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**This issue features:**

Grand openings
Local Events
Stories from, and about, local businesses
Opinion Pieces
& Information on upcoming Bee Festival!



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# Topsail Times

**Print Dates 2025**

May 4th




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# Topsail Gun Gal

**By Dorothy Royal**

Looking for a new 9mm handgun to add to your collection? I got one thing to say - "Buy the bundle". For some reason, both Springfield and S&W have gone crazy with amazing deals that include range bags, speed loaders, up to 5 magazines (some up to 17 rounds each) and to make it extra sweet – an optic. Yes, an optic. The latest craze for those, who like me, need a little bit extra on that quick eye acquisition. Springfield Hellcat bundles come with the optic at time of purchase and so does the Springfield Echelon Bundle. These are both 9mm handguns designed for range use and carry.

S&W offers a large assortment of handguns that once you purchase the firearm, you fill out the form and they send you a green dot optic (worth $289). These are amazing deals for anyone looking in the $599 - $699 category and wanting to get a lot for your money. Don't hesitate, the Smith & Wesson deal ends April 30th and Springfield deal will end when supplies run out.

Some people have forgotten how important freedom really is. Freedom of course comes in all shapes and sizes, but sometimes it comes in property rights. Thanks to State Representative Charlie Miller (Republican for District 19), the Brunswick County town of South Port has lost all power over property owners in the ETJ (Extra Territorial Jurisdiction). What does that mean exactly? Thanks to House Bill 911, the people that own property in the former ETJ no longer are subjected to the city's rules and regulations, building permit fees or fines.

Property owners in ETJ of any municipality **do not** pay city property taxes, they **do not** receive services (fire/police) from the municipality, **do not** vote in municipal elections and cannot serve on an elected board of commissioners, but they are ruled over through zoning and may be fined regarding zoning or other offenses. In all reality, it is government taxation without representation, and certainly government overreach.

For those of you who own property in the ETJ of Holly Ridge, you may be familiar with some of these issues. ETJ property owners only pay county taxes and receive emergency services from the county. In the case of Holly Ridge, the fire department is contracted to serve the county so there is no loss of services there. Law enforcement is provided by the Onslow County Sheriff's department, and yes, they can reach out to local PD for assistance.

Mississippi has joined the group of states that are doing away with income tax. In a pledge to the people of the state, Governor Tate Reeves will sign into law the reduction and eventual elimination of income tax for his constituents. Currently nine states do not have income tax, including; TN, FL, SD, NH, NV, WY, AK, WA and Texas. The Governor is hoping to boost economic growth through no longer taxing the work and earnings of the people of Mississippi.

The Governor of Florida is working on a plan to end property taxes. His argument is that it is an "unfair tax". This would require a vote to create a Constitutional Amendment and would need the support of 60% of all voters. I don't know about you, but I would vote for this!

Come on North Carolina, start listening to some of the other states, aren't we taxed and taxed and taxed enough?

Some very scary predictions are coming out about the major loss of honeybees this year across our country. Some reports are sounding the alarm that the bee population may decline up to 70% which could lead to a major reduction in agricultural products. How can you help? Simple, don't mow all your lawn or native flowers until the end of May, don't spray poisons on flowers and vegetation and plant more flowers! Sounds like an inconvenience? Try living without fruits and vegetables.

Join us on April 26th for the 2nd Annual Holly Ridge Bee Festival on Sound Road and learn more about how we can save the amazing honeybee!

Remember knowledge is power, bees are essential to our existence, and no one likes to pay taxes!

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# Coastal Common Sense

**By Kim McGahey**

Common sense is something we should all aspire to, but it has been strangely displaced in our culture by a longing for instant self-gratification and the quest for power. Common sense used to provide us with a productive and rewarding lifestyle, and its return today just might be our saving grace.

So much of what the complicit liberal media and the progressive left has shoved down our throats lately defies common sense. Yet they continue to tell us to believe their lies and ignore what we see with our own eyes. Their mantra is to go back to your lives, citizens, there's nothing to see here.

And this masquerade is not just a national phenomenon - it starts locally. Is it common sense or the quest for political power that compels a Town of Topsail Beach commissioner to falsely claim residency in order to remain on the Town council? Common sense tells us that a voluntary resignation is the honorable decision to make.

Is it common sense or a corrupt conflict of interest for a Pender County commissioner to vote on the extension of the Pender EMS when a family member is a financial officer in that non-profit? Common sense would demand a recusal on that vote.

Is it common sense or political pandering for our progressive governor to start sounding like a conservative on school safety when the political headwinds begin blowing in his face? Common sense says to have the courage of your convictions and stand up for what you believe, come hell or high water.

Is it common sense or pure hatred when the Democrat terrorists funded by Alex Soros stage violent attacks on Elon Musk and his environmentally friendly Tesla brand just because he backs President Trump's common sense government restoration? Common sense demands that there is no room for violent protests in our Republic and any philosophical disagreement in the public square should be with words and votes, not with molotov cocktails.

Is it common sense or manipulation of the masses when the Davos crowd at the World Economic Forum (WEF) claims elite status over working populations around the world attempting to impose their globalist worldview on the U.S. Congress and the American people? Common sense would have us retain our self-determination, independence and individual freedom from such oligarchs.

Common sense is the bloodline of the American experiment, according to Alex d'Tocqueville, who witnessed this core value in every facet of life in the young American nation. He saw that common sense would rule our families, our communities and our country.

It should be the intrinsic glue that holds us together and separates us from the third world banana republics. Common sense is biblical, ethical and culturally reliable. With any luck, common sense is back in style.



**Kim McGahey**
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# CFCC Spring Open House April 10

Cape Fear Community College invites prospective students, families, and community members to explore all that the college has to offer during its upcoming Spring Open House on Thursday, April 10, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at CFCC's Downtown Campus. Attendees can check in at the Schwartz Center, located at 601 N. Front Street.

With more than 170 academic and career training programs, CFCC is ready to help individuals prepare for high-demand careers, begin their college journey, or take the next step in their current professions.

What to expect:

· Explore labs and workshops – see hands-on demonstrations and learn more about our academic and career-based programs.

· Meet employees – connect with program representatives and get your questions answered.

· Attend information sessions (5:00 - 5:30 pm) – learn about admission and financial aid, Career & College Promise (dual enrollment), and career exploration resources

· Take a campus tour – get a feel for campus life and see our state-of-the-art facilities.

· Discover your future career – complete a career assessment to see how CFCC can help you reach your goals.

"This event is the perfect opportunity for anyone curious about their next steps," said CFCC President Jim Morton. "Whether you're a high school student, working adult, or someone looking to make a change, our Open House will give you a comprehensive look at the programs, people, and support systems that make CFCC a strong choice for your future."

To learn more and register to attend the event, visit cfcc.edu/open-house/.





cfcc spring
open house
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- Meet faculty and staff.
- Attend information sessions (5:00 – 5:30 PM) on Admissions and Financial Aid, dual enrollment, and career exploration resources.
- Take a campus tour.
- Get a complete career assessment!

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Sign up today: CFCC.EDU/OPENHOUSE

Questions? Contact Us:
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Light up Topsail Beach

On April 18, 2025, we will celebrate the 250th anniversary of Paul Revere's Ride.
7 p.m. at The Assembly Building
7:45 p.m. We will Light Up Topsail Beach

You are invited

topsailhistoricalsociety.org
topsailchamber.org

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF TOPSAIL ISLAND NORTH CAROLINA

THE GREATER TOPSAIL AREA Chamber of Commerce and Tourism

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# Hampstead Alive After Five Returns with Free Summer Concert Series

**By Brandi Cobb**

Hampstead Alive After Five is set to return for another season of free outdoor concerts at Hampstead Kiwanis Park, featuring live music, food trucks and dessert vendors on select Friday evenings throughout the summer.

Concerts will take place from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., and attendees are encouraged to bring chairs or blankets. The event is open to all, whether they prefer to sit back and enjoy the music or hit the dance floor.

This year's lineup features a mix of well-known performers:

The Entertainers – (May16) With deep R&B and beach music roots, this iconic band has been a staple of the music scene since the 1980s. The group satisfies diverse audiences by playing selections from the latest Top 40, classic rock and roll, and country music.

Carl Newton's Review – (May 30) Eastern Carolina's hottest dance show band and a crowd favorite known for energetic performances.

The Pink Slips – (June 13) Playing a mix of Carolina beach music, soul, country, rock and more, this high-energy band may even have you dancing with a band member by the end of the night.

The Konnection – (June 27) One of the East Coast's hottest variety bands since 2005, closing the season with a diverse mix of hits designed to keep audiences on their feet.

"Hampstead Alive After Five has become a beloved summer tradition, bringing the community together for great music, good food and a fun outdoor experience," said Zach White, Pender County Parks and Recreation director.

A variety of food and dessert vendors will be on-site, offering attendees the chance to enjoy local flavors while taking in the live entertainment. The event is free and open to the public.






# Letter to the Editor: Senate Bill 50

**By John Michael Moore**

Several keep asking about the pending change to North Carolina's Concealed Carry Handgun Law. Recent headlines imply that it is already in place. Those headlines are incorrect and can get a person into a lot of trouble.

It's not law yet... but it's probably coming. Maybe... but it still a few steps to go.

The North Carolina House passed its first reading of Senate Bill 50, which would allow residents to carry concealed weapons in public without a permit if and when implemented. Though the Senate approved the bill last week, it's now in committee and must pass two additional readings in the House before being sent to Gov. Josh Stein's desk, who could still veto it.

Though, Senate Leader Phil Berger shot down a similar proposal in 2023, he's actually a co-sponsor of SB50, marking a significant shift in his thinking on the legislation. A similar House bill that would allow state lawmakers to carry concealed weapons into places where guns are otherwise banned has been in committee for a few weeks. It's not yet clearly evident how that provision will proceed.

Senate Bill 50 IS NOT an open ticket for anyone and everyone to carry concealed weapons. Those currently prohibited for the most part would remain prohibited. If found carrying... such individuals would in most cases be facing felony charges.

Those prohibited from legally carrying a concealed weapon without a permit are still prohibited even when the bill is implemented. The punishment for illegally carrying actually increases, especially if during the commission of a violent crime.

The prohibited persons include anyone ineligible to own or possess a firearm, convicted felons, military veterans who receive anything other than an honorable discharge, people who have been convicted of domestic violence, crimes against law enforcement or anyone who has been convicted of DWI within the past three years. The bill also restricts against people who have been found in court to be mentally ill or incompetent.

Persons who meet certain criteria will still have the opportunity to file through the courts for a hearing for restoration of firearms rights, however most federal restrictions are pretty permanent.

Current state law requires North Carolinians seeking a concealed carry permit to take the North Carolina Concealed Handgun Safety Course, to get the permission of their local sheriff and pass tests on firearm safety and accuracy, as well as tests on laws related to guns and self-defense during that class.

Though SB50 would make that system optional, meaning North Carolinians who are eligible to own a firearm wouldn't be required to go through those steps to carry that weapon, the class is still strongly recommended because of the 8hr block on the laws in the class. Not knowing a law is no excuse for violating a law... and those who assume often find themselves in unexpected, unwanted crisis when the damage has already been done.

The permit isn't going away entirely, and it is still strongly recommended for those who travel, and or are in the military. One might ask "Why?" There's a pretty doggone good reason. Many states including some who recognize Constitutional Carry for their own residents, only allow people visiting their state to carry concealed guns if they have a permit from another state, usually the state in which they reside or declare as their home of record.

Permits would still be available, as many states allow people to carry concealed guns if they have a permit from another state.

Keep in mind that all of this is still not yet law here in North Carolina. House Bill 50 still has to go through two more readings in the house... surviving those.. it then proceeds to the governor's desk. Then there is the possibility of a veto... in which case there has to be an override vote in the Senate which is not so easy to become law... So it may be a while yet.

In reality not much really changes in the course of humanity. Responsible people will still act responsibly and abide by law. Irresponsible people will still act irresponsibly. When they break the law and get caught they will still face consequences.

I am not writing this post in favor nor against the passage of House Bill 50. It is only to clarify where it is at the the process at this time. Simply put... several recent headlines have been wrong and can get a person into trouble. House Bill 50 is in the pipes and coming down the line... BUT... and this is important for those thinking about carrying concealed... IT'S NOT LAW YET! Pardon the pun.. but don't jump the gun. A little patience is a really good idea right now.





# Beach Furniture Outfitters

When Sam Morrow started Beach Furniture Outfitters 30 years ago, he had a vision. Not only did he want to outfit every beach home with the perfect furnishings, but he also wanted to offer a turnkey experience, including everything down to the pots and pans. Sam found himself working with Nathan King, a local developer, to fill a need that was growing at a quick pace once everyone wanted a beach home on Topsail Island.

Often visiting Nathan King's office, Sam met Diana Tippett, who came to the area with a degree in horticulture but soon found herself working at a real estate office. Shortly thereafter he offered Diana a job working with him at Beach Furniture Outfitters. Decades later, she is still proudly sitting behind the counter, helping customers that have been coming back for years.

"We pride ourselves on keeping good records. A person can come in and see the purchases they made in 2003." Dianna states as she proudly shows me some of the handwritten detailed receipts from over the decades. She and her husband, Larry purchased the business a decade ago after Sam passed away. Beach Furniture Outfitters is not just a furniture store but also a haven for local art and gifts. Jewelry, paintings, sculptures, ornaments, windsocks, puzzles, toys, plush and a DVD selection. What you can see walking through this marketplace is a history of Topsail Island. "Whenever a local business would shut down, I would buy up some of their goods and we have them for sale here."

After spending 25 years on the beach, Diana decided to move to her current location at 13997 Hwy 50 in Surf City five years ago. "The thing I remember most about that move was it was exactly when the Covid shutdowns started. I was in a panic, but the most amazing thing happened, young men from the community showed up with their pick-up trucks and helped us move all this stuff from the beach to the shop. That was no easy feat.

Oddly enough, that first April during Covid was the best month she had in business. "We had more people buying things, remodeling, redecorating. It was amazing, and exhausting. But we all got through it."

"My family really stepped up when I was in need. My brothers, sister and my niece, all came down to help me set up the entire store, and in fact, my brothers stayed on to help deliver furniture. To this day one of my brother's drives down from Fayetteville to help me 3 days a week. I don't think I could have done this without the help of both my family and the community."

Beach Furniture Outfitters is open Tuesday through Saturday. Stop by and say hello to Diana and look around, you never know what treasures you will find.




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# CFCC Announces New Foundation Executive Director, David Howell

Cape Fear Community College proudly announces David Howells' appointment as the CFCC Foundation's Executive Director. With nearly two decades of experience in philanthropy and public service, David brings a mission-driven approach and a deep passion for improving lives and creating meaningful, lasting change in the Cape Fear region.

Most recently, Howell served in multiple leadership roles with the American National Red Cross, including Senior Regional Philanthropy Officer, Chief Development Officer, Advanced Fundraiser Training Lead, and National Program Manager in Disaster Fundraising. In addition, he represented the Southeastern U.S. Division of the Red Cross National Foundation Advisory Council, helping shape philanthropic best practices and guiding financial growth strategy across the organization.

A lifelong North Carolina resident and proud Wilmingtonian since 2004, David has maintained a strong connection to the state's colleges and universities – as an educator, advocate, and champion for student success. His community service includes extensive board participation with regional nonprofits and leadership in volunteer organizations. He currently serves as the President of the Association of Fundraising Professionals of Cape Fear, supporting nonprofit missions and fostering learning opportunities for fundraising professionals throughout the region.

"I join the Cape Fear Community College team with great excitement and a deep sense of commitment, collaboration, and compassion as we provide our region with accessible, quality education and world-class workforce development opportunities," said David Howell.

As Executive Director, David will lead the CFCC Foundation's efforts to secure private support that enhances the student experience through scholarships, program innovation, faculty development, and campus advancement.

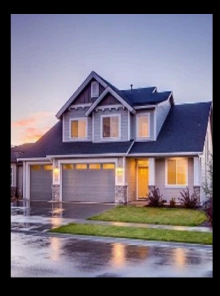
"We are excited to welcome David to Cape Fear Community College," said Jim Morton, CFCC President. "His extensive experience in philanthropy, combined with his strong community ties and passion for education, make him an outstanding choice to lead our Foundation."

For more information about the CFCC Foundation, visit cfcc.edu/foundation/.



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- D. R. Royal












2nd Annual
Bee Festival
Located At
Paradise Axe & Arcade
April 26, 2025

# A CELEBRATION OF BEES

## Bee Festival in Holly Ridge, NC

# April 26, 2025

## Street Fair on Sound Road in Holly Ridge, NC

## 10am to 3pm

2nd Annual

# Bee Festival

Located At

Paradise Axe & Arcade

April 26, 2025

"Full of Food, Fellowship and Fun. DJ was great. Volunteers were amazing. Always offering to help. Total success!" - Coastal Claud, FB

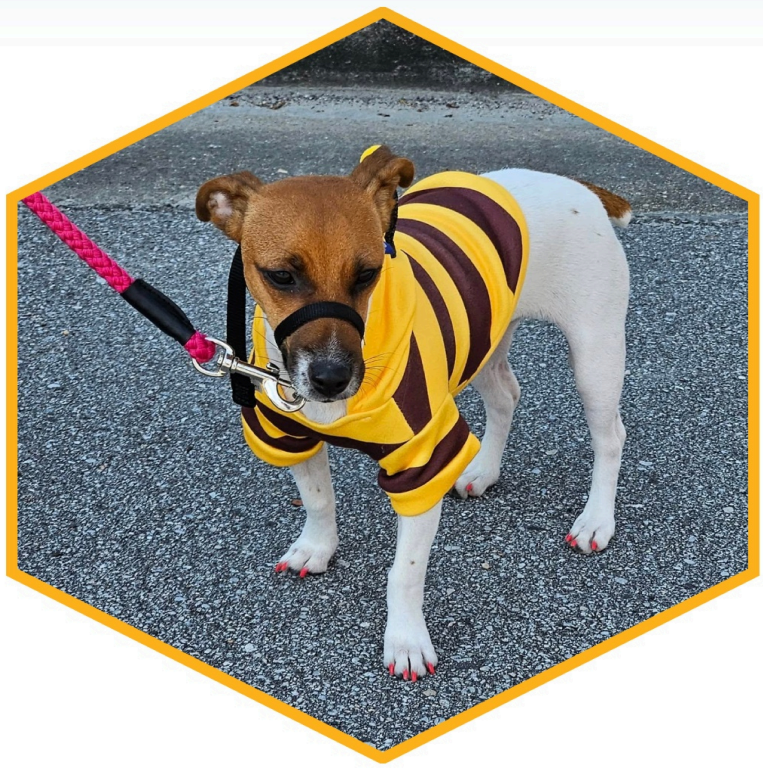
## Join us for the 2nd Annual Bee Festival!

**Vendors** **Food** **Entertainment**

Join us at Paradise Axe & Arcade, for the 2nd Annual Bee Festival where vendors will be located both indoors and outdoors.

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**

# Food Lion Feeds Achieves Donation Goal of 1.5B Meals to Nourish Local Communities

**By Alexandra Fusari**

*The omnichannel retailer's hunger-relief platform accomplished its goal 10 months early; announces continued commitment to reduce food insecurity.*

Food Lion Feeds, Food Lion's hunger-relief platform, has achieved its goal of providing 1.5 billion meals to address food insecurity in the towns and cities it serves across its 10-state footprint. This goal was achieved through a collective effort and combination of product, financial and equipment donations; disaster relief and recovery efforts; associate volunteer hours; in-store retail campaigns; and the company's food rescue program.

Food Lion Feeds was founded in 2014 to reduce food insecurity in the towns and cities Food Lion serves and committed to donating 500 million meals by 2020. After reaching its goal 18 months early, Food Lion Feeds set a new goal of providing 1 billion more meals by the end of 2025. Reaching this milestone 10 months early was made possible through in-store retail campaigns, including pin pad donations, as well as the generous support of customers. Additionally, Food Lion Feeds and the Food Lion Feeds Charitable Foundation donated more than $4 million in the last four years toward disaster relief during hurricanes and other emergencies. These efforts accelerated the support for families in need and early achievement of the milestone.

Food Lion Feeds' new goal will double its efforts to-date and provide a total of 3 billion meals by 2032. This next milestone demonstrates Food Lion Feeds' ongoing commitment to nourishing communities by providing immediate hunger relief and addressing the root causes of food insecurity. The organization plans to expand its work with sustainable solutions for future generations, including culinary skills training, workforce development, teaching gardens and nutrition education, empowering neighbors to grow their own food, helping them achieve self-reliance and break the cycle of food insecurity. These initiatives collectively address food insecurity and foster long-term solutions for healthier, more resilient communities.

Additionally, the Food Lion Feeds Charitable Foundation will donate $1 million, equivalent to 10 million meals, through its upcoming spring grants, kicking off the renewed efforts.

"We believe no one should have to choose between dinner and rent or gas and groceries," said Meg Ham, President, Food Lion. "We are honored to support the towns and cities we serve in meaningful ways. We appreciate the support of our customers, associates, feeding partners and vendors in helping us provide 1.5 billion meals to those who are food insecure. While this milestone is significant, our work is not done and we are committed to further nourishing our neighbors to help set them up for success in life."

To celebrate this achievement and recommit to its mission, Food Lion Feeds will host food distribution events in seven towns and cities through its "Thanks-A-Billion" tour. Food Lion associates will volunteer at each event, preparing and distributing boxes filled with nutritious food, increasing access to healthy meals for families and individuals facing food insecurity. These volunteer efforts provide immediate hunger relief but also create a sense of community and unity. By involving associates in these events, Food Lion Feeds strengthens its commitment to nourishing communities and addressing the root causes of food insecurity.

**About Food Lion**

Food Lion is an omnichannel grocery retailer committed to nourishing its neighbors. More than 82,000 associates across 1,100+ stores deliver an easy, fresh and affordable shopping experience throughout 10 Southeastern and Mid-Atlantic states. With a focus on hunger relief, Food Lion is a pioneer in food rescue. Since 2014, the company's hunger relief platform Food Lion Feeds has donated more than 1.5 billion meals to those who are food insecure. The retailer has committed to donate 3 billion meals by 2032. Founded and based in Salisbury, N.C., since 1957, Food Lion is a company of Ahold Delhaize USA, the U.S. division of Zaandam-based Ahold Delhaize. For more information, visit foodlion.com.

**About The Food Lion Feeds Charitable Foundation**

The Food Lion Feeds Charitable Foundation is the philanthropic arm of Food Lion, based in Salisbury, N.C. Established in 2001, the Food Lion Feeds Charitable Foundation provides financial support for programs and organizations dedicated to eliminating hunger. The charitable foundation has provided more than $19.6 million in grant funding, helping to nourish communities with fresh food for backpack programs, Kids Café's and other hunger-relief programs as well as funding for long-term programs to help shorten the lines at food banks. The charitable foundation partners with Feeding America, the nation's largest hunger-relief agency, in addition to local food agencies serving the 10 Southeastern and Mid-Atlantic states in which Food Lion operates.



# Dedication of Memorial Bench in honor of Key and Kelley

The Chamber suffered two devastating losses on Feb. 7 and Feb. 8 with the passing of Stephanie Key and Angela Kelley.

Stephanie, A.K.A. Mrs. Claus, worked part-time for the Chamber. She worked on the administration side of the website and authored a Friday events newsletter. She was helpful, guiding many new members through the tangled web of the Chamber's website.

Angela Kelley, a wedding officiant, served the Chamber as an Ambassador. She was always helpful, sweet, and kind.

Chamber members, representatives from the Town of Surf City, and friends and family gathered for the March 26 dedication at Nelva R. Albury Park. We will never forget Stephanie and Angela and the bench will be lasting memorial to them from the Chamber.






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# Senior Olympics: A Celebration of Health, Friendship, and Friendly Competition

**By Wendy Foster**

In March, 100 spirited participants, ages 70-94, gathered at South Bay at Mt. Pleasant senior living community for the 4th annual Liberty Games.

The Olympic-style event is a signature experience of Liberty Senior Living, a leader in the senior living industry. The Liberty Games brought residents from 10 of the organization's independent living communities for three days of competition. Participating communities, in addition to the host, were The Barclay at SouthPark, Brightmore of South Charlotte, Carolina Bay at Autumn Hall, Brightmore of Wilmington, The Templeton of Cary, Wellington Bay, Pisgah Valley, Quail Haven Village, and Hayes Barton Place.

The Games were spearheaded four years ago by Haley Kinne-Norris, INSPIRE Wellness and Enrichment Coordinator for Liberty Senior Living. "I wanted to find a fun way to bring everyone together for a healthy competition," Kinne-Norris said. Liberty Senior Living boasts a strong commitment to a culture of wellness.

The 2025 event was spectacular from start to finish. Opening ceremonies started with a torch reportedly used in the Paris Olympics, a color guard presentation by cadets from the Citadel, and the energetic entrance of each team. The keynote address /pep talk was delivered by philanthropist inspirational speaker and retired basketball official, Dereck Whittenburg.

The extraordinary ceremony ended with a headstand by Cookie Finkelstein, an 83-year-old athlete from South Bay at Mt. Pleasant. The six-time cancer patient went on to win the ½ mile walk.

**The Competitions: A Test of Skill and Determination**

Athletes, many of whom have been training for months (if not the entire year since last year's Games), participated in various events. The athletic competitions included bocce ball, putting, swimming, billiards, ping pong, shuffleboard, a water balloon tossing off a fourth-floor balcony towards a bull's eye on the ground, and more.

In addition to the physical events, the Liberty Games included trivia, chess, and other cognitive competitions in which the residents' minds were challenged.

**A Culture of Wellness and Engagement**

The Liberty Games were designed to crown champions and, even more importantly, foster a sense of community, camaraderie, and active engagement. The Liberty Games embody a corporate-wide commitment to promoting a culture of wellness, where staying engaged and active is a priority no matter your age.

Elizabeth Pierce, a resident of Brightmore of Wilmington, competed in several activities. The arthritis in one arm and shoulder and hip replacements she said, "don't hold me back from having a good time. This is a fun and competitive way for me to represent my community and I feel great."

**Celebrating Achievement**

After the Games, winners in each event were recognized with awards for first, second, and third place. The top-scoring teams were also recognized, with The Templeton of Cary taking home the gold for the third time.

**A Legacy of Health and Wellness**

Ultimately, the Liberty Games event proves to be much more than a competition—it is annually an inspiring celebration of active aging. The Liberty Games are a fun reminder that it's never too late to pursue health, build friendships, and stay engaged with life.

For the participants, the games are a chance to challenge themselves, laugh with new friends, and take pride in staying active and involved to live a purposeful, independent and engaging life.

***Liberty Senior Living***

*Liberty Senior Living, LLC is a division of Liberty Healthcare Management that specializes in senior living and retirement communities. Based in North Carolina and established in 1875, Liberty Healthcare Management is an experienced, family-owned company that has been assisting people to manage their healthcare and residential needs for almost 150 years. To learn more about Liberty Senior Living and the communities they manage, visit www.LibertySeniorLiving.com.*












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ALL ABC PERMITS

# Surf, Paddle and Peddle with George

The first ESA Central District surf contest of the season was a resounding success, with Surf City proving to be the perfect venue. Competitors were met with clean, consistent 3-foot waves, providing ideal conditions for high-level performances. Though early morning fog caused a brief one-hour delay, the contest officially got underway at 9:00 AM and ran smoothly for the remainder of the day.

Despite the initial visibility challenges, judges navigated the conditions with precision, ensuring fair and accurate scoring. Standout performances emerged throughout the event, with Surf City's own Emerson delivering an impressive showing to claim first place in his division.

Team Onshore had an exceptional day, securing two first-place and three second-place finishes in the men's divisions, along with two first-place victories in the women's divisions. The event was proudly sponsored by Onshore Surf Shop and Shaka Taco, both of which continue to support the local surfing community.

The next ESA Central District contest is set for April 10 at Oceana Pier in Atlantic Beach. Surfers looking to compete are encouraged to sign up in advance.

The Eastern Surfing Association (ESA) remains a premier platform for amateur surfers looking to develop their skills and compete at higher levels. Under the leadership of Wes and Tim, the ESA Central District continues to foster talent and provide top-tier competitive opportunities.

See you next month on the beach!






# Thank You Topsail Young Professionals!

What an incredible turnout for our Mini Golf Tournament!

Huge thanks to each of you for bringing your energy, laughter, and fantastic sportsmanship to the greens.

A big round of applause to Pirate's Turf Putt Putt and Arrrcade—your venue was the perfect backdrop for our evening, and your hospitality knocked it out of the park!

Special gratitude goes out to our event sponsor, Inside Out Holistic Health. Your support helps our community thrive, and we deeply appreciate your generosity.

To all of our awesome hole sponsors—thank you for adding fun, support, and a bit of friendly competition to each hole. You truly made this event unforgettable.

Congratulations to our champions, The Goose Heads! Your skills (and perhaps a little luck) have earned you bragging rights until next year!

Already missing the fun? Don't worry, we are too! Keep an eye out for details on next year's event—it'll be even bigger, better, and more exciting.

Thank you all again for an unforgettable night.

Our next Networking night is Tuesday April 8th at Seam Mist and Grace.








# Spring Garden Festival Set to Bloom in Jacksonville

Get ready to dig into spring! The highly anticipated Spring Garden Festival is set to take place on Saturday, April 26, 2025, from 8:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. at 4024 Richlands Highway in Jacksonville, NC. Sponsored by the Extension Master GardenerSM Volunteer Association of Onslow County and the NC Cooperative Extension, this vibrant community event promises to bring together gardening enthusiasts and families alike.

Located near the Discovery Garden and the Onslow County Farmers Market, the festival will feature a diverse array of locally grown vegetables, herbs, perennials, and landscape plants available for purchase. Also on offer will be beautiful hanging baskets to brighten up any home or garden. Please remember, this is a cash-only event, so plan accordingly!

The festival is not just about shopping; it's an opportunity to learn and engage with fellow gardening enthusiasts. The Extension Master Gardener Volunteers will be on hand to answer any plant or gardening-related questions, and a Plant Clinic will be open to help visitors with their gardening dilemmas.

Families are encouraged to bring their children, as there will be free activities in the Children's Garden, designed to inspire the next generation of gardeners. Educational displays in the raised-bed garden area will showcase the possibilities of gardening in small spaces, providing useful insights for those with limited room to grow.

Visitors will also have the chance to tour the Discovery Garden, featuring the Pollinator Garden, the Children's Garden, the Gazebo, and the Pond. Additionally, don't miss the opportunity to purchase rain barrels, crafted by the dedicated Extension Master Gardener Volunteers, promoting sustainable gardening practices.

This event serves as a fundraiser to support educational programs within the community, helping to foster a love for gardening and environmental stewardship among residents.

For more information, or if you have any questions, please contact Emilee Morrison at 910-455-5873 or via email at emilee_morrison@ncsu.edu.

Mark your calendars and prepare to celebrate the beauty of gardening at this year's Spring Garden Festival!











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# CFCC Annual Riverfront Boat Show Returns April 12

Cape Fear Community College is excited to announce the return of its annual Riverfront Boat Show on Saturday, April 12, 2025, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Set against the backdrop of the Cape Fear River, the event will span the area between Hotel Ballast and the Coastline Convention Center, showcasing various wood and fiberglass boats on land and in the water.

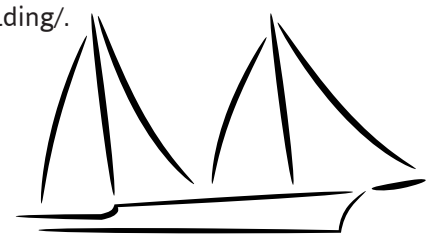
This free, family-friendly event invites the community to experience the artistry and tradition of boat building up close. From handcrafted student-built vessels to custom boats created by local craftsmen, the show offers a unique opportunity to explore the region's rich maritime heritage.

"The annual boat show gives our students a real-world opportunity to connect with experienced boat builders and proudly display their hard work," said Jim Morton, CFCC President. "It is also a chance to inspire the next generation of craftsmen while celebrating the enduring legacy of maritime trades."

The Riverfront Boat Show is CFCC's largest fundraising event. It supports scholarships for boat-building students and helps future artisans and marine industry professionals pursue their passions and education.

Interested in participating as a vendor, exhibitor, or sponsor? Visit cfcc.edu/boat-building/cfcc-riverfront-boat-show/ for more information.

To learn more about CFCC's Boat Building program, visit cfcc.edu/boat-building/.








# 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.

# Potatoes au Gratin



3-1/4 cup of Milk
4-5 Potatoes, Peeled
(Yellow, white or red)
3 - 4 cups of Shredded sharp cheddar cheese

*Ingredients*

*Steps*

Butter large casserole dish. Wash and peel potatoes, slice them paper thin. Layer approximately 3 - 4 cups of shredded sharp cheddar cheese and potatoes. Pouring slowly, add approximately 3 1/4 cups milk, until it covers about 1/2 the potatoes. Preheat oven to 350° and cook for 45 minutes to an hour until potatoes are fork tender and the milk starts to bubble around the edges.



## Word Search: Peanuts Characters

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | D | B | E | I | O | S | N | O | O | P | Y | A | O |
| L | L | B | N | W | O | R | B | Y | L | L | A | S | I |
| B | M | R | L | H | C | S | E | S | N | H | E | Y | S |
| N | W | O | R | B | E | I | L | R | A | H | C | I | H |
| S | T | E | L | O | I | V | A | U | K | O | W | T | R |
| O | P | T | N | A | H | C | C | C | Y | P | A | L | O |
| E | I | B | E | I | Y | E | O | S | P | D | H | H | E |
| L | G | U | W | P | P | T | E | O | E | E | Y | B | D |
| I | P | N | L | C | S | E | Y | I | G | R | I | W | E |
| N | E | E | I | D | K | H | R | K | C | M | S | C | R |
| U | N | W | O | L | S | F | N | O | I | S | O | L | O |
| S | I | O | E | D | O | L | B | A | L | U | C | Y | A |
| A | W | S | H | E | R | M | Y | B | R | C | O | O | O |
| I | S | F | I | O | D | R | N | M | N | N | E | B | W |

## The Word Bank

Woodstock
Violet
Sally Brown
Shroeder
Charlie
Brown
Shermy
Pig Pen
Snoopy
Frieda
Linus
Lucy






Wilton C Wescott

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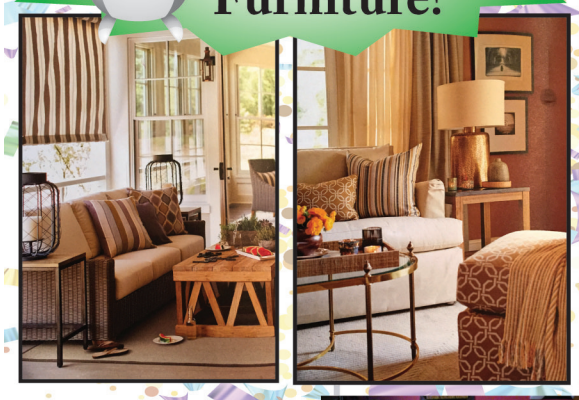


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