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● **6th May, 2022**

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Is Rapid Growth Destroying Our Quality of Life?

Is the evolution of our area growing bigger and better or just bigger? The Topsail area, including most coastal areas, are seeing a spike in residential construction that has most residents asking, "where are all these people coming from?"

Due to changes in workplace environments, mostly based on past Covid restrictions, people can work at home without being stuck in large cities or suburban communities. Why not live at the beach?

But are the coastal areas equipped to handle thousands of new residents, that may include hundreds if not thousands of new students for our school systems? Unfortunately, most signs point toward no.

If people are moving here in great numbers without having the convenience of working from home, where are they working? Look around and several "help wanted" signs are going unanswered. Many jobs are being combined to make up for the lack of employees, over working one person while not paying them for the additional work. Small businesses are not the only ones suffering. Large franchise restaurants are constantly raising starting pay and offering

signing bonuses, which should result in a large number of applicants, but they are not. Where did 30% of the American workforce go?

"Traffic is terrible in Hampstead, the last thing we need are another 5-10,000 people driving to work each day before the bypass is open." Lisa Edwards stated as we discussed the topic. "I have to allow an extra 45 minutes a day just to go 10 miles to work. This is insane and only going to get worse. We are lucky if we go three days in a row without a major accident on highway 17."

It's not just the traffic, but also the burden on sewer and water systems. Most municipalities in our area were not anticipating a growth of this size all at once. The Town of Surf City and Onwasa, two of the area's largest suppliers of water and sewer are always hunting for more suitable land for expansion. Right now the Town of Surf City has a moratorium on new developments with a wait time from several months to a few years for sewer.

New homes are popping up and appearing to be filled with occupants as soon as they are completed. Construction and home owners are struggling to co-exist as demand grows. Johnny Smith

mentioned that he and his wife bought their first home last year and it was surrounded by beautiful trees. Now all that land has been cleared and 14 new homes are going in feet away from each other. "It breaks my heart," He added, showing me photos of the burn piles that were once trees and flowering shrubs. "If I wanted to be a few feet from my neighbors I would haven't moved from the city," He doesn't look forward to all the noise and mess from the upcoming construction.

The beaches, always a destination for residents and tourists alike, have taken on a new look too. Where once everyone could park and carry their towels, sun block and beach toys with little concern, now the issue of paid parking has taken away from the simplicity. Questions flood social media sites as to how to pay to park, especially if someone doesn't have a smartphone (not everyone has one). Other common questions are regarding grocery stores, restaurants and town parks. People are not clear as to what hours paid parking is required or what times of the year. Many who complained didn't realize paid parking is only from 9-5pm and free all other times in Surf City. Businesses with their own

parking lots do not charge for parking and several town parks do not either. A new feature this year is an increased fee of \$5 per hour for the "best" parking spots in Surf City. Many people questioned if that discriminates against elderly and those with young children. Another concern is "what is a resident?" Does a person who lives in the County (not city limits) have to pay to park? Does a long-term renter get free passes and the property owner? Do people renting homes on a weekly basis have to pay to park? Does a property owner that has more than 2 vehicles only get 2 free passes? The system is certainly not without its flaws. This year Surf City paid parking started on March 1st and ends October 31, 2022.

With growth comes consequences, but perhaps with all the new revenue from all the new homes being built the taxes will decrease and services will improve.



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Stupid People and Games They Play

By Dorothy Royal

If there ever comes a time in your life that you encounter someone with a bullet proof vest who asks you to shoot them for fun, just say no. Is this a new thing? Apparently not. In 2019 two grown men (ages 50 and 35) were arrested for doing just that. While drinking they decided to see what would happen. Luckily for them, they just proved themselves stupid, but still alive. That, unfortunately, was not the result when police found 16 year old Chris Broad shot in the chest. Three teens were involved, one is dead and now one is charged with manslaughter. These "games" are no joke.

Fourteen year old Avery Cormier was home for spring break when she heard a window being broken downstairs. Without hesitation, she ran down the stairs, grabbed two large kitchen knives and went after the burglar. Apparently shocked by Avery's aggressive stance and screaming profanity, he ran from the home, jumping into his truck and pulled out of the driveway. Avery pulled out her phone and started recording. After calling the police and providing the video, the police were able to apprehend 58 year old Joseph Ridge, a criminal with a violent and lengthy history, who was currently out on bail.

Do you have a pet that freaks out during fireworks and found CBD products that help? Have you found the new line of skin creams and shampoos made from Hemp products and like them? Do you enjoy a calming cup of CBD tea before bed? Well, thanks to government disconnect, all of that may be illegal after July 1st.

In 2015 Hemp growers started planting crops and making products thanks to the "Hemp Pilot Program Bill". All types of products are in all kinds of stores. Law Enforcement practices have changed due to the plentiful supply of hemp products that appear like marijuana, in certain forms, but don't contain the THC. Drug sniffing dogs no longer are trained for marijuana, why bother? So what is the deal with the idea of making all these new products suddenly illegal? Simple, when the North Carolina 2015 bill expires on July 1st, there is nothing in its place to keep hemp and CBD legal. Therefore, without a new bill or law, things revert back. How silly is that?

On May 18th the general assembly returns which will provide it a little over a month to create a bill or extend the existing one. Start sending emails and making phone calls! Your smartphone can do both!

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Remember knowledge is power, being tough during a time of danger can save your life and keeping our freedoms "free" is hard work.



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Fashion Statements

By Becky Borneman

As they say, trends come and go. And this one has come full circle! Everywhere I look I see ladies wearing adorable sneakers with dresses. The first time I saw this trend was in the 1988 movie *Working Girl*. I was 11 when this movie came out and I remember thinking to myself...that just doesn't look right! Business suits and sneakers. Then I started seeing it whenever my mom would take us downtown. Growing up in the capital of Florida, there were tons of government buildings downtown. We would drive through and I'd see business-women walking to their office in beautiful suits, shoulder pads a blazing, hair as high as it could be teased, wearing white Reebok high tops...and white socks. The shoes not only laced up, but Velcro

topped it off just to ensure your foot would stay in that shoe. And not just one Velcro strap...TWO! The last straw I had with this trend was seeing my Grandmother who worked in the Capital building joining in. To her credit she would carry her sneakers to her office inside a Publix bag so she could change into them at lunchtime and walk the floors for exercise with some of her work friends.

Now, to be fair, from what I've read it wasn't so much a fashion trend but a necessity for comfort. And you know what, I get it. I can't imagine working all day in those 3-4" heels that were popular in the 80's. Much less living in NYC where you walked to work, worked all day and walked home!

And I have to add that at age 11 I certainly was not a connoisseur of fashion.

I was a middle-schooler who wore the exact same thing every day of my school career through 8th grade. A green, blue and white plaid skirt, white polo, white socks and penny loafers...outfitted with the penny of course! So what do I know? Nothing! But I knew I did NOT care for that trend!

Well, we've come a long way since then. The shoes I see being worn today are quite different from the Reebok of the 80's. I am seeing cute platform white shoes, adorable Jellypop sneakers in many colors and even the backless slide on kind being worn with all different color dresses. Now this is a trend I can get behind. But it does have me wondering...what will my nieces think of this trend? Will they be as turned off as I was when I first saw it 30+ years ago? Certainly not!

Stop by Fancy Flamingo and Coral Cottage to see the selection of adorable sneakers to pair with an array of Spring/Summer dresses new in stock!



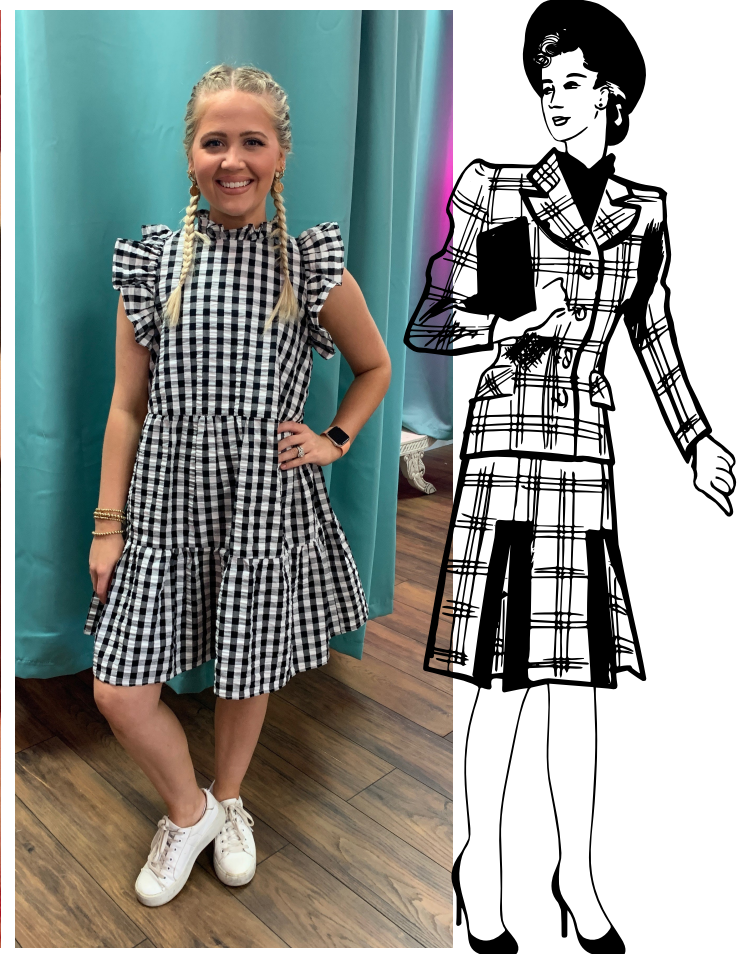
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Sea Turtle Hospital News



By Karen Sota

A few weeks ago we told you that everybody's favorite green, "Canal", would be setting off for a new life at his forever home at SEA LIFE Charlotte-Concord. On Tuesday, May 3rd he'll be packing up his grotto and along with his entourage heading west where his specially constructed room with a brand new 5,000-gallon tank with three viewing windows is up and running. Of course we're not going to let him go without a big send-off.

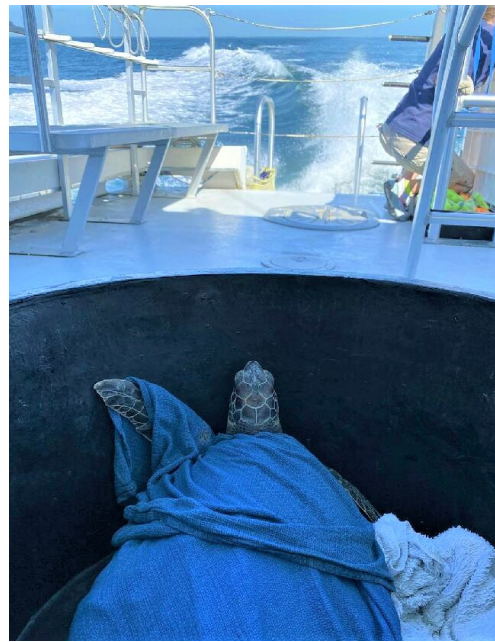
"Canal Days" (April 29th- May 1st) will be a celebration of his seven years as one of our hospital's most popular patients. If you've scheduled your tour during that time there will be special photo ops with Canal, commemorative stickers and a large card that you can sign wishing him well on his journey. For Canal - well he'll be getting not only extra love from us and his fans but extra servings of his favorite menu items. He's always been a star; may he sparkle and shine even brighter for decades to come. We'll miss you, little guy.

But Canal's not the only one with a ticket to ride. Recently admitted loggerhead "Sepia," along with re-admitted aquanaut green "Tracy Dyson" secured a spot on a boat headed to the deep blue and were released offshore on Monday, May 25th.

The water had warmed enough for them to readily acclimate, and we're hoping that Tracy Dyson has learned her lesson about hanging around inshore waters in the winter. Two times a cold-stun was not fun for her or us!

Our tour schedule is changing for May. We will be open on Sunday, May 1 from Noon - 2 PM, but due to private events and Memorial Day weekend that will be the only Sunday in May for public tours. Going forward in May: tours will be Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 11 AM - 1 PM. Tickets MUST be purchased in advance through our website: www.seaturtlehospital.org.

Select the date, time and the number of guests in your party and purchase your tickets. We limit the number of guests for each time to make the experience more enjoyable and to continue our commitment to keep you and our staff safe as we work our way through Covid. Transmission rates in NC are currently low so we are not requiring masks during your visit. Sorry, but we are not able to accommodate walk-ups for tours once we sell out for the day. Please keep in mind that traffic increases exponentially after Memorial Day and it is very likely that you will experience some delays - please plan accordingly. If you are coming only to our gift shop (not for a tour) you can enter through the single door to the left of the main entrance.



"Are we there yet?"
Tracy Dyson on her ride back home.

Even though sea turtles do not keep calendars we do. The official start of nesting season on Topsail is May 1st and our Topsail Turtle Project volunteers have laced up their sneakers and will be heading out in the wee hours of the morning to look for mama tracks. If you spot anything unusual such as a stranding or nesting, please call our Director of Beach Operations, Terry Meyer at: 910-470-2880. If she is not available, you may call the hospital during operating hours: 910-329-0222. We will take the information and we will send a trained volunteer to meet you to assess the situation. The State of NC hotline for stranded, sick, and injured turtles is 252-241-7367. The state number picks up 24/7. Please note that all our work with sea turtles, at the hospital and on the beach, is authorized by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission, ES Permit 22ST05.

Sea Turtle Hospital Expands Tour Options

Beginning in May we will be adding Thursdays to our tour schedule. Tours will be Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 11 AM - 1 PM. Please note that we cannot accommodate walk-ups once the schedule is full for that day.

Tickets must be purchased in advance through our website
www.seaturtlehospital.org.

Our renovated gift shop and adoption center will be open to everyone during tour hours and you will not have to take a tour to shop and adopt. Masks are not required at this point as transmission rates for our NC counties are low. Hope to see your smiling faces very soon.



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Waiting for Fish

By Carol Ann Ross

Special to the Topsail Times

Get your gear ready, make sure your net doesn't have any holes in it, that you have a sharp knife for cuttin', and make sure you don't have any worms or shrimp still glued to your hooks from last year in your tackle box, because pretty soon the influx of fishermen to the island for surf and pier fishing is going to blow you away.

Try driving around Roland Avenue by Buddy's starting next month and you'll see what I'm talking about. Wait til the summer and you'll really improve your cursing vocabulary. The amount of people is overwhelming and trying to maneuver around them is no small feat. Of course, not all of them are fishermen, but a big percentage are, and they come here for what *going fishing* offers them. Fishing just ain't about fishing.

This time of the year people who love to fish come here in droves and I welcome them with open arms. I love fishing, the act of fishing and I love the person who stands out there for hours hoping, plying their skill, hoping some more, and filling with so much pride when they do catch a fish, that it makes everything in life, not just that day, seem to make sense. It says, "I know how to do some-



Photos provided by Carol Ann Ross

thing, and I can do it well, so well, in fact, that it can feed myself, maybe even my family."

Real fishermen are in it for what the sport gives them. Every cast is a testament to their diligence, every cast that yields a catch is a testament to accomplishment. And everybody likes the feeling of accomplishment.

I've always said that fishing isn't so much about catching, it's about what the time spent doing it offers. Catching something is just an added bonus. If nothing is biting, fishing gives you a chance to think about life, your life, the lives of the people in your life. And if you're fishing in the ocean, well, with

that vastness in front of you, it can make you take a look at your own mortality. Is that going too far? Maybe, but fishing does give one a chance to think about things.

Well, we've all heard about the fisherman who exaggerates about the size of his/her catch or even how they caught it. Like, "Oh I caught a 16 inch cobia," when it was really 10 inches. And then maybe it wasn't a cobia at all, but a blue fish. But some people embellish the amount of hours they spent in labor, or the amount of home runs they hit, or the speed at which they raced their car, or the kind deeds they've done. People do tend to do that sort of thing, but then, that's a sort of people.

A long time ago, I worked on my father's fishing boat, the Cloud Nine. It was docked right next to Buddy's Pirate at what is now Queen's landing. We set out traps for black fish, Daddy drove the boat, I threw out the traps and buoys and pulled them back in. Sometimes the yield was small to so-so and other times the yield was so big, I had to throw the fish on deck because the fish boxes were full. I'd take off my boots and stuff them in the scuppers so the fish wouldn't get off the boat.



Fishing taught me a lot, because sometimes on that roly old round bottom boat, when the swells were swelling, I would get sick as a dog. That experience taught me to work through the hard times. If you've ever been sea sick, you'll understand what I mean when I say that was a hard lesson to learn. I've been fifty miles out to the Gulf Stream and have both engines fail, that was kind of scary, but I learned that losing your cool won't get you to shore. Thunderstorms can't be wished away or ignored, you have to face them.

These are just a few of the things that fishing taught me. Yes, waiting for fish can be a lesson on its own. Sometimes I wish the youth of today could be fishermen, at least for a couple of years. Some of those politicians in Washington should try it too.



Cloud Nine fishing boat in early 1970s

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COFFEE WITH A CANDIDATE

By Dorothy Royal

John Yopp is running for Onslow County Sheriff.

I spoke with him over the phone before his shift started at North Topsail Beach police department.

He told me that he started working for Onslow County Sheriff's office as a patrol deputy and as a jailer almost twenty years ago. He medically retired from the sheriff's department for excessive nerve pain and numbness in his left leg.

Without giving up, Mr. Yopp spent almost four years working to regain his strength and to begin to walk without pain.

After healing, he began a career working as mall security, soon advancing to the top security position of Lieutenant. After a year, he took over the security contract. While running the security department he had to handle budgets, meetings, personnel, and training.

After apprehending two gang members that had assaulted a girl in the women's bathroom, he realized that dealing with criminals unarmed was not the

future he wanted. Eight years after leaving the Sheriff's Office, he decided to go back into law enforcement. Mr. Yopp attended B.L.E.T. certification in Wilmington.

At the age of 45, he started his position with North Topsail Beach police department, where today he is the patrol sergeant.

In a smaller department, like North Topsail Beach, a sergeant has more responsibilities. In addition to scheduling shifts and doing officer evaluations he is also in charge of vehicle inspections and basic repairs, and all patrol officer supervision.

During the Covid pandemic, being creative was a must when avoiding direct contact with other officers. In order to follow all the guidelines, most change of shift meetings were conducted outdoors where space was available. John Yopp's police car is essentially a mobile office, making it easier to keep in touch with officers on duty and to handle paperwork and reports.

This was also a direct result of the damage to the police department and town hall building from Hurricane

Florence that left the town homeless. After the hurricane, the town had to come up with a solution to keeping everyone working while finding a new office.

The ability to have remote contact for paperwork, and facetime calls with other officers at the end of their shifts cuts down on travel and expense for the town. He believes this could be a vital tool for the deputies in Onslow County where miles of territory need to be covered.

John Yopp is a firm believer in a visible presence of law enforcement as a deterrent for crime. Business checks and residential checks where officers physically get out of their vehicles is a great way to be present and observative.

In order to reduce work-load while maintaining the same level of service, Mr. Yopp suggests combining the work of patrol and the warrant squad. Mr. Yopp states that most patrol officers see more people in the community and are more likely to come across the people who have warrants for their arrest than someone just going to a home address in the middle of the day.

As a lifelong resident of Onslow

County, Mr. Yopp lives with his wife of 25 years who helps to care for his premature grand baby. Mr. Yopp is active in his church where he is a board member, as well as Adult Sunday School teacher. Mr. Yopp said he is concerned about the people of our community and would be honored to serve our citizens as their Sheriff.



By Dorothy Royal

George Papastrat is a 38 year old veteran, husband, father and local business owner, and he is a Republican running for Congress in the 3rd district against incumbent Dr. Greg Murphy.

The new district 3 lines now go from the Virginia state line and down the Atlantic coast to the Onslow County border. The 3rd district is now the 4th largest. The diverse district includes areas known for fishing, tourism, military bases and farming.

George Papastrat has a platform a little different than the other candidates.

George Papastrat is a 13 year military veteran who was medically retired after a spinal cord injury caused by a vehicle roll over overseas. From the lengthy road to recovery he realized the problem our country is facing from opioids and how that has to be changed now.

First, he will tell you the legalization of medical marijuana is crucial to keeping opioids out of the hands and bodies of millions of people who need temporary or long-term pain relief. Already legal in several other states, George Papastrat believes we are currently behind the times which will continue to harm patients. Federally decriminalizing marijuana has to be a serious discussion as most states have already done this.

Second, he wants to work toward building a "State of the Art" VA Hospital in Onslow County where it is desperately

needed. As a veteran he is very discouraged by the abuse that veterans must endure for a doctor's visit or medical treatment, whether in person or by zoom call.

Third, he wants to ensure the defense bill is passed on time. He states that this has not been done in decades and affects every military person out there. He claimed at one time when the bill was delayed it left him without any death benefits while he was in the military and overseas. The constant delay of this bill creates undue stress on all military personnel and families.

Fourth, to build a much better relationship between the military personnel and the communities they live in. He states that there are so many programs not utilized by communities that the bases offer that need to be publicized and used. Military personnel make up a large part of our local communities and many want to raise their families here and retire in our area. We need to have better communication to encourage that.

Fifth, to assist in bringing large manufacturing to the area that would employ hundreds of residents, as well as retired military. Mr. Papastrat mentioned that he would work side by side with other community members toward enhancing communication with these manufacturers.

Wouldn't it make sense to have a large firearm manufacturer like Colt for example, here in our state?

An opportunity like that would be both beneficial to the community as well as the military.

Sixth, George Papastrat would like to see North Carolina become a Constitutional Carry State. With 25 states already advancing to Constitutional Carry, it makes no sense that North Carolina is being left behind. What is Constitutional Carry? Constitutional Carry eliminates the need for government permission for law-abiding gun owners to carry their firearms concealed.

Seventh, to pass regulations that would prohibit transgender participants in sporting events. A person born a male who later decides he wants to participate as a female in the sporting world has a list of unfair advantages. This should be common sense.

Eighth, promoting term limits. Mr. Papastrat firmly believes that a politician should only need to hold an office one or two terms before moving on to a different level or moving out of the way for someone new. He does not believe that our country's forefathers wanted people to stay in a political office for decades.

Ninth, Mr. Papastrat would like to see a memorial built for the war against terror where so many of our local military have had such a large impact.

You can contact George at George@George4congress.com or visit his website George4congress.com



What's in a Zip Code?

By Dorothy Royal

A zip code, the five digit number assigned to every area in the United States that receives mail (several being accompanied by an additional 4 digits) may be far more important than you think.

Did you know that the 28445 zip code is based in the city of Holly Ridge in Onslow County?

Most people don't realize that Topsail Beach (Pender County) and Surf City (Pender County) also share the same zip code with Holly Ridge even though they have their own post offices.

Did you know that there are people who live right outside the Surf City town limits that have a Holly Ridge phone number and a Hampstead zip code? Imagine answering that 911 call.

What other kind of problems can this cause?

Delivery services cannot distinguish between Holly Ridge, Surf City or Topsail Beach based on zip code alone.

Incorrect sales tax may be charged for Pender County customers. Onslow is 7% and Pender is 6.75%.

Voter confusion. Getting ready to vote in the primary? Most people consider their zip code as a way to determine their voter polling station. Unfortunately that may not be the case. The City limits of Holly Ridge are rather small compared to the general area of the 28445 zip code and often people are turned away on election day for heading to the wrong polling station.

Surf City has multiple voting locations based on districts that include Cape Fear Community College (if you live in the Sloop Point precinct) Surf City (for city residents) and Topsail Beach voters both use the Surf City Community Center to vote.

As many residents have found out over the years, a lot of people reside in the county and not the city limits of Holly Ridge and Surf City and therefore cannot vote in municipal elections.

Not sure where you live? If you own

property, check your tax bill. If you only pay county taxes you are not in the city limits. Rent? Call the town hall you think represents you and give them your address.

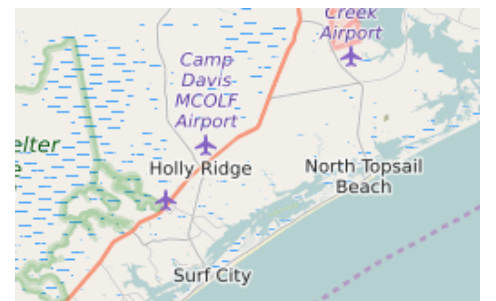
Real Estate. When a person is searching for island property from out of town, it is very confusing through search platforms to distinguish on island, near island or mainland.

Schools - When the new Surf City elementary and Middle school were constructed there was a lot of confusion as to whose children were able to attend. The really strange part was that the new schools were given the mailing designation as Hampstead with a 28443 zip code.

Up until recently, the postmaster for Topsail Beach (the farthest southern point of Topsail Island in Pender County) would pick up the mail from Sneads Ferry Post office and drop off mail to Holly Ridge (hwy 17) then Surf City (hwy 50 near Foodlion) and then to their own post office in Topsail Beach. At \$4.00 a gallon

for fuel, that could be a very expensive daily route (not to mention it is reversed in the afternoon for drop off). In total the route was 36 miles round trip. Did you ever get a notice that you had a package being held in Sneads Ferry? That was the reason why.

Recently that has changed to where Topsail Beach picks up their mail and Surf City's in Holly Ridge, which reduces the round trip to just 20 miles a day for the Topsail Beach post master. Is it way past due for Surf City and Topsail Beach to have their own zip codes? Absolutely.



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The Marian Way: Bring Beauty To Every Room

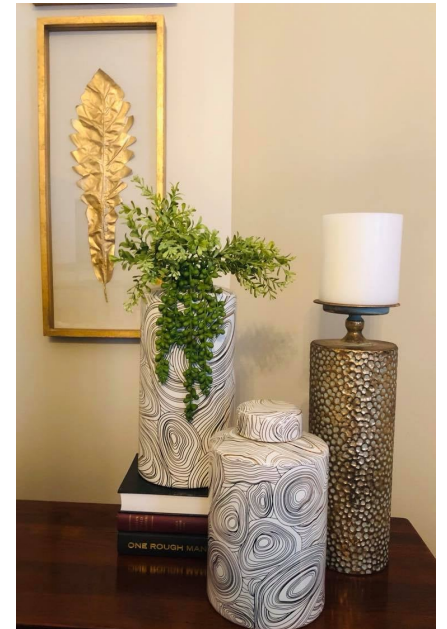
By Marian Taylor

Is your home in need of a refresh? Update and elevate your space by adding simple décor touches to your home. You can easily freshen any room with small changes using seasonal colors, patterns, and textures. Perk up a plain sofa or bedding by adding new decorator pillows, and a bright colored throw to make things cozy. Be sure to keep in mind that you don't need endless throw pillows, just a few is all you need. Layering objects like books, family photos, and simple décor pieces bring an additional element to your surfaces. The Marian Way is to decorate your room with accessories in odd numbers (3 or 5 items) vs even numbers so that you have symmetry and balance. Creating various heights also gives dimension to the area and is more appealing to the eye. Hanging a mirror in any space makes the room feel larger and more open and the reflective surface brings additional light into the room. The Marian Way rule when you purchase new décor items is one in and two out so that you don't have excess.

Bring the outdoors into a room using live elements such as lush plants. Plants not only brighten up and add beauty to your space, but they also add health benefits. Some of these benefits include reducing carbon dioxide, increasing humidity, reducing pollutants, reducing dust in the air, and keeping hot rooms cool. The Peace Lily is one of my favorites and it's true to its name. This plant has such beauty and is also easy to grow. Having this plant in your home will provide light and beauty to your entire home! This is a cost friendly and beautiful way to detoxify your home. Every room including the kitchen needs a live plant. It enhances the room by bringing color and an organic dimension to that space along with adding well-being to your family's health. The Marian Way believes that having fresh flowers in the home not only adds beauty to your home, but it also increases happiness and joy to your life.

Create a simple table scape by adding a bowl of green apples or lemons as the centerpiece for your table. The Marian Way decor solution is to use an

unexpected vessel such as a decorative crate or wooden bowl and fill it with fresh green apples. It brings a pop of color to the room, and it is a delicious way to store your apples for the week. Whatever you add to freshen your space be sure to Keep It Simple...The Marian Way!



Marian Taylor, is the creator of The Marian Way. Her mission is to support people in living a simple, and beautiful lifestyle. As a professional downsizer and relocation specialist for 10+ years she knows firsthand as to what it takes to help people let go of their "excess", with her time-tested tools, tips, and solutions. Marian is also a good food ambassador and offers gluten free and clean mealtime solutions. Marian will be sharing Simple Solutions for Meals, Wellness, Home Décor and more -The Marian Way! To find out how The Marian Way can help you with your project, please email: Marian@TheMarianWay.com

Yopp's Meeting Hall Restoration

By Theresa Kramer

The Yopp's Meeting Hall, also known as Yopp's Primitive Baptist Church is a historic church, located in Sneads Ferry. It was placed on the National Register in 1999. Now, this beautiful area is neglected and in need of repair. We are missing documents and church records that would help us fill in the blanks, including the unmarked graves. For the past 20 years, people have made attempts to restore and clean this 3.6 acre diamond in the rough. Attempts in the past from local people, some who have family in the cemetery, have failed, due to lack of help and lack of funds.

This property was donated and was made a nonprofit called Friends of Yopp's Meeting House Inc. We have not fully understood what happened at that time, but we know this property was not maintained. Hard work has started to make a difference and the only way to keep it that way is to have it be self-sufficient and produce its own income to have it maintained. There are so many great ideas for this, but first, we need it brought back to respectability.

We love the kind words of people who cannot care for their family plots anymore and see it improving. But we need more help, we are blessed to have the marines and sailors help a few times and do the work that we can't.

The "Sneads Ferry Community Yopp Cemetery Restoration" is our Facebook Page. We know people care as we had 205 members join in the first month. Take the time to look for the changes, the stories and the people. That really is what this is about. We are working on grants for the cemetery, church and tourism. That is a year away. But it is a year we can get the hard work done in the cemetery. Hard work is free and fulfilling. The stories, the surprises, the transformation, respect of the people buried there, the history....that is the payment.

What is the future of Yopp's? Maybe a museum of the past, or a wedding venue too, or an instructional class of the past such as basket weaving. Maybe a Farmers Market and Vendor market? Possibilities to make it a self sustained, non profit are endless. It just depends on local community involvement.

Won't you please consider helping. We have many things that need to be done and different levels of ease from light work to difficult. No set times, just go out when you can....you just need to do it once to feel the spark. Donations are also needed. Future updates will be posted. Please call Heather Whitfield at 562-505-6786 or Theresa Kramer at 715-808-4157 to volunteer or if you have questions. Thank you.

Yopp Meeting House & Cemetery Restoration Project

YOPP'S HISTORIC MEETING HOUSE

MEETING HOUSE

Yopps Meeting House, is a historic Primitive Baptist Church located in Sneads Ferry.. The current building was built around 1890, however there may have been a log building built as early as 1813. It is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places

CEMETERY

The Cemetery on the grounds has graves dated pre-Civil and includes an African American portion as well as rare unmarked wooden markers.

OUR MISSION

Over time the building and cemetery grounds have fallen victim to neglect and deterioration. With the help of many volunteers the beauty of the cemetery is beginning to come back. History matters and should be protected and taught. We strive to restore the church to it's original beauty as well as consistently maintain the cemetery grounds. Our vision is to use the building as a space to teach future generation and residents the rich culture and history of our community. To learn more about our project please follow us on Facebook at: Sneads Ferry Community Yopp Cemetery Restoration

CONSIDER DONATING TODAY!

VENMO

CONTACT: Heather Whitfield (562) 505-6786 or Terry Kramer (715) 808-4157

Follow the progress on our Facebook page at Sneads Ferry Community Yopp Cemetery Restoration

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Alligators

By Lise Gore

According to the Smithsonian's National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute, "the American alligator is found in the United States from North Carolina to the Rio Grande in Texas. Alligators are usually found in freshwater, slow-moving rivers. They also live in swamps, marshes and lakes." Alligators cannot survive for long periods in salt water because they lack salt glands. Alligator holes provide habitats for other animals especially during droughts. They increase ecological diversity and are considered to be important in maintaining the environments where they live.

Six months ago Fox 35 of Orlando released a video (you can watch the video on YouTube) of a very large alligator trying to bite a paddle board. The woman on the paddle board pushed the alligator away with her oar. The woman said she had never had an alligator approach her that way. She believes someone has been feeding the gator.

As we disturb the salt marshes and coastlines the chances of human interaction with these apex predators rises and we will continue to hear of such encounters. This week a 3 foot alligator had to be removed from a swimming pool in Florida so the Montverde swimming team could practice. The alligator was removed safely.

Unfortunately, he didn't make the team.

Members of the reptile family, the alligator was hunted to near extinction and protected until 1987 when populations recovered enough to remove them from the endangered species list. Now they thrive in bayous, lakes and yes.. even golf courses. The Ancient reptile has changed very little since dinosaur times. American alligators are about 84 million years old with ancestors around 200 million years old. One could consider them dinosaurs.

Breeding season begins in April to May when bull alligators bellow to attract the females and warn other suitors away. Females build nests in June or July consisting of marsh vegetation mounded several feet high. The hatchlings begin life about 65 to 70 days later by breaking through the egg with an egg tooth. They are 8 to 9 inches long and will grow about a foot a year. The first 6 months the mother alligator protects her young in waters near the nest. Some are naturally taken by predators. Interestingly, the sex of these alligators is often determined by the temperature of the nest. Males are larger than females with an average size of 11 feet whereas females average at 8 feet. The largest alligator on record is on display at Mann Wildlife Learning Center in Montgomery, Alabama and is an impressive 15 foot 9 inches but there are reports of a 19.2 foot alligator in Louisiana in 1890.

Defenders of Wildlife reports that there are an estimated 5 million alligators in the U. S. with the majority of the populations being in Louisiana and Florida. Alligator populations have risen enough to allow very limited permit only hunting. North Carolina issued 20 permits in 2018. South Carolina, Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Georgia, Mississippi and Texas have a limited permit hunting season for the impressive reptiles. Each state has very specific laws and guidelines. It would be prudent to check all state laws before hunting. It is illegal in most states to harass, feed or shoot an alligator without one of these limited permits.

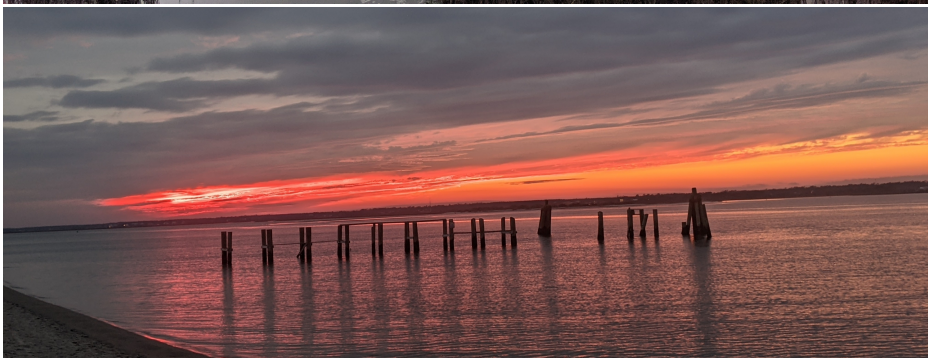
Sam Voyles lives on the Pascagoula River in Mississippi and his Dad, Ben, applies for a permit or tag each year. Sam says he sees a gator almost every day in the summer. Last summer his dog, a rat terrier named Sugar, had an encounter with a gator. Sam said, "Sugar spotted the gator, jumped in and started trying to bite it on the head. The gator was about 6 feet and thankfully it kept trying to get away. Sugar finally came back to the bank." It was a scary moment for Sam.

Alligators normally avoid any interaction with humans and will shy away from encounters. Dogs are the right sized to be considered prey so it is important to take care around alligator habitats when walking your dogs. Alligators are more active around dusk and dawn. They can move quickly on land

but they tire easily when not in the water. And for the love of common sense- Don't Feed the Alligators.



Sam Ave & his dog Sugar on the Pascagoula River



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Local Government Overreach Leads To Court Decision To Stop The Abuse

By Dorothy Royal

Peg and David Schroeder of Wilmington wanted to use their home as a short-term rental. With high demand for tourism, this was a simple way to give people the opportunity to visit the area while allowing the couple to bring in some extra income. The problem? The City of Wilmington.

The City of Wilmington had created an excessive list of hurdles a person had to jump over in order to rent their property short-term. The list included having to register their home, having to obtain a permit to do so and to be put into a lottery system before they could be approved. The other giant hurdle? No two rentals could be within 400 feet of each other. The City had also put a 2% cap on the number of vacation rentals allowed which is strange in itself being a tourist area.

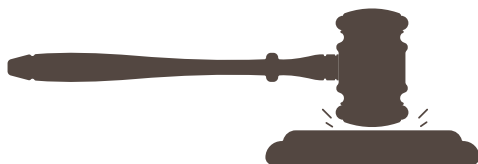
The Schroeder's neighbor was selected from the lottery, therefore making it impossible for the Schroeder's to rent their home. Something began to stink.

With the assistance of the Institute for

Justice, the Schroeder's took this to the courts, and just last week, the courts agreed. Wilmington was exceeding its powers and had no right to restrict short-term rentals and no right to require any form of registration.

In fact, state laws were put into place to avoid this kind of government overreach, an issue that the City was aware of when they created the rules. Will this lead to lawsuits from others denied their rights? I hope so. Will this lead to more people questioning rules and regulations that restrict freedoms? I definitely hope so.

Perhaps this will be a wake-up call to other cities and towns to look over their rules and restrictions that take away people's freedoms, because let's be honest, that is not the role of government.



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Simply Homemade Recipes

Slow Cooker Chicken Bone Broth

- 3 pounds assorted chicken bones
- 6 cloves garlic, unpeeled
- 2 unpeeled carrots, cut into chunks
- 2 stalks celery with leaves, cut into chunks
- 1 onion, unpeeled and quartered
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black peppercorns
- 12 cups water, or as needed



Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C). Place chicken bones, garlic cloves, carrots, celery, and onion on a baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil. Toss to coat. Roast in the preheated oven for 30 minutes, stirring halfway through. Transfer roasted bones and vegetables into a 6-quart slow cooker. Add vinegar, bay leaves, salt, and peppercorns. Cover completely with water and cook on Low for 24 to 48 hours, adding 1 to 2 cups more water during the cooking process, to keep bones submerged. Strain broth using a fine mesh strainer. Pour into jars and refrigerate until ready to use.

Garlic Shrimp Pasta Bake



- 1 pound uncooked medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley, divided
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1 (10 ounce) package penne pasta
- 3 tablespoons butter, divided
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh dill
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup chicken broth
- 1 cup milk
- 2 large tomatoes, chopped
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 3/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 cup grated Romano cheese
- 1/4 cup shredded mozzarella cheese

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Add penne and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender yet firm to the bite, about 11 minutes. Drain. Heat 1 tablespoon butter and vegetable oil large oven-safe skillet over medium heat. Add garlic; cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add shrimp, 2 tablespoons parsley, and dill. Cook and stir, flipping shrimp halfway, until pink, 3 to 4 minutes. Move shrimp to a plate and set aside. Melt the remaining 2 tablespoons butter in the skillet, stirring into the shrimp juices. Add flour; whisk until fully combined and starting to turn golden, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Add chicken broth and milk in that order; whisk to combine. Stir in tomatoes, lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Bring sauce to a simmer. Stir 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese and Romano cheese into the sauce until cheeses begin to melt and sauce is creamy. Add 1 tablespoon mozzarella cheese. Mix in about 1/2 the cooked penne to start; add more if there is enough sauce to coat. Add the shrimp and stir to combine. Top with the remaining parsley, Parmesan, and mozzarella. Bake in the preheated oven and bake until top is golden and sauce bubbles around the edges of the skillet, 8 to 10 minutes.

Photos and recipes courtesy of AllRecipes.com

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By Cale K. Brody

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