing 1,4-dioxane from factories into the city's sewage treatment plant. That wastewater goes into the Haw River and then the Cape Fear — the drinking water source for nearly one million people, in violation of the Clean Water Act and state water quality laws. HRA was joined in this action by the City of Fayetteville, which draws its water further downstream on the Cape Fear River.

On December, 2021, we reached a settlement with the State and Greensboro for a revised Special Order of Consent that reduces the amount of 1,4-dioxane, increases monitoring, requires public reporting of this data, and requires investigation of which industries are the source of this pollution.

Additionally, we continue to partner with Duke University and N.C. State to do public health forums (two have been held so far) concerning the water contamination, and facilitating studies with Pittsboro drinking water users to test PFAS levels in their home drinking water taps and in their blood. We are continuing to review NCDEQ's sampling data and work with academic labs to collect and process samples to pinpoint other sources. We are committed to continue our 40 years of work for clean water in the Haw River, and stopping pollution at its source.

Elaine Chiosso
Bynum

The writer is the executive director of the Haw River Assembly.

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.

Chatham News + Record

www.chathamnewsrecord.com

BILL HORNER III, Publisher & Editor

HANNAH McCLELLAN, Reporter/Web Editor

TAYLOR HEEDEN, Reporter

VICTORIA JOHNSON, La Voz de Chatham Reporter

VICTOR HENSLEY, Sports Editor

KIM HAWKS, PEYTON SICKLES & SIMON BARBRE, Staff Photographers

MAX BAKER & HEIDI PEREZ-MORENO, News Interns

YEAR

Continued from page A1

This story highlights not only the power of community, but also of Chatham's youth looking to make a difference.

3. Community events remember Eugene Daniel, Chatham's Black history

On the 100th anniversary of his lynching death, Chatham County paused to remember — and formally memorialize — Eugene Daniel, and honor the county's Black history, at two separate events in September. Bill Horner III covered the events, which were led by the East Chatham Branch of the NAACP, members of the Community Remembrance Coalition-Chatham, descendants of the other children of Eugene's parents — John and Ida Daniel.

At the Monday board meeting following the commemorations, county commissioners unanimously adopted a resolution formally apologizing "for any part an elected official or appointed local official played" in Daniel's 1921 murder, Hannah McClellan reported. Commissioner Karen Howard, the only Black member on the five-person board, read the resolution and seconded the motion made to approve it.

"If we don't address this and begin to have these really difficult conversations about what could have been taught to the succeeding generations about what happened that day, we're never going to unravel this," Howard said. "I encourage us all to take that really, truly bitter fruit and talk to our neighbors and friends about who we were, who we are and who we want to be."

The News + Record's extensive coverage of this painful anniversary — including the above stories and exclusive pieces from Commissioner Diana Hales and Barry Saunders' report regarding Sheila Thompson learning Daniel is her uncle — highlights the need for thorough local coverage written for and in partnership with the community.

Breaking News

Though we're a weekly paper, we've done our fair share of providing breaking coverage online in the wake of consequential board meetings, tragic accidents and COVID-19 news. We provided regular updates on Pittsboro's PFAS drinking water woes, along with Chatham County School's school protocol decisions and masking mandates. Here are a few breaking stories that were



Courtesy of Carolina Tiger Rescue

Lousie Orr, Carolina Tiger Rescue's communications director, shares the story of Saber Tiger, pictured here, who was bred and exploited by a magician until 2016:

'He has been with us ever since, and leads a much more peaceful life fitting of a wild tiger where he is cared for via proper veterinary care, proper diet, loads of space to run and play with his enclosure-mate, Shira Tiger, and daily enrichment that keeps him mentally and physically stimulated.'

particularly important or widely viewed over the last year:

4. Three years down the road, commissioners approve Mountaire's rerouting request

In September, Lars Dolder wrote a thorough report regarding the Siler City board of commissioners' approval of three resolutions to close and reroute a series of roads abutting the Mountaire Farms facility — almost three years after the national poultry processor first requested permission to overhaul the downtown artery. Dolder followed the story closely from the summer, when he'd written an exclusive report after Mountaire representatives shared their presentation with the News + Record ahead of the town's first look at reroute plans.

According to Mountaire's virtual rendering of the \$6 million project it plans to fund, East Third Street's current terminus at U.S. Hwy. 64 will close to regular traffic and shift about 510 feet west, replacing North Avenue. East Fifth Street and Johnson Avenue — minor roads running through the Mountaire complex — will also close to the public. Before final design and construction can begin, the N.C. Dept. of Transportation must also approve Mountaire's request, although NCDOT representatives previously told the News + Record the agency is likely to follow the board of commissioners' lead "so long as required traffic improvements are made and they are up to current safety and design standards."

It may be a couple of years

at least until construction has finished, Siler City Planning Director Jack Meadows previously told the News + Record. We'll provide construction updates throughout this year.

5. In violation of state order, Greensboro discharges dangerous chemical into the Haw

Last July, Lars Dolder kicked off a series of reports regarding the illegal discharge of a dangerous chemical into the Haw River — Pittsboro's only drinking water supply — which Taylor Heeden has continued covering since she joined the CN+R in October.

It was in July, for the first time in more than a year, that Pittsboro's drinking water was contaminated with suspected carcinogen 1,4-Dioxane after the City of Greensboro discharged levels 20 times higher than EPA recommendations into one of the Haw River's tributaries — violating a Special Order by Consent and prompting Pittsboro to shut down water intake.

In November, the town experienced a spike in 1,4-Dioxane levels in the water related to an improper discharge from a yet-unnamed Greensboro industry. In addition to providing regular and timely updates on the chemical levels in Pittsboro's water, our coverage has also consistently provided context for what health threats such chemicals might pose, along with solutions the town is working toward. Follow our work in 2022 for more investigative work regarding past water issues and how they're impacting residents.

6. Arrest made after crash at Johnson's Drive-In in Siler City kills one, injures three

In October, the Siler City community was shaken by news that a car driven by 60-year-old John Salvatore Graviano of Siler City crashed into Johnson's Drive-In, hitting four customers, one of whom — 64-year-old Mark McKinney, a Pittsboro resident and the pastor of a Morrisville church — died at the scene. In the days that followed, Hannah McClellan and Bill Horner III followed police reports and talked with victims, witnesses and Johnson's employees about the crash.

After briefly closing to make repairs to the front of the building, Johnson's since reopened, and added barriers



Staff photo by Bill Horner III

Repairs under way at Johnson's Drive-In after October's accident which killed one customer and injured three others.



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Workers and volunteers helped load boxes of Mountaire chicken at an April sale in Siler City plant last year. Mountaire's facility in Siler City is one of several meatpacking facilities in the state at which COVID-19 case counts were higher than reported, according to internal documents obtained by the Food & Environment Reporting Network.



Submitted photo

Geneva Yarger-Woolford (left), Annika Lowe (right), Angelina Parker-Lewis (second from right), and Emma Dickerson drop off donated hygiene and period products at the West Chatham Food Pantry on April 23. Their donation drive collected over \$14,000 worth of donations.

to section off an area where customers stand and across the front of the building, in the unlikely chance this type of event happens again.

Meanwhile, Graviano's case has been continued until Jan. 26; he was charged the day after the crash with misdemeanor death by vehicle, as well as two additional charges of failure to reduce speed to avoid an accident and driving left of center.

7. COVID-19 'outbreak' at Siler City Post Office causes staffing shortages, mail delays

Last January, Hannah McClellan investigated past bureaucratic secrecy to report on a stunning COVID outbreak at the Siler City Post Office that caused major staffing shortages and mailing delays. A spokesperson for the U.S. Postal Service declined to comment on specific COVID-19 case counts at the office, citing privacy law, but sources — including employees of the Siler City office — told the News + Record that 75% of staff had tested positive with COVID-19.

The News + Record received multiple tips from employees or family of employees at the time saying the entire staff either tested positive or was quarantining. Customers and workers told the News + Record and posted on Facebook that the post office was staffed by workers coming in from Fayetteville and elsewhere in the state. The News + Record never received confirmation regarding the reports, highlighting the difficulty in gaining information about COVID-19 spread in many settings.

"Most carriers won't talk to you for fear of termination or retribution. We have been told repeatedly NOT to speak with the media by our supervisors and union representatives," one employee said in an email. "The USPS is more concerned about 'bad' media and focusing on distribution and operations."

Business

2021 marked a big year for Chatham's business sector — locally, with developments from Charter Furniture in Siler City, 3D manufacturing company PolarOnyx, Chatham's three megasites and growth anticipated from Chatham Park; and regionally by economic booms in surrounding areas like Cary, Chapel Hill, Raleigh and Durham. In March, the country also sent out revaluation notices, with more than three-fourths of the nearly 46,000 Chatham properties assessed in the county's state-mandated reappraisal process seeing valuations increase. The total overall valuation of parcels in Chatham County, when finalized, may show an increase by as much as 18%, according to Tax Administrator Jenny Williams, with 77% of parcels having gone up in value and 23% having gone down.

Though we included many features and updates on new business and industry expansions, here are two stories with a lot of context and big business actors in Chatham.

8. As pandemic wanes, Chatham Park going, growing in a 'great direction'

In March, Bill Horner III provided an in-depth look at 7,068-acre development Chatham

Park, which has a 30-to-40-year buildout plan and anticipates 60,000 total residents. Over the last 17 years, Tim Smith, Julian Rawl and their Cary-based Preston Development Company team have spent more than \$200 million worth of infrastructure investment, with more than half of the plan to go. Last year, the first dozen or so residents bought homes in the neighborhood development.

The development will bring large growth to Chatham, and for that reason is controversial among some residents with concerns about infrastructure strain. In November, some critics were pleased to see the Pittsboro Board of Commissioners voted 4-1 to approve the last of Chatham Park's "additional elements" components — requiring 7.5%, or 1,650, of the planned community's 22,000 market-rate housing units — to be affordable housing. Affordable housing was the final element of 12 approved for the Chatham Park development after the initial approval, back in 2015, of Chatham Park's master plan.

In the original proposal in 2016, Chatham Park offered to make 1% of its residential developments affordable housing units; November's approved plan had Chatham Park agreeing to 7.5% of residential properties being affordable homes. Taylor Heeden reported on the development, which we'll be following closely this year.

9. When it comes to land, Chatham's in high demand

Following a series of high-acreage purchases in Chatham, Bill Horner III reported in December that regional developers say location and vision make the county ripe for growth and "hot" for sellers. Michael Smith, the president of Chatham's Economic Development Corporation, said the EDC had a record year in 2021 for interest in, and visits to, the county's two megasites — the Chatham Advanced Manufacturing (CAM) site in Siler City and the TIP site in Moncure.

Smith said the EDC would be sharing more information with the public soon, which we'll certainly be following. He's featured in the Chatham Chat in this week's edition.

COVID

In many ways, 2021 was defined by the COVID-19 pandemic as much as 2020 was. By the start of the year, vaccinations were available to elderly adults and healthcare workers — expanding to most other adults by the spring, and last summer, to children ages 5-11. Still, variants such as Delta and Omicron have led to continued surges in cases (even breakthrough cases with typically mild symptoms among those fully vaccinated) and strains on hospitals.

In Chatham 57% of residents have received at least one dose of the vaccine, and 54% are fully vaccinated. On July 7, exactly 50% of Chatham's population became at least partially vaccinated — suggesting vaccination numbers have stayed relatively flat in the last six months. Still, community leaders and organizations are working to increase vaccinations and keep residents healthy. Here are a few of our

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Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Road construction in downtown Pittsboro last March, is one of many construction and business related projects from last year.



Drone photo by Bill Oestereich/Chatham Park

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

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best stories highlighting COVID trends last year:

10. After initial disparities, Chatham's Hispanic vaccination rate nears 50%

The county's health department has emphasized equity in its vaccine outreach efforts throughout the pandemic — leaning heavily on community partnerships with local churches and organizations such as the Hispanic Liaison.

Chatham's Hispanic community was hit hard at the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, before vaccines were available. Though Chatham's population is about 13% Hispanic, 32% of its total confirmed coronavirus cases were among Hispanic residents earlier this fall, according to the state's COVID-19 data.

Now, according to data compiled by CCPHD data scientist Maia Fulton-Black and reported by our Victoria Johnson, 51% of the county's eligible Hispanic population — 5 years and older — is at least partially vaccinated, while 47% are fully vaccinated, as of Dec. 1. We'll continue keeping an eye out on equity and COVID in the months to come.

11. 'Living sermons': Black and Latino churches lead faith vaccination efforts in Chatham

Though some evangelical Christians have earned a reputation for being staunchly against COVID vaccinations, some churches have worked to decrease vaccine hesitancy and refusal in their congregations, Hannah McClellan reported in September.

Across Chatham and the state, Black and Latino churches led efforts to tackle vaccinations in their congregations, by sharing critical information with congregants and even hosting COVID-19 vaccine clinics. This story reflects the importance of community and solutions-based reporting that local outlets are positioned to do well, and highlights efforts to solve community challenges.

"The way the community has come together



Staff photo by Kim Hawks

Homes at the intersection of Whispering Wind Drive and Cliffdale Road sit directly across from the neighborhood's privately operated wastewater treatment plant.

and helped the families that found themselves in those difficult situations is quite powerful and touching to witness," St. Julia's Catholic Church's Fr. Julio Martinez said.

12. For Chatham Hospital's staff, frustrations abound

Bill Horner III also provided an in-depth look at the impact of the pandemic in September, talking with Chatham Hospital's COO and chief nursing officer Erick Wolak about the hospital's nursing shortage, among other challenges, such as increased COVID hospitalizations. "We'll continue to work to convert people who are kind of on the fence (about vaccines)," Wolak said. "Over the course of the next couple of months, I'm very hopeful we'll be in a much better spot in a year. I'm hopeful for spring."

13. N.C. cluster data likely under-represents coronavirus spread

As of Monday, there have been more than 1.7 million cases of COVID in North Carolina; 8,063 cases in Chatham and 99 deaths. Such shocking numbers still likely under-represent the coronavirus's spread and impact, due to state health guidelines which only require congregate living settings, schools and childcare facilities to report clusters or outbreaks, as reported by Lars Dolder and Hannah McClellan last April. Other settings — such as churches, public venues and most businesses — are not. Members

of the latter category may voluntarily report COVID-19 cases to the health department, but others do not, thereby "under-represent(ing) the full scope of clusters and associated cases," according to the introduction of the NCDHHS COVID-19 Clusters in North Carolina report.

Education

The start to the 2021-22 school year marked the first in three years of those impacted by the pandemic that Chatham students returned to the classroom for in-person school five days a week. As of January, all of Chatham's schools — CCS and its three charter schools — remained fully open with indoor masking mandates. In addition to dealing with the pandemic, Chatham saw a new superintendent at CCS, a new high school (Seaforth, the first built in the district since 1972), efforts to combat staffing shortages and to offer expanded summer learning across the county. We've provided extensive reporting on education; here are a few stories from 2021 that were especially relevant and timely:

14. Nearly 32% of CCS students are Hispanic. How is the district serving them?

Last summer, Hannah McClellan and Victoria Johnson spoke with Hispanic students and parents about the services offered to them at Chatham County Schools. CCS has more than 2,700 Hispanic students, according to the district's May 2021 Ethnic Enrollment report, or 31.6% of its total student population. In the district's Siler City schools, those numbers are higher: 65.5% of students at Siler City Elementary are Hispanic, 73.4% at



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

U.S. Postal Service officials would not confirm, but sources — including employees of the Siler City post office, pictured here — said 75% of staff tested positive with COVID-19 during last January's outbreak.

Virginia Cross Elementary, 71% at Chatham Middle School and 62.6% at Jordan-Matthews High School, according to the same report.

While the district has increased its translation services in recent years, and many parents and students said they're grateful for these services, others wish the district would do more, particularly when it comes to engaging immigrant parents and offering more bilingual resources. This story highlights the importance of coverage that partners not only with school leaders, but students and parents, and why following up on stated district priorities matters.

15. Academic ineligibility significantly cuts some CCS team rosters

Last March, Victor Hensley reported that remote learning challenges in the fall led to many students — from incoming freshmen to seniors — being stripped of their eligibility in the spring season, hitting schools like Jordan-Matthews and Chatham Central much harder than usual.

Last semester, the number of Chatham County students who

received a grade of D or F in at least one class increased by nearly 74% from the previous year, according to December data released by the district's central office.

Statewide student-athlete eligibility standards set by the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) require a student to attend at least 85% of mandatory classes and pass "a minimum load of work" in the semester before the start of their sport's season. The number of students who fell behind notably increased the number of student-athletes declared ineligible to compete when sports started back up across Chatham County last winter, according to data from several district coaches and directors.

16. Chatham counselors, therapists support increased mental health services

In light of increased mental health challenges wrought by and throughout the pandemic, Hannah McClellan reported in September that CCS is working to address rising mental health needs in schools by increasing its contracted mental health services for in-school therapy and by hiring two additional counselors and three social workers — supported by federal COVID-19 relief funding. The district will continue its contract with Renaissance Wellness Services, a Pittsboro clinic it has partnered with since 2017, for \$57,811.

Such efforts are important, because as students themselves say, many are struggling. In addition to coping with the continued stressors of the pandemic, Chatham high schoolers are also — like teenagers across the country — often facing increased

mental health challenges, McClellan reported in November. Students are also working through traumatic news in Chatham and beyond — most recently with the deaths of beloved Northwood students Bryan Vilchis, 18, and Desmond Patterson, 16, who died following an Oct. 23 car crash. In the months to come, we will continue looking at how the pandemic is impacting students, and schools generally.

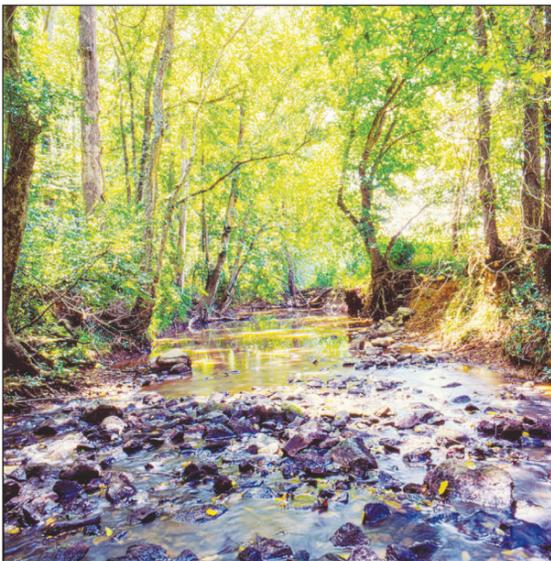
Other notable news: The Hispanic Liaison launched a second Hispanic youth group at Seaforth, allowing Orgullo Latinx Pride to serve 48 students and counting across the county; five mobile units at North Chatham Elementary School were destroyed in a November fire overnight (no one was injured); CCS hosted first-ever Dual Language camp last summer, with about 170 students registering; after lobbying by LGBTQ groups, N.C. school records will list students' chosen names, announced last spring; and new social studies standards meant to guide discussions of the nation's history were revised last February to remove "systemic racism," "gender identity," and "systemic discrimination" from the standards and replace the words with racism, discrimination and identity.

Environment

Last summer, for the first time in more than a year, Pittsboro's drinking water was contaminated with suspected carcinogen 1,4-Dioxane after the City of Greensboro discharged levels 20 times higher than EPA recommendations into one of the Haw River's tributaries; another discharge took place in November. PFAS has been a regular contaminant in Pittsboro's drinking water since at least 2018 — both 1,4-Dioxane and PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) are suspected carcinogens which pose severe health risks if regularly ingested over long periods of time. High exposure is associated with thyroid disease, increased blood cholesterol levels and birth defects, and possible inhibition of the body's immune system.

PFAS compounds have been detected throughout North Carolina, but earlier this year, Pittsboro's levels of PFAS concentration led to nonprofit research organization Consumer Reports naming the town's drinking water as among the worst in the country. The town is working toward solutions, including eliminating and removing PFAS through updating its water filtration systems at the municipal water plant to filter as much as 90% of all PFAS from the drinking supply. It will take at least a year for the system to be completed and operational, and it could cost millions. We'll be continuing to cover the water situation in Pittsboro closely in 2022,

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Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

As the impacts of climate change continue to be felt on a national scale, Chatham County is not excluded. Local officials are planning ahead by looking for more sustainable wastewater practices, development and energy. Pictured here is the Hickory Mountain Township in Chatham.



Courtesy of Creative Commons

Sensitive data files stolen following Chatham County's Oct. 28 governmental 'cyber incident' were posted online by the criminal enterprise responsible.

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along with the following two environment stories:

17. Testing the waters: Private sewage system's shortcomings devalue Briar Chapel homes

In this last of a six-part series investigating Chatham County's water and sewer infrastructure, Lars Dolder explored the potential challenges of sewage systems being overseen by private developers, rather than the government. After years decrying deficiencies in their neighborhood's private wastewater treatment plant, Briar Chapel residents had new quantitative evidence last May to prove that sewage smell and intermittent leaks are more than just a nuisance: their homes were devalued as a result.

More than 87,000 gallons of sewage have spilled from the community's plant in 32 different leaks since 2016, according to the N.C. Dept. of Environmental Quality. Of those, more than 72,000 gallons drained into Pokeberry Creek, a tributary of the Haw River and Jordan Lake. The frequent spills have suffused Briar Chapel with rank air as raw sewage bleeds onto private land and runs through the streets. The treatment plant — which was privately developed and has been privately managed by various operators over the years — is located at the neighborhood's highest point, worsening the effects of leakage and complicating facility upkeep.

Previous stories in the series explored plans for infrastructure expansion in Pittsboro, Siler City and county-operated facilities. Such reporting emphasizes the importance of investigative community journalism to highlight issues that many residents don't know much about until they're impacted.

18. Climate change is impacting Chatham. What's the county doing to prepare?

As the impacts of climate change continue to be felt on a national scale, Chatham County is not immune — particularly with significant development and population growth expected over the next 20 years. This October report by Hannah McClellan examines the impact of climate change in the county, as well as efforts to mitigate such effects. Chatham County is limited in what it can do because of state jurisdiction as well as low emissions levels from the county government itself. Still, local officials and leaders are pushing for creative solutions — like adding solar panels to its buildings, buying electric or hybrid electric cars as old ones need replacement and installing two electrical vehicle stations, one in Pittsboro and one in Siler City.

Government

Over that last year, Chatham County government has worked to respond to COVID-19 — including funding campaigns to vaccinate the community against the virus — to recover from the October 2020 cyber-attack that incapacitated many of the county's business systems for two to three months, and make time to celebrate the county's yearlong celebration of its 250th anniversary. It's been a busy year. Here are some highlights, concluding with a February update on the 2020 cyberattack — which apart from COVID, was arguably one of the county's biggest stories of 2021.



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Ricardo Valladares, dual-language teacher at Chatham County Schools, in his 2nd-grade classroom at Siler City Elementary last year. 'I think every work in equity is necessary,' he said. 'It's relevant and it's important. It's an obligation; it's a moral obligation. Especially for me, as an educator, as a minority, I have to make sure that gaps do not exist.'



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

'God has given us the ability to develop the vaccine and so I have promulgated getting vaccinated among our people here at St. Julia's,' Father Juilo Martinez of St. Julia's Catholic Church said, 'and I will continue to do that.'



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Johnsie Hubble, a nurse for 39 years — 37 of which she's been at Chatham Hospital. 'We are still learning and changing to meet these challenges,' she told the News + Record in May. 'It does not stop because we keep learning new information based on the current science!'

19. 'It is a priority for us': Chatham works toward expanding services for Spanish speakers

In August, Victoria Johnson and Hannah McClellan investigated the county's Spanish resources, following a report on hurricane coverage that revealed the county did not offer consistent Spanish-translation alerts. In Chatham, more than 12% of the population is Hispanic or Latino, and according to the U.S. Census' five-year American Community Survey, 11.6% of Chatham residents — nearly 8,000 people — speak Spanish at home. Five percent, or nearly 3,500 people, speak English less than "very well."

Even so, Chatham County offers few readily available Spanish-language materials and resources, like permitting forms and instructions. Though Hispanic community leaders say the county has expanded its Spanish resources in recent years — in many cases ahead of neighboring counties — several gaps still persist, including translations for important county alerts and services as well as bilingual staffing. "In Chatham, it's gotten so much better," said Ilana Dubester, executive director of the Hispanic Liaison and an immigrant herself. "... There are still, you know, gaps out there, particularly when it comes to translations, but it certainly has gotten better."

20. What's the status of Pittsboro's removed Confederate monument?

In October, Bill Horner III followed up on one of the county's biggest stories from 2019: the Commissioner-approved removal of the "Our Confederate Heroes" monument removed from in front of the historic Chatham County Courthouse grounds. Now more than two months later, interested parties are still awaiting a decision from the N.C. Court of Appeals about the monument's legal ownership, following a decision that said United Daughters of the Confederacy owned it. In the meantime, the statue and its pedestal are locked within a Greensboro warehouse, with Chatham County footing its \$300/month storage bill.

If the court case determines that Chatham does in fact own the statue — rather than the UDC — state law could require the statue to be

replaced. County officials aren't commenting on that possibility. "It's in storage right now, and it belongs to the Daughters of the Confederacy," County Manager Dan LaMontagne said. "Until they find an appropriate location for it, we'll keep it in storage and continue to pay rent and keep it protected there."

21. Stolen Chatham county data posted online after cyber incident, includes personnel files, other sensitive documents

Stolen Chatham County government files posted online following an Oct. 28, 2020 ransomware attack contained personal information — including data such as Social Security and bank account numbers — of some local residents, in addition to current and former county employees, an exclusive February report by Bill Horner III, Lars Dolder and Hannah McClellan found. The News + Record learned about the posting of sensitive data files by the criminal enterprise responsible on Feb. 8; county officials later confirmed to the newspaper that sensitive data had been released by the ransomware group known as DoppelPaymer.

This news came after more than three months of county staff working diligently to mitigate the impact of the "cyber incident," with many staff reportedly working nights and weekends to ensure services to county residences went uninterrupted. DoppelPaymer's first data upload was made Nov. 4 2020, a week after Chatham County officials announced the breach; it contained "mostly innocuous" files, LaMontagne told the News + Record at the time, including files that fall under North Carolina's public records laws; a second upload in late January contained more sensitive data.

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. Cybersecurity experts routinely warn businesses and entities not to pay ransomware demands, saying it incentivizes cybercrime. Following the crime, the county added new safeguards against potential future breaches, including: a training on security awareness and email, using multi-factor authentication, implementing additional network

security monitoring and Next Generation Anti-Virus Software (NGAV).

This story was the result of our team continuing to stay on top of the cyber incident story from 2020. Though not a happy story to tell, it shows the importance of keeping the community informed — a goal we will carry with us into the year to come.

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



CN+R file photo

The Confederate monument in front of the Chatham County Historic Courthouse is shadowed by clouds in August 2019, three months before it was removed.



Staff photo by Kim Hawks

Jennifer Saylor, counselor at Chatham School of Science and Engineering.



Staff photo by Kim Hawks

Ilana Dubester, pictured here, is the founder and executive director of the Hispanic Liaison. 'In Chatham, it's gotten so much better,' she said. 'There are still, you know, gaps out there, particularly when it comes to translations, but it certainly has gotten better.'

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OBITUARIES

PAUL DAVID 'PD' FIELDS



Paul David "P.D." Fields, 81, of Siler City passed away on Saturday, January 1, 2022, at Chatham Hospital, Siler City.

P.D. was born in Chatham County on August 26, 1940, the son of the late Jesse Paul and Mildred Ray Fields. He attended Silk Hope School and Guilford College. He was a member of Mt. Vernon UMC where he was an active member all his life. P.D. was an involved member of the community serving in the Siler City Masonic Lodge 403 A.F. & A.M., coaching Little League, collecting Toys for Tots and volunteered as a reading buddy at Silk Hope School.

P.D. had an exceptional work ethic. He was a salesman for Chatham Grocery, owner and operator of Sportsman's Lanes as well as a real estate broker. P.D. excelled in many areas, but what meant most to him was his family. His love of others was obvious to anyone who knew and met him.

He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Linda Kennedy Fields; daughters, Lecia Fields Jolly and husband Robert "Buddy" of Marietta, Georgia; Kim Fields Teague and husband Linney of Hickory, N.C.; and Paula Fields Hargrove and husband Lynn of Greensboro, N.C.; brother, Kenneth Ray Fields of Supply, N.C.; grandchildren, Rom and Atalie Teague, Lauren J. Stewart and Grace Jolly, Morgan and Graem Hargrove; great-grandchildren, Annabelle Stewart, Merritt Teague and Collins Teague.

The family received friends on Tuesday, January 4, 2022, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Smith & Buckner Funeral Home. The funeral service was held at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, January 5, 2022 at Mt. Vernon, Hickory Mountain Road, Siler City, with Rev. Jason Dickerson officiating. Burial followed in the church cemetery.

Memorials may be made to the Mount Vernon United Methodist Church Memorial Association, c/o Teresa S. Piezo, 61 Royal Pines, Pittsboro, N.C. 27312.

Smith and Buckner Funeral Home is assisting the Fields family.

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

MICHAEL DEANGELO



Michael DeAngelo passed away peacefully in his sleep on Wednesday, December 29, 2021, surrounded by his family.

Michael was preceded in death by his parents, Albert and Christine DeAngelo and his son, Gregory Height.

He is survived by his wife of 39 years, Mary E. DeAngelo; daughters, Elizabeth Willett and husband Lynn, Katherine Jacoby and husband Jacob; grandson, Paul Jeffrey Willett; his brother, Albert M. DeAngelo and wife Patricia; his sisters, Josephine Farley and Amelia Hosier; and several nieces and nephews.

Michael was a graduate of Saint Michael's Catholic High School in Jersey City, N.J., and Jersey City State University. A charitable individual, he was happiest helping others. He loved to tell stories about growing up in Jersey City in the 1950s and '60s and about all he learned while serving in the U.S. Army Reserves.

A family visitation was held Monday, January 3, 2022, from 1 to 2 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church with service following at 2 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Habitat for Humanity of Chatham County, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, or First United Methodist Church of Siler City, 1101 W. Raleigh St., Siler City, N.C. 27344.

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

Smith and Buckner Funeral Home is serving the family of Michael DeAngelo.

BETTY DENKINS MOODY

Betty Denkins Moody, 85, of Siler City passed away on December 29, 2021, at SECU Jim & Betsy Bryan Hospice Home of UNC Health Care.

A visitation was held from 1 to 2 p.m. on Sunday, January 2, 2022, at the Smith and Buckner Funeral Home Chapel, with service starting at 2 p.m. with Rev. Don Southern officiating. Burial was in Sandy Branch Baptist Church Cemetery.

Betty was born in Sanford, on February 24, 1936, the daughter of the late Jessie Carl and Eleanor Mae Phillips Denkins. She attended Siler City First Wesleyan Church. She worked for Selig Manufacturing and retired from Hickory Mountain Farms. She was preceded in death by an infant daughter, her husband Clarence Moody, her parents, two brothers, Bobby and Billy Denkins, and a great-grandson.

Survivors include her daughters, Betty Jean Haire Carter of Sanford, Phyllis Haire Bayles of Siler City; five grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren; siblings, Barbara, Broadus, Bruce and Benny Earl Denkins, all of Lee County.

On-line condolences may be made at www.pughfuneral-home.com.

SHARON LYNN WOOD LETT

Sharon Lynn Wood Lett, 74, of Sanford, died December 29, 2021, at her home.

Funeral services were held at 3 p.m. on Sunday at Moore Union Christian Church, where Sharon taught Sunday School for over 35 years. Burial followed in the church cemetery.

She was born November 6, 1947, in Clayton, in Johnston County, daughter of the late Paul Jackson and Margaret Worley Wood. Sharon worked as a teacher assistant at Broadway Elementary School for over 20 years until her retirement. Sharon was preceded in death by her parents.

Sharon is survived by her husband of 57 years, James Doyle "Jimmy" Lett; sons, William Doyle "Billy" Lett and Michael Wayne Lett; four grandchildren, three great-grandchildren; sisters, Rebecca "Beckye" Wood and Deborah "Debbye" Wood Sloan, all of Broadway.

In lieu of flowers, the family request donations be made to Moore Union Christian Church Missionary Fund, 4294 Buckhorn Road, Sanford, N.C. 27330.

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

JOHN HENRY TIPTON

John Henry Tipton, 87, of Robbins, died Sunday, December 26, 2021, at FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital in Pinehurst.

The family will conduct a private memorial service at a later date.

John was born in Jackson County, Georgia, in 1934, son of the late Lendon and Mary Marsh Tipton. He served in the U.S. Navy working as a machine repairman. He retired as a driver from Darrell Andrews Trucking. John was of the Catholic faith. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by infant brothers, Vince and Edward Tipton, brother, Lendon Tipton Jr., sister, Helen Upchurch and Elizabeth Polfahl.

He is survived by his twin siblings, Dean R. Tipton and Dina Faye Moore of High Falls.

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

LEON 'PEE-WEE' MARSH, JR.

Leon "Pee-Wee" Marsh Jr., 68, of Siler City, passed away Sunday, December 26, 2021, at Moses Cone Hospital in Greensboro.

Services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home.

WILLIAM CURTIS BOWDEN

William Curtis Bowden, 60, passed away at his home Wednesday, December 22, 2021, in Hillsborough.

Services entrusted to Knotts and Son, Siler City.

LEO ROBERT NESS

Leo Robert Ness Jr., 67, of Robbins, passed away Friday, December 31, 2021, at his home.

The graveside service was held at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, January 4, 2022, at Pine Rest Cemetery, with Rev. Bucky Davis officiating.

He was born in Baltimore County, Maryland, on November 12, 1954, to Ruby Francis James Barron and Leo Robert Ness Sr. He was a member of New Birth Church of the Living God and a retired textile worker. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his son, Leo Robert Ness III and two sisters.

He is survived by his wife of 47 years, Bonnie Mae Hanson Ness of the home; sons, John Allen Ness and Joshua Edward Ness, both of the home, William Jacob Ness of Spies; sisters, Connie Lee Long and Patricia Roberts, both of Robbins; seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

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

GUTHRIE 'BUD' MURRAY HUNTER

Guthrie "Bud" Murray Hunter, 79, passed away on Wednesday, December 29, 2021, at FirstHealth Hospice House.

A graveside service was held on January 5, 2022 at 2 p.m. at Broadway Town Cemetery with Rodney Murray Hunter officiating.

Bud was born in Lee County on December 1, 1942, to the late Guthrie Murray and Zula Catherine McNeill Hunter. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by siblings, Billy Ray Hunter, Thurman Hunter, Vivian Cameron and Edith "Dot" Morgan. He worked at GKN for many years retiring as Plant Manager.

He is survived by sons, Rodney Hunter and Brad Hunter, both of Sanford; sisters, Mary Sue Angel of Broadway, Betty Oldham of Sanford and Judy Rosser of Broadway and five grandchildren.

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

MARY AGNES WHITE MACKAY

Mary Agnes White Mackey, 76, died January 1, 2022, at her home.

The family greeted friends at Calvary Missionary Church on Wednesday, January 5, 2022, from 12:30 p.m. until the service at 2 p.m. with Pastor Curtis Norris officiating. Burial followed in the church cemetery.

Mackey was born in Lee County, on December 31, 1945, to the late Fred Hunt White and Mary Pierce White. She was preceded in death by her parents; grandchildren, Wesley and Justin Moser; sister, Faye Norris; brothers, F.J. White, Paul D. White, Danny White, and Lewis White.

Surviving relatives include her husband, James Roy Mackey of the home; sons, Kenneth Mackey of Vass and Don Mackey of Texas; daughters, Angie McDevitt and Donna Mose, both of Cameron; seven grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Calvary Missionary Methodist Church, 185 Calvary Church Rd., Olivia, N.C. 28368.

Arrangements are with Bridges-Cameron Funeral Home.

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

GENE AUTRY HEADEN

Gene Autry Headen, 78, of Siler City, passed away Monday, December 27, 2021, at his home.

Services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home.

LAMONDA SOPHIA BATTLE

Lamonda Sophia Battle, 41, of Cameron, passed away on Thursday, December 30, 2021, at FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital.

Services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home, Sanford.

PATRICIA ANN BLUE

Patricia Ann Blue, 62, of Sanford, passed away on Thursday, December 30, 2021, at Central Carolina Hospital.

Services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home, Sanford.

LINDA STONE CAMPBELL

Linda Stone Campbell, 56, of Sanford, died Saturday, Jan. 1, 2022, at Central Carolina Hospital in Sanford.

Funeral services will be held on Thursday, January 6, 2022, at 2 p.m. at the Smith Funeral Home Chapel in Broadway with Pastor Charlie Hickman officiating. Burial will follow in the Poplar Springs U.M.C. Cemetery.

Linda was born in Lee County on April 3, 1965, daughter of William Barney and Pauline Watson Stone. She was preceded in death by her mother and her husband, Douglas Thomas Campbell.

Surviving is her father, William B. Stone; son, Bryan William Campbell; daughters, Megan Victoria Campbell and Farren Lynn Welch, all of Sanford; sisters, Brenda Faye Stone, Debbie Lynn Stone, Paulette Stone Harmon, all of Sanford; and five grandchildren.

The family received friends on Wednesday at Smith Funeral Home in Broadway from 6 to 8 p.m. The family request that mask be worn for the visitation and funeral service.

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

EDWARD TALBERT

Edward Talbert, 75, of Robbins, passed away on Monday, January 2, 2022, at his home.

The funeral was held at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, January 5, 2022, at Joyce-Brady Chapel with Rev. Bryan Maness and J.J. Moore presiding. Burial was at Pleasant Hill U.M.C. following the service. The family received friends at Joyce-Brady Chapel before the service from 1 to 1:45 p.m.

He was born in Moore County on July 29, 1946, to Bertha and Charlie Talbert. He was a member of Pleasant Hill U.M.C. and a U.S. Army Veteran. Edward worked as a carpenter in the maintenance department of Moore County Schools. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by wife, Vickie and sisters, Mary Lou Hall and Debbie Sparks.

He is survived by his daughters, Linda Talbert of the home and Glinda T. Garner of Robbins; step-father, Jack Hall of Biscoe; sisters, Shirley Gallimore, Margaret Lucas, Wanda Sue Hall and Linda, all of Star; brothers, Johnny Talbert of Seagrove, Wade Hall of Star, Ricky Hall of Seagrove, Sammy Hall and David Talbert, both of Star; and four grandchildren.

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

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

WILLIE JOE SMITH JR.

Willie Joe Smith Jr. 62, of Cameron, passed away Saturday, December 4, 2021, at his home.

A memorial service will be held in the Chapel of Bridges-Cameron Funeral Home on Saturday, January 8, 2022, at 2 p.m. with Rev. Don Flynn presiding. The family will receive friends one hour prior to the service.

He was born in Jellico, Tennessee, on November 10, 1959, to the late Ronnie Ray and Judy Frazier Ray.

Surviving relatives include his wife, Bobbie Presley Smith of the home; sons, Ronnie Smith, Bobby Canellas, and Johnny Canellas, all of Cameron; brothers, Ronnie Ray of Colorado and William Ray of Cherokee; sisters, Sheena Sterling of Kentucky and Debbie Kearsy of Fayetteville; six grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Arrangements are by Bridges-Cameron Funeral Home.

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

CARLOS HERNANDEZ-HERNANDEZ

Carlos Hernandez-Hernandez, 27, of Winston-Salem, passed away on Wednesday, December 22, 2021, at his home.

Services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home, Sanford.

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OMICRON

Continued from page A1

ing yourself and others. “(V)accinated people are less likely to get sick, require hospitalization, and pass away from COVID,” said Chatham Hospital’s Eric Wolak, who serves as the facility’s chief nursing officer and chief operating officer. “So there is no valid argument or data supporting not getting vaccinated.”

And it’s Chatham’s unvaccinated — currently the roughly 35% to 40% of eligible residents who haven’t received at least one dose — who are contributing to the problem, which is expected to worsen.

“The next several weeks will be unlike any other period of the pandemic,” said Mike Zelek, Chatham County’s Public Health Department director. “Given the infectiousness of Omicron, we will see many, many cases, and that will cause disruptions across all settings.”

Nationwide, new coronavirus infections reached 1,082,549 on Monday — another new record, according to Johns Hopkins University data — while hospitalizations were up 27% in the last week.

In this extended interview, Wolak and Zelek respond to questions generated by Omicron, case trends, changing guidelines and testing.

Let’s start with a reset for 2022. The Omicron variant has driven the number of COVID-19 cases to record numbers in some locations around the globe — including a “tsunami” of cases in Europe — and some areas within our region. And while hospitalizations are up, they’re not up at the same proportion. But Dr. Michael Osterholm, the director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy, recently said, “Over the next three to four weeks, we are going to see the number of cases in this country rise so dramatically that we’re gonna have a hard time keeping everyday life operating.” What do you think, and how do you assess what we’re seeing in terms of cases and the severity of cases?

ERIC WOLAK: The number of new cases in the past week have been very dramatic. While we are seeing that play out in Chatham County, currently the level of sickness has not required as much hospitalization. This could always change, though, and with the intense spread of this COVID variant, the increased chances we have in getting very sick patients. I do think things will be very hard these next few weeks. Personally, I’m limiting any social interactions and wearing my mask. I’ve been vaccinated and boosted, but I’m going to be especially careful until rates begin to decrease significantly.

MIKE ZELEK: The next several weeks will be unlike any other period of the pandemic. Given the infectiousness of Omicron, we will see many, many cases, and that will cause disruptions across all settings. That said, thankfully we have strong protection through vaccines and boosters, which is holding well against Omicron, particularly against severe illness and death. This is a very good thing and a public health success.

Observers talk about the “moving goalposts” of COVID. One example: the CDC has reduced the quarantine/isolation time for people who test positive for COVID-19 from 10 days to five days if they’re asymptomatic (but they should mask up for five days after isolation ends). Reaction to that, specifically?

WOLAK: I think the science is always chang-

Additionally, and this is the most important part of the science, vaccinated people are less likely to get sick, require hospitalization, and pass away from COVID. So there is no valid argument or data supporting not getting vaccinated.

ERIC WOLAK, Chatham Hospital

ing because the virus and environment is always changing. In regards to the changes in quarantine/isolation, the primary intent is to maximize our normal life as much as possible, while still being safe and decrease the spread of the virus. It is my understanding that this new variant has a lower “virus life”, which means one will test positive for a shorter period of time than they did with the Delta variant. Regardless, I trust the CDC and know that their recommendations are based on the science.

ZELEK: I think more often than not the goalposts stay where they are, but COVID forces us to change our game plan. As our understanding grows and COVID evolves, we need to update our strategy. The isolation period changed early in the pandemic, and a shortened quarantine (10-day, versus 14-day) was adopted in the spring. The new guidance reflects where we are now, but it comes with important caveats that should not be overlooked.

First, those who have COVID should not leave isolation until they feel better and are fever free. Second, it is strongly recommended to test negative before you end isolation, i.e., at day five. And third, even if your isolation or quarantine period ends after day five, it is critical to wear a mask around others at least for days six through 10 (and everyone should be wearing a mask in indoor public spaces). Shortening the isolation and quarantine periods does incur some additional risk, but these additional layers can help to mitigate that risk.

One criticism of that move is that a negative test should be required before those infected leave isolation. What do you think?

WOLAK: I agree, but it is also my understanding that the test should be negative after five days for those who are asymptomatic.

ZELEK: We strongly recommend getting a negative test after day five before leaving isolation. The CDC’s decision to make this a recommendation and not a requirement reflects the sharp increase in demand for testing relative to supply, which can vary across the country. We have seen testing numbers surge in recent days in Chatham, though our no-cost community options have been able to meet current demand. However, it is best to preregister. Find more at www.chathamcountync.gov/coronavirustesting.

And regarding uncertainty ... some among the unvaccinated are using that uncertainty as rationale for not getting “the jab.” Is that justified?

WOLAK: One thing the science has been very clear on is that vaccinated and boosted people have less likelihood of getting the virus and transmitting the virus to others if they have a breakthrough infection. Additionally, and this is the most important part of the science, vaccinated people are less likely to get sick, require hospitalization, and pass away from COVID. So there is no valid argument or data supporting not getting vaccinated.

ZELEK: The evidence to support getting vaccinated, including the booster shot, remains strong. Even for those who have been infected with COVID, the vaccine adds important protection. Vaccination

continues to be our best tool to protect ourselves and those around us.

And speaking of tests: can you walk us through the options on testing, and specifically rapid tests?

WOLAK: There are various ways to get a test. You can schedule an antigen test or a PCR test at a drug store like CVS. Those results could take a few days. You can also go to a drug store and purchase an at-home test with results in 15 minutes. My wife and I took those before visiting family/friends on Christmas. While supplies of the at-home tests are not what we want, supplies are increasing. I was just in Walgreens the other day and they had just received a large shipment. I was limited to purchasing four kits, but was happy to get them.

ZELEK: There are many places to get tested, and I’ll highlight a couple of no-cost options through Optum Health. The Old Agriculture Building in Pittsboro has testing Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Saturday testing begins Jan. 8). The Medical Office Building behind Chatham Hospital has testing Monday-Friday, 5 to 8 p.m. Both of these sites offer rapid (antigen) testing and PCR testing. In addition, StarMed has drive-up testing Mondays noon to 4 p.m. at CCCC in Siler City, Wednesdays at the Goldston Town Hall 2 to 7 p.m., and Thursdays noon to 4 p.m. at CCCC in Pittsboro. For a full list of options, visit www.chathamcountync.gov/coronavirustesting.

At-home rapid tests are another great option. Unfortunately, the supply is limited, though these tests can be found at some pharmacies. The federal government is working on a plan to increase access to at-home tests, but this has not yet been implemented. North Carolina has a free program that will mail you a PCR sample collection kit. After you collect your sample, you mail it in the included package to the lab and they will notify you of your results. More information can be found at <https://www.ondemand.labcorp.com/>.

As a refresher, PCR tests are sent to a lab and usually take one to three days for results to come back. Antigen tests, also called rapid or at-home tests, give results in around 15 minutes. Because of their short turnaround time and high accuracy to detect COVID when someone is actively infectious, rapid tests are an important public health tool.

And let’s address the subject of the reliability of tests. There are concerns that rapid tests may be less reliable if someone is infected by the Omicron variant. Can you speak to that?

WOLAK: A report was just released that the at-home tests may not be as accurate with the Omicron variant. That being said, they still do detect the variant, but there is a higher rate of false negative (it says you don’t have the virus, but you really do). It’s important to note that no test is 100% and these at-home tests are an additional tool in our toolbox. They should not be used in isolation as one’s only approach to protecting themselves and others. But when used along with vaccinations, boosters, and masks, they can be a valuable tool to help one make informed decisions. I should also



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Mike Zelek, director of Chatham County’s Public Health Department, poses with his wife, Jess Edwards, and his son, Dominic, at the Hispanic Liaison’s COVID-19 Health Fair in Siler City in September.

mention that the accuracy of the at-home tests are much higher if one is symptomatic.

ZELEK: Rapid tests are very accurate at detecting COVID when someone is actively infectious. While this may miss a short period when someone is pre-infectious, their short turnaround time, especially with Omicron, is very valuable. Compared to PCR tests, they are also less likely to come back positive when someone’s infectious period has ended, meaning lower risk of isolating someone who can no longer transmit to others. While some rapid tests are not effective at detecting Omicron, those in circulation here like Binax Now are, and these tests will be very important in the coming weeks and months.

Give the increase in breakthrough cases, is it indeed inevitable — as I read this week — that “most everyone you know will, at some point, get COVID”? Why or why not?

WOLAK: I do think this is an accurate statement, especially with how things are trending. But if we are vaccinated and boosted, not only are you more protected from the virus, you are also protected from getting sick if you were to get the virus. **ZELEK:** Yes, I expect the vast majority will get COVID at some point, so the main question is whether you will have protection from the vaccine when you are exposed to the virus or not. That is completely within our control. That said, mitigation strategies like wearing masks remain important to slowing the spread of the virus, which can allow us to keep critical functions like education and healthcare operational during the Omicron surge.

News broke this week that booster shots for 12- to 15-year olds will soon be authorized. Your thoughts?

WOLAK: I think this is wonderful. I hope once approved, those in that age group get boosted ASAP.

ZELEK: This is promising news. The FDA and CDC, including ACIP [the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices], will carefully review the evidence to inform their final decision. This standard process is important to ensure a science-based decision and reassure parents and adolescents. I have heard from many parents who are eager to know when boosters will be available to this group.

The New York Times wrote last week that changing and confusing guidance and the plethora of “arm-chair epidemiologists” are making risk calculation for COVID tricky. What’s your advice about making sense of what we read and hear from sources about COVID?

WOLAK: This is an evolving virus that we are trying to learn more about. So that means that the science is ever-changing as well. Some key things are foundational, though — masks, vaccinations, booster, testing. If we keep those core

tools available to use, then we are doing the right things. It is also important to consider the source. Information coming from the likes of CDC, IHI, NIH, etc., should be seen as the gold standard, because they are based on science and not opinion.

ZELEK: Eric is spot on. The core messages have remained the same for a long time, while the details have been updated based on emerging evidence and an evolving virus.

Guidelines can be effective if folks follow the rules. So many of those who insist on not following guidelines and rule level in the fact that they’re not getting sick — until, of course, they do. Meanwhile, Chatham’s vaccination rates have barely budged. We’ve asked you about this quite a few times over the past year. Anything new in terms of what you’d say to the unvaccinated?

WOLAK: For those who are still unvaccinated, I do not know why you aren’t. It’s not only important for your protection, but also for those around you. If not for yourself, please vaccinate so you don’t infect others.

ZELEK: Even now, the vast majority of those hospitalized and dying from COVID are the unvaccinated. That is the most telling endorsement from getting vaccinated.

Should the rules and guidelines be different for the vaccinated?

WOLAK: At this point, no. The virus has evolved too much and it is spreading too fast. But we know vaccinations help mitigate the spread and decrease sickness and death, and that is what is really important right now.

ZELEK: The quarantine rules yes, given those who are vaccinated within the past six months or boosted have a much stronger antibody response against COVID which prevents illness and spread. But isolation and mask wearing remain similar across groups.

I have several friends who, as we speak, are “as sick as they’ve ever been” with colds, coughs, congestion — and they’ve tested negative for COVID. How nervous should I be spending time around them?

WOLAK: This pandemic has really highlighted how quickly colds and flu spread. I would not spend any time with anyone who is sick with anything. Wait until they are better and then enjoy each other’s company.

ZELEK: Those who feel unwell should stay at home and away from others. This is standard flu-season guidance and has been a key message throughout the pandemic. As Omicron cases continue to rise, each indoor gathering will pose a greater risk of infection. Even if all feel well, I would limit the size and number of these gatherings, and get tested beforehand.

Anything new on boosters?

WOLAK: If you have not received your booster



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Eric Wolak

yet, and you are eligible, please get one ASAP.

ZELEK: We continue to see a steady demand and expect the updated CDC guidance will further encourage those who have not yet gotten their booster to move forward.

Before getting my booster, I heard a lot of stories about reactions to them — mainly fatigue, some aches. What are you experiencing as you encourage people to get them, and seeing people get them?

WOLAK: I have not seen hard data around this, but what I have witnessed is that when you get your booster, your reaction will probably be similar to your 1st and/or 2nd dose (for vaccines with two doses). If you did not feel anything with your first dose(s), then you may not feel anything with your booster. The same may be true for those who did have a reaction. At the end of the day, though, if you do have a reaction, please know that its short-lived and you’ll be back to your normal self in a day or two.

ZELEK: Reactions are generally pretty mild and can vary from one person to the next. They often do feel like the earlier doses.

And what do we know, and not know, about the effectiveness of vaccines over time?

WOLAK: I think we are still learning, so this is a big question mark. For myself, I’m preparing that the COVID vaccine will become an annual thing, just like the flu shot.

ZELEK: We have seen that they hold well over time against severe illness and death, though the booster can up that protection and likely reduce risk of milder infections as well. It is possible additional doses will be recommended, but we don’t yet know.

And finally ... what’s the story at Chatham Hospital in terms of how the staff is handling COVID-related workload these days?

WOLAK: We are continuing to review our staffing days/weeks ahead of time. We also continue to offer our core services, but are always making contingency plans based on patient volume, acuity, and available labor force. Our team has been amazing during these very trying times and I’m always impressed with their positive attitude and resiliency. That being said, with our increased Emergency Department visits, COVID-related absences from our staff, and overall vacancies, every day is a challenge. This is why I do hope the residents of Chatham County really do what’s best for the county and get vaccinated/boosted.

ZELEK: I am extremely grateful to Eric and our healthcare workforce for all they have done throughout the pandemic. They are heroes.

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NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY HAVING QUALIFIED as Administrator CTA of the Estate of **GERTRUDE S. ROGERS**, 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 17th day of March, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. This the 10th day of December, 2021.

Jeffrey N. Rogers,
Administrator CTA of
The Estate of Gertrude S. Rogers
P.O. Box 415
Siler City, North Carolina 27344
MOODY, WILLIAMS, ATWATER & LEE
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
BOX 1806
PITTSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA 27312
(919) 542-5605
D16,D23,D30,J6,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21E707
All persons having claims against **WILLIE JOHNSON AKA WILLIE W. JOHNSON**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 16th day of March, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 16th day of December, 2021.
Cindy Allen, Executrix
1668 Lystra Rd
Chapel Hill, N.C. 27517
D16,D23,D30,J6,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21E722
All persons having claims against **MARJORIE ABIGAIL RUMMELL aka GAIL M. RUMMELL**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 16th day of March, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 16th day of December, 2021.
Robert Mackenzie Rummell, Jr., Executor
1441 Prairie Ave
Lawrence, Ks 66044
D16,D23,D30,J6,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21 E 711
The undersigned, Lea Cramer, having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of **MICHAEL KURT WILLIAMS**, deceased, late of Chatham County, this is to notify all persons having claims against said estate to present them to the undersigned on or before 17th day of March, 2022, or this notice will be plead in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned. This the 16 day of December, 2021
Lea Cramer, Administrator
c/o Shanelle K. Edmonds,
Attorney for the Estate
Hopper Cummings, PLLC
Post Office Box 1455
Pittsboro, NC 27312
D16,D23,D30,J6,4tp

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against **EDWINA ANN ZAGAMI**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 16th day of March, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 16th day of December, 2021.
Sarah McWay Boling, Executrix
2102 Woodbury Dr
Hillsboro, NC 27278
D16,D23,D30,J6,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21E717
All persons having claims against **CLARENCE ADRIAN GOINS**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 16th day of March, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 16th day of December, 2021.
A. Frank Goins, Executor
2327 Ainsdale Road
Charlotte, NC 28226
D16,D23,D30,J6,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
All persons having claims against **EDWARD L. SMITHWICK** aka Edward Lee Smithwick of Chatham County, North Carolina, who died on the 5th day of November, 2021, are notified to present them to Carol Blackman Smithwick, Executrix of the Estate of Edward L. Smithwick aka Edward Lee Smithwick in c/o David R. Frankstone, Attorney for the Estate, at Higgins, Frankstone, Graves & Morris, P. A., 1414 Raleigh Road, Suite 203, Exchange West at Meadowmont, Chapel Hill, NC 27517-8834 on or before March 29, 2022. Failure to present a claim in timely fashion will result in this Notice being pleaded in bar of recovery against the estate, the Executrix, and the devisees of Edward L. Smithwick aka Edward Lee Smithwick. Those indebted to Edward L. Smithwick aka Edward Lee Smithwick are asked to make prompt payment to the Estate. David R. Frankstone Higgins, Frankstone, Graves & Morris, P.A.
1414 Raleigh Road, Suite 203
Exchange West at Meadowmont
Chapel Hill, NC 27517-8834
D23,D30,J6,J13,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21E716
All persons having claims against **TAVIN DANIEL HOWARD**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 23rd day of March, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 23rd day of December, 2021.
Hollie Anne Howard, Administrator
316 Culvert St., Apt 5
Apex, N.C. 27502
D23,D30,J6,J13,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
Having qualified as Executor of the Estate of **ANGELA MOSS**, deceased of Chatham County, North Carolina, on the 20th day of December, 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 25th day of March, 2022, 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 23rd day of December, 2021.
Tami Boardman, Executor
c/o Holly Martin, Attorney for the Estate
McPherson, Rocamora, Nicholson, Wilson, & Hinkle, PLLC
3211 Shannon Road, Suite 400
Durham, NC 27707.
D23,D30,J6,J13,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY HAVING QUALIFIED as Administrator CTA of the Estate of MARGIE BRAY PHILLIPS, 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 31st day of March, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.
This the 21st day of December, 2021.
Amanda Oldham, Administrator CTA of The Estate of Margie Bray Phillips
1624 Siler City-Glen-don Road
Siler City, North Carolina 27344
MOODY, WILLIAMS, ATWATER & LEE
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
BOX 1806
PITTSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA 27312
(919) 542-5605
D30,J6,J13,J20,4tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21E732
All persons having claims against **BETTY MITCHELL JOHNSON**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 30th day of March, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 21st day of December, 2021.
Rodney V. Goldston, Administrator
2503 Fernwood Dr
Greensboro, NC 27408
D30,J6,J13,J20,4tp

NOTICE OF TAX FORECLOSURE SALE
Under and by virtue of an order of the District Court of Chatham County, North Carolina, made and entered in the action entitled COUNTY OF CHATHAM vs. THE HEIRS, ASSIGNS and DEVEISEES of MARY E. BIVINS A/K/A MARY E. BIVENS and spouse, if any, which may include JOE D. BIVENS, INCOMPETENT, and spouse, if any, and THE HEIRS, ASSIGNS and DEVEISEES of WILMA JEAN BIVENS and spouse, if any, or any other person or entity claiming thereunder, HOPE FOR THE FUTURE, INC., GUARDIAN OF THE PERSON FOR JOE D. BIVENS, INCOMPETENT, et al, **19-CVD-739**, the undersigned Commissioner will on the **12th day of January, 2022**, offer for sale and sell for cash, to the last and highest bidder at public auction at the **courthouse door in Chatham County, North Carolina, Pittsboro, North Carolina at 12:00 o'clock, noon**, the following described real property, lying and being in Gulf Township, State and County aforesaid, and more particularly described as follows:
Beginning at a stake in the southern line of E.M. Harris land and in S.R. No. 2306, said stake being the northeast corner of the Mary Bivins 7 3/4 acre tract of land and running thence with the line of Harris, South 84 degrees East 431 feet to a stake, the northwest corner of the Ola Smith lot; thence with Smith's line, South 13 degrees East 590 feet to a stake in the line of R.G. Han-

cock; thence with Hancock's line, North 85 degrees West 609 feet to a stake, the southeast corner of the Mary Bivins 7 3/4 acre lot; thence with the line of said lot, North 5 degrees East 576 feet to the point and place of beginning, containing 6.9 acres, more or less.
LESS AND EXCEPT so much of the above described parcel conveyed to Joe Danny Bivens and wife, Emma Jean Bivens in Deed Book 427, Page 106, Chatham County Registry. Subject to restrictive covenants and easements of record.
Parcel Identification Number: 0008985
The undersigned Commissioner makes no warranties in connection with this property and specifically disclaims any warranties as to title and habitability. This property is being sold as is, without opinion as to title or any other matter. This sale will be made subject to all outstanding city and county taxes and all local improvement assessments against the above described property not included in the judgment in the above-entitled cause. A cash deposit of 20 percent of the successful bid will be required. In addition, the successful bidder will be required, at the time the Deed is recorded to pay for recording fees and revenue stamps assessed by the Chatham County Register of Deeds. This sale is subject to upset bid as set forth in N.C.G.S. Section 1-339.25.
This the 17th day of December, 2021.
Mark D. Bardill/Mark B. Bardill, Commissioner
P.O. Box 25
Trenton, NC 28585
D30,J6,2tc

NOTICE OF TAX FORECLOSURE SALE
Under and by virtue of an order of the District Court of Chatham County, North Carolina, made and entered in the action entitled COUNTY OF CHATHAM vs. WILLIE D. ALSTON A/K/A WILLIS D. ALSTON and spouse, if any, and all possible heirs and assignees of WILLIE D. ALSTON A/K/A WILLIS D. ALSTON and spouse, if any, or any other person or entity claiming thereunder, JERRY ALSTON and spouse, if any, and all possible heirs and assignees of JERRY ALSTON and spouse, if any, or any other person or entity claiming thereunder, PHYLLINDA H. BALDWIN A/K/A PHYLLINDA FAYE BALDWIN and spouse, if any, and all possible heirs and assignees of PHYLLINDA H. BALDWIN A/K/A PHYLLINDA FAYE BALDWIN and spouse, if any, or any other person or entity claiming thereunder, JOSEPH L. RIGGSBEE and spouse, if any, and all possible heirs and assignees of JOSEPH L. RIGGSBEE and spouse, if any, or any other person or entity claiming thereunder, et al, **17-CVD-591**, the undersigned Commissioner will on the **12th day of January, 2022**, offer for sale and sell for cash, to the last and highest bidder at public auction at the **courthouse door in Chatham County, North Carolina, Pittsboro, North Carolina at 12:00 o'clock, noon**, the following described real property, lying and being in Williams Township, State and County aforesaid, and more particularly described as follows:
All of that certain tract or parcel of land situated in Williams Township, Chatham

County, North Carolina, and more particularly described as follows:
Being Lot 5, containing 2.6 acres, more or less, as surveyed by Stephen E. Wilson of Freehold Land Surveys, Inc., and recorded in Plat Book 30, Page 10, Chatham County Registry. Subject to restrictive covenants and easements of record.
Parcel Identification Number: **0018765**
The undersigned Commissioner makes no warranties in connection with this property and specifically disclaims any warranties as to title and habitability. This property is being sold as is, without opinion as to title or any other matter. This sale will be made subject to all outstanding city and county taxes and all local improvement assessments against the above described property not included in the judgment in the above-entitled cause. A cash deposit of 20 percent of the successful bid will be required. In addition, the successful bidder will be required, at the time the Deed is recorded to pay for recording fees and revenue stamps assessed by the Chatham County Register of Deeds. This sale is subject to upset bid as set forth in N.C.G.S. Section 1-339.25.
This the 17th day of December, 2021.
Mark D. Bardill/Mark B. Bardill, Commissioner
P.O. Box 25
Trenton, NC 28585
D30,J6,2tc

NOTICE OF TAX FORECLOSURE SALE
Under and by virtue of an order of the District Court of Chatham County, North Carolina, made and entered in the action entitled COUNTY OF CHATHAM vs. THE HEIRS, ASSIGNS and DEVEISEES of FAYE MCDONALD and spouse, if any, which may include TASHA TEJUANA MCDONALD and spouse, if any, or any other person or entity claiming thereunder, et al, **15-CVD-726**, the undersigned Commissioner will on the **12th day of January, 2022**, offer for sale and sell for cash, to the last and highest bidder at public auction at the **courthouse door in Chatham County, North Carolina, Pittsboro, North Carolina at 12:00 o'clock, noon**, the following described real property, lying and being in Gulf Township, State and County aforesaid, and more particularly described as follows:
All that certain lot or parcel of land situated in Gulf Township, Chatham County, North Carolina, and more particularly described as follows:
BEGINNING at the S. E. Corner of Lot No. 132 on the Goldston-Pittsboro Road and running with said Road, N. 63 degrees E. 83 feet to an iron stake; thence N. 3 1/2 degrees E. 235 ft. to a stake; thence S. 63 degrees W. 191 ft. to a stake; thence S. 27 degrees E. 200 feet to the BEGINNING, being lots 133, 134, 135 of the Harris Subdivision which appears on the record in the Office of the Register of Deeds for Chatham County, North Carolina, in Plat Book 2, Page 57.
Subject to restrictive covenants and easements of record.
Parcel Identification Number: **0009509**
The undersigned Commissioner makes no warranties in connection with this property

and specifically disclaims any warranties as to title and habitability. This property is being sold as is, without opinion as to title or any other matter. This sale will be made subject to all outstanding city and county taxes and all local improvement assessments against the above described property not included in the judgment in the above-entitled cause. A cash deposit of 20 percent of the successful bid will be required. In addition, the successful bidder will be required, at the time the Deed is recorded to pay for recording fees and revenue stamps assessed by the Chatham County Register of Deeds. This sale is subject to upset bid as set forth in N.C.G.S. Section 1-339.25.
This the 17th day of December, 2021.
Mark D. Bardill/Mark B. Bardill, Commissioner
P.O. Box 25
Trenton, NC 28585
D30,J6,2tc

NOTICE OF TAX FORECLOSURE SALE
Under and by virtue of an order of the District Court of Chatham County, North Carolina, made and entered in the action entitled COUNTY OF CHATHAM vs. THE HEIRS, ASSIGNS and DEVEISEES of CHARLES GLENN HARRIS and spouse, if any, which may include LINDA H. WHITESELL and spouse, if any, JEAN H. SUMNER and spouse, if any, SARA H. HOOPER and spouse, if any, and THOMAS G. HARRIS and spouse, if any, or any other person or entity claiming thereunder, THE HEIRS, ASSIGNS and DEVEISEES of LUCILLE H. EVANS and spouse, if any, or any other person or entity claiming thereunder, RUTH RAMSEY and spouse, if any, and all possible heirs and assignees of RUTH RAMSEY and spouse, if any, or any other person or entity claiming thereunder, LOUISE KIRKPATRICK and spouse, if any, and all possible heirs and assignees of LOUISE KIRKPATRICK and spouse, if any, or any other person or entity claiming thereunder, ROBERT LEE ATWATER and spouse, if any, and all possible heirs and assignees of ROBERT LEE ATWATER and spouse, if any, or any other person or entity claiming thereunder, et al, **08-CVD-456**, the undersigned Commissioner will on the **12th day of January, 2022**, offer for sale and sell for cash, to the last and highest bidder at public auction at the **courthouse door in Chatham County, North Carolina, Pittsboro, North Carolina at 12:00 o'clock, noon**, the following described real property, lying and being in Matthews Township, State and County aforesaid, and more particularly described as follows:
TRACT 1: All those certain lots or parcels of land in Matthews Township, Chatham County, North Carolina, and described as follows:
Being all of Lot Numbers 26, 27 and 28 of Greenwood Acres Subdivision, as shown by a plat of the same made by Clotus Craven, Surveyor, and

of land, lying and being in Matthews Township, Chatham County, North Carolina, and described as follows:
Being all of Lots Numbers 95, 96, and 97 of Crestview Subdivision, Property of Hancock Homes, Inc., and C. Whid Powell, as shown by a plat of the same made by Dunn Engineering Company November 16, 1962, and recorded in Plat Book 8 at Page 58, Chatham County Registry. Subject to restrictive covenants and easements of record.
Parcel Identification Number: **12949**
The undersigned Commissioner makes no warranties in connection with this property and specifically disclaims any warranties as to title and habitability. This property is being sold as is, without opinion as to title or any other matter. This sale will be made subject to all outstanding city and county taxes and all local improvement assessments against the above described property not included in the judgment in the above-entitled cause. A cash deposit of 20 percent of the successful bid will be required. In addition, the successful bidder will be required, at the time the Deed is recorded to pay for recording fees and revenue stamps assessed by the Chatham County Register of Deeds. This sale is subject to upset bid as set forth in N.C.G.S. Section 1-339.25.
This the 17th day of December, 2021.
Mark D. Bardill/Mark B. Bardill, Commissioner
P.O. Box 25
Trenton, NC 28585
D30,J6,2tc

NOTICE OF TAX FORECLOSURE SALE
Under and by virtue of an order of the District Court of Chatham County, North Carolina, made and entered in the action entitled COUNTY OF CHATHAM vs. ROY STOUT CONSTRUCTION COMPANY INC. and all possible assigns and successors of ROY STOUT CONSTRUCTION COMPANY INC. or any other person or entity claiming thereunder, et al, **08-CVD-1217**, the undersigned Commissioner will on the **12th day of January, 2022**, offer for sale and sell for cash, to the last and highest bidder at public auction at the **courthouse door in Chatham County, North Carolina, Pittsboro, North Carolina at 12:00 o'clock, noon**, the following described real property, lying and being in Matthews Township, State and County aforesaid, and more particularly described as follows:
TRACT 1: All those certain lots or parcels of land in Matthews Township, Chatham County, North Carolina, and described as follows:
Being all of Lot Numbers 26, 27 and 28 of Greenwood Acres Subdivision, as shown by a plat of the same made by Clotus Craven, Surveyor, and

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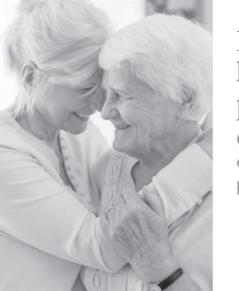
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recorded in Plat Book 8, at Page 50, Office of the Register of Deeds of Chatham County, North Carolina. Subject to restrictive covenants and easements of record. Parcel Identification Number: **0014241**
The undersigned Commissioner makes no warranties in connection with this property and specifically disclaims any warranties as to title and habitability. This property is being sold as is, without opinion as to title or any other matter. This sale will be made subject to all outstanding city and county taxes and all local improvement assessments against the above described property not included in the judgment in the above-entitled cause. A cash deposit of 20 percent of the successful bid will be required. In addition, the successful bidder will be required, at the time the Deed is recorded to pay for recording fees and revenue stamps assessed by the Chatham County Register of Deeds. This sale is subject to upset bid as set forth in N.C.G.S. Section 1-339.25. This the 17th day of December, 2021.
Mark D. Bardill/Mark B. Bardill, Commissioner
P.O. Box 25
Trenton, NC 28585
D30,J6,2tc

and specifically disclaims any warranties as to title and habitability. This property is being sold as is, without opinion as to title or any other matter. This sale will be made subject to all outstanding city and county taxes and all local improvement assessments against the above described property not included in the judgment in the above-entitled cause. A cash deposit of 20 percent of the successful bid will be required. In addition, the successful bidder will be required, at the time the Deed is recorded to pay for recording fees and revenue stamps assessed by the Chatham County Register of Deeds. This sale is subject to upset bid as set forth in N.C.G.S. Section 1-339.25. This the 17th day of December, 2021.
Mark D. Bardill/Mark B. Bardill, Commissioner
P.O. Box 25
Trenton, NC 28585
D30,J6,2tc

All persons having claims against **STANLEY REICHARD THOMAS SR.**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 30th day of March, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 30th day of December, 2021.
Jeffrey E. Manor, Executor
840 Polks Landing Rd.
Chapel Hill, NC 27516
D30,J6,1J3,J20,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY
The undersigned having qualified as Personal Representative of the Estate of **ROBERT JAMES BELL**, deceased, of Chatham County, North Carolina hereby notifies all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present such claims to the undersigned at the address below on or before the 30th day of March, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment. This the 30th day of December, 2021.
Suzanne A. Bell, Personal Representative
5835 Pittsboro Rd
Henderson, NC 27537
D30,J6,1J3,J20,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21E364
All persons having claims against **JACQUELINE BOWEN BEZA**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 30th day of March, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 30th day of December, 2021.
LISA DYMENT, Executrix
275 Seven Island Road
Pittsboro, NC 27312
D30,J6,1J3,J20,4tp

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE TOWN OF PITTSBORO
The Pittsboro Town Board of Commissioners will hold the following **Public Hearing on Monday, January 10, 2022 at 7:00 PM via Zoom** to consider the following items: Zoning Text Amendments. Planning Staff is requesting text amendments to the Pittsboro Unified Development Ordinance including: Add the requirement of Conditional Rezoning for certain Industrial uses in the Table of Uses; Amend Heavy Industrial uses in the Table of Uses and incorporating recent text amendments to funeral homes and crematoriums, Remove Planning Board review step from Special Use Permit requests; and Revise

Board meeting schedule to the following order: (1) Planning Board: Recommendation, (2) Board of Commissioners: Set Public Hearing, and (3) Board of Commissioners: Public Hearing / Consideration. The purpose of the public hearing is to provide interested parties with an opportunity to comment on the request. The complete records are on file at the Town Planning Department located at 480 Hillsboro Street, Suite 400, and are available for inspection through e-mail. Substantial changes in the proposed amendment may be made following the public hearing. The meeting will be held via Zoom, a teleconference software. **Instructions on how to join the Zoom Meeting can be found on the Town's website at www.pittsboronc.gov.** If you wish to make written comments, please send them to the Town Clerk, Cassie Bullock, PO Box 759, Pittsboro, NC 27312 or via email at Cbullock@pittsboronc.gov by 4 p.m. on January 10, 2022.
D30,J6,2tc

CHATHAM COUNTY PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILDREN SEEKING BIDS:
Chatham County Partnership for Children is requesting bids for implementation of effective program activities to address Child Care Related goals and objectives listed in the Bid Packet for 2022-2025 available on our website at <https://chathamkids.org/who-we-are/smart-start/>. Selection of bids and awarding of funding is contingent upon approval by the NC Partnership for Children and the allocation of funding from the NC Legislature. Contact Sheen Klaus at sheen@chathamkids.org with questions.
J6,1tc

TOWN OF SILER CITY LEGISLATIVE HEARING NOTICE
The Board of Commissioners will conduct a legislative hearing on Jan. 18, 2022 at 6:30 pm in the multipurpose room of the Wren Memorial Library located at 500 N. 2nd Ave. Legislative hearing and Board discussion will be conducted on the following requests:
1) Esperanza Fernandez proposes to rezone 9.6 acres from Highway-Commercial (H-C) to Agricultural-Residential (A-R). The subject property is identified as 17885 US 64 W and parcel # 90402.
2) Town of Siler City proposes to rezone 1.71 acres from Light-Industrial (L-I) to Central-Business (C-C). The subject property is identified as 118 W. 2nd St. and parcel # 61343.
3) Town of Siler City proposes the following text amendments to the UDO: §180 Miniparks Required, §182 Usable Open Space (residential developments located within the Downtown Siler City District shall be exempt). The proposed items are available for review by contacting the Planning and Community

Development Director at jmeadows@silercity.org or 919-742-2323. All persons interested in the outcome of the items are invited to attend the legislative hearing and present comments, testimony, and exhibits on the above referenced item. The Planning Board will meet on Jan. 10 @ 6:30 pm to consider a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners. The Town of Siler City as an Equal Opportunity Employer, invites the submission of proposals from minority and women-owned firms and certified Section 3 business concerns if the contract is over \$100,000 for non-construction contracts. The Town of Siler City will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that disabled persons are provided other accommodations, such as arrangements may include, but are not limited to, providing interpreters for the deaf, providing taped cassettes of materials for the blind, or assuring a barrier-free location for the proceedings. This information is available in Spanish or any other language upon request. Please contact Nancy Hannah at 919-726-8625, 311 North Second Avenue, Siler City, North Carolina 27344, or nhannah@silercity.org for accommodations for this request. Esta información está disponible en español o en cualquier otro idioma bajo petición. Por favor, póngase en contacto con Nancy Hannah al nhannah@silercity.org o 919-726-8625 o e311 North Second Avenue, Siler City, North Carolina 27344 de alojamiento para esta solicitud.
J6,1J3,2tc

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
A public hearing will be held by the Chatham County Board of Commissioners on **Tuesday, January 18, 2021, beginning at 6:00 p.m.** The hearing will be held in the courtroom of the **Historic Courthouse in Pittsboro**, North Carolina at 9 Hillsboro Street. Additional information is available at the Chatham County Planning Department office. Speakers are requested to sign up at the meeting prior to the hearing. You may also sign up on the county website prior to the meeting at www.chatham-countync.gov by selecting the heading County Government, then Commissioner Meetings, then Public Input/Hearing Sign Up. The public hearing may be continued to another date at the discretion of the Board of Commissioners. In order to allow adequate time for everyone to provide comments during the meeting, the Board of Commissioners limit speakers to two (2) minutes and Planning Board limits speakers to three (3) minutes. Speakers may not yield any portion of their allotted time to others, and you are encouraged to provide written comments. The purpose of the Public Hearing is to receive input, both written and oral, on the issues listed below: Legislative Request: A legislative public

hearing for a request by the Chatham County Board of Commissioners to consider amendments to the following regulations:
1. Chatham County Subdivision Regulations: amend Sections 2, Definitions, to modify the definitions for major and minor subdivision and 4(C), Exempt Subdivision, to add an exemption for the division of property for public right-of-way dedication for road widenings.
2. Chatham County Zoning Ordinance: amend Section 10.13, Table of Permitted Uses, to revise footnote 3 to include connection to Town of Sanford water, in addition to the county water system. This footnote only applies to the Triangle Innovation Point advanced manufacturing park in Moncure. Substantial changes may be made following the public hearing due to verbal or written comments received or based on the Board's discussions. Notice to people with special needs: If you have an audio or visual impairment, unique accessibility requirements or need language assistance, please call the number listed below prior to the hearing and assistance may be provided. If you have any questions or comments concerning these issues, please call the Chatham County Planning Department at 542-8204 or write to P.O. Box 54, Pittsboro N.C. 27312.
J6,1J3,2tc

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21E494
All persons having claims against **ALCA F. OLDHAM**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 30th day of March, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 30th day of December, 2021.
Jeffrey Berry Oldham, Executor
1328 Henry Oldham Rd
Bear Creek, N.C. 27207
D30,J6,1J3,J20,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21E713
All persons having claims against **MELVIN TOTTEN aka MELVIN LEE TOTTEN**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 6th day of April, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 6th day of January, 2022.
Anne Catherine Chase, Executrix
42 Beverly Dr
Durham, NC 27707
J6,1J3,J20,J27,4tp

NOTICE TO CREDITORS NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY 21E715
All persons having claims against **ROBERT H. CHASE, JR.**, deceased, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 6th day of April, 2022, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 6th day of January, 2022.
Sabrina Person, Administrator
401 East 4th Street
Siler City, NC 27344
J6,1J3,J20,J27,4tp

NOTICE OF TAX FORECLOSURE SALE

Under and by virtue of an order of the District Court of Chatham County, North Carolina, made and entered in the action entitled **COUNTY OF CHATHAM vs. ROY STOUT CONSTRUCTION COMPANY INC.** and all possible assigns and successors of **ROY STOUT CONSTRUCTION COMPANY INC.** or any other person or entity claiming thereunder, et al, **08-CVD-1217**, the undersigned Commissioner will **on the 12th day of January, 2022, offer for sale and sell for cash, to the last and highest bidder at public auction at the courthouse door in Chatham County**, North Carolina, Pittsboro, North Carolina at 12:00 o'clock, noon, the following described real property, lying and being in Matthews Township, State and County aforesaid, and more particularly described as follows:
TRACT 2: All those certain lots or parcels of land in Matthews Township, Chatham County, North Carolina, and described as follows:
Being all of Lot Numbers 122, 123 and 124 of Greenwood Acres Subdivision, as shown by a plat of the same made by Clotus Craven, Surveyor, and recorded in Plat Book 8, at Page 50, Office of the Register of Deeds of Chatham County, North Carolina. Subject to restrictive covenants and easements of record. Parcel Identification Number: **0076456**
The undersigned Commissioner makes no warranties in connection with this property

NEWS BRIEFS

Gov. Cooper encourages high school students to explore cybersecurity careers

RALEIGH — Gov. Roy Cooper is again encouraging high school students in North Carolina to explore careers in cybersecurity by participating in CyberStart America, a free online cybersecurity competition sponsored by the National Cyber Scholarship Foundation and SANS Institute. Any student in grades 9-12 can discover their aptitude for cybersecurity and computer science while also earning chances to win college scholarships. Complete details, including how to register, can be found at [\[tamerica.org\]\(http://www.cyberstartamerica.org\).
“We have to evolve in the way we implement cybersecurity to help keep us safe from online threats,” Governor Cooper said. “Part of how we do that is by attracting the next generation of talented cybersecurity professionals to public service. CyberStart America helps us do that.”
According to Cyber Seek, an initiative funded by the National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education, there are 21,010 vacant cyber-related positions in North Carolina. National-ly, that number tops nearly 600,000.
“Significant, high-profile cybersecurity events across the country this past year have highlighted how vulnerable we are to ransomware and other threats and have underscored](http://www.cyberstar-</p>
</div>
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how critical it is to protect and defend against them,” said James Weaver, state chief information officer and secretary of the N.C. Department of Information Technology. “Programs like CyberStart America help create educational pathways and opportunities to build a diverse and talented cyber pipeline to help address our future challenges.”
CyberStart America is a series of games in which students solve cybersecurity-related puzzles and explore related topics, such as code breaking, programming, networking and digital forensics. Students need no knowledge or experience in information technology or cybersecurity to participate. They learn everything they need to know in the game. Students who do well can

earn access to scholarships and advanced training.
Last year, 1,165 North Carolina students participated in CyberStart America. Eighteen won college scholarships and the opportunity to participate in the Cyber Foundations Academy, a multi-week cybersecurity training and certification course.
Emily Chen, a senior at Panther Creek High School, was among the top 30 students in the nation to have the highest point scores in the competition.
“Prior to this program, I honestly had no idea I could pursue a career in cybersecurity,” Chen said. “I’ve gained skills that made me realize it’s something I really enjoy doing. If you’re hesitant, I just say give it a try. It’s free. You just have to sign up.”

Meat rabbit production classes offered

Are you interested in raising meat rabbits for production? If so, join N.C. Cooperative Extension for an Introduction to Meat Rabbit Production for producers. This will be a three-part series and interested persons can attend one or all of the sessions.
The sessions include:
• Jan. 13: Designing a Business Plan, Housing, Breed Selection
• Jan. 20: Nutrition/Health, Predator Control, Processing
• Jan. 27: Producer Panel
All workshops will be held online through Zoom from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Register at <https://go.ncsu.edu/meatrabbit>.
— CN+R staff reports

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INTEREST

Continued from page A3

moving in and not having easy access to resources for culture and history.”

A first year at UNC-Chapel Hill studying journalism, Sullivan wanted to incorporate both history and storytelling in her project, which was the culmination of her 13-year Girl Scout career. The Girl Scout Gold Award — received upon successfully completing a project — is the highest honor a Girl Scout can earn, and the project aims to emphasize a recipient’s betterment of self and ability to improve the world.

The completion of Sullivan’s project lined up with Chatham County’s Chatham 250 year-long celebration commemorating the county’s sescentennial anniversary. Last summer, Sullivan worked as the communications intern with Chatham 250. The group promoted Sullivan’s project upon its completion, linking to it on their site and co-hosting an Aug. 10 presentation on her project.

After more than 80 hours of research, writing, recording, podcast editing and web design later, Sullivan is proud of her work. Now, she hopes people will continue to learn from it.

“I hope they learn at least a little bit about Chatham’s history and maybe one person in specific,” she said. “And also realize that there are resources online to learn about your local community. It’s definitely harder to learn about the local

community, but I think that ‘A Look Into Chatham’s Past’ and other local organizations are a great resource for learning about local history.”

Vicky Tobar: interpreter at Jordan-Matthews

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.

“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. Seventeen 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 2020; 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.

Last February, Tobar was 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 families, students, administration and teachers. Though she appreciates others’ recognitions, Tobar said last year the best reward has been seeing 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.’”

Hubert West: CCS teaching assistant and UNC’s first Black head coach

Last April, Hubert Davis replaced Roy Williams as the head coach for UNC-Chapel Hill’s men’s basketball team, becoming the program’s first Black head coach and fourth overall in any program at the school.

But it was another Hubert — Hubert West Jr. — who made history as the first Black head coach at UNC, for the school’s track and field program in 1981-83. The next Black head coach at UNC wasn’t named until 2011.

Today, West, 70, is a teacher at Chatham County Schools, but track and field is still “a very prominent part” of his life. Hearing about Davis’

historic hiring brought all his UNC memories back — where he was not only the first head coach of his race, but also the first Black student to receive a track scholarship when he attended in the early 1970s.

“Yeah, it’s very exciting,” West said, “because it brings back memories of the groundbreaking in being the first African American to sign a track scholarship and then the first African American coach at UNC. ... Regardless of what goes on, that first is still behind your name.”

With all his firsts, and athletic and academic feats — he was inducted into the Davie County High School Athletic

Hall of Fame in 2006 and named Chatham County Schools Instructional Assistant of the Year three times — West doesn’t jump to brag about his accomplishments, though he’s happy to share should someone ask.

All these years after first coaching, he’s focused on the same thing: helping students recognize their potential and achieve their goals.

“That is one of the main things that I thoroughly enjoy now,” he said. “With this COVID it hasn’t been as easy, but still being able to give back to the young people, and try to let them see that there is a higher achieving goal that they can set their sights on.”

Honorable mention: Two Chatham County Schools educators who died in 2021 made an indelible impact on the lives of those who loved them, including many Chatham students and staff. Those educators — Karen Heilman, known for her positivity, love of sports and her great hair; and Mike Williams, characterized as the “GOAT (Greatest of All Time)” by many students — changed Chatham in myriad ways and are still missed by those who knew them.

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

TEST

Continued from page A1

testing location at 98 Chapelton Court, Suite 310, in Chapel Hill offers testing daily from 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Testing is free for insured individuals at this location, but uninsured are charged \$160. All ages are able to be tested at Avance Care, and they offer both rapid and PCR tests. You can schedule an appointment by calling 919-590-9005.

• CVS Pharmacy: CVS Pharmacy — located at 11314 U.S. Hwy. 15-501 N. in Chapel Hill — offers COVID testing daily from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. This location offers free testing with insurance or with a federal program. While they don’t offer rapid testing, this CVS location does offer PCR testing. You can go to the CVS website to schedule your appointment at <https://www.cvs.com/minute-clinic/covid-19-testing/>.

• StarMed Healthcare - Goldston Town Hall: COVID testing is available at Goldston Town Hall, 40 Coral Ave. This location only tests on Wednesdays from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. This location offers free rapid and PCR testing, regardless of insurance status.

You can register for a COVID test at this location by going to the StarMed website at <https://starmed.care/testing/>.

• Moncure Community Health Center: Located at 7228 Moncure-Pittsboro Rd., this location offers testing on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 8:20 a.m. to 9:20 a.m. It is free for everyone, regardless of insurance status. This location does not offer rapid testing, but does offer PCR tests. You can register for this testing location by calling 919-545-3452.

PITTSBORO

• Optum Health - Old Chatham County Agriculture Building: This testing location at 65 E. Chatham St. offers testing Monday through Friday, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Testing is free for everyone, and this loca-

tion offers PCR and rapid tests. You can register at the Optum website at <https://www.lhi.care/covidtesting>

• StarMed Healthcare - Central Carolina Community College Pittsboro campus: This location operates on Thursdays from noon to 4 p.m. StarMed offers free rapid and PCR testing to everyone, regardless if they are insured or not. You can make your appointment at the StarMed website at <https://starmed.care/testing/>

• Pine Ridge Urgent Care: This testing location offers both PCR and rapid COVID tests daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is free for those with insurance, but the uninsured will have to pay \$180 for rapid tests and \$220 for PCR tests. You can schedule an appointment by calling 919-542-4450.

• Walgreens Pharmacy: Walgreens offers both rapid and PCR testing daily from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is free to get tested at Walgreens, but the lab processing the COVID tests may bill insurance. You can call the Pittsboro Walgreens — located at 321 East St. — at 919-541-1661.

SILER CITY

• Optum Health - Chatham Hospital Medical Office Building: Free rapid and PCR testing is available at this location on 163 Medical Park Dr. The location is open Monday through Friday from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. You can register to get tested at the Optum website at <https://www.lhi.care/covidtesting>

• StarMed Healthcare - Central Carolina Community College Siler City campus: Free COVID testing is available at the CCCC campus in Siler City on Mondays from noon until 4 p.m. You can register for a test at the StarMed website at <https://starmed.care/testing/>.

• Central Piedmont Urgent Care: This location at 101 Walmart Supercenter offers rapid and PCR testing Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday

from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. This location provides free testing with proof of insurance or proof of ID. You can call 919-663-3911 for pre-screening and scheduling an appointment.

• CVS Pharmacy: The CVS on 1506 E. 11th St. offers PCR testing daily from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. COVID testing at CVS is free with insurance or through federal programs. You can schedule an appointment by going to the CVS website at <https://www.cvs.com/content/coronavirus?cid=redir-coronavirus>.

• Walgreens Pharmacy: The Walgreens at 1523 E. 11th St. offers COVID testing daily from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Both rapid tests and PCR tests are available at this location and are free. You can call 919-663-2040 to schedule an appointment.

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



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Chatham Charter School

Chatham Charter School is now accepting applications for openings in kindergarten and limited openings in first through eleventh grade for the 2022-2023 school year. Kindergarten applicants must be five years of age on or before August 31, 2022. The application period ends on January 28, 2022. Applications may be submitted online (www.chathamcharter.org) under the “Admissions” link, at the school (2200 Hamp Stone Road, Siler City) or by calling (919) 742-4550.

Chatham Charter School is a nonprofit, nondenominational public school providing quality education for children of all races, creeds, handicaps, and national origins.

La Escuela de Chatham Charter

La Escuela de Chatham Charter ahora está tomando aplicaciones para espacios del kinder y algunos espacios desde el primer grado hasta el grado once para el año escolar 2022-2023. Los niños que asistan al kinder deben tener cinco años de edad antes del 31 de agosto, 2022. El periodo de aplicación termina el 28 de enero, 2022. Puede completar una aplicación al Internet (www.chathamcharter.org) al enlace Admissions, a la escuela (2200 Hamp Stone Road, Siler City) o por una llamada (919.742.4550).

La Escuela de Chatham Charter es una escuela pública, multideterminacional, y no lucrative que provide una educación de la calidad para los niños de todos las razas, los credos, una condición de discapacidad, y los orígenes nacionales.



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NORTHWOOD 55, SOUTHERN ALAMANCE 40

Third time's the charm: Chargers get over holiday hump, claim 1st First Bank Charger Classic title

BY DAN E. WAY
News + Record
Correspondent

PITTSBORO — Olivia Porter has a message for opposing teams: Danger lurks when they take the court against the Northwood women's basketball team.

"The great thing about this team is that anybody can score 20 points on any given day, so it just makes it harder for other teams to guard us because we're just so dangerous with the ball," Porter, Northwood's

senior guard, said after the Chargers took an offensive wrecking ball to the Southern Alamance Patriots for a 55-40 win Thursday night.

Host Northwood claimed bragging rights as champions of the First Bank Charger Classic holiday tournament, affirming the enduring maxim, "Third time's the charm."

The Chargers bowed out to Apex Friendship in the finals of the inaugural 2018 Classic and again in 2019. The 2020 tournament wasn't played due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Porter, averaging 19.9 points per game entering the championship tilt, ripped the nets for a game-high 17 points. She headlined the all-tournament team as Most Outstanding Player. Teammates Gianna McManaman and Skylar Adams joined her as all-tournament players.

"It makes me feel good, it makes me feel like my teammates trust me with the ball," Porter said of the honors. "We just work so cohesively together, and the fact that I'm a team

See **CHARGERS**, page B2



Northwood freshman Natalia Whitaker (2) shoots a floater in the Chargers' 55-40 win over Southern Alamance in the championship game of the First Bank Charger Classic last Thursday.

Staff photo by Simon Barbre

I'll admit it: I was wrong about Cincinnati

This is the last time I'll write about Cincinnati this season.



VICTOR HENSLEY
Sports Editor

Up to this point, I've written multiple columns about the Bearcats' historic season.

I've expressed simultaneous sympathy — for my passionate Fighting Irish-fan dad — and elation after the Bearcats' monumental win over Notre Dame in October.

I've made the case for Cincinnati to become the first Group of Five team to ever reach the College Football Playoff — and celebrated when it actually, shockingly, happened, mentioning that I thought the Bearcats could give Alabama a run for its money in the CFP.

And now, for the third time in a few short months, I'm putting words on this Cincy-themed page to admit something: I was wrong.

The Bearcats — as was evident in their crushing 27-6 loss to the Crimson Tide in the Cotton Bowl on New Year's Eve — didn't have a shot against Alabama.

But not because they're inferior as a Group of Five program, but because they simply didn't have it that night.

They didn't have the offense. Bearcats' senior quarterback Desmond Ridder, the team's heart-and-soul during its Cinderella run, was 17-of-32 for 144 yards and no touchdowns (or interceptions). They had just 218 total yards compared to Alabama's 482, but most importantly, they didn't score a single touchdown on the night, settling for just two lousy field goals.

They didn't have the "it" factor they've had all season. On numerous occasions, the Bearcats' offense sputtered out when it had a chance to capitalize, seize control of the moment and put Alabama on its heels ... yet, it never did.

They just didn't have it. Plain and simple.

And that's not to say the team played horribly or weren't worthy of sharing the field with Alabama.

The Bearcats' defense — which kept Heisman-winning quarterback Bryce Young at bay with just 188 yards (17-of-28) and three touchdowns, along with an interception — held the Crimson Tide to its third-lowest point total in a game all season (27) and allowed far fewer points than Georgia did in the SEC Championship Game against the Tide (41).

See **WRONG**, page B2

2021 HOLIDAY TOURNAMENT ROUND-UP

Here's what you might've missed over the holiday break

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
News + Record Staff

For many, the holidays are defined by quality time with loved ones, cheerfully recognizable tunes and sweater weather.

But in high school basketball circles, this time of year is home to one of the sport's biggest staples: holiday tournaments.

While many other students are taking time away from school for winter break, basketball players are spending a good chunk of it in the gym — practicing, preparing and playing.

In Chatham, eight local teams took the time to participate in holiday tournaments across the region, with some claiming their respective tournament titles and others coming away empty-handed.

Here, the News + Record recaps all of the winter-break basketball action from around the county, including info on any holiday tournaments you might've missed.



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

The Northwood Chargers women's basketball team poses with the bracket and banner following their 55-40 win over Southern Alamance in the championship game of the First Bank Charger Classic last Thursday. This is the first time the Chargers have won the tournament, which they've hosted 3 out of the last 4 seasons.

Chatham Charter Winter Slam

Chatham participants: Chatham Charter men (3-0), Champions

Dates: Dec. 20-22

Location: Chatham Charter School

of participants: 4

Knights' Team MVP: Beau Harvey (freshman)

Chatham Charter went into its annual Winter Slam tournament at 10-1 on the season and came out with a 13-1 overall record, a clean sweep of its opponents and the 2021 Winter Slam title.

The Knights downed the Neuse Charter Cougars (62-39), the Cornerstone Charter Cardinals (83-51) and the Research Triangle Raptors (60-59) to go unbeaten in the round-robin-style tournament.

It didn't take long for the Knights to flex their depth, with four players in double figures — including junior Aamir Mapp, who led the team with 13 points — in the tournament-opener against the Cougars.

They followed it up with another blowout, this time of the Cardinals, with the sibling duo of junior Adam Harvey (21 points) and freshman Beau Harvey (16 points) combining



Submitted photo

The Chatham Charter men's basketball team poses for photos after defeating the Research Triangle Raptors, 60-59, in the championship game of the 2021 Chatham Charter Winter Slam on Dec. 22.

for 37 points en route to the team's 2-0 start.

Two games in, the Knights had outscored their opponents 145-90 and were rolling.

Then came the last game of the tournament against the Raptors, who were also unbeaten entering the Slam's final day.

"The first two teams gave us a little bit of a challenge, just different looks, but then we got into that championship game with Research," Jason Messier, the Knights' head coach, told the News

+ Record following the tournament. "And we knew it was going to be a battle."

Chatham Charter had seen Research Triangle in the second game of the season — the Knights won, 58-45 — so they knew what they were up against: the Raptors' "incredible half-court trapping defense," said Messier.

The Knights were ahead by 10 at one point in the first half, but the Raptors hung around and fought

See **HOLIDAY**, page B3

An expanded Playoff will provide more competitive football

To the surprise of probably nobody, the College Football Playoff semifinals weren't close.

Alabama vs. Cincinnati was exciting for a little more than a quarter and the pregame hype surrounding Michigan vs. Georgia was more entertaining than the actual game.

Only three of the semifinal games in the eight-year history of the playoff format have ever been decided by single digits. The average margin of victory is more than 20 points per game.

Some people will use that statistic to argue that an expansion of the playoff is not necessary. I see it a different way. An eight- or 12-team playoff likely won't make the semifinals any more competitive. The SEC, particularly Alabama and Georgia, are so much more dominant than everybody else.

But, an expanded format would give us more competitive bowl games.

Imagine if the Utah vs. Ohio State Rose Bowl, which turned out to be a 48-45 shootout on New Year's Day, was a quarterfinal matchup.

ESPN pundits like Kirk Herbstreit, among others, like to call out players for not playing in their bowl games and, instead, choosing to sit out and

prepare for the NFL Draft. There's too much for some of these players to risk and blaming them for either decision is wrong.

But maybe players are sitting out more often because the games don't mean as much as they used to with an increased emphasis on the Playoff over everything else. In an era of college football where the Playoff is given so much more value than other bowl games, do you blame them?

The College Football Playoff has taken over the sport. If given a chance to play for a shot at a title, players might be more inclined to play in another game. Michigan State vs. Pittsburgh could have been a really exciting game.

But with MSU running back Kenneth Walker and Pitt quarterback Kenny Pickett sitting out, it was a clunker.

The same would hold true for coaches. Brian Kelly and Lincoln Riley might not be more worried about their next venture before the bowl game.

Even with a change in format, the best two teams would almost always meet in the final like they do now. This would not change that. But it will give the smaller conferences a fairer shake and a chance to see more competitive football games. That's what this is all about anyway.

Max Baker can be reached at max@chathamnr.com and @maxbaker_15.

CHATHAM COUNTY ATHLETICS RUNDOWN

This week's schedule and last week's results

BY VICTOR HENSLEY
News + Record Staff

New year, new schedule. This week, student-athletes from around Chatham are getting back into the groove as schools return from winter break. That means plenty of basketball and the occasional wrestling match and swim/track meet. After a successful batch of holiday basketball tournaments last week — which you can read about in this week's edition — teams will attempt to build off of their performances by having strong showings to start off the new year. Across the board, we're in for a fantastic slate of local sports to kick 2022 off right. Here's this week's schedule and last week's results.

THIS WEEK

Wednesday, January 5

Basketball: Jordan-Matthews vs. Graham (women at 6 p.m., men at 7:30 p.m.)
Basketball: Northwood vs. Panther Creek (women at 5 p.m., men at 6:30 p.m.)
Wrestling: Chatham Central vs. Cummings (North Moore also participating), 6 p.m.
Wrestling: Jordan-Mat-

thews at Graham (Bartlett Yancey also participating), 6 p.m.

Thursday, January 6

Swimming: Jordan-Matthews vs. North Moore, 5 p.m.
Basketball: Chatham Charter vs. Southern Alamance (women at 6 p.m., men at 7:30 p.m.)
Swimming: Northwood at Cedar Ridge (Orange and Williams also attending), 8 p.m.

Friday, January 7

Wrestling: Northwood, Seaforth at Jaguar Invitational (at Carrboro), 8 a.m.
Basketball: Chatham Central at Cummings (women at 6 p.m., men at 7:30 p.m.)
Basketball: Seaforth vs. Jordan-Matthews (women at 6 p.m., men at 7:30 p.m.)
Basketball: Woods Charter at Research Triangle (women at 6 p.m., men at 7:30 p.m.)

Saturday, January 8

Track: Northwood in H.O.T. JDLS Fast Track, 4 p.m.
Basketball: Northwood women vs. Seaforth, 5:30 p.m.

LAST WEEK

Monday, December 27

Basketball: The Jor-

dan-Matthews women were crushed by the Central Davidson Spartans, 66-29, in the opening round of the Randolph-Davidson Christmas Classic played at Providence Grove. Leading the Jets on the night were senior Eillia Wright (17 points, 5 rebounds, 8 steals) and sophomore Lia Carter (7 points, 2 rebounds, 7 steals).

Basketball: The Jordan-Matthews men lost a lopsided game to the Central Davidson Spartans, 87-60, in the opening round of the Randolph-Davidson Christmas Classic played at Providence Grove.

Tuesday, December 28

Basketball: The Northwood men defeated the Callaway Chargers (Mississippi), 61-52, in overtime in the 3rd place game of the Coby White Bracket in the John Wall Holiday Invitational. Leading Northwood on the morning was sophomore Fred Whitaker Jr. (22 points, 5 rebounds, 5 assists, 6 steals) and sophomore Drake Powell (14 points, 6 rebounds, 6 assists, 2 steals, 2 blocks).

Basketball: The Jordan-Matthews women won a close game over the Lexington Yellowjackets, 45-43,

in the first round of the consolation bracket at the Randolph-Davidson Holiday Classic played at Providence Grove. Leading the Jets in the win were senior Eillia Wright (17 points, 2 rebounds, 4 assists, 3 steals), junior Maggie Thornton (15 points, 6 rebounds, 2 steals) and senior Tatyn Siler (6 points, 12 rebounds, 4 assists, 1 steal, 1 block).

Basketball: The Jordan-Matthews men fell to the Randleman Tigers, 54-37, in the first round of the consolation bracket at the Randolph-Davidson Christmas Classic played at Providence Grove.

Basketball: The Chatham Central women lost a lopsided game to the Athens Drive Jaguars, 56-30, in the opening round of the First Bank Charger Classic at Northwood.

Basketball: The Seaforth women defeated the South Iredell Vikings, 52-49, in the opening round of the North Iredell Holiday Classic.

Wednesday, December 29

Basketball: The Northwood women earned a blowout win over the Southern Durham Spartans, 68-42, in the second round of the First Bank Charger Classic.

Basketball: The Seaforth women fell to the Mooresville Blue Devils, 44-28, in the second round of the North Iredell Holiday Classic.

Basketball: The Jordan-Matthews women defeated the Asheboro Blue Comets, 39-37, in their second consolation game of the Randolph-Davidson Christmas Classic played at Providence Grove.

Thursday, December 30

Basketball: The Chatham Central women fell to the Garinger Wildcats, 46-24, in the consolation round of the First Bank Charger Classic played at Northwood.

Basketball: The Northwood women downed the Southern Alamance Patriots, 55-40, in the championship game of the First Bank Charger Classic to claim the tournament title.

Friday, December 31

No events scheduled; Winter Break

Saturday, January 1

No events scheduled; Winter Break

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

CHARGERS

Continued from page B1

player and I just do what I have to do to get a win makes me happy.”

After taking a 16-10 lead in the first period, the Chargers exploded for a 25-point run in the second period to extend the lead to 41-12, effectively sealing the win. Porter fueled the scoring avalanche with 10 of those points.

“We just couldn't miss,” Porter said. “We was hitting shots from the outside, on the perimeter and making layups.”

Southern Alamance forward Caitlyn Russell opened the second period with a basket, which would count for the only Patriots points in the period.

During a three-minute stretch that followed, the Chargers' Natalie Bell drained a 3-pointer from the corner, followed by Adams raining in a 3-pointer of her own.

Porter then got a steal at mid-court and raced, uncontested, for a layup, then knocked down a 3-pointer on an ensuing possession.

Northwood senior Myla Marve splashed in the Chargers' fourth 3-pointer of the period a little later, adding to the Chargers' eventual seven 3-pointers in the



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Northwood senior Olivia Porter (23) fights through contact in the paint in the Chargers' 55-40 win over Southern Alamance in the championship game of the First Bank Charger Classic last Thursday. Porter finished with 19 points on the night and earned the tournament's Most Outstanding Player award.

game. They eclipsed the Patriots, 7-2, on total 3-pointers.

The early commanding lead was huge for the Chargers.

“Second half we weren't making our layups,” Porter said. “We weren't hitting our threes.”

Southern Alamance

outscored their hosts, 28-14, in the second half, holding the Chargers to just 4 points from Adams in the final frame.

“We just got lazy,” Porter said. “We thought the game was won. If we hadn't played that way in the first half, it would have been a way closer game.”

“We played really well in the first half and didn't quite execute well on some stuff in the second half,” Northwood Head Coach Kerri Snipes added following the win. “But overall they continue to play hard. We just need to clean up, especially putting four quarters together.”

Snipes said she changed up the defense in the second half and the Chargers got out of sync.

“We had some different people in there at different times that aren't used to always playing together,” she said.

On the plus side, she said, her players worked the ball well, looked for their teammates, made good passes and hit each other in open court, underneath the basket and outside, as well. Eight players scored in the well-balanced offensive barrage, which saw Adams also in double digits with 13 points.

“We just talked to the girls at halftime about not quitting, and fighting. Don't give up,” said Southern Alamance Head Coach Amy Sarrett, calling Northwood “prob-



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Northwood junior Te'Keyah Bland (12) goes up for a shot in the paint in the Chargers' 55-40 win over Southern Alamance last Thursday. Bland, who is coming off of a leg injury, is looking to get back to last year's all-conference form.

ably the best team we've faced all year.” MaxPreps ranks Northwood 19th in the state, fourth in the 3A class.

The Patriots had three players in double digits. Meilani Patterson scored 10 of her 14 points in the second half, and Christina Bowers scored all 14 of her points in the second half. Russell dropped in 10 and joined Bowers as all-tournament players.

Northwood, which has set a goal of making it to the state championship game this year after dropping a loss in the Final Four last season, should be even stronger down the stretch. Junior Te'Keyah Bland, a top performer last year, has returned to limited action after being sidelined for four months.

Snipes said with Bland back in the lineup, she and post player senior Caroline Allen can get more looks inside with their height advantage.

“I feel OK,” Bland said. “I know it will take some time, but other than that it's a slow recovery. Coach Snipes does a good job of making sure if I'm OK and if I need to come out.”

Bland struggled with a shin fracture for three years before getting surgery.

“My tibia bone is kind of cracked in half,” and her physician gave her a stern warning, Bland said. “He said any wrong move I could have snapped it in half.”

The most challenging part of her comeback?

“I'm not the same player I used to be. That's probably it,” Bland said. “Some more time (and) it will come.”

WRONG

Continued from page B1

But despite their ability to defend the pass, the Crimson Tide gashed the Bearcats on the ground for 301 yards, including 204 from redshirt senior running back Brian Robinson Jr. alone.

There were plenty of things Cincinnati did well.

Alabama just did them better.

And when it was all said and done, the Bearcats found out the hard way what Power Five teams learned a long time ago: Nick Saban always wins.

Following the game, social media was ablaze with one of the laziest takes I've heard in years.

Many took the Bearcats' three-score loss to the Crimson Tide as an opportunity to prop up the Power Five, effectively using it as an example of why teams outside of the Power Five should never have a shot at the Playoff.

Yet, those same folks fail to recognize the fact that Alabama's won all seven of its CFP semifinal victories — all of which were Power Five programs aside from Cincinnati this season — by at least two scores.

And that doesn't even include the 52-24 beatdown the Crimson Tide handed the Ohio State Buckeyes in last season's national title game.

Group of Five schools making the Playoff isn't

the problem here.

Alabama is. Saban's just too dang good. And that's OK.

But there's no reason to fault Cincinnati — or Group of Five teams as a whole — for losing to Alabama on the big stage. It happens to just about everybody.

If you're going to delegitimize the Bearcats' program because of one loss, then you've got to do the same for Ohio State (52-24 title game loss in 2020-21), Notre Dame (31-14 semifinal loss in 2020-21), Oklahoma (45-34 semifinal loss in 2018-19), Clemson (24-6 semifinal loss in 2017-18), Washington (24-7 semifinal loss in 2016-17) and Michigan State (38-0 semifinal loss in 2015-16) for all suffering the same fate.

It stinks that the Bearcats' season ended the way it did, with no real fight, no unforgettable win over Bama, no happy ending to their storybook campaign.

But a 13-1 season with plenty of roller-coaster moments, history-shattering storylines and a shot to go toe-to-toe against the best football program of my generation in the College Football Playoff is undoubtedly a success.

And when you're going up against Alabama in the semifinals, sometimes that's the best you can hope for.

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



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Northwood senior Caroline Allen (30) wins the tip-off in the Chargers' victory over the Patriots last Thursday.



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HOLIDAY

Continued from page B1

back to make it a one-point game heading into the fourth quarter.

But despite the Raptors' speed, athleticism and undeniable defensive intensity, the Knights were able to squeak out the one-point win, 60-59, in the playoff-like atmosphere thanks to a few huge plays in the final period.

"We were ready for that playoff atmosphere," Messier said. "My guys loved it. They soaked it up. And there were moments where we did show our inexperience and our youth, but they executed down the stretch to pull out that victory."

Beau Harvey was named the tournament's Most Outstanding Player as the Knights' youth movement continues to flourish. Their other big-named freshman, center Brennen Oldham, nearly had a triple-double with blocks (8 points, 10 rebounds, 7 blocks) in the title game.

First Bank Charger Classic

Chatham participants: Northwood women (2-0), Champions; Chatham Central women (0-2)

Dates: Dec. 28-30

Location: Northwood High School

of participants: 8

Chargers' Team MVP:

Olivia Porter (senior)

Bears' Team MVP: Kailey Green (junior)

It'd been three years since Northwood began hosting the First Bank Charger Classic.

Yet, over the first two installments, the Chargers came away empty-handed, watching Apex Friendship lift the banner on their home court in both 2018 and 2019.

This year, however, the Chargers made a statement with two emphatic, double-digit wins over the Southern Durham Spartans, 68-42, and the Southern Alamance Patriots, 55-40, to claim the 2021 First Bank Charger Classic title.

Northwood's opening game against the Enloe Eagles was cancelled due to a COVID-19 issue within the Eagles' program, meaning it automatically advanced to the second round, where the Chargers had a face-off with former conference mate Southern Durham.

The Chargers allowed just 16 points in the opening half against the Spartans while simultaneously scoring 43 points of their own, culminating in a 27-point first-half lead.

Northwood senior transfer Olivia Porter — the team's leading scorer on the season, averaging 19.9 points per game — led the team with 26 points as the Chargers routed the Spartans with a strong second half.

"Olivia played well," Kerri Snipes, the Chargers' first-year head coach, told the News + Record. "She was aggressive on defense and was able to finish on the other end with a lot of steals. She was also tough getting to the basket."

The Chargers then found themselves in a familiar spot: the Classic's final round.

Their opponent, Southern Alamance, had narrowly eked out an overtime win against the Athens Drive Jaguars in the semifinals, 44-43, and were undoubtedly sluggish, scoring just 12 points in the first half against the Chargers.

Meanwhile, Northwood was on an offensive tear to start the championship game, ripping off four of their seven total 3-pointers in the second quarter en route to a whopping 41-12 lead at the break.

"As the coaching staff,



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Chatham Central junior Kailey Green (10) scores in the paint in the Bears' 56-30 loss to the Athens Drive Jaguars in the opening round of the First Bank Charger Classic on Dec. 28.

we try to tell the girls, 'Each game starts at the tip-off, so bring that energy and intensity from the tip,'" Snipes said, "They've really kind of bought into our philosophy that defense is going to win games."

But in the second half, their offensive production tapered off as the Chargers got cold, scoring just 14 points compared to the Patriots' 28.

Luckily for the Chargers, their early lead gave them enough insurance to avoid a late-game Patriots comeback, earning them their first-ever First Bank Charger Classic title as they finally became the team to hold up the banner at mid-court.

"I tell them, 'We always need to protect our home court,'" Snipes said. "We definitely want to defend the court that we get to play on each day in practice. So they definitely did a good job of coming out and being ready to play despite some of the changes in scheduling."

On the Chatham Central side of things, the Bears finished the tournament with an 0-2 record after losing their first-round game to Athens Drive, 56-30, before falling to the Garinger Wildcats, 46-24, in their consolation game.

Junior Kailey Green was the lone Bear added to the Classic's all-tournament team for her performance.

John Wall Holiday Invitational

Chatham participants: Northwood men (1-1), 3rd place

Dates: Dec. 23-30

Location: Raleigh

of participants: 4 (24 overall)

Record: 1-1

Champion: Asheville Christian

Chargers' Team MVP:

Fred Whitaker Jr. (sophomore)

The John Wall Holiday Invitational is one of the most prestigious holiday tournaments in the country, showcasing not only some of North Carolina's top programs, but also an assortment of top-tier teams from around the nation, which come together for nearly a week of wall-to-wall basketball in Raleigh.

In this year's tournament, 24 teams — including six teams from California, Florida, Maryland, Mississippi and Virginia — took the stage across the Invitational's four brackets (named after four different N.C.-born players).

Northwood — making its first-ever appearance in the Invitational, which has now seen 49 installments — was a member of the four-team Coby White bracket, where the Chargers were knocked out in the first round by a familiar opponent, the Terry Sanford Bulldogs, in a 49-46 thriller, ending their tournament run before Christmas.

The Chargers battled back from a 5-point deficit entering the fourth quarter thanks to big games from their stellar sophomores, Fred Whitaker Jr. (18 points) and Drake Powell (17

points), but couldn't finish the job despite having an opportunity to tie it with less than 5 seconds remaining.

Even in defeat, however, the Chargers still found a way to see the positive in being one of just 18 teams from N.C. to receive an invite to the Holiday Invitational.

"It's the first time in school history that we were asked to be a part of (the Holiday Invitational) and I know the boys were thrilled because they grew up watching it and the players that were in it," Matt Brown, the Chargers' head coach, told the News + Record. "It was just a really cool experience and a real blessing for us. ... It was a lot of fun."

The Chargers followed up their loss in the third-place game against the Callaway Chargers (Mississippi), where they battled back from a 12-point deficit for a 61-52 overtime victory to claim third place in their bracket.

Whitaker Jr. — who also made the all-tournament team — had 22 points and 6 steals in the win, being named Hoop State's "Star of the Game" for his performance as Northwood finished the tournament on a high note.

"We're very fortunate because not all teams have a true point guard who can score and can defend on-ball," Brown said. "He's probably one of our hardest workers. ... This year, he's really stepped up, he's gained a lot of confidence and that experience last year helped him out big time."

The Chargers wrapped up their trip to Raleigh with a 1-1 record, but after being shorthanded due to illnesses — which they didn't find out until the morning of the Terry Sanford game — and playing as tough as they did against some of the country's best, it's left Brown and his team with plenty of high hopes.

"I learned that we were deeper than I expected because, going in, I thought maybe six or seven guys could play, but now I'm leaning more toward eight or nine guys can play and that's going to help out," Brown said. "We're pretty resilient, coming back from a deficit in both games and winning one and almost winning the other says a lot about the group. ... These guys will keep fighting."

North Iredell Holiday Classic

Chatham participants: Seaforth women (1-2)

Dates: Dec. 28-30

Location: North Iredell High School

of participants: 8

Champion: Langtree Charter (women)

Hawks' Team MVP: Gabby White (freshman)

The Seaforth women's basketball team competed in the North Iredell Holiday Classic, making the nearly two-hour trek to Olin for the three-day tournament.

The Hawks won their opening game against the South Iredell Vikings in a close one, 52-49, but struggled mightily in a 44-28 loss to the Mooresville Blue Devils, followed by a narrow loss, 36-31, to the North Iredell Raiders in their consolation game.

The star of the show for the Hawks was freshman guard Gabby White, who racked up 25 points — nearly half of her team's scoring — in their first-round game against the Vikings, adding 11 rebounds in the process.

In fact, White produced double-digit rebounds in all three of the Hawks' holiday contests, including 12 boards against the Blue Devils and an impressive 16 rebounds against the Raiders.

Her scoring slowed down in the Hawks' two losses, giving way to sophomore Peyton Collins (13 points vs. Mooresville, 11 points vs. North Iredell) to make her presence known on the offensive end.

At about the season's midpoint, the Hawks have a 5-5 record (2-0 in the Mid-Carolina 1A/2A conference) with a few of their losses coming against some of the state's top teams (Northwood, 11-1; Grace Christian, 18-1; Apex Friendship, 11-1).

So while Seaforth's record on the young season is as middle-of-the-road as you can get, their youth's ability to compete with teams much larger than them is a sign of good things to come.

Randolph-Davidson Christmas Classic

Chatham participants: Jordan-Matthews women (2-1); Jordan-Matthews men (1-2)

Dates: Dec. 27-29

Location: Providence Grove High School

of participants: 16 (8 women, 8 men)

Champion: Randleman Tigers (women); Central Davidson (men)

Jets' Team MVPs: Eillia Wright (senior) and Maggie Thornton (junior), women; Rayshawn Alston (senior), men

As the old adage goes: it's not about how you start, it's how you finish.

That's the motto for the 2021-22 Jordan-Matthews women's basketball team halfway through the season, which has seen the Jets start slow on a few different occasions before gaining their footing and finishing strong.

The same could be said for their performance in the 2021 Randolph-Davidson Christmas Classic, played in the gym at Providence Grove High School last week, when the Jets lost their opening contest to the Central Davidson Spartans, 66-29, before rattling off two straight wins in consolation play against the Lexington Yellowjackets, 45-43, and the Asheboro Blue Comets, 39-37.

"To get the two wins against 3A competition and 2A competition and then also playing against Central Davidson, which is pretty good and in 3A, the level of competition helped us a lot," Lamont Piggie, the Jets' first-year head coach, told the News + Record over the weekend. "It'll prepare us for the second stretch of the season."

In the opener, Jets senior Eillia Wright — who Piggie named his team's co-tournament MVP — scored 17 of her team's 29 total points in the 37-point loss to the Spartans.

Central Davidson made a living out of getting to the charity stripe against J-M, shooting an impressive 25 for 33 (76%) from the free-throw line as one of the primary reasons for their blowout victory.

However, after the Jets "didn't show up like we were supposed to" in their first-round matchup, said Piggie, they bounced back the following day in their first consolation game against Lexington, where Wright dropped another 17 points and junior Maggie Thornton added 15 of her own to seal the narrow win.

Even more impressive than the win for Piggie, though, was his team's ability to overcome Wright's second-half foul trouble to stay afloat and fend off a late Yellowjackets comeback.

He praised Thornton for being able to "step up big for us" while Wright wasn't on the floor.

"It was a collective effort from the whole team," Piggie said. "Maggie helped carry us in the second game when Eillia was out and kept us in it."

In the Jets' second consolation game and their final game of the tournament, they faced off against Asheboro, the defending 3A state champions, in a low-scoring battle.

Wright (21 points) and Thornton (12 points) led the charge in a game that Piggie called "closer than it should've been," acting as the only two Jets in double figures and combining for 33 of the team's 39 total points.

Through 10 games, J-M has a 4-6 record, sitting at just a game under .500, which is a positive for a team that started the season 1-5 with four losses of 36 points or more.

"The key is to have confidence because last year, (this team) won one game, but we're at four right now, so that's excellent for them," Piggie said. "You've just got to keep working, you can't let up."

As for the men's team, it may not have won the Randolph-Davidson Christmas Classic — or even finished above .500 — but by the end of it, the Jets might have done something even more important: discovered who they are.

"I think we found our identity in the tournament," Rodney Wiley, the Jets' head coach, told the News + Record on Monday. "To make some noise in the conference this season, we just have to come out and play J-M basketball and stick to hat and go out and compete every night."

The Jets finished their three-day trip to Providence Grove with a 1-2 record after losing their first two games to the eventual champion Central Davidson Spartans, 87-60, and the Randleman Tigers, 54-37. They rounded out the tournament with a victory over the West Davidson Dragons, allowing them to leave Climax with a win under their belts.

Against the Spartans, the Jets got off to a slow start, unprepared for their pressure-filled defense, which forced J-M to make plenty of mistakes and turn the ball over early.

"We got behind early and they hit open shots, they hit all of their threes, it seemed like," Wiley said. "They're a really good basketball team. Real, real gritty, just played hard. They kind of knocked us on our heels to start off and we just had to fight back to compete in that game."

The script was a little different for their Day 2 game against Randleman, where Wiley said his team "played them pretty good starting out," but hit a brick wall as a lid was seemingly placed over the Jets' basket and they struggled to produce offensively.

The Tigers, who were up by just 8 points at halftime, pulled out to an eventual 17-point lead, putting a pin in the Jets' attempt at a comeback.

Then, even after losing two straight, the Jets had to get up for an early morning game against the Dragons, earning a hard-fought win.

"It's hard to get up for an early morning game, but I just told the guys, 'We've got to come back and compete because what you do now in this last game toward the end of the year is going to propel us going into the new year,'" Wiley said.

"And we went out and really played hard that game and were able to come up with a victory."

Wiley said he was impressed with the way his seniors, Rayshawn Alston and Colby Daniel, along with one of his two juniors, Dallas Richardson, played despite the results.

For Wiley, his team's experience at the holiday tournament might have been what they needed to compete in their final 11

games of the regular season, which includes eight conference games.

"(In the tournament) we learned that if we just run our offense and be patient, we can get the shots we want," Wiley said. "And just dig down defensively. Keep guys in front of us. Play man-to-man defense. ... just get back to who we are."

Yellow Jacket Christmas Classic

Chatham participants: Chatham Charter women (0-2)

Location: Lee County High School

Dates: Dec. 27-29

of participants: 7

Knights' MVP: Tamaya Walden (junior)

Chatham Charter was a last-minute entry into the Yellow Jacket Christmas Classic, hosted by Lee County, which — aside from the 1A Knights — consisted of two 3A schools and four 4A schools.

In short, the Knights had their work cut out for them against schools much larger than them. And they held their own.

They finished the tournament with an 0-2 record with losses to the Willow Spring Storm, 56-46, and the Western Harnett Eagles, 64-62, both games that came down to the wire.

However, the team's inability to come out on top in either game could be credited to its usual shortcomings.

"Basically, it comes down to the same things in every game we've lost: our turnovers, our rebounds and our fouls," Jeff Patterson, the Knights' head coach, told the News + Record on Monday. "We got in foul trouble (against Willow Spring) and we didn't do the fundamental stuff we needed to as far as boxing out."

Chatham Charter also struggled with their offensive aggression against the Storm, drawing contact at an alarmingly smaller rate than Willow Spring.

When it was all said and done, the Storm shot 25 free throws to the Knights' six.

"We haven't gotten to the point where we're really aggressive on the offensive end," Patterson said. "It's like we're afraid of contact ... it's like I tell the girls, 'You've got to be aggressive and make the referee call it.'"

At the end of the third quarter, the Knights were down by just one point, 39-38, but fell apart in the fourth quarter, scoring just eight points as the Storm pulled away and sealed the double-digit win.

The following day, the Knights faced off against the Eagles and suffered yet another late-game collapse.

At the end of the third period, Chatham Charter held on to a 10-point lead, 46-36, but as Patterson described it, "it seemed like the wheels fell off" and the Knights lost their footing in a quarter filled with poor fouls, turnovers and lost rebounds.

The Eagles were able to send it into overtime, where they'd take the close win, 64-62.

"Overall, I was pleased with the way we played," Patterson said. "We fought. And for us to be a 1A school playing against 2A and 3A schools, it should help us out come playoff time."

In the Knights' consolation game, junior point guard Tamaya Walden scored 29 points on 45% shooting from the field. Patterson called her "the glue to the team" and named her the team's Most Valuable Player for the tournament.

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

Capturing the moment

In 2021, fans of Chatham sports had plenty to celebrate with multiple teams and individuals competing in state title events as programs experienced success across the board. At the News + Record, our staff photographers withstood rain delays, navigated pandemic-related protocols and did everything they could to capture big moments from the pitch to the field to the court. Here are some of our favorite sports shots of 2021, straight from the lenses of the N+R.

In this photo, the Northwood men's lacrosse team trains maneuvers along the sideline under the setting sun during a game against the Carrboro Jaguars last February.

Staff photo by Peyton Sickles



Staff photo by Kim Hawks

Chatham Central freshman Brennen Oldham (42) rises up in the paint to score a bucket in the Knights' 61-35 win over Chatham Central in Siler City on Dec. 10.



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Northwood midfielder Sydney Cox takes a corner kick during the first half of her team's game against East Chapel Hill on March 30 in Pittsboro. The Chargers generated numerous first-half scoring chances but ultimately lost, 2-0.



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Northwood's football team gathers around one final time after their 32-7 second-round loss to Havelock last April. The Chargers finished the 2020-21 pandemic-shortened year as 6-3 conference co-champions, a major step up from the previous season.



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Chatham Central senior first baseman Brady Cunnup (12) tosses a ball to himself in the dugout during his team's 11-0 win against conference foe South Stanly in Bear Creek last May.



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Seaforth sophomore Lochlan Haddix (24) drives through contact against a Cummings defender in the Hawks' 87-62 loss to the Cummings Cavaliers on Dec. 14.



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Jordan-Matthews' sophomore quarterback Kelton Fuquay (14) drops back in the pocket while looking for an open receiver during a game at the Jack Shaner Jamboree, hosted by Northwood, in August.



Staff photo by Kim Hawks

The Woods Charter women's volleyball team (white uniforms), surrounded by fans and fellow students, pose for photos after winning the Central Tar Heel 1A conference tournament title against Chatham Charter on Oct. 20. The Wolves, which had been 4-44 combined over the last few seasons, finished with an 18-4 record this past year.



Staff photo by Peyton Sickles

Knights sophomore guard Jackson Brown (14) is introduced in the pre-game festivities against Woods Charter last January. Chatham Charter won handily, 87-37.



Staff photo by Simon Barbre

Woods Charter senior Kyle Howarth (green) strides down the track in the boys 100-meter dash at the 1A NCHSAA Track & Field State Championships at North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro last June. Howarth placed 6th in the event (11.64) and 9th in the boys 200-meter dash (23.96).

CHATHAM CHAT | MICHAEL SMITH, CHATHAM EDC

In Chatham, 2022 poised to be a year of opportunity



Courtesy of the Chatham EDC

Michael Smith

state 685, means big things for Chatham as well. With Toyota's large plant located just over the county line, Chatham will see a lot of interest from Toyota's suppliers, who will want to locate new facilities nearby.

It's well known that interstates are a critical component of commerce, moving both people and goods. When companies are scouting a new location, one of the key questions is the distance from a potential site to an interstate. The possibility of U.S. Hwy. 421 being upgraded to an interstate would enhance Chatham's status as a centrally located area and serve as an additional benefit to our industry-ready sites.

We've discussed "Accelerate 2026" before. What's the funding status — and can you provide an update about the work being done through this funding?

We're ecstatic that we are getting close to our fundraising goal of \$900,000. With our funding and future secured, staff remains focused on ways we may increase the commercial and industrial tax base through new companies and expansions of existing operations. 2021 sets up well for this goal in Chatham.

We are continuing to work very closely with CCCC both in their workforce training programs and with its new Small Business Center Director, Phillip Pappas. We also contin-

The possibility of U.S. Hwy. 421 being upgraded to an interstate would enhance Chatham's status as a centrally located area and serve as an additional benefit to our industry-ready sites.

MICHAEL SMITH, president, Chatham EDC

ue to work with our existing industries to help on any issues they may have and to keep them updated on programs and opportunities through CCCC.

The program funding will allow us to even better market the county as a great place for businesses and families to grow and prosper.

What's the latest on activity at Chatham's two megasites?

Both the CAM [Chatham Advanced Manufacturing; Siler City] site and the TIP [Triangle Innovation Point, Moncure] site have seen record interest, activity, and visits over the past 12 months. This community is fortunate to have such strong business leaders that own these two state-certified megasites in the 2,000-acre range and want to have significant companies land on each.

The recent Toyota battery announcement is a site 10 minutes from CAM, so our opportunity for related businesses is high. The TIP site is a great fit for multiple technology companies looking to be at a location 10 minutes from the I-540 Raleigh Outer Loop. These two sites both continue to be in conversations with very large projects that have a chance to provide good jobs and opportunities for Chatham County and this region.

As 2022 dawns, we're still in the midst of a pandemic, and for many businesses, it's still a struggle. But we're seeing lots of industrial expansion all around us. What's your assessment of Chatham's positioning?

Despite the initial pandemic issue that hit everyone, Chatham is positioned well. There

of the EDC ...

We are looking forward to working with our two board members that were reappointed by the BOC, Dr. Jennifer Platt and Chreatha Alston. We are glad to have their input into how Chatham can continue to move in a positive direction.

You came to Chatham County from Lee, so you're very familiar with Pittsboro's partnership with the city of Sanford to boost its water supply. What's the status of that right now?

The partnership between Chatham County and Lee County remains strong. Earlier this year, the project to extend wastewater from Sanford to Pittsboro received the necessary permits. More recently, the project went out to bid. This agreement and the timing has allowed Moncure to be a part of several responses to large RFIs from major companies. We are looking forward to the beginning of construction and the culmination of years of planning and diligent work from our local and regional partners.

We are fortunate to have County Manager Dan LaMontagne's utility experience and regional connections to help us during this busy time. My previous work in Lee has been helpful with this unique regional agreement we have. Our partners in Sanford continue to be at the table as we are working with several large projects considering a new location at the Triangle Innovation Point site in Moncure.

(Editor's note: see the Dec. 30-Jan. 6 edition of the News + Record for a story about the state's \$34 million grant provided to the City of Sanford specifically for improvements to the TIP Megasite.)

Michael Smith can be reached at michael.smith@chatham-countync.gov.

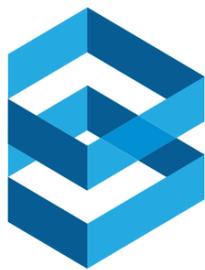
Chatham is a part of NC CORE, as we know, but now the proposed Interstate 685 could also impact our area. What can you tell us about anything new w/NC CORE, and what do we need to know about I-685?

The Carolina Core had a big announcement recently, with the Toyota battery plant that is coming to neighboring Randolph County at the Greensboro-Randolph Megasite. That announcement, along with the potential development of Inter-

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REVIEW | SPIDERMAN VS. CHINA?

2 blockbusters fight a box office war across a U.S.-China political divide

BY BUCK RYAN & LEI JIAO
Special to the News + Record

Editor's note: While news media obsess over U.S.-China relations, a little-known conflict was just resolved. Spoiler alert: Looks like Hollywood won this one.

The battle over global box office receipts pitted a film leader you may never heard of — “The Battle at Lake Changjin” — against a Marvel superhero you surely have — Spider-Man. English lecturer Lei Jiao is uniquely positioned at her Wuhan University of Technology post in China to watch both films and offer her cross-cultural perspective.

As she did with “Mulan,” “Raya and the Last Dragon” and “Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings,” Jiao teams up again with University of Kentucky journalism professor Buck Ryan in a Q&A film review. This time they double their pleasure as they dig deep into the making of “Changjin,” its battle with “Spider-Man: No Way Home,” and why their appeal put them No. 1 and No. 2 in global box office.

“Lei, with great power comes great responsibility.”

“Yes, Buck, that advice from Uncle Ben’s widow, Aunt May, applies to world superpowers, too — even in a proxy war.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, the latest battleground between our two countries got played out at the box office — the ‘soft power’ of Hollywood versus China’s patriotic fervor.”

“Oh gee, I remember when the war movies I watched on CCTV in China celebrated victories over Japan. Now, it sounds like the U.S. is again the protagonist.”

“Yep.”

“Well, Lei, how popular can an anti-American film get?”

“Try world leader in box office receipts, Buck — at least until the other day.”

“How can that be?”

“Well for starters, China will be the worldwide box office champion for 2021, according to Variety, with \$7 billion, or 39 percent of the global box office total.”

“Wait, how long has China led in worldwide box office receipts?”

“This will be the second year. The first time in history was 2020.”

“What about the U.S.?”

“Variety puts it second with \$3.7 billion and a 21 percent share.”

“So, Lei, tell me about that anti-American film.”

“You mean the three-hour Chinese blockbuster ‘The Battle at Lake Changjin!’”

“Oh come on, Lei, I never heard of it.”

“Well, that’s because almost all of its \$906 million in revenue came from ticket sales here in China, with its September 30 release date, making it the highest grossing film of 2021 as of December 27.”

“Then what happened?”

“Spider-Man happened.”

“You mean ‘Spider-Man: No Way Out’ got on a roll after its December 17 release date.”

“Yep again.”

“The Chinese film focuses on two weeks in 1950 of what your Korean War history books call the Battle of Chosin Reservoir in frozen late November to mid-December weather. There are authentic and impressive battle scenes, brutal images of gun and physical



The Battle at Lake Changjin, a Chinese film recounting a 1950 battle between the United States and China, tops the box office in that country — while the newest Spiderman film has captured the attention of American audiences.



Courtesy of Alibaba Pictures

fighters, even some humor, and tear-jerking drama.”

“A real tear-jerker, eh?”

“Moviegoers were urged to bring tissues to the theater. The stellar cast includes action superstar Wu Jing, young heartthrob Jackson Yee, and tough guy/real deal Hu Jun.”

“What’s the money line?”

“I guess it’s when Mao (actor Tang Guoqiang) solemnly says ‘the foreigners look down on us’ and ‘pride can only be achieved on the battlefield.’ That speaks to a long history of China getting pushed around by bullies.”

“So it’s a movie with two combatants, and China punches Uncle Sam in the nose.”

“More or less. Make that an arrogant Uncle Sam, as General Douglas MacArthur (actor James Filbird) delivered this fateful line to his troops: ‘I guarantee you this will be over by Thanksgiving.’”

“Lei, the first casualty of war is truth. What do the fact-checkers say about your blockbuster?”

“Well, the camera lens focuses on only one of the 22 nations that contributed military or medical personnel to the United Nations Command in Korea — the U.S., of course. On the other side, the heroes in the winter of 1950 are China’s newly minted People’s Volunteer Army, or PVA.”

“What’s the PVA’s goal?”

“Simple, to ‘resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea.’”

“And the PVA succeeded.”

“Yes, Buck, the film portrays this as a great Chinese military victory — 71 years ago.”

“What happened next?”

“The battle was a turning point as U.N. forces were forced to retreat south of the 38th parallel. China helped to create a stalemate — a war of attrition, really. That lasted until 1953, when the armistice still in place today was signed with no final peace settlement ever achieved.”

“So where did the film come from and who paid for it?”

“Bona Film Group Ltd., which teamed up with Quentin Tarantino and other production companies in 2019 to do ‘Once Upon a Time ... In Hollywood.’ The Chinese Communist Party gave ‘Changjin’ rave reviews when it trumpeted its upcoming debut during the party’s 100th anniversary celebration on July 1. It’s the most expensive film ever made in China with a budget of \$200 million.”

“I guess it really would take a superhero to con-

quer that.”

“For sure. I watched both films and I have to say I understand the appeal to both audiences.”

“How did ‘Spider-Man: No Way Home’ do at the box office in China?”

“TBD, Buck. There’s no release date, and any possible green light from the government’s China Film Administration got dimmer when the U.S. announced its diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Olympics.”

“So the Spider-Man movie surpassed Changjin’s \$906 million without box office receipts from China?”

“Yep, globally but without China, the Spider-Man co-production between Sony and Disney topped \$1 billion over the Christmas weekend like nothing seen since 2019’s ‘Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker.’”

“So I guess we’ve got two blockbusters here across a political divide. What made ‘Changjin’ so competitive?”

“Well for starters, it broke 12 records with the largest production scale and the most people participating in the history of Chinese cinema. The script took five years, the movie took two years of preparation with 460 workdays of shooting, seven filmmaking teams, a total of over 12,000 staff members and 40-plus special effects companies involved.”

“Looks like the filmmakers pulled out all the stops to please their Chinese audience.”

“Yeah, it brought in three industry heavyweights — Chen Kaige, Tsui Hark and Dante Lam — all household names to direct the movie. And the timing was right. Just as ‘Spider-Man’ was released in time for the Christmas season, ‘Changjin’ was released one day before the National Day holiday, known as Golden Week.”

“Western critics call it propaganda. What do you think?”

“It’s not a top-down brainwashy lesson, but more of a preaching-to-the-choir resonance with deep-felt patriotic and nationalistic emotions of the people built up from recent years of tension between our two countries. What can I say, patriotism sells ... despite its obvious flaws in the art of filmmaking.”

“As you might guess, a 2016 PBS documentary, ‘American Experience: The Battle of Chosin,’ calls the two-week battle involving 12,000 men of the First Marine Division, fought in brutally cold temperatures, ‘one of the most celebrated in Marine Corps annals’ and ‘recounts this epic

conflict through the heroic stories of the men who fought it.”

“To each his own storytellers, Buck.”

“What do you see in the two films that make them 1-2 on the world stage?”

“They are both about heroes. Those heroes both fought hard, and triumphed. They both went through struggles. They lost their loved ones. The American army is not portrayed as ‘villains,’ per se, in ‘Changjin.’ In ‘Spider-Man’ the villains are not hard-core evil monsters, either. They are redeemable.”

“Any universal messages?”

“From ‘Changjin’ there’s this one: ‘You are only tough enough when your enemies take you seriously.’ And from

‘Spider-Man’ this gem: ‘When you try to fix people, there are always consequences.’”

“Those films would make quite the double-feature at a Chatham County drive-in, Lei.”

“Yes, Buck, all you need to enjoy them are five and a half hours, plenty of popcorn, an open mind and this quote from Confucius’ Analects: ‘In worthy teaching, all things are related.’”

About the authors: Buck Ryan, a University of Kentucky journalism professor, and Lei Jiao, an English lecturer at Wuhan University of Technology, Hubei Province, China, collaborate on articles to advance cross-cultural under-

standing. Ryan, who is doing a “participatory case study” of the News + Record, has been a visiting scholar at three universities in China, including Jiao’s WUT.

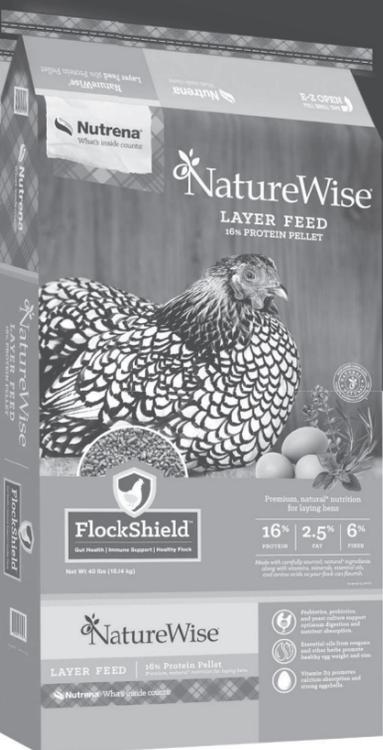
You can read previous dual-reviews of films by Ryan and Jiao from these links:

- <https://www.chathamnewsrecord.com/stories/love-conquers-slings-and-arrows-aimed-at-new-version,6690>
- <https://www.chathamnewsrecord.com/stories/raya-meets-camus-so-you-think-its-just-a-kids-movie-eh,8702>
- <https://www.chathamnewsrecord.com/stories/your-kids-will-flip-over-shang-chi-while-it-trips-over-a-china-divide,10663>



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COUNCIL ON AGING

At her retirement, Caregiver Specialist Susan Hardy reflects

Susan Hardy's last day at the Chatham County Council on Aging was last Friday. It came the day after her co-workers hosted a "going away" event for her at the Chatham Community Library and a few weeks after Chatham Commissioners honored her with a resolution recognizing her "strong work ethic and remarkable talents" and the "tremendous contributions she has made to Chatham County seniors, their families, and the entire community."

Hardy leaves her position as the COA's human services team leader and caregiver specialist after nearly seven years with the organization. She played a number of other vital roles for the COA, made more relevant because of Chatham's growing aging population. Upon the occasion of her retirement, the News + Record spoke to Hardy about her time and experience at the COA and what's next for her and the organization.

What's changed in caregiving since you began with the COA in 2015?

The tasks involved in caregiving are pretty much the same. The role of a caregiver was difficult in 2015 and it is still a difficult role to assume in 2021.

What has changed is the emphasis on the importance of the caregiver and the vast amount of information and attention the media covers regarding dementia. Hopefully, all this attention will spill over to those who know a caregiver

My grandmother died five years before my grandfather. I wanted to make sure that I helped caregivers recognize the importance of their own health. I did not want my grandmother's story to be one that repeated itself with other caregivers.

SUSAN HARDY, Council on Aging

and cause them to empathize with the caregiver and step in to help. And with all this information available, the caregiver, or person helping the caregiver, can research and find resources out there on how to deal with the various behaviors they may encounter with a person living with dementia and suggestions on how to tackle these caregiving tasks in a safe and healthy manner.

What have we learned at that time, and what tools have been developed to help caregivers since you first went to work in Chatham County?

I think we have learned that we need to provide as much support as possible for the caregiver in the home. Most of us want to remain in our homes and die in our homes. This makes it particularly important to pay attention to the caregiver's needs and support them so they can continue caring for their loved one in the home.

The Council on Aging has developed a team of staff members, along with programs, whose sole purpose is to provide as many services as possible in the home. Something as simple as providing incontinence supplies from the N.C. Diaper Bank has helped many caregivers. Not

only do caregivers drop by the Center to get adult diapers, but they also get bed pads and sanitary wipes. Another example of services to help caregivers in the home is our Minor Home Repair Volunteers program. By installing grab bars in a shower in the home, this team of highly qualified volunteers can alleviate the need for the caregiver to be in the shower to assist their loved one.

And how have the needs of caregivers changed? I see caregivers today needing to cast a wider net for obtaining help and support. I think back to my grandmother, and how she automatically assumed the role of caring for my grandfather, who was living with dementia. She had always been a homemaker and never worked outside of the home. Today many caregivers are working outside the home when they are confronted with the role of becoming a caregiver. They must choose between stopping work prematurely or finding help outside of the home.

Sometimes there is no choice. The lack of finances leaves them no choice, or if the money is there, then the lack of available qualified help in their community requires them to stop working and take on the full-time caregiver role.



Staff photo by Kim Hawks

Hardy (right) was recognized by her co-workers and friends for her commitment to Chatham County's seniors and their caregivers.

In our very mobile world, often there are no family members living near the caregiver. Also, families are smaller which leaves one or two carrying the load. My grandmother was able to receive some support and relief from her large family of seven children and the fact that all but one of her children lived within a 30-mile radius from the childhood home.

What do you see changing in the world of caregiving in the coming years, particularly as our population ages?

The aging of the baby boomers, the effects of COVID on our health care workers, couples choosing careers over having children, and the restrictions the U.S. has in place on immigrants are factors, when combined, can only add to the stress put on the health care agencies who were already experiencing a shortage of certified nursing assistants available to serve our aging populations. This shortage will only increase as the growth of our elderly population overpowers our shrinking younger population.

One of the areas you've worked so hard to address is the area of stress — of helping caregivers reduce their stress. COVID has certainly complicated that. As you depart the COA, what's your message to those families in Chatham County coping with those burdens right now?

Reach out for help. Call the Council on Aging to find out about the programs and services offered there. Call on your extended family,

faith community and other groups who can provide help. If a person is uncomfortable sitting with your loved one, allow them to run errands for you.

For those of us who have followed your work at the COA, you've handled a lot. Family Caregiver Support Program, the Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP), the Assistive Equipment service, the Home Repair service, Options Counseling, Information and Assistance, and so much more. Who's picking up the torch when you leave, and what should COA clients expect?

Lynn Parks will be taking on my position of Human Services Team Leader and Caregiver Specialist. She has over 10 years of experience in counseling and is a Certified Dementia Practitioner. She has been engaged in training with me for the past five months. Chatham's COA clients can expect a person who is a compassionate listener and diligent worker, who is very capable of leading a team of staff members with the common goal of serving the caregivers and their loved ones. I am confident that she and the Human Services Team members will strive to provide the support the caregivers and their families need to continue living safely in their homes in Chatham County.

What's driven you to succeed in creating the level of service standards you've created? What's been your secret sauce?

When I began working at the COA, I recognized the high standards that

were already in place. By the examples I saw in the staff and leadership all around me, I was encouraged to give my best. I also knew that this would be the last career I would tackle, and I wanted to make sure I left something behind to be proud of.

The title of Caregiver Specialist was the role I embraced the most. I carried with me the memory of my grandmother, who had neglected her own health to care for my grandfather. My grandmother died five years before my grandfather. I wanted to make sure that I helped caregivers recognize the importance of their own health. I did not want my grandmother's story to be one that repeated itself with other caregivers.

Your colleagues have described you as "wise, passionate, compassionate, fun-spirited, inspirational, honest, meticulous, a visionary and a doer." How do you want to be remembered?

I think all those words would be fine with me.

You found a calling at the COA. So what's next for you?

I am looking forward to spending more time with my two daughters and my son-in-law as well as with my parents and extended family. Both of my parents are in relatively good health, and we are in the process of planning 12 N.C. day trips for the next 12 months. I gave them the task of selecting towns to visit from the 2020 Our State magazines. November is still up for grabs, but the other eleven months already have towns stamped on them.

I also plan to stay on as a consultant with the COA. I want to continue working on the team for developing at least two more Peaceful Pathway Parks for Caregivers. I also would like to pick up the R.E.S.T. for Caregivers program that we started just before COVID hit in March of 2020. This will depend on when churches receive directions from the health officials as being safe to open back up completely without the social distancing and mask requirements. I plan to continue leading the Chatham County Aging Plan 2018-2023 Committee on Care Services and Caregiving. Our hope is to tackle all the strategies we established through 2023.

So, as you can see, COA is still calling me, and I continue to answer.

Watch Out For Tax Scammers

Sadly, identity theft happens throughout the year – but some identity thieves are particularly active during tax-filing season. How can you protect yourself?

One of the most important moves you can make is to be suspicious of requests by people or entities claiming to be from the Internal Revenue Service. You may receive phone calls, texts and emails, but these types of communication are often just "phishing" scams with one goal in mind: to capture your personal information. These phishers can be quite clever, sending emails that appear to contain the IRS logo or making calls that may even seem to be coming from the IRS. Don't open any links or attachments to the emails and don't answer the calls – and don't be alarmed if the caller leaves a vaguely threatening voicemail, either asking for personal information, such as your Social Security number, or informing you of some debts you supposedly owe to the IRS that must be taken care of "immediately."

In reality, the IRS will not initiate contact with you by phone, email, text message or social media to request personal or financial information, or to inquire about issues pertaining to your tax returns. Instead, the agency will first send you a letter. And if you're unsure of the legitimacy of such a letter, contact the IRS directly at 800-829-1040.

Of course, not all scam artists are fake IRS representatives – some will pass themselves off as tax preparers. Fortunately, most tax preparers are honest, but it's not too hard to find the dishonest ones who might ask you to sign a blank return, promise you a big refund before looking at your records or try to charge a fee based on the percentage of your return. Legitimate tax preparers will make no grand

promises and will explain their fees upfront. Before hiring someone to do your taxes, find out their qualifications. The IRS provides some valuable tips for choosing a reputable tax preparer, but you can also ask your friends and relatives for referrals.

Another tax scam to watch out for is the fraudulent tax return – that is, someone filing a return in your name. To do so, a scammer would need your name, birthdate and Social Security number. If you're already providing two of these pieces of information – your name and birthdate on social media, and you also include your birthplace – you could be making it easier for scam artists to somehow get the third. It's a good idea to check your privacy settings and limit what you're sharing publicly. You might also want to use a nickname and omit your last name, birthday and birthplace.

Here's one more defensive measure: File your taxes as soon as you can. Identity thieves often strike early in the tax season, so they can file their bogus returns before their victims.

To learn more about tax scams, visit the IRS website (irs.gov) and search for the "Taxpayer Guide to Identity Theft." This document describes some signs of identity theft and provides tips for what to do if you are victimized.

It's unfortunate that identity theft exists, but by taking the proper precautions, you can help insulate yourself from this threat, even when tax season is over.

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

Edward Jones. Member SIPC.

Pittsboro
Chad Virgil, CFP® ChFC®, CLU®
630 East St Suite 2
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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

Meet Dawn Parker



–Graduated from Colorado State University with a Master's in Human Development & Family Studies (Emphasis in Marriage & Family Therapy)

–Self-proclaimed "nerd" who was a Brownie, Girl Scout, member of Key Club, 4-H, drama club, & multiple honor societies

–Has lived in seven different states (KS, NE, MO, TX, CA, CO, & NC)

–Met her husband of almost 17 years on a dating website...they are the proud parents of two boys

–Spent 6 weeks living with a host family in Sevilla, Spain studying Spanish language, culture, & traveling via school excursions. Went on to spend two additional weeks traveling independently to Barcelona, Paris, and Rome where she received a Papal blessing at the summer home of Pope John Paul II

–Owns a beautiful guitar, but can't play anything (spent hundreds of dollars & countless hours torturing instructors in Colorado & North Carolina)

–Has "a few" tattoos & enjoys changing the color of her hair on a frequent basis (since she wasn't a rebel as a teen!)

–Her great loves include: family, friends, food, tasty beverages, traveling, photography, reading, baking, music, & advocating for others

Rotary
Club of Pittsboro

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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

POLICE REPORTS

CHATHAM COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

On Dec. 30, David Franklin Perrell, 52, of 438 Roscoe Road, Bear Creek, was arrested by Cpl. Robert Hussey for assault by strangulation, assault inflicting serious injury, assault on a female and communicating threats. He was placed on a 48-hour domestic violence hold and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County Superior Court in Pittsboro on Jan. 3.

On Dec. 31, Lacy Allen Nall, 34, of 946 Saint Luke Church Road, Goldston, was arrested by

Deputy Percy Grady for simple assault. He was issued a \$1,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on Jan. 12.

On Dec. 31, David Martin Sparrow Jr., 52, of 3190 Hamlets Chapel Road, Pittsboro, was arrested by Deputy Rami Amer for driving under the influence, driving while license revoked – impaired revocation and possession of an open container(s) of alcohol in the passenger area of a vehicle. He was issued a written promise to appear in Chatham County

District Court in Pittsboro on Jan. 19.

On Jan. 1, Jordney Segordy Smith, 33, of 183 N. Seminole Point Lane, Pittsboro, was arrested by Deputy Brandal Harrington for hit/run and leaving a scene with property damage. He was issued a written promise to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on Jan. 26.

On Jan. 2, Steven Ray Urey, 24, of 395 Pea Ridge Road, New Hill, was arrested by Cpl. David Nixon for false imprisonment, interfering with emergency

communications, assault on an individual with disabilities and communicating threats. He was issued a \$2,500 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on Jan. 19.

On Jan. 2, Missy Jo Riddle, 45, of 2400 Bower's Store Rd., Siler City, was arrested by Deputy Brandal Harrington for violations of pre-trial release conditions. She was issued a \$25,000 secured bond and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on Jan. 6.

On Jan. 2, Wayne Lee Wilson, Jr., 24, of 2294 N. Pea Ridge Road, Pittsboro, was arrested by Deputy Rami Amer for carrying a concealed gun. He was issued a written promise and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on Jan. 5.

On Jan. 3, Gregory Lorenzo Johnson, 36, of 15 Anthony Street, Pittsboro, was arrested by Sgt. Anthony Norton for assault inflicting serious injury. He was issued a written promise and is scheduled to appear in Chatham County District Court in Pittsboro on Jan. 25.

Winter Wonderland



Photos by Ed Lallo

In an around Pittsboro's Fearington Village, Monday's cold front brought big, wet flakes that — for a while, at least, until what stuck melted — created a winter wonderland in Chatham County. Fearington resident Ed Lallo, a professional photographer who retired from corporate work, took these photos.



H A P P Y
New Year

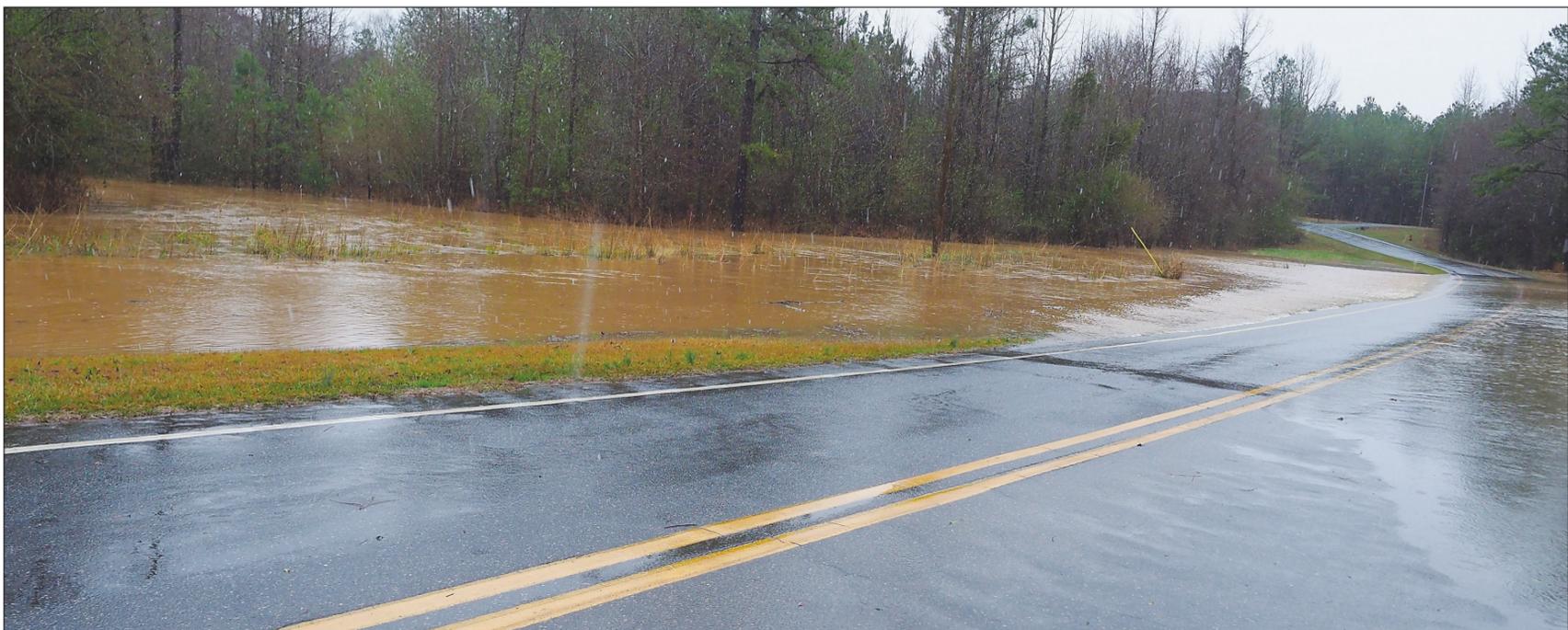
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**CENTRAL
PIEDMONT**
URGENT CARE

SILER CITY
101 Walmart Supercenter

RANDLEMAN
1011 High Point Street



Staff photos by Simon Barbre

The winter deluge

Flooding on Rosser Road in Chatham County Monday prevented travelers from reaching the Camelback Bridge.

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Aladdin
THE OUTSIDERS
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Driving out in Chatham County after Monday's storm, photographer Simon Barbre's trip came to an abrupt halt by floods on Rosser Road.



Monday's torrential rains caused flooding in many parts of Central Carolina. 'Turn around, don't drown' is what drivers are advised to do — definitely a good idea here.

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SABA, new Chatham charter, opens 2022 lottery and adds 6th grade students

BY HANNAH MCCLELLAN
News + Record Staff

PITTSBORO — School of the Arts for Boys Academy (SABA) — a new public charter school set to open next fall — will add 6th grade students to its 3rd through 5th grade school population to accommodate boys provisionally accepted in 2021 when the school still planned to open in fall 2021.

“As we continued our planning for opening in August we recognized that over 2 dozen boys had already been provisionally accepted to SABA during our accelerated recruitment period,” SABA’s founder and lead administrator Valencia Toomer said in a Dec. 23 email update. “It made sense to keep these students in the SABA family and to accommodate them in our plans.”

The decision was unanimously approved at SABA’s December school board meeting, and allows all rising 4th through 6th grade boys accepted earlier in 2021 to enroll at SABA for the 2022-23 school year.

SABA was approved by the state to operate as a public charter school last February, after submitting a justification letter to the state in January 2021 to open as a single-sex charter school. The school is the only all-boys public charter school in the state, and was formed with the goal of using the arts and culturally responsive teaching to close the achievement gap and empower Black



Submitted photo

School of the Arts for Boys Academy founder Valencia Toomer’s son, Tyson Toomer, rocking one of the school’s new shirts last February. The school is set to open in fall 2022.

and brown boys. When it was approved, the school planned to open on an accelerated timeline the following fall, but later was granted a “regular timeline” status, leading to its current expected August 2022 opening date.

Allyson Alston, SABA board president, said in the Dec. 23 release that adding a 6th-grade class will allow the school to expand its curriculum and potentially introduce interscholastic sports.

“We’re looking forward to all the positive developments this decision will bring,” Alston wrote.

The school will serve 116 students its first year, now distributed among four grades instead of three. Applications to enroll for the inaugural 2022-23 school year opened on SABA’s website (sabacademy.org) on

Monday and will remain open through April 30.

The school uses a weighted lottery for admission — meaning students with various education disadvantages are given extra weight, or consideration, for acceptance. There are no fees to attend, and Toomer said the school will reserve 60% of its slots for students who qualify for free and reduced lunch. In comparison to other Chatham charter schools, Willow Oak Montessori reserves 40% of the available spots in a grade level after other priorities are met for economically disadvantaged students; Woods Charter School reserves 25% of its available slots after accounting for sibling and faculty applicants.

The lottery also gives extra weight to siblings of those accepted. Students, apart from those already previously accepted in 2021, will be randomly selected via a computer-generated technology at the lottery’s April 30 conclusion.

All boys can attend SABA, but the school will be specifically structured to serve boys of color by exposing students to rich and diverse culturally responsive learning opportunities. School officials say the structure and emphasis on the arts is meant to help address the achievement gap — any significant and persistent disparity in education performance — consistently found between Black and white students across the country.

In Chatham, despite a commitment to school

equity by CCS in recent years, students of color — particularly brown and Black boys — are suspended at higher rates than any other group and their test scores are consistently not reaching those of their white counterparts, data from the last several years shows.

“We have to ask ourselves why is that? Why is that happening?” Mike Wiley, SABA board member and artist in residence, previously told the News + Record. “Why does it continue to happen? To be able to combat that, it is important that SABA succeed, it is important to have a SABA that particularly teaches Black and brown boys from a pedagogical standpoint that nurtures the difference in them.”

Now, seven months before SABA is set to open, is an “unbelievably exciting time” for the school, Wiley said.

“The time has come to welcome the SABA boys who will play a defining role in building the foundation of SABA in a rich, diverse, culturally responsive environment,” he said. “We will be sharing a journey of learning and discovery for as much as a full decade in some cases. We can’t wait to meet these young men and families, and to get started!”

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

CHATHAM COMMUNITY LIBRARIES

CCL’s next ‘Women of Chatham’ conversation series set for Jan. 15

From Chatham Community Libraries

Chic Fashion, Pittsboro
• Maria Parker-Lewis, Sycamore at Chatham Mills, Forest Hall at Chatham Mills, and 39 West Catering, Pittsboro

PITTSBORO — Chatham Community Library continues its series of quarterly discussions highlighting women changemakers in Chatham County on Jan. 15.

The Celebrating Women of Chatham series addresses areas of interest to county residents viewed from the perspective of women engaged in both traditional and non-traditional careers including agriculture, entrepreneurship, education, the arts, law enforcement, and social activism.

The free virtual program will be held from 1 to 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 15. This event is open to the public and will be presented via Zoom. Participants should register online to receive the meeting link at <https://www.chatham-countync.gov/Home/Components/News/News/15526/>.

This second in the series is a panel featuring Chatham County women entrepreneurs including:

• Robyn Allgood, Robyn’s Nest Creative Learning Center, M2 Graphics, and Southern Threads, Pittsboro
• Lysandra Webber, Geek-

• Becky Starr, Starlight Mead, Pittsboro
• Brandi Morris, Red Moose Brewing Company, Pittsboro

• Carmen Rice, bmc brewing, Pittsboro
Carolyn Miller, Chatham County’s assistant county manager for human resources, will moderate the panel. Panelists will discuss the challenges and rewards of being a businesswoman in Chatham County, among other aspects.

Residents may visit the libraries’ website, www.chathamlibraries.org, or contact the Library at (919) 545-8084 or rita.vanduin@chathamlibraries.org for more information.

The Celebrating Women of Chatham series was created in response to the library’s March 2021 virtual forum celebrating Women’s History Month: “Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow: A Woman’s Perspective of Chatham County.” A recording of this program and those in this series are available on the library’s YouTube channel.

HONORS

RANDOLPH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Randolph Community has announced the 2021 fall semester Academia Standing List. The following Chatham County students were named to those lists.

Presidents List

Siler City: Alexis Quinn,

David Stecher

Dean’s List

Bennett: Misty Murray, Zachary Ritter

Academic Merit List

Siler City: Dustin Bullock, Dianna Flores Arellano, Ashley Hicks, Jennifer Lopaz

Chatham COA Events & Announcements

January 6th through January 12th

- Thursday, January 6th**
- [Body Conditioning w/Jackie](#) at 8:00 AM (at Forest Hall at Chatham Mills) 🧘
 - [Take Off Pounds Sensibly \(TOPS\)](#) at 1:00 PM (via Zoom) 📺
 - [Geri-Fit w/Olivia](#) at 2:00 PM (at WCSC Aerobic Room) 🧘
- Friday, January 7th**
- [Body Conditioning w/Jackie](#) at 8:00 AM (at Forest Hall at Chatham Mills) 🧘
 - [Strong & Fit w/Olivia](#) at 9:00 AM (at Western Chatham Senior Center, Siler City) 🧘
 - [Strong & Fit w/Jackie](#) at 10:00 AM (at Forest Hall at Chatham Mills and on Zoom) 🧘📺
 - [Friday Night Dance](#) at 7:00 PM (on site at WCSC - Siler City) 💰
- Monday, January 10th**
- [Strong & Fit w/Olivia](#) at 9:00 AM (at Western Chatham Senior Center, Siler City) 🧘
 - [Chair Yoga w/Liz](#) at 10:00 AM (Chatham Grove Community Center (Pittsboro) and on Zoom) 🧘📺
- Tuesday, January 11th**
- [Body Conditioning w/Jackie](#) at 8:00 AM (at Forest Hall at Chatham Mills) 🧘
 - [Strong & Fit w/Jackie](#) at 10:00 AM (at Forest Hall at Chatham Mills and on Zoom) 🧘📺
 - [Chatham Striders Walk & Learn](#) at 10:15 AM (at Holly Brooks Room, WCSC) 🧘
 - [Geri-Fit w/Olivia](#) at 2:00 PM (at WCSC Aerobic Room) 🧘
- Wednesday, January 12th**
- [Body Conditioning w/Jackie](#) at 8:00 AM (at Forest Hall at Chatham Mills) 🧘
 - [Strong & Fit w/Olivia](#) at 9:00 AM (at Western Chatham Senior Center, Siler City) 🧘

For more information or to register for these and other programs, visit our website: chathamcouncilonaging.org/activities/calendars/

- 🧘 **In-person - Pre-registration Required**
- 📺 **Programming Hosted On Zoom**
- 💰 **Fee Required for Participation**

Annual Public Board Meeting

Our Council on Aging’s Board of Directors holds their annual public meeting Thursday, January 6 at 5:30 p.m., virtually on Zoom. If you are interested in providing comments at the beginning of the meeting, contact Dennis Streets at dennis.streets@chathamcoa.org or call 919-542-4512. The Board will also be electing its officers for 2022.

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Eastern Chatham Senior Center (ECSC) 365 NC-87 N Pittsboro, NC 27312 919-542-4512	Western Chatham Senior Center (WCSC) 112 Village Lake Road Siler City, NC 27344 919-742-3975
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Here's to a new life

I'd had a couple glasses of wine. The Kid had a beer and two cans of hard cider.

I'm a laughably cheap drunk, so I was tipsy. The drinking had been over a few hours, so I assumed The Kid was sober. Then my child stood up. He had the rolling gait of a greenhorn sailor on a storm-tossed clipper ship, and as soon as I saw these subtle yet hilarious signals, I nixed the idea of departure. I informed The Kid that there would be no leaving until a couple of hours had passed, and food and heavily caffeinated, non-alcoholic beverages were consumed. So, I made a post-midnight charcuterie plate.

We ate and drank my famously strong iced tea the family calls "jet fuel." Then we shared a bag of peanut butter M&Ms. Once my child was walking normally and I couldn't sense any drunkenness, The Kid was free to go.

I think we both drank too much that night because it was the end of a day of way too many emotions for both of us. This was the day that I told Petey I was leaving and moved out of our house.

We'd tried. Petey and I both tried. We'd gone to counseling and at first it felt like we were going to make it.

But finally, I accepted that I was deluding myself, and the people we had become didn't bring out anything good in each other. We'd both changed so much, but the home we'd made became a mockery of the love, laughter, and closeness that used to fill it to the rafters.

Here's the truth Gentle Reader; if I stayed on that couch, in that house of sadness, disappointment, and acrimony for much longer, I would be an alcoholic, a bitter, angry wretch, or dead — and probably all three.

So, I made the hardest decision of my life — to leave and give us both a chance for peace and happiness. I found a new job that paid well and then sought to move. The problem was that where I wanted to go was also one of the most popular spots in town. Apartments didn't open up very often, but the very kind and patient young man who ran the building knew of two tenants who would be moving out eventually. I was now

Post-Midnight Sober-Up Plate

At least three kinds of very thinly sliced meat; I had prosciutto, salami and capicola

Cold salted butter

Room-temp brie

Ciabatta rolls

To make the rolls as fresh as they've just come from the oven, put them back in the oven. Pre-heat oven to 350°. When the oven comes to temp, run the bread under cold water and place directly on the center rack. Then splash ½ cup onto the oven floor and shut the door immediately. The steam will give a freshly baked crispness while keeping the interior soft.

Cook for 9 minutes for room temp bread and 11-13 for frozen bread, depending on size.

Remove and let cool on a cooling rack so the bottom stays crispy.

on the list. A large portion of the new income I was making went into a savings account, and while I waited, I decorated my future space.

I didn't want to go to a furniture store and buy prefab, decorated rooms. I wanted something unique that would take time to create.

My bed, linens, and most soft surface furniture were bought new. A few items that I couldn't resist were also bought new.

But almost everything else was bought at antique stores (like an elm hibachi from the Japanese Meiji period that became my coffee table), thrift stores (a couple of tables and most of my dishes and glasses), and furniture consignment stores (a mid-century sideboard and a Regency period ridiculously over-the-top coat rack).

I love my new home, and every day I wake up in it, and it makes me happy.

These last few months I've been thinking a lot about the difference between courage and strength. Courage is what makes you jump in the water to save the floundering swimmer. Strength is what you need to give up trying to save the person determined to drown and save yourself.

For many years I used every bit of courage I possessed. And although it wasn't an easy decision, I finally had to be strong for myself, my Kid, and the future.

Thanks for your time. Contact me at bullcity.mom.

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo

SHADES OF HISTORY

ACROSS

1 Holds inside
9 Scrams
16 Many millennia
20 Chart of the Pacific, e.g.
21 Eeyore's creator
22 "Blue Jasmine" Oscar winner
23 Start of a riddle
25 Cawing bird
26 Collate, e.g.
27 Couch potatoes stare at them
28 Maple stuff
29 Thin coins
30 Prayerful plea
34 Designer
37 Sparks' state
39 Riddle, part 2
45 Subject for Dr. Ruth
46 "Zip-—Doo-Dah"
47 "... Mac — PC?"
48 Hostess snack cake
49 Onetime senator Trent
51 Hiccup or charley horse

54 Convents and abbeys
56 Colored rings of irises
58 About 4.2 millimeters, in typography
61 Fooled vase
62 Agnus — (Mass prayer)
63 Riddle, part 3
66 "This is SO frustrating!"
69 Beelzebub
70 Tools used in fixing flats
72 Huge fad
76 To date
78 Riddle, part 4
80 Ship's swerve
83 Brow's curve
85 Bygone
86 Russ. states
86 Most speedy
87 She won eight Oscars for Best Costume Design
91 "Oops, I messed up!"
93 Comic-strip light bulb
94 Sliding-open car option
95 Like below-zero nos.
98 "... — it just me?"

100 Highway goo
101 End of the riddle
106 "Perhaps ... ask me about it later"
107 Band with the hit "Whip It"
108 — date (plan for marriage)
109 Exuding testosterone
111 Catch sight of
113 Hobbit hunter
115 Tide type
119 Exhort
120 Riddle's answer
126 Aspersion
127 Carry in the uterus
128 They could use a welcome sight
129 Quick flights
130 Most bohemian
131 Tilting

DOWN

1 Milked beasts
2 Dos cubed
3 Close by
4 Body image?
5 Moreover
6 Texting shorthand for "I think"
7 Anti's call
8 Catch sight of
9 "Goldfinger" singer Shirley
10 French thirst quencher
11 Electric guitar connection
12 Pointers
13 Actor Everett
14 Customs worker
15 Golf bag item
16 Fender bender, e.g.
17 Tagged for a particular use
18 Plains tribe
19 Bulletin fodder
24 Iris' layer
29 Miles of jazz
31 Student transcript no.
32 Long-used adage
33 Least shallow
35 P-shaped Greek letter
36 Sculler's tool
38 Promising solemnly
39 Illinois city
40 Size
41 "— culpa"
42 Oreck product, for short
43 St. Pat's land
44 Lucy's Arnaz
45 BBQ sides
50 In present times
52 Church topper
53 Bishops' toppers
55 Greg Evans' long-running comic strip
57 Isolated
59 Poker IOUs
60 Fliers' military branch
64 Neopagan practice
65 Full of racket
67 Autos such as Ramblers and Pacers
68 Half of Hispaniola
71 Tanzanian tourist treks
73 Must measure
74 Pant-length
75 Perfume from petals
77 Chevy SUVs
79 Chuck Berry title woman
80 Rural assent to a woman
81 Together, in music scores
82 Bringing to a conclusion
84 Bracing drink
88 Singers executing quavers
89 With vehemence
90 Genetic ID
92 — choy
96 Conclusion
97 "Goodness!"
102 Share, as a blog entry
103 Web-footed wading bird
104 "Me neither"
105 Pioneer Boone
109 Maudlin sentimentality
110 Guthrie of folk singing
112 Legendary snow beast
114 Hacienda house
116 "Orinoco Flow" singer
117 Yemeni port
118 "Hey, over here ..."
120 Org. for club swingers
121 No, in Paisley
122 Part of TGIF
123 "Just joking!"
124 Lingerie item
125 The, in Arles

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Solution for the puzzle in last week's edition.

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M	A	R	G	O	T	F	O	N	T	E	Y	N			D	E	K	A	L	B	
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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

5				1			7
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Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

- ♦ Moderate
- ♦♦ Challenging
- ♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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MAGIC MAZE ● "THE SOUND OF MUSIC"

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

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally
Unlisted clue hint: PLAYED BY JULIE ANDREWS

- | | | | |
|----------|-------------|--------|---------|
| Austria | Friedrich | Kurt | Max |
| Baroness | Georg | Liesl | Musical |
| Brigitta | Gretl | Louisa | Rolf |
| Franz | Herr Zeller | Marta | |

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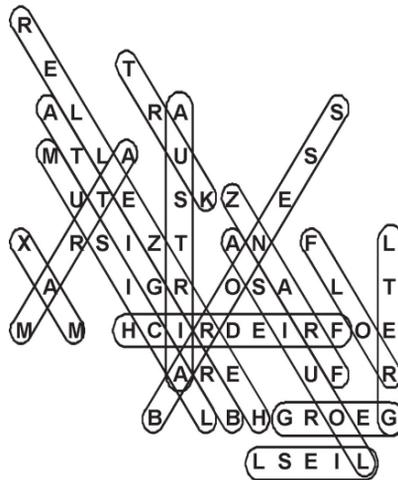
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Answer

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

Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



GRIN and BEAR IT by Wagner



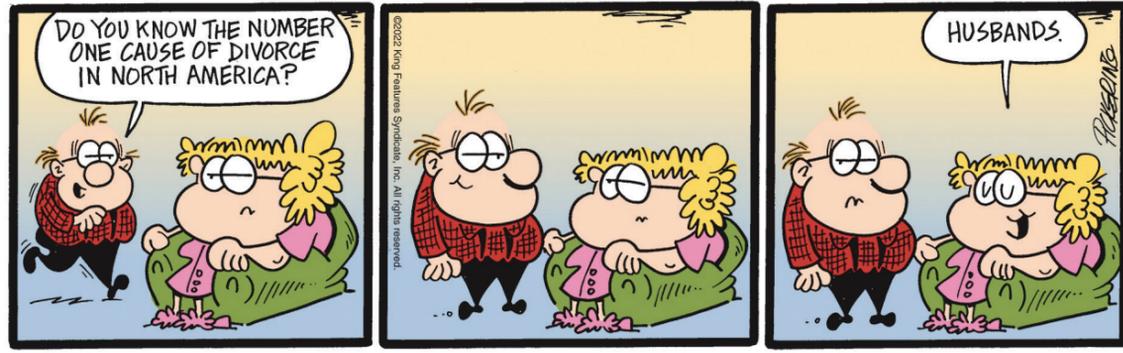
R.F.D.

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