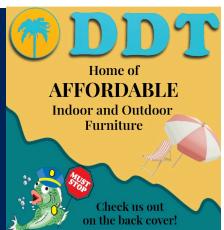


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Volume V, Issue 2 / 3

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## Jimmy Ellington Jr.

June 22, 1972 - February 16, 2025

## K9 Kayda

There's no easy way to say this but our sweet Kayda is no longer with us. Our lovely girl had a sudden onset medical issue last night and today we had to make the hard decision to let her go. She was so blessed to have 14 mostly healthy and very active years, 13 of those with us, and we have loved having her as a part of our family. We will always be grateful for her time within the Surf City community; in addition to the amazing work, she did we know that she was

We've been reminiscing over all of our favorite Kayda stories together, laughing and crying throughout. We'd love to hear any of your stories that you can share as we take time to adjust to this new reality.

I know I've not done well posting during her 4 years of retirement, but she was living the easy life which didn't always generate news to share. Please know her time was filled with love, rest, and fun with her family. She is already missed!





# Angela Leigh Kelley

November 23, 1970 - February 8, 2025

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the unexpected passing of our beloved Angela. She was a wonderful daughter, an exceptional mother to Allahna, a partner in crime with her sister Cara Lynn and a loving wife to her husband, Corey. Angela began her career as a structural firefighter in Eagle, Idaho, and spent the last 10 years as a professional wedding officiant, celebrating love on the beaches of North Carolina and beyond. We hope you are soaring high and causing as much joy and mischief in the universe as you did here on Earth. There was never a dull oment with you, and that is just one of the many reasons we loved you so deeply. Please spread kindness in memor of Angela.



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# Topsail Times

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### TOPSAIL TIMES NEWSPAPER - **400**4 -

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## **Topsail Gun Gal**

#### **By Dorothy Royal**

When President Trump created the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), most American voters agreed that our government is overdue for a fiscal overhaul and evaluation. In the business world, this is an essential process to keep things running. No small business can survive if funds are constantly going out and nothing is coming in to replace them, except debt. That is a bad business plan and set to fail. No one likes paying taxes, especially when taxes keep going up, only to find out our tax dollars are being spent in wasteful ways. I think it's a good time for us all to start asking questions.

When was the last time you attended a local town meeting? Have you ever been to a county meeting? The decisions made at these meetings may impact your daily life more than any change caused by DOGE in Washington.

Last year the Town of Holly Ridge budgeted \$300,000.00 for a new website. For those of you who have visited the town's website over the years, you may agree it is lacking in all departments. Unlike all the surrounding towns, the town meetings are currently not "live streamed" and the minutes from previous meetings sometimes take months to post on the website. I think as a taxpayer, this town can do better.

The Town of Surf City has a new sign on the wall outside the council chambers that I strongly recommend everyone stops by and looks at. Bravo to the person or people who made this happen. There is nothing nicer for a taxpayer than to see something that defines each department, the number employees and the function of that department. Clear, simple, powerful. Good job.

President Trump wants to do away with pennies. Are you opposed? I'm not. Over the years I have heard that it costs more in materials to make a penny than it is worth. As someone who like to use those "penny machines" when I travel to bring home a flat penny memorabilia, I can assure you the pennies of today are nothing like the pennies of a decade ago. Today's penny is thin and flimsy when pressed. You know what we need to make a comeback? The \$2 bill. I love those things! And don't forget about the 50-cent piece, you really felt like you were holding something when you had one of those.

How do we combat the egg shortage? Easy, let's take a trip back in time when everyone had chickens. Guess what, no egg shortage. Every home should be allowed to have 2 hens per person for both eggs and pest control. Nothing gets rid of bugs like a chicken. People need to become more self-sufficient, and this is a real easy way to start.

Let's state a simple fact – most all politicians who reach a high level have wealthy friends. Do you know what it costs just to get your name on a national ballot? Do the math people, both democrats and republicans depend on the wealthy. This witch hunt needs to stop.

North Carolina may be on the precipice of joining the 33 other states with Constitutional Carry. What does that mean for you? Absolutely everything, if you are a law-abiding gun owner (present or future) and nothing if you are a criminal because you will most likely break the laws either way. Constitutional Carry will allow law abiding citizens to carry their firearms concealed (pockets, holsters, purses) without the need for a piece of paper and paying money. You know what piece of paper already protects this? The 2nd Amendment. You know what the 2nd Amendment doesn't say? That you only have this right if you pay a fee. Aren't we all tired of paying and paying and paying? I know I am.

North Carolina is currently an "Open Carry State" which means you need no additional permits or to pay any fees to carry open if you are legally allowed to possess a firearm. Nothing will change here folks (for those of you that may be worried) except citizens of North Carolina won't have to pay out more money.

My hope is that when this does pass

that the option to get a Conceal and Carry Permit will still be available since it still makes the purchase process much easier as it is already proof of a background check. Another benefit to a NC CCW permit is that it reciprocates with 37 other states to carry. Don't be afraid of common sense, and making North Carolina a Constitutional Carry State is common sense.

While common sense might be on the table, wouldn't it be nice if NC drivers did NOT have to renew their driver's license every 8 years? Did you know that Arizona only requires a driver to renew their license on their 65th birthday and then it renews every five years? Wouldn't that be great! Why do we continually need to pay DMV fees to prove we can drive? Maybe that is something that can change in the next few years.

Remember knowledge is power, common sense is a wonderful thing that needs to be restored, and driving should not be a survival sport if we all just slow down and focus.



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## **Coastal Common Sense**

#### By Kim McGahey

Natural disasters have dominated our lives and the news cycle for the past couple years. The blame game rages on from both sides of the aisle about forest management, water policy, fire department budget cuts and insurance coverage withdrawls, but the common theme is how free Americans come together to help our suffering fellow citizens in their time of need.

First, however, we must acknowledge that God is in control of all natural phenomena. They are not caused or calmed by some globalist liberal climate change political worldview coming out of Davos, Switzerland. God's green earth and all its climatic highs and lows has been subjected to hurricanes, wildfires, earthquakes, tornadoes, asteroids, eclipses, solar flares and more for millions of years.

These natural disasters are nothing new and hardly man made. Once we see this perennial destruction as events beyond our blame and out of our control, then it becomes our priority on how best to react to them and the damage they cause. This mitigation can happen as a result of public policy and as well as individual charity.

A few days spent in Burnsville, Yancey County, North Carolina with Samaritan's Purse taught me so much about how chainsaws, dump trucks and grateful hearts can cure even the worst of human tragedies and suffering. Those mountain communities were destroyed by the torrential rains and force winds of Hurricane Helene and all structures within 100 feet of any river, stream, creek, rivulette or drainage ditch were either severely damaged or literally washed away. Thousands of uprooted trees collapsed on roads, rooftops and driveways making access impossible. The list is over 1000 homeowners still waiting for trees to be removed and houses to be made habitable.

Yet in spite of this natural calamity and the financial ruin it places on residents there, those people in the flooded restaurant where we ate dinner insisted on paying for OUR meals because of how grateful they were for the aid and comfort pouring into their ravaged community from all over America. It was indeed a heartfelt meal.

Similarly, the California wildfires have brought unforeseen apocalyptic destruction into a quiet, exclusive hillside neighborhood overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Fourth and fifth generation homes were consumed by a towering inferno that wiped out cherished family mementos and left nothing but ashes for the current generation to rebuild on. And with no insurance to cover the losses, even the wealthy Hollywood types in this

area are left bankrupt.

Some say these natural disasters are payback for a hedonistic unbiblical culture that has abandoned God and that more fire and brimstone will rain down on a secular society that does not put God first. Visions of Sodom and Gomorrah come to mind.

Nobody can say for sure what the causes of these horrific events are, but we can certainly identify the cure by watching the outpouring of generosity from fellow citizens. Thousands of individual volunteers, churches, fire departments, hospitals, first responders, and go-fund-me sites from all across America have chipped in across party lines to help restore the victims' lives and property. The love thy neighbor response has been overwhelming as private and

public resources have been immediately and unselfishly donated to assist our suffering neighbors back on their feet.

This is not a Left or Right issue. This is a common sense love America issue where the American people are unique in human history for practicing the age old saying, "...leave no man behind...". We set aside our petty bickering when our neighbor needs help and we stand in the gap when Mother Nature unleashes her devastating wrath.

Let us resist the temptation in this dark hour to point fingers, but instead, give us wisdom on implementing public policies and personal philanthropy that help reduce and mitigate the life changing destructive outcomes of such cataclysmic natural disasters.

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## **Major Drug Bust in Onslow County Leads to Multiple Arrests**

#### **By Onslow County Sheriff Dept.**

Following a six-month investigation, the Onslow County Sheriff's Office Drug Enforcement Unit, in collaboration with multiple state and federal agencies, has made significant arrests in an ongoing effort to combat illegal drug activity.

On Thursday, February 6, 2025, deputies, along with the NCIS Special Operations Unit, Jacksonville Police Department Special Investigators Unit, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), executed three drug-related search warrants at 250 Wild Geese Lane (Lots #6 and #7) and 400 Duncan Road South in Richlands.

During the operation, law enforcement seized approximately 1,343 grams of methamphetamine, five grams of fentanyl, five firearms one of which was reported stolen—a 2017 Ford Fusion, and \$6,792 in U.S.

Investigators made two arrests as a

result of the search warrants.

William Feliciano, 42, of 250 Wild Geese Lane Lot 6, is charged with:

- Felony Trafficking Methamphetamine (x6)
- Felony Maintaining Dwelling for a Controlled Substance
- Felony PWSID Schedule II Controlled Substance (x2)
- Felony Trafficking Heroin/Opium
- Manufacture Felony Methamphetamine (x2)
- Possession Drug Paraphernalia (x2) Feliciano received a \$2.5 million secured bond and is in the Onslow County Detention Center awaiting his next court date.

Concetta Star Dearborn, 35, of 250 Wild Geese Lane Lot 6, is charged

- Felony Trafficking Methamphetamine (x3)
- · Felony Maintaining Dwelling for a Controlled Substance (x2)
- Felony PWSID Schedule II Controlled Substance (x2)

- Felony Trafficking Heroin/Opium (x2)
- Felony Methamphetamine
- Possession Drug Paraphernalia (x2)

secured bond and is in the Onslow TIP4CSJAX and your message to County Detention Center awaiting her 274637 (CRIMES). Callers to Crime next court date.

"This operation underscores our and ongoing efforts to remove dangerous identity. drugs from our communities," said Sheriff Chris Thomas. "We will continue to work alongside our local, state, and federal partners as our top priority is the safety and well-being of our citizens."

Anyone with information regarding this incident or similar incidents is asked to contact the Sheriff's Office at 910-455-3113

For media requests or questions, please contact Public Information Officer Trevor Dunnell at (910) 219-4936 ext. 4936 Cell: (910) 787-4216 or

trevor\_dunnell@onslowcountync.gov. Crime Stoppers offers cash reward of up to \$5,000 for information that is deemed

of value or assistance to law Manufacture enforcement. Please call Crime Stoppers at 910-938-3273 Information can also be anonymously Dearborn received a \$2.5 million texted via Text-A-Tip by typing Stoppers may remain anonymous never have to reveal their





Feliciano

Dearborn



# Jacksonville Man Arrested After High Speed Chase; Stolen Firearm Recovered

#### By Onslow County Sheriff Dept.

The Onslow County Sheriff's Office has arrested a Jacksonville man on multiple felony charges following a high-speed pursuit related to a stolen firearm.

Around 2:50 p.m. on Thursday, February 20, 2025, deputies received a BOLO alert for a silver connected to a warrant for 25-yearold Raymond Novak. Novak was wanted in connection with the theft of a firearm from Hollywood Pawn and Jewelry in Jacksonville earlier that day.

Deputies spotted Novak driving the BMW near Ramsey Road and attempted a traffic stop. Novak did not stop, leading deputies on a brief pursuit, reaching speeds of 110-115 mph. The chase ended when the BMW ran off the road near Ramsev Road and W T Whitehead Drive.

A 17-year-old passenger exited the BMW and fled into a wooded area near the neighborhood of Carolina Plantation. Novak remained in the BMW before deputies took him into custody.

At that time, deputies set up a perimeter around the neighborhood, taking the juvenile into custody shortly after.

Deputies were able to recover the stolen firearm, along with another firearm registered to Novak, around 32 grams of suspected fentanyl, 13 grams of crack cocaine, and nine oxycodone pills from the BMW.

Raymond Novak, 25, of 1029 Ramsey Road in Jacksonville, is charged with:

- Larceny of a Firearm
- Possession of a Stolen Firearm
- DWLR/Limited Driving Privileges

- Flee/Elude Arrest with Motor Vehicle
- Speeding
- Title/Registration **Fictitious** Card/Tag
- Reckless Driving/Disregard
- Fail Maintain Lane Control

Novak was placed under a \$32,000 secured bond and is in the Onslow County Detention Center awaiting his next court date on March 12,

Charges are pending for the narcotics found, along with federal charges with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

Crime Stoppers offers cash reward of up to \$5,000 for information that is deemed of value or assistance to law enforcement. Please call Crime at 910-938-3273 or Information can also be anonymously texted via Text-A-Tip by typing

TIP4CSJAX and your message to 274637 (CRIMES). Callers to Crime Stoppers may remain anonymous and never have to reveal their identity.



Raymond Novak

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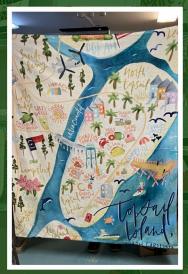
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## **CFCC Student Makes Full Circle Journey**

From student to instructor, Cape Fear Community College (CFCC) alum Ashley Wells has come full circle, returning to her alma mater as a Science Lab Technician.

Wells, a Wilmington native, and Laney High School graduate, began her educational journey at CFCC in the Marine Technology program. She sought to expand her skill set and learned about the Chemical Technology program through a friend. This was the start of a new journey.

"I was mainly curious about the [Chemical Technology] program at first," shared Wells. "I'd only ever taken a high school chemistry course before, but I was hopeful that gaining new technical skills would help me find a career."

Enrolling in the Chemical Technology

program in the fall of 2020, she immersed herself in coursework. Wells gained hands-on experience through a workbased learning internship with Quality Chemical Laboratories (QCL), a local Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) contract lab. Under the guidance of experienced professionals, she received training in procedures such as High-Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC) and creating standing operating procedures.

Wells graduated from the Chemical Technology program in May 2022 and soon began working as a chemist at QCL. There, she performed tests like ID tests, Thin-Layer Chromatography (TLC), and pH determinations to ensure the quality and safety of pharmaceutical materials. This

position helped her gain valuable handson expertise that she will now bring to her students.

Reflecting on her time as a student, Wells was inspired by Kim Bufkin, a Science Lab Technician at CFCC. "Kim showed me how crucial lab technicians are to the effectiveness of a lab. When a similar position became available at CFCC, it felt like fate. I knew it would challenge me to grow while allowing me to give back to the college that gave so much to me."

In December 2024, Wells joined CFCC as a Science Lab Technician, a role that allows her to support faculty and inspire students by applying her education and professional experience. "I'm just over a

month into this role, but it's already been so rewarding," she said.

For more information about CFCC's Chemical Technology program, visit cfcc.edu/chemical-technology/.



**Photo Provided by CFCC** 

#### **Save The Date! Denim and Diamond Returns!**

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#### Students Hone Leadership Skills at the **United States Air Force Academy**

announce scholarship recipients overcoming for the Spring 2025 Frances building personal character. Hesselbein Student Leadership (FHSLP) at prestigious United States Air Force attending the FHSLP: Academy in Colorado Springs, - Amira from Ramstein High 18-22, program, established by MCEC in - Tiffany from Prattville High 2006, is designed to enhance the School (Prattville, AL) leadership abilities of students - Jesilyn from Lejeune High School and strengthen their Student 2 (Camp Lejeune, NC) Student®

Ten exceptional students have - Mitchell from Burkburnett High been selected to participate in School (Burkburnett, TX) week-long. experience, where they will School (Swansboro, NC) engage in leadership activities - Olivia from Fort Campbell High and lessons alongside cadets and School (Fort Cambell, KY) other S2S leaders to include - Bella from Pieper High School sessions during the National (San Antonio, TX) and Character Symposium. The program aims to School (Madison, AL) necessary tools and knowledge to School (Colorado Springs, CO) further develop their local S2S

and successes with their peers.

The Military Child Education Distinguished guests will also be Coalition® (MCEC®) is thrilled to present to offer insights on obstacles and

> We are excited to introduce the the following students who will be

- 2025. This School (Ramstein, Germany)
- (S2S™) teams on Libby from Smith Station High School (Smith Station, AL)

  - intensive Mason from Swansboro High
  - Leadership Abigail from Bob Jones High
- equip these students with the Molly from Widefield High

We believe that this program will have a profound impact on The FHSLP not only focuses on these students' lives and their building leadership skills but also ability to lead and inspire others. provides a platform for students. We would greatly appreciate it if to share their program challenges you could help us spread the word about this incredible opportunity for young leaders.

### Help Make Family and Friends Night Possible: Sponsor Able Buddies NC

Able Buddies NC is a (501 c3) nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering inclusion and building connections for individuals with disabilities in Holly Ridge, North Carolina. Through its programs, Able Buddies NC creates opportunities for friendships, personal growth, and a stronger sense of community. Among their initiatives, the monthly Family and Friends Night stands out as a cornerstone event that brings people together in a fun and inclusive environment.

Family and Friends Night offers a safe and welcoming space where

individuals with intellectual disabilities, along with their loved ones, can enjoy an evening of games, entertainment, and connection. These gatherings promote a sense of belonging and joy for everyone involved.

However, hosting these events requires ongoing support, and Able Buddies NC relies on the generosity of local businesses to help make them possible

Sponsors play a critical role in ensuring Family and Friends Night continues to thrive. Financial contributions help cover the costs of venue rentals, refreshments, activity supplies, and decorations. By

becoming a sponsor, your business directly impacts the lives of participants, creating lasting memories and supporting a culture of inclusion

In return, sponsors receive valuable recognition, such as having their company's logo featured on event materials, social media promotions, and opportunities to engage with the Able Buddies NC community. Sponsorship also demonstrates your company's commitment to corporate social responsibility and community

enrichment.

Whether you're a small business or a large corporation, there are many ways to get involved, including monetary donations, in-kind contributions, or volunteering time.

Together, we can make Family and Friends Night an unforgettable experience for all who attend.

For more information about sponsoring Able Buddies NC's Family and Friends Night, e-mail Aileen Green at Aileen@ablebuddiesnc.org. Join us in building a more inclusive community—one event at a time.

## **Coastal Common Sense II**

#### By Kim McGahey

Toto has finally pulled the curtain back on the great and powerful Oz. What was once intentionally hidden from the public's eyes by our corrupt government is now being fully exposed for everyone to plainly see. And the widespread exposure is as jubilant for most as it is painful for the few who are getting caught with their hands in the cookie jar.

The Constitution of the United States of America outlines the separation of powers in an elaborate, yet relatively simple, set of checks and balances among three equal branches of government. Nowhere in our Constitution does it authorize the monstrous fourth branch of government that has grown so unwieldy and unmanageable in the last 100 years.

Article I plainly outlines the responsibility of the Legislative branch i.e. both houses of Congress. The House of Representatives and the Senate are clearly responsible for making the laws.

Article II describes in very straightforward terms the powers of the Executive branch i.e. those duties vested in the President. His major responsibility is the execution of the laws passed by Congress and the subsequent administration of all the offices, agencies and employees of that Executive branch; as well as

being the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. military.

Article III defines the oversight mission of the Judicial branch wherein the judges and courts, under the protective guidance of the Supreme Court, are charged with interpreting the laws that are passed by Congress and executed by the President. This branch is intended to provide legal guardrails that keep the power of the federal government from abuse and have it remain tightly held in the hands of We the People.

These three branches of government have successfully and efficiently functioned according to the Constitution for the past 250 years. The timeless genius of the Founders is evident in the way our three branches work together, while at the same time retaining their autonomy and still keeping a watchful eye on the others. It is a classic study of mutual dependence coupled with autonomous independence with all power derived from a free people; a feat never before accomplished in human history.

But over time as the country grew and prospered, an unconstitutional fourth branch of government with no direct authority from the people has slowly evolved in the form of a pervasive bureaucracy. Slowly but steadily, inch by inch federal agencies were established and filled with "experts" whose job it is to manage a

gigantic government leviathan presiding over 330 million people. Eventually, these unelected bureaucrats became entrenched and were no longer accountable even to their elected representatives, much less to the people.

These well funded pinheads also served our elected officials as shields to insulate unscrupulous politicians from negative voter reaction, and eventually became the self-important, impregnable deep state labyrinth we see in the alphabet soup of Washington, D.C. federal agencies today. What started out as a democracy has devolved into a bureaucracy.

Now the task at hand, as approved by voters last November, is to unravel this bureaucratic octopus and free our country from its poisonous tentacles. This is job number one for the Trump administration's Department of Government Efficiency headed by the volunteer private citizen Elon Musk.

But a funny thing happened on the way to the Colosseum where the people gathered to cheer this bureaucratic beast being destroyed. The assorted liberal progressive Democrat members of all three branches set up a phony self-serving defense line around the monster and are trying to prevent the good guy gladiators from accomplishing their public mandate.

They say politics makes strange bedfellows and as we watch power hungry Democrats in bed with tax wasting bureaucrats, we know that's true. Governments at all local, state and federal levels need to stop controlling our lives, stop their endless spending and start lowering our taxes. Government should be confined to filling potholes and keeping us safe. We the people have spoken and the curtain can never be put back.



## **Pender County Library Honors Samm-Art Williams** with February Exhibit

Pender County Library is proud to host an exhibit celebrating the life and career of Samm-Art Williams (1946-2024),а distinguished playwright, screenwriter, television producer, and actor. The exhibit will be on display at the Main Library in Burgaw (103 S. Cowan St.) throughout February.

Born and raised in Burgaw, Samm-Art Williams graduated from C.F. Pope High School in 1964. He later earned a degree from Morgan State University in Baltimore. impressive career took him to stages and screens nationwide, yet he remained deeply connected to his roots in rural Pender County.

The exhibit, curated by the Pender County Historical Society, was made possible through the generous support of Sandy Shepard. Shepard has loaned items from Williams' personal collection to the Historical Society for the exhibit, including play

posters and photographs. After February, the exhibit will move to the Pender County Museum in Burgaw, where it will remain on display through April 30.

Samm-Art Williams received numerous accolades during his lifetime, including Tony and Emmy Award nominations. He holds the distinction of being the only individual from Pender County inducted into the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame. His play Home was a Broadway sensation, earning nationwide acclaim and a revival in June 2024, shortly after his passing on May 13, 2024.

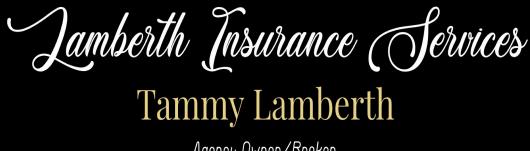
While living in Los Angeles during the 1980s and 1990s, Williams gained prominence as a screenwriter and executive producer for hit television shows such as The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air. He also appeared in several notable films and television movies. Despite his national success, he often

spoke of his formative years in Pender County and the profound influence they had on his storytelling. Later in life, he returned to Burgaw to care for his mother and enjoy a quieter pace among family and lifelong friends.

"This exhibit offers a wonderful opportunity to discover more about Samm-Art Williams' incredible life and contributions to the arts," said Library Director Allen Phillips-Bell. "Visitors will gain a deeper appreciation for his legacy and enduring connection community."

Don't miss this chance to celebrate a Pender County legend. Visit the Main Library in Burgaw this February to explore the exhibit. For more information, call Pender County Library at 910-259-1234 or visit pendercountylibrary.org.





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- D. R. Royal



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## Food

## **Entertainment**

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Live music, arts & crafts, book signings, local honey, bee products, gardening supplies, entertainment for all ages, food & drink will all be available!







127 Sound Road in Holly Ridge, NC

## CFCC Joins NC Community Colleges Boost Program to Empower Students and Drive North Carolina's Economic Growth

To advance workforce development and create pathways to high-wage, in-demand careers, Cape Fear Community College (CFCC) is excited to announce its participation in the NC Community Colleges (NCCCS) Boost program. This innovative initiative aims to accelerate students' progress through college and into the workforce, aligning with the state's economic development goals.

The NC Community Colleges' Boost program is being launched with a historic grant of \$35.6 million from Arnold Ventures, marking the most significant private investment ever received by NCCCS. Modeled after the City University of New York's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (CUNY ASAP), the Boost program has already proven successful in other states, where it has doubled graduation rates and reduced the time to degree completion.

"This program is an incredible opportunity for Cape Fear Community College and our students," said Jim Morton, CFCC President. "Through the Boost

program, we are dedicated to providing students with the support and resources to complete their degrees more quickly, overcome challenges, and build the skills required for high-demand careers that will strengthen our regional and state economies."

The NCCCS Boost program is set to serve students at CFCC and 14 other participating colleges across North Carolina. The program will focus on sectors identified as critical to the state's economic future. It works through timely and relevant support, dedicated student advising, and incentives to accelerate education. This program is a collaborative effort between the state, NCCCS, colleges, and students, designed to invest in students' success and equip them with the skills needed to secure quality jobs that benefit their communities. To receive the benefits of the NCCCS Boost program, participating students must meet certain eligibility criteria, choose a program that leads to an indemand career, and meet regular program benchmarks.

"This program has increased graduation rates, reduced time to graduation, and lowered the cost per graduate across many individual colleges in several states," said NCCCS President Dr. Jeff Cox. "Here in North Carolina, we have every reason to expect similar results. What makes this especially exciting is the opportunity to demonstrate success through our pilot and then scale it statewide - something few other states have done. We are fully committed to transparency and will track and report the program's results regularly, ensuring policymakers can see the return on investment. This is an exciting day for North Carolina businesses, companies looking to relocate to a state dedicated to world-class workforce development, and for the residents of North Carolina. We expect the North Carolina Community College System Boost program to significantly and positively contribute to our state's economic future."

Cape Fear Community College will begin enrolling students in the Boost program for the Fall 2025 semester. For more information on CFCC's involvement in this program, visit www.cfcc.edu.

## About North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS):

The North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) is dedicated to providing accessible, affordable higher education and workforce training that is responsive to the needs of students and employers in North Carolina. The system serves more than 600,000 students at 58 colleges across the state and plays a critical role in developing the state's workforce and driving economic growth.

#### **About Arnold Ventures:**

Arnold Ventures is a philanthropy focused on supporting research to identify and address America's most pressing social problems. With a focus on systemic change, Arnold Ventures works to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster economic opportunity. The foundation's grantmaking areas include education, criminal justice, health, infrastructure, and public finance, and its work is guided by evidence-based solutions that seek lasting impact.



NORTH CAROLINA'S ACCELERATED COLLEGE TO CAREER PROGRAM

# A partnership between the State of North Carolina, the North Carolina Community College System, and participating students

- Doubles graduation rates by investing in breaking down barriers students might face in completing their education quickly
- North Carolina Community College System will tailor its implementation to our state's unique culture and needs to ensure an optimal fit
- Students must meet certain qualification criteria and commit to meeting the program's high standards
- The State of North Carolina sets the workforce development goals and will provide future funding for the program according to its demonstrated return on investment



Visit our website at: nccommunitycolleges.edu/boost

## Designed to train the workforce that will drive North Carolina's economic prosperity

- Focused on training and educating North Carolina citizens to succeed in the careers that are essential to North Carolina's economic development success, as specified in PropelNC workforce development goals.
- Targeted fields include Biotechnology, Healthcare, Engineering & Advanced Manufacturing, and Information Technology
- $\bullet \ \ {\tt Quickly\ moves\ students\ through\ college\ into\ high-wage,\ in-demand\ careers }$
- Advances economic mobility and security for all North Carolinians

#### Built on a proven model

- Based on a program developed by City University of New York and promoted nationwide by Arnold Ventures, the NC Community Colleges Boost model is recognized as the gold standard in accelerated workforce development in higher education
- Implementations in six states have built a track record of success cutting time to graduation, increasing graduation rates, and lowering the cost per graduate

#### **Evidence-based and fully transparent**

- North Carolina Community College System will track the program's performance and report its results on a regular basis
- Policy makers and all interested parties will know the program's return on investment

#### The Facts

Proven Results from Previous Implementatio 2x

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Increase in 2nd Semester Full-tim

Increase ie Attemp

ises Credits Increase in Inpted and Bachelor's Passed Attain

crease in 4-Year achelor's Degree

#### Partnering with the following Colleges

NC Community Colleges Boost will be implemented at 8 colleges across the state this year, and 7 more will be added in 2026:

































## Melodies Make Memories: A Teen's Tribute to Her Grandmother Through Music and Compassion at The Commons at Brightmore of Wilmington

#### **By Wendy Foster**

Wise beyond her years, she's driven by love for her late grandmother and compassion for people whose lives are impacted by dementia.

Callie Cromartie is in the unique position of having the support and notoriety of the Miss North Carolina organization platform to help others, and she's putting it to great use.

The 17-year-old, who is a senior at Hoggard High School in Wilmington, North Carolina, has created Melodies Make Memories in a tribute to her late grandmother 'DeDe.' The grand matriarch of a musical family passed away at the age of 76 from Alzheimer's disease.

Callie, who is part of the Miss North Carolina organization, is drawing on her memories of her beloved grandmother to help and inspire seniors while also raising awareness about the impact of dementia on millions of Americans. It is her community service initiative required by the organization and has enabled her to pursue something about which she is passionate while increasing awareness.

It also has given her the stage at The Commons Memory Care at Brightmore.

Brightmore of Wilmington is a fullservice rental retirement community offering independent living that supports a vibrant lifestyle for active seniors. The Kempton and The Commons, both located on-site, provide assisted living and memory care.

Several times monthly, Callie, a talented singer and dancer, performs before an enthralled group of residents at The Commons. Callie's grandmother was a resident there during her final years.

Tanya Langley, activities director for The Commons, is enchanted by the impact Callie's presence and talents have on the residents. "The thing that amazes me with the music is that residents that are further along in their dementia journey still react to familiar songs. Residents who are unable to sing might hum or whistle. Residents who can't clap their hands will tap their fingers to the beat, and residents who can no longer dance will tap their toes. Residents who can't move and groove with us nod their heads or just have a sparkle in their eyes; you can tell they know the song or music. I really think that music is magical, and the fact that it is coming from a younger person just sparks that reminiscing with them. We had a resident tell other residents that she was their granddaughter," she said.

Callie created Melodies Make Memories with an understanding of the effect that music has on individuals with dementia. "Music is a gift that transcends disease and mental decline, and research has shown that music has therapeutic benefits for those affected by dementia. Music also helps bridge the gap between patients and caregivers," she said. Callie recalled while visiting her grandmother, she and her mother would sing. "DeDe would join in, remember words and sometimes even harmonies. connected through the melodies in lieu of the memories. I want to be able to use my passion for the arts to help others have that experience as well."

Callie, who hopes that Melodies Make Memories becomes a permanent program, also hopes that it grows. Currently featuring singing, and as she continues on her musical path with the seniors, she's hoping to recruit other musicians, including instrumentalists, to join her. She's also excited about the possibility of integrating dancing into the program. "My hope and plan is for this

initiative to cover all of the arts that incorporate music, not just singing. I have contacted the theater, chorus, dance, band and orchestra teachers at Hoggard High School in hopes of obtaining more volunteers. Basically, if the performance has music, it is welcome in Melodies Make Memories!

"I'm just very excited to get this up and running and hope that everyone can truly see how amazing this can be, not only for the people experiencing dementia but also for the performers getting to bless others with their gifts. It's just such a win/win!" Callie said.

Tanya is impressed not only by Callie's talent but also by her dedication. "I get a lot of students that want to come in and volunteer. Normally, it is a one-time thing to fill out some service requirements. This seems more special to me. Callie wants it to be an official and permanent program here," said Tanya.

"My DeDe would be so incredibly proud! She loved singing and all the arts,

so that just makes the whole initiative ten times more special for me," said Callie.

#### **Brightmore of Wilmington**

Brightmore of Wilmington is a fullservice rental retirement community located in Midtown Wilmington, a community known for its bustling riverfront, moss-draped oaks in its 230block historic district and island beaches. Brightmore of Wilmington offers independent living that supports a vibrant lifestyle for active seniors. The Kempton and The Commons, both located on-site, provide assisted living and memory care. Brightmore of Wilmington is owned and operated by Liberty Senior Living, LLC, a division of Liberty Health that specializes in senior living and retirement communities. To learn more about Brightmore of Wilmington, please visit www.BrightmoreOfWilmington.com. To learn more about Liberty Senior Living and the communities they offer, please visit www.LibertySeniorLiving.com.

Below: Callie & a resident of Brightmore







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**ALL ABC PERMITS** 

## Rouzer Seeks Veteran, Gold Star Family Member, or Active-Duty Spouse for Wilmington Office

Congressman David Rouzer (R-NC-07) announced he is seeking a veteran, Gold Star Family Member, or an active-duty spouse for a fellowship position in his Wilmington office. This person will be working with the military and their families to handle veteran-related casework and act as a liaison between constituents and federal, local, and state agencies.

"I'm honored to work with the House of Representatives to hire a Green and Gold Fellow to help serve the veterans and military personnel living in North Carolina's 7th Congressional District," said Representative Rouzer. He continued,

"This program provides an opportunity for a member of the military community to use their firsthand experience and perspective to help meet the needs of other service members."

#### Requirements:

**Veteran Requirements:** Aides are limited to veterans who meet ALL of the following requirements:

- Served on active duty in the last six years: and
- Must have a terminal rank of E-5 or O-3/W-2 and below; and
- Must have an Honorable Discharge. **Gold Star Requirements:** Aides must be a child/step-child, spouse,

parent/step-parent or sibling/stepsibling of a veteran who:

- Died in the line of duty while serving in the Armed Forces; or
- -Died of a service-connected disability during the four-year period within last discharge date.

Active-Duty Spouse Requirements: Aides must be the spouse of an active-duty servicemember. Active-duty servicemembers are those who:

- Work in the military full-time and are subject to permanent change of station (PCS) orders upon completion of each tour of duty.

More information about this position, and instructions on how to apply can be found at:

www.usajobs.gov/job/ 828768500



## **Updates from David Rouzer**

#### Reintroducing the Disaster Assistance Fairness Act

Recently, I reintroduced the Disaster Assistance Fairness Act alongside Congressman Jerry Nadler (D-NY-12), to provide residential communities with the same assistance after disasters as all others.

Last year's hurricane season reminded us natural disasters do not discriminate among neighborhoods, location, or housing arrangements. No matter your living situation, every individual deserves the same access and support during recovery from natural disasters. However, under FEMA's current eligibility rules, individuals in condos, co-ops, and homeowner associations do not have access to Individual Assistance to cover the damage of common elements, increasing their share of the costs to rebuild. The Disaster Assistance Fairness Act allows these individuals to receive the same assistance as everyone else.

## New Committee and Subcommittee Assignment

For the 119th Congress, I was appointed to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, in addition to continuing my service on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure as well as the Committee on Agriculture.

On the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, I have been appointed chairman of the

Subcommittee on Highways and Transit. This subcommittee is responsible for creating policies to construct, maintain, and improve all aspects of highway and transit. I will continue to serve as a member of the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials.

In addition, I have been appointed vice chairman of the House Committee's Agriculture Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities, Risk Management, and Credit. This subcommittee oversees policies related to row crops as well as risk management, agricultural credit, and farm safety net programs. I will also serve on the Subcommittee on Forestry as well as the Commodity Subcommittee on Markets, Digital Assets, and Rural Development.

This will be my first Congress serving on the Committee on Space, Science, and Technology. The committee oversees agency budgets totaling more than \$42 billion, including NASA, the National Weather Service, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology. On this Committee, I have been selected to serve on the Subcommittee on Research and Technology and the Subcommittee on Environment.

### House Passes the Halt Fentanyl

With my support, the House passed H.R. 27, the Halt All Lethal Trafficking

(HALT) Fentanyl Act, to permanently classify fentanyl-like substances as Schedule 1 drugs. This designation provides law enforcement with the necessary tools to keep these highly dangerous drugs off our streets. The Fentanyl Act also takes precautions to protect medical research fentanyl-related substances to gain а understanding of their overall impact on human health and their use in the medical field.

The next vote is a critical step to protect our communities from the deadly dangers of fentanyl and related drugs. The HALT Fentanyl Act strengthens law enforcement's ability to get these deadly drugs off our streets and protects the ability to enhance our understanding of its impact on Americans. One overdose death is too many, and 100,000 is completely unacceptable. American families deserve action to end the fentanyl crisis!

#### Facts on Fentanyl:

In 2023, more than 107,000 people died of drug overdoses; roughly 75,000 of whom died from synthetic opioids — largely illicit fentanyl or fentanyl-related substances.

Illicit fentanyl poisoning deaths among teens accounted for 77% of adolescent overdose deaths in 2021. Illicit fentanyl poisonings are now the number one cause of death among adults age 18-49 — more than cancer,

heart disease, and car accidents.

Fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances can be 50-100 times more potent than morphine

A temporary scheduling of fentanyl-related substances is set to expire at the end of March. Without action by Congress, the fentanyl crisis will only get worse. The Halt Fentanyl Act previously passed the House in May 2023 with bipartisan support, but the Senate failed to bring up the legislation for consideration.

## House Passes the Protecting American Energy Protection Act

With my full support, the House passed H.R. 26, the Protecting American Energy Production Act. H.R. 26 ensures states maintain control over hydraulic fracturing (commonly known as fracking) regulation on state and private lands. It also prevents the Executive branch from independently imposing a ban on fracking without Congressional approval, so domestic energy production can move forward uninterrupted unless there is legitimate cause to cease production.

The passage marked a victory for American energy independence. We're now one step closer to empowering our nation, boosting jobs, and ensuring the future of energy is truly American-made. This is the first step to rolling back the Biden-Harris Administration's Green New Deal disaster

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## Topsail Chamber's WomenConnect Expands Networking Opportunities for Local Businesswomen

The Greater Topsail Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism is pleased to announce the expansion of its premier networking group, WomenConnect. Starting in March, two events will be added to the schedule, giving local businesswomen even more opportunities to connect and share valuable business insights.

In addition to the monthly luncheon group that currently meets at Hampstead's Nineteen Restaurant, a second luncheon meeting will be held at Rick's Restaurant in Sneads Ferry.

"We're thrilled to launch a new WomenConnect group in Sneads Ferry, starting in March on the first Tuesday of each month," said Tammy Proctor, Director of the Greater Topsail Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism. "This group will complement our existing luncheon at Nineteen Restaurant, which takes place on the second Thursday of each month, ensuring there are networking opportunities for women no matter their schedule or location."

For women who prefer morning meetings, the Chamber will also expand its popular Mornings with WomenConnect series. Currently, a morning group meets at Southern Roots Grille in Holly Ridge at 7:30 a.m. on the fourth Thursday of each month. A second morning group will now meet at Taste of Sunrise Coffee House in Hampstead, also at 7:30 a.m. on the first Thursday of each month.

"We're always looking for opportunities to provide more flexible options for our members," Proctor continued. "With our large coverage area, which spans coastal Pender County and parts of Onslow County, we believe adding these events will make it easier for local women to attend meetings closer to their place of business. They'll now have the opportunity to network multiple times per month."

The schedule for WomenConnect events in March is as follows:

WomenConnect in Sneads Ferry
March 4, Noon, at Rick's Restaurant
Mornings with WomenConnect
Hampstead

March 6, 7:30 a.m., at Taste of Sunrise

Coffee House

WomenConnect in Hampstead

March 13, Noon, at Nineteen Restaurant, located at Olde Point Country Club

Mornings with WomenConnect in Holly Ridge

March 27, 7:30 a.m., at Southern Roots Grille

All events are free. Attendees order from menus at their own expense. To register visit the Chamber's website: topsailchamber.org/events

WomenConnect, founded more than 11 years ago, offers businesswomen a supportive environment to network, exchange ideas, and strengthen their professional connections.

## CFCC Music Instructor's Composition Performed at Carnegie Hall

Cape Fear Community College (CFCC) music instructor Ernesto Ferreri recently achieved a significant milestone in his career by performing his composition, Octet Op. 32, at the prestigious Carnegie Hall in New York City. The Connecticut Virtuosi performed the piece under the direction of Maestro Damiano Tognetti of Florence, Italy.

Originally composed in 1979 and extensively updated in 2013, Octet Op. 32 is a richly layered work written for an eight-player ensemble. The performance at Carnegie Hall featured an expanded string section, enhancing the piece's

depth and texture.

"Performing at Carnegie Hall is a dream for many musicians, and to have my composition played there is an honor," said Ferreri. "As a native of New York City, this felt something like a homecoming."

Ernesto has been a dedicated faculty member at CFCC since 1993. He has a long history of composing and sharing his work internationally. His journey to Carnegie Hall began in 2007 when the Tallis Chamber Orchestra performed one of his compositions. This performance led to further opportunities, including performances in Tehran, Iran, and Poland,

where conductor Arian Sylveen Mackiewicz championed his work.

"Having a faculty member whose work is performed at Carnegie Hall speaks to the exceptional talents and dedication of the instructors at Cape Fear Community College," said Jim Morton, CFCC President. "Opportunities like this not only highlight the caliber of our instructors but also inspire our students, showing them that a career in the arts can reach the highest levels of recognition. We are proud to celebrate Ernesto's achievement."

To learn more about Cape Fear Community College's Fine Arts program, visit cfcc.edu/associate-in-music/.





## **CFCC to Host Second Chance Employer Engagement Sessions**

Cape Fear Community College (CFCC) invites local employers to its Second Chance Employer Engagement Coffee Hour on Friday, February 14, from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. in room 101A of the G Building on CFCC's downtown campus (411 N. Front Street, Wilmington). This event offers the opportunity for interested employers to learn about second chance hiring, connect with likeminded professionals, and explore resources that support justiceindividuals involved seeking meaningful employment.

This event is open to any employer interested in becoming a second chance hiring champion. Attendance is free. Employers will gain valuable insights into the benefits of second chance hiring, including:

- Best practices: Learn effective strategies for integrating justice-involved individuals into your workforce
- · Financial incentives: Discover tax credits and other financial benefits available to employers.
- Support resources: Explore local and state programs to aid employers and employees in successful reentry

efforts.

In addition to learning more about the program, employers can network with peers who have successfully implemented second chance hiring practices and are positively impacting their industries and communities.

"Second chance hiring is not only a pathway to creating a more inclusive and diverse workforce but also an opportunity to tap into a motivated talent pool that can make a real difference in businesses and communities alike," said Rachel Bodkin-Fox, CFCC Pathways Home 2 Program Director.

For more information about second chance hiring, to find additional dates for upcoming coffee hours, and to complete the employer survey,

cfcc.edu/continuing-education/pathway-home-2-grant/.

**FEBRUARY 14** – Employer Listening Session

**APRIL 11** – Second Chance Hiring Champions

JUNE 13 – WOTC/Federal Bond Clinic AUGUST 8 – Pathway Home Meet and Greet

OCTOBER 10 – Second Chance Hiring Policy Clinic

DECEMBER 12 - Employer Gratitude

## Pender County Announces Aimee Watson-Green as New Director of the Department of Social Services

Pender County is excited to announce that Aimee Watson-Green will be joining the Consolidated Human Services Division as the new Director of the Department of Social Services (DSS). Watson-Green, a dedicated social services professional with 23 years of experience, has most recently served as the Assistant Director of DSS for Pender County.

Throughout her career, Watson-Green has held various roles within the social services field, including positions in Onslow, New Hanover, Jones, and Pender counties. Her extensive experience includes roles such as social work supervisor,

quality assurance and improvement supervisor, social work program manager, interim director, and DSS Director. Additionally, she has served as a Children's Program Representative and child welfare policy consultant for the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

Watson-Green's career progression highlights her deep knowledge, leadership abilities, and unwavering commitment to serving both her team and the community. She is eager to continue applying her expertise in leading the department and enhancing service delivery across Pender County.

Watson-Green holds a bachelor's degree from East Carolina University and a master's degree from Liberty University. She has been an active participant in several human service organizations, serving on various boards, councils, teams, committees. Her past involvement includes membership Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) and Community Child Protection Team (CCPT) in Onslow County, and on the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council in Jones County. Currently, Watson-Green serves on the Pender County Opioid Task Force, the Substance Use Prevention Partnership (SUPP), the Pender County Pre-K Policy Council,

and the Pender Long Term Recovery Group (PLTRG). She has also previously served on Pender County Smart Start.

Watson-Green is dedicated to collaborating with her staff, community partners, and stakeholders to further enhance social services in Pender County.



## CFCC to Host Division II Region 10 Conference Men's and Women's Basketball Tournaments

Cape Fear Community College (CFCC) is excited to announce that the Joe & Barbara Schwartz Center (610 N. Front Street, Wilmington) will be the home of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Division II Region 10 Conference tournaments for men's and women's basketball from March 5-8, 2025. This marks the third consecutive year of hosting the men's tournament, with the welcomed addition of the women's tournament this season.

Below is the schedule of both tournaments. Seeding details will be announced via the Region 10 Conference the week of tournament play. Seeding updates will also be posted on the tournament web release page at goseadevils.com.

Wednesday, March 5th Men's Quarterfinals Games at 12 p.m., 2 p.m., 5 p.m., and 7 p.m.

Thursday, March 6th

Women's Quarterfinals & Men's Semifinals Women's Quarterfinal games at 10 a.m., 12 p.m., 2 p.m., and 4 p.m. Men's Semifinal games at 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Friday, March 7th

Women's Semifinals & Men's Championship Women's Semifinal games at 2 p.m. and 4

Men's Championship game at 7 p.m.

Saturday, March 8th Women's Championship at 1 p.m.

The Women's Basketball tournament winner will receive a bid to the NJCAA Division II Women's Basketball National Tournament at the Leggett & Platt Athletic Center in Joplin, Missouri, March 17-22,

2025. The Men's Basketball tournament winner will receive a bid to the NJCAA Division II Men's Basketball National Tournament at the Mary Miller Center in Danville, Illinois, March 17-22, 2025.

Spectator tickets will be available for purchase on-site, priced at \$15 for a single-day pass and \$25 for access to the entire tournament. Cash and credit cards are accepted. A live-stream of all games will be available on the CFCC Athletics YouTube page at youtube.com/@cfccathletics.

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## Jacksonville Man Arrested on Several Felony Charges Including Robbery / Kidnapping

Deputies with the Onslow County Sheriff's Office have arrested a man on multiple felony charges after an attempted robbery on Tuesday.

Around 10 a.m. on February 5, 2025, deputies responded to the area of Forest Ride Trail and Brittany Lane after receiving a call of a man attempting to rob two females. When deputies arrived, the two females inside a Grey Dodge pickup truck directed them to the suspects vehicle. Deputies were able to locate a grey Hyundai Elantra as a chase ensued. During the chase, the suspects car hit one of the deputy's patrol vehicles, before driving towards Belgrade-Swansboro Rd.

The suspects vehicle continued to Freedom Way towards Hubert at speeds of 78 mph in a 55-mph zone. After a few miles, the suspect's car came to a stop near 3153 Freedom

Way where he was successfully boxed in by two deputy vehicles. The suspect, identified as 24- year-old Andre Anderson Derival, was taken into custody with the assistance of the Swansboro Police Department.

Further investigations showed Derival was watching the two females at a nearby doctor's office before following them in his vehicle. As the pair pulled into their driveway, Derival pulled in behind them and attempted to open the doors to the truck. Derival then blocked the truck several times before attempting to smash open the driver's side window.

The women were able to briefly escape by driving their truck into Derival's car. Derival followed the truck for a short time before deputies arrived.

Other than damages to the vehicles involved, no physical injuries

were reported. Derival, 24, of Limeston Dr in Jacksonville, is charged with the following:

- Felony attempted kidnapping
- Felony common law robbery
- Felony assault government official/employee
- Felony breaking and entering vehicle
- Injury to personal property
- No operator license
- Hit and run property damage
- Reckless driving
- Speeding
- Felony flee/elude arrest with motor vehicle

Derival received no bond and is currently in the Onslow County Detention Center ahead of his first court appearance scheduled for Thursday, February 6, 2025.

The incident is still an open and active investigation.

Crime Stoppers offers cash reward of up to \$5,000 for information that is deemed of value or assistance to law enforcement. You can call 910-938-3273 to submit a tip. Information can also be anonymously texted via Text-A-Tip by typing TIP4CSJAX and your message to 274637 (CRIMES). Callers to Crime Stoppers may remain anonymous and never have to reveal their identity.



Victory Baptist Church P.O Box 301 Holly Ridge, NC 28445 150 youth + Pastor gets egged!

It is that time of year again, the annual C.C.Y.R will be held on Saturday, April 12, 2025, at the Holly Ridge Community Center from 10-3. Please join us for a spiritually refreshing and physically exhausting good time. We will have fun games, godly singing, and great preaching. Lunch provided. Please make plans to attend. Cost per person is \$5.00 and pre-registration would greatly be appreciated. You can register online

by scanning the QR code.

We look forward to seeing you.

You are invited to the

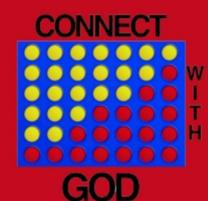
4TH ANNUAL COASTAL CAROLINA YOUTH RALLY



Ages 6 and Up are Welcome!

April 12, 2025
Holly Ridge Community Center
404 Sound Road

Call 919-222-5976 if you have any questions.



Romans 8:17

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# Art in the Park coming March 22 to Hampstead Kiwanis Park

Local fine artists of all mediums will be featured on March 22, at Hampstead Kiwanis Park. This is the first time the Greater Topsail Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism is teaming up with the area's premier gallery, ArtExposure, the Greater Topsail Arts Association, and Pender County Parks and Recreation for a day of celebrating the arts.

"Pender County is celebrating its 150th anniversary, and we want to celebrate the arts in Pender County with an exhibition of fine art and performances from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m." says Tammy Proctor, director of the Greater Topsail Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism.

Shoreline Party Rentals is the premier sponsor of the first *Art in the Park*.

Untitled Theatre Productions will perform scenes from their upcoming musical, Shrek, at 2:30 p.m.

"This is an opportunity to spotlight our local talented artists," added Proctor

Admission is free. The event will also feature various local food trucks.

Art in the Park will be a family-friendly event.

"Hampstead Kiwanis Park is an ideal venue for this event as it offers picnic shelters, playgrounds for children, and ample parking for event visitors," said Zach White, Pender County Parks and Recreation director.

Artists may apply for consideration by contacting ArtExposure at 910-803-0302 or via the website at

www.artexposure50.com. ArtExposure is located at 22527 Hwy 17 in

Hampstead.

For more information contact the Greater Topsail Area Chamber of

Commerce & Tourism at 910-329-4446.





810 OLD FOLKSTONE ROAD, SNEADS FERRY, NC
NEXT TO THE NORTH TOPSAIL SHORES BAPTIST CHURCH

## **Lori's ACE Home and Hardware Opening March 25th in Surf City**

Calling all homeowners, contractors and businesses. vacationers - Lori's Ace Home & Hardware will open on Tuesday, March 25, 2025.

The store is located at 14021 NC-50 in Surf City. The hours of operation will be Monday through Saturday, 8 a.m.-7 p.m. and Sunday 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

The Grand Opening will be April 11-13, with a ribbon cutting at 5 p.m. on Friday, April 11. There will be giveaways each day of the Grand Opening. On Saturday, April 12, customers can sample BBQ and sauces with award-winning Vicious Pig BBQ pitmaster Bobby Brinson, and meet representatives from Stihl, Big Green Egg, Ego, Evergreen, Duke Children's Hospital and more.

Lori's Ace not only offers products in familiar categories such as paint, grilling, outdoor power, electrical, plumbing and hardware, but also a vast selection of home and garden lawn and garden décor, gifts, supplies, kitchen and bath accessories, wild bird food and feeders, pool supplies, cleaning supplies, games/puzzles, snacks, and live plants in the Garden Center.

"It truly is a one-stop-shop, and we focus on making each visit memorable. Everything from the music played overhead to the unique

Nationally known,

locally owned.

products we carry to the cleanliness of the store comes together to create a welcoming environment," said Lori Tracy Stobbe, president and co-owner of Lori's Ace Home & Hardware. "But the most common feedback we get is how friendly and helpful the employees are. We're excited to introduce this new Lori's Ace team to you, and they are eager to start helping customers and community."

This is the second Ace store for owners Lori Tracy Stobbe and Nate Stobbe. Their first store is Fayetteville and recently received the 2025 Local Franchise of the Year award from the Greater Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce for demonstrating dedication charitable contributions in the community, exceptional customer service, innovation and leadership in the industry.

To keep up with the store progress, event and product information, customers can follow the store on Facebook at Lori's Ace Home & Hardware - Surf City/Topsail.

#### About Lori's Ace Home & Hardware

Lori's Ace Home & Hardware is locally owned and provides an unmatched customer service experience. Their robust, high-quality







product selection includes best brands like Benjamin Moore, Stihl, Ego, Milwaukee, DeWalt, Craftsman, Big Green Egg, Traeger, Weber, Yeti and Scout.

The stores include Grilling.

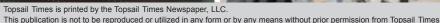
Outdoor Power, Paint, Lawn/Garden, Holiday Décor, a Garden Center, Home Décor & Gifts, Wild Bird, and much more. For more information on Ace. visit acehardware.com.











www.topsailtimes.net

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## Be You Neurofeedback Opens in Surf City

#### **By Wills Public Relations**

Cutting-edge brain training for conditions such as ADHD, anxiety, autism, PTSD, are now available in Surf City.

"I offer a drug-free alternative that can significantly impact your current brain habits," says Mallory Padgett, owner of Be You Neurofeedback. Padgett says that people with depression, brain injuries, sleep issues, or migraines may benefit as well.

Padgett opened her practice after seeing tremendous results in the lives of her children: a son with autism and a daughter with anxiety issues. After neurofeedback, her son, then age 15, was less overwhelmed by high sensory environments and made huge leaps in OCD behaviors, stemming and cognitive thinking, she said.

Her college-aged daughter's anxiety improved allowing her to finish her degree after almost dropping out.

Neurofeedback is non-invasive and painless. The advanced technology maps brainwaves and provides real-time feedback that helps to develop more balanced and more neutral pathways. Using sensors, brainwaves are shown on a screen. The technology trains the brain to be calmer and more focused.

Before becoming certified in neurofeedback, she was a church administrator in Virginia. She and her family live in Scott Hill.

Her office is at Gateway Plaza Executive Suites, Suite 216A, 13500 NC HWY 50. She can be reached at: beyouneurofeedback@gmail.com. The telephone number is 910-548-



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## **MacDougall Named USA South Rookie of the Week**

#### By Joseph Marvin

Brevard College freshman outfielder Addie MacDougall was honored by the USA South Conference after a stellar collegiate debut, securing USA South Rookie of the Week honors.

MacDougall, a product of Topsail, North Carolina, went a combined 7-for-9 (.778) with a .700 on-base percentage, and a 1.000 slugging percentage to go along with five runs scored, three RBI, two doubles, and one sacrifice fly as the Tornados opened the season with a doubleheader sweep of Wesleyan.

In the first game of the season, MacDougall went 3-for-4 at the dish with two doubles, two runs scored, and two RBI. The first-year Tornado followed that performance up by going 4-for-5 in game two of the doubleheader, scoring a team-high three runs and an RBI.

The Tornados are preparing for their home-opening doubleheader at the BC Softball Field, with Brevard hosting Agnes Scott on Saturday beginning at 1 p.m.

To follow the latest news and updates surrounding Brevard College Athletics, follow the Tornados on Twitter/Instagram @BCTornados, 'Brevard College subscribe to Tornados' on YouTube SoundCloud, and follow 'Brevard College Tornado Athletics' Facebook. In addition, follow 'brevardcollege' on Flickr for photos from BC events.



#### **Career Statistics**

#### **Hitting Statistics** AVG 3**B** HR RBI SLG% BB **HBP** SO GDP OB% SB 2025 .778 2 2 9 5 7 0 0 3 1.000 0 0 0 0 .700 0 0 1.000 .700

#### Fielding Statistics

|       | PO | Α | Ε | FLD%  |
|-------|----|---|---|-------|
| 2025  | 1  | 0 | 0 | 1.000 |
| Total | 1  | 0 | 0 | 1.000 |

## **Second Deadliest Season on Record for Bees**

#### **By Dorothy Royal**

What does it mean to be a "Bee City, USA"? A few years ago, I was reading an article about towns, cities and college campuses that had become "Bee City, USA" members. The more I read about it, the more I thought about how it would be a good fit for Holly Ridge to participate in. I personally had seen a large decline in bees around my garden and flower beds and was feeling concerned. Where were all the bees and how could we bring them back? I met with the Holly Ridge Town Manager about the possibility of Holly Ridge becoming a "Bee City, USA". She agreed that this program would be a good thing for our community and presented it to the Town Council. Holly Ridge became an official Bee City, USA in December of 2023.

Last year, on the last Saturday in April, the Town had an amazing street fair that brought over 2,000 people to the Town of Holly Ridge to learn about and celebrate bees. Food trucks, exhibits and vendors lined Sound Road from Hwy 17 down to Hines Street. The weather was perfect, and the day was amazing.

Graphic credited to:

As Chairperson of the committee that helped make this happen, I was thrilled with the turnout and the overwhelming positive response from residents who attended.

The focus of the festival was to promote "No Mow May". No Mow May is a national movement designed to help promote the healthy growth of vegetation for native bees. including honeybees, by eliminating toxic poisons used for weed control, to teach people the importance of leaving areas long and natural, instead of cutting and weed whacking away what that the bees depend on. People are encouraged to plant more flowers to help feed the native bees and to refrain from mowing lawns short or to reduce the amount of lawn that is mowed during the month

Some of the funds raised during last year's festival made a local impact as a donation to the Greater Topsail Community Garden to help provide flowers for pollinators. If you are not familiar with this group, you need to check them out. Visit them on Facebook to see all the wonderful things they do for our community, including providing fresh produce

Form a team, enjoy some friendly ompetition, and connect with other ocal businesses at the First Annual TYP Mini Colf Tournament! through "Share the Table" to those in our community in need. Looking to volunteer? This is a great way to work outdoors with an amazing group of people.

We can all take small steps that can help an insect that is critical to the survival of humans, survive and flourish. Interested in your community or school becoming a "Bee City, USA" member? Check out their website at Beecityusa.org

This year's Bee Festival will be on Saturday, April 26th from 10am until 3pm on Sound Road.

### U.S. Honeybees Suffer Second Deadliest Season on Record

Estimated share of bee keepers' colonies lost in the United States from 2016-17 to 2022-23\*



\* Years ending April 1 Source: Bee Informed Partnership

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statista 🚄

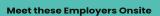
COASTAL PENDER COUNTY HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM



Are you overwhelmed navigating the maze of career options?
Are you losing confidence searching for a job?
Learn about local jobs in the Hospitality and Tourism Labor Markets.
Meet with NCWorks Career Advisors and find your next employment opportunity!

#### Wednesday, March 12, 12 - 4 p.m.

Cape Fear Community College
Alston W. Burke Center of Surf City, 621 NC Hwy 210



- Altitude Trampoline Park
- Food Lion
- Fusion Blue Zones Cuisine
- Loggerhead Inn/Carolina Resorts
- Margherita Pizza Co.Sea Green Natural Cleaning
- Sweet Dreams Linen
- IGA of Surf City

Adding employers daily!





NCWorks Career Center 1994 17th St. Wilmington, NC 28401 910-945-6900



CFCC Surf City 621 NC Hwy 210, Hampstead



13775 NC Hwy 50 Surf City, 28445 topsailchamber.org

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Limited Team Spots & Sponsorship Opportunities

https://www.statista.com/chart/30260/honey-bee-colony-losses-in-the-united-states-timeline/

Mini Golf Tournament

Friday, March 28 at Pirates Turf in Topsail Beach

Sponsor a Hole

## **YOGI, Stranded on a Sandbar**

#### **By Carol Ann Ross**

And then there was the time--I think we must have been around nine years old because Lewis Williamson was still running Barnacle Bills Fishing Pier, Well, Yogi and I strolled out onto the end of the pier and decided we were going to throw one of the big hoop nets over the side. But no sooner than we did, we saw ol' Lewis beating it out toward us and we knew we were in trouble, so we ran. We were almost home free when he snagged Yogi by the scruff of the neck. I jumped over the side of the pier into the sand where Yogi had thrown his flip flops.

"Hey, Carol! Yogi calls to me. "Throw my flip flops up here." I did, and doing so, hit Lewis in the face. Boy, was he mad.

Long story short-I don't recall what happened to Yogi, neither does he. But my daddy took me to Lewis and made me apologize. Had to pay my allowance too.

That's just one story. Yogi has a

ton and he had a much more interesting and adventurous life on Topsail Island, than myself. He's famous for being one of the first and best surfers around. He's also renowned as one of the best chefs on the island too. His parents owned and operated the Pirates Den in Surf City for 25 years. Yogi learned to create some of the finest culinary cuisine while working there. But one thing you can say about Yogi is that he is a personality, no fake BS from him, his is real. And man, has he got some stories. Here are some recollections from my dear friend Yogi Paliotti:

Back then, before all the "progress," it was eat, surf, swim, fish, hang out on the beach until the street lights came on. There wasn't anything else to do except get in trouble and that wasn't hard to find. We kids gave our local police a run for their money on both ends of the island. They didn't have much else to do then either. Back in the day, the fishing piers tried to ban us from hanging out and surfing. We were just kids having

a good time. Hey, it was fun too, giving tourists wrong directions when they asked.

We kids would ride our bikes from one end of the island to the other and the police would call each other up to warn them we were coming. We were barred from some places and welcomed at others. We didn't care; we were having the ime of our lives. We were job security for Chief Chicken Carter and his partner, whom we called Jingles. He was named so because of the huge ring of keys he wore, which jingled when he would try to sneak up on us. He actually went undercover one time as a Hippie with a long hair wig on his head. This big guy, called Jingles, was trying to buy some grass from us when we were at the Sand Piper (Buddy's now). That was really funny.

The Sand Piper was where it all went down. It was where everybody hung out, the hippies, the Marines, the rednecks, and they were all laid back. Man, they were at the beach, just enjoying being at the beach. Back then, (the 60s and 70s) the Sand Piper was run by Big John, a gangster-type from up north. Big John ran a tight ship and when he told you to leave, you had better do so.

I was standing behind him one night when he told a biker to leave, and the biker picked up a pool stick and Big John reached in his back pocket and pulled out his 38 and shot him in the leg. Well, he never had anymore trouble out of that guy.

We had two fishing piers, (out of the nine on the island) that were the hub of entertainment for the whole family. Barnacle Bills and the Scotch Bonnet stayed open 24 hours a day. Both had a grill, and ocean front dining rooms with ocean views. Both had arcades for all ages and parents could drop off their kids knowing they were safe and secure there. They had everything, it was truly a family beach back then. Surf City Pier had a grill too. They had the best waves. It wasn't crowded then like it is now. So, between the three piers we had a

I guess you can call me lucky that I was able to grow up on this sandbar, back in a magical time decades before the world finally found us.

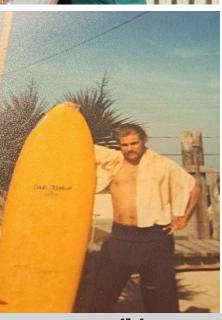
We all knew they would eventually. Looking at the progress, destruction-as I see it, it's hard to believe that we had such a perfect

Would you believe that we had a maritime forest that stretched from the IGA to the ends of the island. I can remember counting less than 20 houses on the sound side. It was sad seeing them destroy the oaks and twisted cedars, sculpted by the wind and salt spray. Now, its palm trees brought up from Florida, subdivisions and cookie cutter houses that are running our wild life out and killing them.

It's unbelievable how much the beach has changed in the last twenty or so years. I think back to our beautiful maritime forest and huge dunes that are now gone forever, replaced by house after house.

All I can say is that we had the best of it. The best, when Topsail wasn't crowded and life was easy and the sand dunes were real. The traffic was less congested and everybody wasn't in such a hurry. Why's everybody in such a hurry, anyway? Relax, you're at the beach.









# GOLF

## TOURNAMENT

Help FCA Southeast support the local coaches and student-athletes by joining us for a fun day on the course!

Information & Registration www.southeastncfca.org

Castle Bay Link, Golf Course

MONDAY APRIL 28, 2025

For any questions call Mary Ann at 910-471-9673



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## **Guns For Women**

Most women purchasing a gun are going to get advice from a man on the type of gun and caliber size they need.

Unfortunately most men suggest guns that are PERFECT FOR A MAN...BUT NOT FOR A WOMAN.

After learning to shoot and getting my purchase permit I headed out into the world of male dominated gun shops. After stopping at a few I found a man who took time to explain each gun to me and he finally convinced me that I needed to carry the gun that he actually owned. The problem was he was a 200 lb body builder and I was not (ha ha). Needless to say I purchased a .40 caliber semi-automatic and bought the ammo and headed to the range.

While all the other women in my group were loading their clips with ease, I was struggling to the point of my thumbs nearly bleeding. When I finally got the gun loaded and ready, Itook my position and began to fire. BAM BAM BAM. The noise was tremendous, the recoil was more than I ever wanted and by the time I was done shooting everyone was staring at me. Though I still hit the target my shoulders were sore and my head hurt.

This was NOT the right gun for me.

Of course my husband did not see my problem. He was gracious enough to take the gun (which I now see is a conspiracy on the part of men) and I continued on my search for the right gun. Unlike most men I know, I was not raised shooting a gun.

I knew very little about them and found that in this case knowledge and comfort were the two most important things I needed to focus on.

Guns scare me and I needed a gun that I could feel safe around, know how to load and unload, and that I could ensure was safe around my children.

These were not things that anyone in a gun shop had ever asked me about and I knew that needed to change.

When a woman comes into my shop the questions I ask are.....

- 1. Do you have children in the house? (to me anyone under 18 is a child) SAFETY SAFETY SAFETY
- 2. Is this your first gun? I usually recommend a revolver for a first time gun owner super easy to load, unload and clean.
- 3. Do you plan on carrying this gun for personal security? Makes a difference on size, weight and safety features
- 4. Do you plan on taking this gun out for target practice? (which I strongly recommend so that you become comfortable with the gun)
- 5. Will anyone else be using this gun (at the range)? Most men don't like shooting pink guns

When a woman comes into my shop these are questions that THEY ask me about handguns....

- 1. How do I open the gun to put in the bullets? The revolver is the easiest of the handguns to load and unload. In the case of a semi-automatic pistol, some guns required you to load the clip and then ratchet the gun back to put one bullet in the chamber. Not all pistols require ratcheting. Make sure if you buy a semi-automatic pistol that you CLEARLY UNDERSTAND from the seller how to load the gun correctly. Guns should come with an instruction manual that should also have instructions. Do not be embarrassed to ask!!!! This is going to be your line of defense and you need to know how to use it.
- 2. What if the bullet jams? Revolvers do not jam. In the case of a semi-automatic pistol it is possible to have a bullet jam due to inferior ammunition; the gun needing to be cleaned or a weak or stiff clip spring. Jams do happen in semi-automatic pistols and you MUST know how to clear the jam safely. Ask your seller and read the instruction manual.
- 3. How do I know the gun is loaded? In the case of a revolver, you slide open the cylinder and can easily see if the gun is loaded. Some semi-automatic pistols have "load" indicators such as a colored dot. ALWAYS PRESUME THAT A GUN IS LOADED. When looking at a pistol always remove the clip and ratchet back the slide to view inside the gun to make sure it is empty. Do not look down the barrel or pull the trigger to check. All it takes is one bullet!
- 4. My husband said that I need a .40 or .45 caliber gun because anything smaller won't stop someone. More people are killed by a .22 cal. bullet then any other round. The purpose of a gun is to PREVENT harm, not to cause it. It is more important that you are able to load the gun and can control it. I recommend a .38 special or 9 mm for woman. If they want a larger caliber I always suggest that they shoot one first before making that their first gun. Some gun shops offer an indoor or outdoor range where you can rent a gun, which is an excellent way to try different types of handguns.
- 5. My husband said I should have a gun with a laser...is that true? Lasers are very popular and definitely make a gun "cool" looking but I always tell people to know how to aim their gun correctly first, and not to depend on the red dot. On a bright sunny day the dot may not be visible.
- 6. How much should I spend on my first gun? Depending on the brand and style of gun you choose, your gun could cost anywhere from \$250 and up. Most guns come with a basic warranty (if purchased new). We sell handguns that can cost up to \$1500 but we don't recommend anything like that for a first time buyer. We sell a nice selection of revolvers for \$300 and up. There is nothing wrong with a used gun for a first time owner as long as it has been inspected by an authorized gun dealer. Don't be afraid to ask friends and family for recommendations, it is an easy conversation starter!
- 7. If I lock up the gun and need it in a hurry, what do I do? Practice locking and unlocking your gun. Whether it is a cable lock through the gun itself or a trigger lock, make sure you know where the keys are and how it works. We do not recommend storing guns loaded. If you have a gun for personal protection leave a clip loaded but out of the gun (and out of the reach of children). My husband always teases me that if I ever needed my gun in a hurry I would be better off hitting the intruder with the gun box then trying to remove all the safety features. My response is that I have children in the house and that takes priority over everything else.
- 8. How do I clean the gun? How often? A clean gun is a gun that is going to serve you well. It takes very little time to clean a gun that has been fired and worth every minute. The instruction manual and/or gun dealer can show you how to properly clean and care for your gun. All inclusive kits are available for around \$15.00
- 9. What difference does the barrel length make? A great bit of difference. The longer the barrel the more accurate the gun. Most conceal and carry guns are short barreled and made for easy storage on your body. Some people have a gun for carrying and a gun for target shooting. There are quite a few guns designed to do both, just let your seller know what you want your gun for. We sell a short barreled .380 that is perfect for self protection but not a gun I would take to the range.
- 10. How can I carry my gun? Check with your local gun laws. Every state is different. In North Carolina, you need a Conceal & Carry permit to carry the gun on your body (out of plain sight). We sell several purses with holsters built right into them (since most women would be unable to find a gun in a hurry if they simply dropped their gun into their purse (ha ha). There are holsters designed for wearing on your hip, concealing inside your pants and ankle holsters. We sell a t-shirt where the holster is sewn onto the fabric and can be worn under another shirt (for both men and women). How you carry your gun is just as personal as what kind of gun you have.
- 11. What is an ambidextrous clip release? It is a button on semi-automatic pistols that allows the user to release the clip from either side of the gun (preferred by left handed shooters). Not all guns come with this feature.
- 12. What if I already own a gun but I don't like it? Depending on your local gun laws and local gun dealers you may be able to trade your gun in for one that is right for you. Always check around since the value of a gun varies GREATLY from one gun dealer to another. Our shop offers consignment (most shops do not). Be cautious of the neighbor that "will take it off your hands". That is usually a good indicator that the gun is worth more than they are offering. Don't be afraid to call around or look your gun up in the "Blue Book" for reasonable values. Be careful of using web sites to determine the value since in most cases the price listed is "asking price" and not what the gun sold for. Check your local laws before selling your gun to a private citizen.
- 13. Someone gave me a gun. How do I register it? Check your local laws since State Laws vary. North Carolina does not have a gun registration so therefore you are entitled to own the gun. If you are going to transport the gun across state lines CHECK WITH EACH STATE you will be traveling in first. If you have a Conceal & Carry permit for your state check and see what other states allow you to carry your gun in their states.
- 14. Other than a gun, what do you recommend for personal protection? With the introduction of tasers, people now (depending on your state's laws) have the ability to have a home protection device that can give them time to stop the intruder and get help. Tasers are usually designed to "shoot" a pronged device up to 15 feet an electrical charge is applied and the person usually drops to the ground for 5 seconds giving you the ability to defend yourself without direct contact. A background check is required when a taser is purchased to active it. Most tasers cost over \$250.00 and re-fill cartridges can be \$30 or more.
- 15. What do I need to buy a gun? Handguns and long guns can now be purchased in NC with a background check done on site for NC residents.

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## Steak and Egg Hash

## Word Search: Coral Reefs



1 beef sirloin steak, sliced
1 pound potatoes, cut into small pieces
salt and ground black pepper to taste
1 sweet onion, chopped
4 eggs

1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved

Italian seasoning Jngredients

Steps

Heat a cast iron skillet over medium heat; add steak and cook 4 to 5 minutes on each side. An instant-read thermometer inserted into the center should read 140 degrees F (60 degrees C) for medium doneness. Remove steak to a plate and reserve the drippings in the skillet. Add potatoes to the skillet; season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until potatoes are just tender, about 8 to 12 minutes. Add onion and cook until lightly browned and the potatoes are cooked through, about 3 to 5 minutes. Slice steak into pieces and return to the skillet, reduce heat to low. Make 4 shallow wells in the potato mixture and crack an egg into each one. Scatter the tomatoes throughout the skillet and cover; cook until the egg whites are set but the yolks are still runny, about 6 to 12 minutes. Season eggs with salt, pepper, and Italian Seasoning; serve.

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The Word Bank

Management Hard Atoll Tropical Barrier Relationship Environment Zooplankton Ecosystem
Synoptic
Chart
Calcium

Symbiotic Carbonate Soft Coral

Reef Precious Human



### Free Fly • Life is Good • Vineyard Vines • Fish Hippie • Olukai • Turtlebox





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