



# TOPSAIL TIMES

TOPSAIL ISLAND, HOLLY RIDGE, HAMPSTEAD AND SNEADS FERRY



February 2026

American-Owned. Free Press.

Volume VI, Issue 2

FREE!

Inside this issue of the Topsail Times Newspaper ...

**Candidate Responses\* to March Primary Questionnaire  
on pages 4 and 11 - 14**

\*Emails were sent to all candidates for the March election

## Winter Storm Gianna

In late January 2026, North Carolina dealt with significant snow accumulations. For the first time in over a decade, measurable snow fell in all 100 counties, according to the North Carolina State Climate Office. Greenville, for example, received 14 inches of snowfall, an amount not seen since a large storm in March 1980. Snow totals ranged from 6 to 12 inches for Charlotte. Longwood in Brunswick County received the most with nearly 18 inches. Wilmington reported 5.6 inches of snow, the heaviest there since 1989.

Photo credits:

Herring's Outdoor Sports (top left)

DDT Outlet (top right)

Wilton C Wescott, Snow in Surf City 2-2-26 Video (center two)

Amy Fowler Shores Photography (bottom right)

Wilton C Wescott Photography (bottom left)





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# Topsail Times

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TIMES  
NEWSPAPER

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**Denoia's Pizzeria**

**and more!**

# Topsail Gun Gal

**By Dorothy Royal**

A mushroom that has a link to fairy tales? Could be. In the Chinese Province of Yunnan, the Lanmaoa asiatica mushroom, considered a popular food, has been known to lead to hallucinations of seeing little people if the mushroom is eaten partially uncooked. If visiting this area of China, remember to cook your mushrooms for 15 minutes (or more) to avoid seeing lots of little people, described as tiny elves, that are seen on clothing, walls and furnishings. The most interesting thing is the majority of people who have these hallucinations recall the same tiny people. Hmmmm. My question is when tested the mushrooms on mice and they hallucinate, what do they see?

A man was arrested for indecent exposure when entering an Onslow County convenience store naked (during this frigid weather). I'm sure it was a shock to everyone but my first reaction would be to give him a blanket and something warm to drink! Pleas for help and mental health issues present themselves in lots of different ways, of course he may have been looking for the Nudist Campground in New Bern. Who are we to judge?

One of the most important lessons to teach your children is responsibility. When a person takes responsibility for their actions it shows character. Responsibility is not spoken about that

much anymore, but it should be.

One of the worst parts of social media is not taking responsibility to comments. I cannot stand "anonymous" participants. Own up to your words. That is your power. If you are too ashamed or embarrassed to make a post under your REAL identity, then maybe you should not be doing it at all.

I think it is time we re-instate nap time. Remember in kindergarten when there was a nap time after lunch? The teacher made the room quiet and dark and the kids would lay on their little mats and everyone would take 30 minutes to recharge our batteries. It was also a wonderful time for the teacher to get some "quiet" time. We all need this in our lives as we are being deprived of it on a daily basis.

Coyotes are out in abundance. With all the massive construction and destruction of their native environments they are coming into neighborhoods and yards in search of prey. Keep your outdoor cats locked up (dusk to dawn) and make sure your outdoor cats have a place to hide during the day. Coyotes are hunting for food - it's nothing personal.

Are you tired of sitting in traffic? Worried about low water pressure and what they means during a fire? Stressed about all the local schools being overcrowded and the lack of teachers and bus drivers? Concerned about all those families that got sick on Camp Lejeune? Well, here is YOUR chance to use your

voice to stop it from getting worse!

A developer who applied to annex 1200 acres of land into the city limits of Holly Ridge last August (which includes 300 acres of Pender) is back again! This time it's worse. The new annexation request is for 1500 acres and a possible 3,000 homes!!!!!!! That could add 5,000 cars a day to Highway 17 traffic! There is no doubt this project will extremely over burden both Pender and Onslow Schools with up to 5,000 more students - as this is being sold as "work force housing" and though we don't really know what that means - it most likely means families. What about the land itself? Why hasn't anything been built on that land so far? Simple - it is the old Camp Davis Army base from the 1940s and there is documentation being researched by outside groups regarding possible contamination. Does that sound like a wise place to develop to you? Currently this land is owned by ONWASA (Onslow Water and Sewer Authority). Don't you think if this was "good" land that it would be a sewer spray field to accommodate the current over-development? When I asked ONWASA how many properties they had for sale I was told "none" since they are not in the business of selling land. Hmm. I may not be a rocket scientist like my father, but I do know when something feels wrong on this level that there reasons that we ALL need to be aware of. Please use your voice - ask questions and ATTEND the meetings in

February. There is a "Public Information Session" on Wednesday February 11th and then on February 19th is the BIG meeting where the Holly Ridge Council members may actually VOTE to annex the massive tract of land, re-zone the land, approve a PUD (planned unit development) and agree to a "50 year developers agreement" - which in my opinion is INSANE committing future generations to giving the developer(s) EVERYTHING they want and need for 50 years. Two of the current council members have a lot of questions and concerns - WHY don't they ALL? It is my understanding that this massive project has not even gone before the Planning Board yet. Isn't that the first step? Don't sit by and think someone else will handle this. Let your voice be heard.

Please come to the meetings on Wednesday, February 11th at 6pm at the Holly Ridge Community Center on Sound Road and Thursday, February 19th at 6pm at Holly Ridge Community Center.

Remember knowledge is power and greed is no reason to destroy the quality of lives for generations to come. Use your voice and do your own research and VOTE in the primary.

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## Kim McGahey for Pender County Board of Education

I wanted you to know my goals, my experience and my personal history in my run for Pender County Board of Education District 2.

### My Goals:

- \* More parental involvement and participation in schools and School Board meetings.
- \* Focus on academic achievement - no CRT, no DEI in curriculum - improve standardized test scores, emphasize the 3R's.
- \* Public safety in schools, on buses and on campus - SRO officers in every school - only 2 unlocked doors, front door and back door, each with armed security guard. Security cameras connected to police. Signage saying these schools are protected by armed security.
- \* Bus transportation improved discipline and safety - increased bus driver pay, parental input on bus

routes and schedules. Bus security cameras connected to police.

- \* Teacher pay and hiring based on merit.
- \* Monthly School Board meetings held at schools quarterly.
- \* Visit all Pender County schools quarterly.
- \* Make Pender County schools the North Carolina gold standard.
- \* Put God back in our schools.

### My Experience:

- \* Former Board of Education member Summit County, CO.
- \* Co-chairman of approved \$56million bond election for new high school, new middle school and new elementary schools Summit County, CO.
- \* Former Breckenridge Elementary School PTA president.
- \* Current At-Large member Pender County Republican Party Executive

Committee.

- \* Chairman Summit County, CO Republican Party 6 years.
- \* Election judge Pender County Board of Elections.
- \* Founder Summit Strikers Youth Soccer Club, and youth soccer coach 10 years.
- \* Founder Breckenridge Soccer Club adult soccer.
- \* Current high school varsity soccer referee 20 years; youth soccer referee 25 years.
- \* Organizer Conservative Cocktails monthly Pender patriot gathering.
- \* Watched Colorado schools get californicated and want to prevent that from happening here.

### My Personal History:

- \* Currently reside Topsail Beach, NC.
- \* Pender County tax paying property owner since 2016.
- \* Lived Breckenridge, CO 1978-2022.

\* Married 42 years, 2 married adult sons.

\* Part time Topsail Beach Marina employee.

\* Retired real estate broker, investor.

\* Emma Anderson Chapel Worship Committee member.

\* Samaritan's Purse volunteer Yancey County, NC.

\* Topsail Times Newspaper monthly column author called Coastal Common Sense.

I am my own man; nobody tells me how to vote; I am an independent thinker who has the courage of his convictions and will make decisions based on what is best for students.

You can vote for KIM McGAHEY for Pender County Board of Education on March 3, 2026 (early voting starts 2/12/26) no matter where you live in Pender County.

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## CFCC Partners with Johnson & Wales to Offer Transfer Pathway for Food-Focused Fields

Cape Fear Community College has entered into a new articulation agreement with Johnson & Wales University, creating clear transfer pathways for culinary students to continue their education and earn bachelor's degrees in food-focused fields.

The agreement established multiple transfer options for CFCC students pursuing careers in culinary arts, baking and pastry arts, and food and beverage leadership. Through the partnership, eligible CFCC graduates can transfer into the

following Johnson & Wales bachelor's degree programs:

- \* Bachelor of Science in Applied Food Science
- \* Culinary track
- \* Baking and Pastry track
- \* Bachelor of Science in Food and Beverage Entrepreneurship
- \* Culinary track
- \* Baking and Pastry track
- \* Bachelor of Science in Food and Beverage Industry Management
- \* Culinary track
- \* Baking and Pastry track

"Johnson & Wales is nationally

recognized for excellence in culinary education, and this agreement creates a strong, natural next step for our students," said Jim Morton, CFCC President. "By aligning our programs, we're creating a clear pathway for CFCC students to continue their education at an institution that is well known for preparing leaders in the culinary and food industries."

"We are so pleased to offer pathway opportunities for Cape Fear Community College students, particularly given their longstanding and highly successful culinary-related

programming," said Jason Evans, JWU Dean of College and Food Innovation and Technology.

To qualify for transfer, students must:

- Have a minimum GPA of 2.7
- Complete an eligible associate degree

- Meet the admission standards and comply with the admission procedures of JWU

- To learn more about the Johnson & Wales direct transfer agreement, visit [cfcc.edu / advising / university-transfer-guide/](http://cfcc.edu/advising/university-transfer-guide/).

[www.topsailtimes.net](http://www.topsailtimes.net)

## North Carolina First in Freedom Festival to Highlight Scottish Roots of the American Revolution and the 250th Anniversary of the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge

As part of the national America 250 commemoration, North Carolina will spotlight its uniquely Scottish-influenced path to independence during the North Carolina First in Freedom Festival, culminating in the 250th anniversary of the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge, February 26–28, 2026, at Moores Creek National Battlefield.

Fought on February 27, 1776, the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge was a decisive Patriot victory and an early turning point in the American Revolution. The conflict was shaped overwhelmingly by Scottish involvement on both sides, as Highland Scots immigrants and their descendants stood as Loyalists and Patriots alike. The battle ended organized Loyalist resistance in the colony and helped set North Carolina on the path to becoming the first colony to authorize independence.

Festival programming will explore this Scottish legacy through living history, educational programming, cultural events, and commemorative ceremonies.

A featured event of the festival will be a special appearance by Diana Gabaldon, internationally known

author of the Outlander series, whose work has sparked widespread interest in Scottish history and heritage, particularly in North Carolina. Her participation is made possible through the sponsorship of the Scottish Society of Wilmington, which is underwriting her airfare as part of its ongoing mission to promote education and awareness of Scotland's historical influence in North Carolina.

"Our sponsorship reflects the Scottish Society of Wilmington's commitment to education, storytelling, and historical awareness. Diana Gabaldon's work has inspired millions to explore Scotland's past, and we are proud to support her participation in an event that highlights the central role Scots played in North Carolina's path to independence."

— Catherine Fort, President, Scottish Society of Wilmington

The North Carolina First in Freedom Festival is presented in partnership with America 250 North Carolina, Moores Creek National Battlefield, and regional historical and cultural organizations.

Events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted. Some appearances by Gabaldon are ticketed.

The Scottish Society of Wilmington (SSOW) is a nonprofit cultural organization dedicated to preserving, promoting, and sharing Scottish history and heritage in southeastern North Carolina. Through educational programs, cultural events, music and dance, historical interpretation, and community partnerships, the Society fosters an understanding of Scotland's lasting influence on the Cape Fear region and beyond. SSOW supports public history initiatives,

scholarships, and heritage projects that connect descendants, scholars, and the wider public to Scotland's rich cultural legacy. SSOW is also one of the organizing partners of the Port City Highland Games, to be held Saturday, May 30, 2026. [wilmingtonscots.org](http://wilmingtonscots.org)

For a full schedule of events, visit: [www.ncfirstinfreedomfestival.com](http://www.ncfirstinfreedomfestival.com)



<p><b>Friday February 27</b></p> <p><b>Ongoing Programs and Activities:</b></p> <p><b>10:00AM-4:00PM - Loyalist and Patriot Living Historian Encampments</b> Patriot Earthworks</p> <p><b>10:00AM-4:00PM - Colonial Crafts and Trades</b> Tar Heel Education and Demonstration Area</p> <p><b>Tar Heel Education and Demonstration Area</b> - Explore what life was like for families in the early days of the American Revolution through engaging hands-on demonstrations.</p> <p><b>10:00AM-4:00PM - History Row</b> - Make sure to visit our friends along History Row. This is a collection of national and state parks and historic sites, as well as other patriotic organizations, who will be sharing more about the work that they are doing.</p> <p><b>10:00AM-4:00PM - Colonial Sutlers</b> - There will be several sutlers selling items throughout the event. You will find sutler signs in those areas.</p> <p><b>Battlefield and Demonstration Area</b></p> <p><b>Food Vendors:</b> We will have a variety of food vendors onsite where you can purchase food from 10 am until 4 pm today. Vendors include the Atkinson Fire Department, The Donut Bus, Chocolate and S'more, and more!</p> <p><b>Looking ahead to Saturday Feb. 28</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-North Carolina First in Freedom Art Show - 11 am</li> <li>-Battle Demonstration Program at 12:30 pm and 3:30 pm</li> <li>-2nd Marine Division Band at 2:15 pm</li> </ul>	<p><b>Moore's Creek National Battlefield Map &amp; Schedule of Events</b></p> <p><b>The 250th Anniversary of the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge</b> February 27th and 28th, 2026</p> <p><b>9:00AM-5:00PM - Visitor Center</b> Access to park information, exhibits, a short park film, the gift shop and donation box.</p> <p><b>10:00AM - Wreath Laying Ceremony</b> Moore's Creek Battleground Association Program Tent/Grady Monument</p> <p><b>12:30 PM - Music Program</b> NC State Pipes and Drums Patriot Earthworks</p> <p><b>1:00 PM - Battle Demonstration</b> Narrated program featuring musket and cannon firing followed by memorial dedication. Patriot Earthworks</p> <p><b>2:00 PM - Ribbon Cutting</b> Unveiling of New Visitor Center exhibits Visitor Center</p> <p><b>2:30 PM - Guest Speaker</b> Regulators at Moore's Creek Nathan Schulz, Site Manager Alamance Battleground State Historic Site</p> <p><b>2:30 PM - Musket Demonstration</b> Explanation of weapons; musket firing. Near the Grady Monument</p> <p><b>3:00 PM - "The Bridge of Defiance"</b> American Battlefield Trust Documentary Visitor Center Theater</p> <p><b>3:00 PM - Guest Speaker</b> "All Our People Here Are Ripe for Independence" Frank McMahon, Assistant Site Manager Historic Halifax State Historic Site Patriot Earthworks</p> <p><b>3:30 PM - Battle Demonstration</b> Narrated program featuring musket and cannon firing followed by memorial dedication. Patriot Earthworks</p>
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- D. R. Royal

## Two Juveniles Tragically Drowned After Falling Through Frozen Pond

### Onslow County Sheriff's Dept

The Onslow County Sheriff's Office is devastated to report the tragic loss of two children following a water-related incident on Sunday.

Around 5:30 p.m. on Sunday, February 9, 2026, deputies responded to Mayberry Lane after receiving a 911 call regarding two 7-year-old juveniles who had fallen into a frozen pond. Deputies, along with officers from the

Richlands Police Department, firefighters from Hargett's Crossroads Volunteer Fire Department and Back Swamp Volunteer Fire Department, and Onslow County Emergency Service responded to the scene.

A family member was able to remove one of the juveniles from the water prior to the arrival of first responders. The second juvenile was quickly located and removed from the water by responding emergency

personnel.

Life-saving measures were immediately initiated, and the children were transported to Naval Medical Center Camp Lejeune. Despite the extensive efforts of first responders and medical staff, both juveniles tragically succumbed to their injuries.

The incident has been ruled an accident.

"This is a heartbreak day for our community," said Sheriff Chris Thomas.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the family as they face an unimaginable loss. We are also keeping our deputies, first responders, and everyone involved in this response in our thoughts, as incidents like this affect all of us deeply."

The Onslow County Sheriff's Office asks the community to keep the family in their thoughts during this incredibly difficult time.

## Multi-Agency ICAC Investigation Leads to Arrest

### Onslow County Sheriff's Dept

The Onslow County Sheriff's Office, in coordination with the United States Secret Service, the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation, and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, has arrested a Jacksonville man following a multi-agency Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) investigation.

Brandon Allyn Nelson, 40, of Jacksonville, was arrested on Friday, January 23, 2026, and charged with 10 counts of Felony Second Degree Sexual Exploitation of a Minor.

Nelson received no bond and will have a first court appearance on Monday, January 26, 2026, in Onslow County District Court.

The investigation remains ongoing.

Anyone with information related to this case or suspected crimes against children is encouraged to contact the Onslow County Sheriff's Office or submit a tip through the NCMEC CyberTipline at report.cybertip.org.



## Man Arrested After Firearm Located at Richlands Elementary School

### Onslow County Sheriff's Dept

On Wednesday, January 28, 2026, deputies responded to Richlands Elementary School involving an incident with an individual identified as Spencer Oluich, 29, when school staff were made aware of a potential conflict between Oluich and the mother of his children, who are students at the school.

Staff contacted the school resource officer after Oluich became agitated

during the conversation. The SRO escorted Oluich outside, where it was determined that he had driven to the school with a suspended driver's license.

The SRO initiated an investigation and located a pocketknife and a handgun on Oluich. Oluich was taken into custody without further incident. At no time did he inform the deputy that he was carrying a firearm.

The quick response of school staff and law enforcement ensured no

students, staff, or visitors were harmed during this incident. The investigation remains ongoing.

Oluich is charged with Felony Gun on Educational Property and Misdemeanor Weapon on Educational Property. Additional charges are pending.

We'd like to thank Richlands Elementary School staff for their cooperation and commitment to maintaining a safe learning environment for all students.



## Pender County Residents Urged to Be Alert for Unsolicited Seed Packets

### Brandi Cobb, Pender County

Pender County Cooperative Extension is urging residents to remain alert following reports that unsolicited seed packets are again being mailed to U.S. addresses. In 2020, mysterious packets of seeds originating from China were sent to households across the country. In early 2026, the Texas Department of Agriculture confirmed that similar shipments have resumed, with 16 known seed packets recently delivered to locations across Texas.

At this time, no seed packets have been reported in North Carolina. However, residents of Pender County and surrounding areas are encouraged to closely monitor their mail and take immediate action if an unexpected packet of seeds is received.

If you receive an unsolicited seed packet:

**Do not open the packet and do not plant the seeds.**

Contact a Consumer Horticulture Agent at any Cooperative Extension office in Onslow, New Hanover, or

Brunswick counties, or Deliver the unopened packet to the NC Cooperative Extension Office, 801 S. Walker Street, Burgaw, NC.

Unsolicited seeds may pose serious risks to agriculture, the environment, and native plant species. Introducing unknown or invasive plants can spread pests, diseases, and weeds that threaten crops and landscapes.

Pender County Cooperative Extension will coordinate proper handling and reporting of any suspected seed packets in cooperation

with state and federal agricultural officials.

For more information, residents are encouraged to contact their local NC Cooperative Extension office.



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# A Loyal Friend

## By Faith Cho

Do you know why everyone needs this loyal friend? I think everyone should have a dog. Because dogs are fun. They're happy, energetic. They benefit in many ways.

First, they help encourage activeness, taking you for a daily

walk, a run, or even a game of fetch. Dogs motivate jumping, running, and playing. Do you go out every day? Dogs help you to get up, get out, and be more alive and active every day. These loving companions even reduce risk of chronic disease, heart attack, death and diabetes.

Next, they help mentally.

Promoting routine, they depend on structure. These furry friends also enhance mindfulness and provide a sense of responsibility and purpose. Did you know that dogs improve our sleeping quality? And finally, dogs benefit emotionally.

Their powerful, unconditional love offers companionship and support.

Dogs are comforting, happy and energetic. So, this is why we physically, mentally and emotionally need a dog.

I think everyone should have a dog. This loyal friend.



## Community Meetings to Provide Information on Pender County's 2026 Property Reappraisal

Pender County is inviting residents to attend a series of community meetings and town hall presentations to learn more about the county's 2026 property reappraisal and what it may mean for property owners.

The meetings will be held at locations throughout the county and are intended to provide educational information and opportunities for residents to ask questions. County staff and contracted reappraisal professionals will be available at each session. Additional dates and locations will be announced as they are scheduled.

North Carolina law requires counties to conduct property reappraisals at least once every eight years. Under N.C.

General Statute 105-286, counties must review and update property values to reflect current market conditions. N.C. General Statute 105-283 requires property to be appraised at its true market value, defined as the price a property would likely sell for under normal market conditions.

The 2026 reappraisal is conducted to help ensure property taxes are distributed fairly and equitably across the county based on updated market values.

During each meeting, staff and appraisal representatives will provide information about how property values are determined, potential changes property owners may see, when updated property value notices will be mailed,

how residents can review their property information, and the process for appealing property values if necessary.

Residents are encouraged to attend a meeting at the location most convenient for them. Meeting details are listed below, and additional meetings will be added as they are confirmed.

### Town Hall Schedule

#### Town of Burgaw

Town Center, 108 E. Wilmington St., Burgaw  
Feb. 10, 4:30 p.m.

#### Town of Topsail Beach

Town Hall, 820 S. Anderson Blvd, Topsail Beach | Feb. 11, 6:00 p.m.

#### Town of Surf City

Town Hall, 214 W. Florence Way, Hampstead  
Feb. 19, 6 p.m.

### Community Meeting Schedule

#### Penderlea Auditorium

220 C R Dillard Rd, Willard | Feb. 24, 6 p.m.

#### Pender County Hampstead Annex

15060 US-17, Hampstead | Mar. 13, 6 p.m.

Residents who are unable to attend may find additional information about the reappraisal by visiting our website or contacting the Pender County Tax Administration office at 910-259-1222.

Pender County remains committed to providing accurate information and supporting residents throughout the reappraisal process.

[www.pendercountync.gov/370/Revaluation](http://www.pendercountync.gov/370/Revaluation)

## FRESH SEAFOOD AND LOCAL PRODUCE



### Local Stump Sound Oysters

By the Dozen or Bushel



### Local Pender County Honey & Produce

SCALLOPS  
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CLAMS  
FLOUNDER  
CRAB CAKES  
GATOR TAIL  
FROG LEGS  
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# Sample Ballots

## Republican Pender Ballot

PARTISAN NOMINATIONS	
US Senate (You may vote for ONE)	
<input type="radio"/> Margot Dupre <input type="radio"/> Richard Dansie <input type="radio"/> Donald M. (Don) Brown <input type="radio"/> Michael Whatley <input type="radio"/> Elizabeth A. Temple <input type="radio"/> Michele Morrow <input type="radio"/> Thomas Johnson	
Pender County Board of Commissioners District 1 (You may vote for ONE)	
<input type="radio"/> Shayne Frey <input type="radio"/> Joe Cina	
Pender County Clerk of Superior Court (You may vote for ONE)	
<input type="radio"/> Elizabeth H. Craver <input type="radio"/> Camille Costin Harrell	
End of Ballot	
Pender County Board of Commissioners District 2 (You may vote for ONE)	
<input type="radio"/> Ryan Collins <input type="radio"/> Randy Burton	
Pender County Board of Commissioners District 3 (You may vote for ONE)	
<input type="radio"/> David Fallin <input type="radio"/> Andy Jessie DeVane	
Pender County Board of Commissioners District 4 Unexpired term ending 2028 (You may vote for ONE)	
<input type="radio"/> Michael C. Byrne <input type="radio"/> Matt Smith	
Pender County Board of Education District 1 (You may vote for ONE)	
<input type="radio"/> Jimmy T. Tate <input type="radio"/> Max Southworth-Beckwith	
Pender County Board of Education District 2 (You may vote for ONE)	
<input type="radio"/> Jennifer R. Hansen <input type="radio"/> Sam Guidry	
Pender County Board of Education District 16 (You may vote for ONE)	
<input type="radio"/> Kim McGahey <input type="radio"/> Jason K. Jordan	

SAMPLE BALLOT   SAMPLE BALLOT   SAMPLE BALLOT   SAMPLE BALLOT

## Democratic Pender Ballot

PARTISAN NOMINATIONS	
US Senate (You may vote for ONE)	
<input type="radio"/> Daryl Farrow <input type="radio"/> Justin E. Dues <input type="radio"/> Roy Cooper <input type="radio"/> Robert Colon <input type="radio"/> Marcus W. Williams <input type="radio"/> Orrick Quick	
NC Court of Appeals Judge Seat 3 (You may vote for ONE)	
<input type="radio"/> James Weldon Whalen <input type="radio"/> Christine Marie Walczyk	
End of Ballot	

SAMPLE BALLOT   SAMPLE BALLOT   SAMPLE BALLOT   SAMPLE BALLOT

## Republican Onslow Ballot

PARTISAN NOMINATIONS	
US Senate (You may vote for ONE)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Margot Dupre <input type="checkbox"/> Richard Dansie <input type="checkbox"/> Donald M. (Don) Brown <input type="checkbox"/> Michael Whatley <input type="checkbox"/> Elizabeth A. Temple <input type="checkbox"/> Michele Morrow <input type="checkbox"/> Thomas Johnson	
Onslow County Board of Commissioners (You may vote for THREE)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tim Foster <input type="checkbox"/> Whitney Cantrell <input type="checkbox"/> Royce Bennett <input type="checkbox"/> Walter J. Scott <input type="checkbox"/> Elliot N. Jarman <input type="checkbox"/> Tyler Googe	
Onslow County Board of Education (You may vote for THREE)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Doug Davis <input type="checkbox"/> Angie Todd <input type="checkbox"/> Bill Lanier <input type="checkbox"/> Daisy M. Haywood <input type="checkbox"/> Bill Halley <input type="checkbox"/> David Green	
End of Ballot	

## Democratic Onslow Ballot

PARTISAN NOMINATIONS	
US Senate (You may vote for ONE)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Daryl Farrow <input type="checkbox"/> Justin E. Dues <input type="checkbox"/> Roy Cooper <input type="checkbox"/> Robert Colon <input type="checkbox"/> Marcus W. Williams <input type="checkbox"/> Orrick Quick	
US House of Representatives District 3 (You may vote for ONE)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Raymond Smith <input type="checkbox"/> Allison Jaslow	
NC Court of Appeals Judge Seat 3 (You may vote for ONE)	
<input type="checkbox"/> James Weldon Whalen <input type="checkbox"/> Christine Marie Walczyk	
End of Ballot	

For Pender County Election Information:  
[www.pendercountync.gov/412/Pender/County/Board-of-Elections](http://www.pendercountync.gov/412/Pender/County/Board-of-Elections)

For Onslow County Election Information:  
[www.onslowcountync.gov/ElectionInfo](http://www.onslowcountync.gov/ElectionInfo)

## Joe Cina for District 1 Commissioner



1. Tell us a little about yourself, including the position you are running for and what are your qualifications for the position you are seeking.

I am a proud single father of 3 children growing up in the Pender County School System. I am a homeowner and a business owner in Pender County. I am also a volunteer and servant in our community and have been for decades, not just

because I am running for office. A graduate of UNCW with 20 years dedicated to law enforcement in NC. This is not my first run for County Commissioner in Pender County. In fact this is my 3rd run for the seat as I am dedicated to our community and defending its citizens.

The difference between me and the other candidates is simple. I will continue to serve this community, paid or unpaid as I have for over 2 decades. I will not disappear after this election as many other candidates have done in the past.

2. If you are an incumbent, what have been your greatest accomplishments for the community while in office? If you are not an incumbent, what inspired you to run for this office and what changes would you make?

As a homeowner, business owner, with 3 children growing up in Pender

County I have witnessed many highs and lows in our community over the last 2 decades. The majority of which have affected my life and my children's life personally. Due to these experiences I have pursued this seat repeatedly over the last decade. I have faced challenges, smear campaigns, and setbacks, but I am still here, ready to fight for every resident of Pender County. Being told repeatedly that this is just the way things are is no longer acceptable.

I will open up communication between the citizens of our community and local government from day one. An elected official should be known by his or her community and not be a stranger. That is the first step in healing our community's relationship with our local leaders and beginning to build back community trust. We must work together in order to heal our community and move forward.

3. Please name 3 goals you would

work to complete during your term if elected.

1. Immediately fight for equal representation throughout Pender County particularly on the east side where currently only 2 representatives are responsible for over 50% of the population and 3 representatives make up less than 50% of our population locally.

2. Immediately seek changes to our outdated 2010 Unified Development Ordinances. These unaddressed outdated ordinances continue to put our community at risk and damage our already strained infrastructure. It is time to address these concerns and stop making them talking points.

3. Immediately work hand and hand with the Pender County School Board to help them solve overcrowding, school safety, and bus transportation concerns.

## David Fallin for District 3 Commissioner

1. Tell us a little about yourself, including the position you are running for and what are your qualifications for the position you are seeking.

\* Graduated Embry Riddle Aeronautical University 1987, Computer programming  
\* University of North Florida 1990, Building Technologies  
\* Pender County Resident of 30 years  
\* Married 35 years, 3 kids, 6 grandkids

\* Self employed 29 Years, finish construction and cabinet installation and design.

\* State Highschool basketball referee 33 years

\* NCAA basketball referee 23 years Eastern basketball officials Association Board member and clinic leader 8 years

2. If you are an incumbent, what have been your greatest accomplishments for the

community while in office? If you are not an incumbent, what inspired you to run for this office and what changes would you make?

Continue and improve the progress and work of our current commissioners. I would like to change how overdevelopment progresses and needs to slow down and spread out and allow infrastructure to be done on the front end and not trying to make up for it on the back end.

Increase efforts to plan earlier and acquire land for schools and allow school size to be large enough for future students to keep cost down from building too many schools.

3. Please name 3 goals you would work to complete during your term if elected.

Work with the state to lower taxes, improve roads, and eliminate property tax after the age of 65 on primary residence.

# David Fallin

Republican

for District 3 Commissioner



Hard Working

Common Sense

**Vote NO**  
to:  
New Taxes  
Traffic  
Overdevelopment  
Property Taxes After Age 65  
Lack of Storm Drainage  
Big Government

Conservative Values  
Small Business Owner  
Pender County Resident for 30 Years  
NCAA Basketball Referee for 28 years  
High School Basketball Referee for 33 years

Paid for by Fallin for Commissioner

# Max Southworth-Beckwith for District 4 Commissioner

1. Tell us a little about yourself, including the position you are running for and what are your qualifications for the position you are seeking.

I am running for Pender County Commissioner, District 4.

I come from a family with a strong military tradition, and after high school I followed that path by joining the United States Marine Corps. I served two tours in Afghanistan as a **1371 Combat Engineer**, conducting route clearance, demolitions, and counter-IED operations. That experience taught me leadership, accountability, and how critical planning and infrastructure are—especially when lives and taxpayer dollars are on the line.

After leaving the Marines, I entered the construction industry, where I eventually started my own business. Over the years, I have worked on—and helped manage—large-scale construction projects, including multiple projects exceeding \$100 million, many of which were funded by taxpayers. This hands-on experience gives me a practical understanding of infrastructure planning, budgeting, and long-term cost impacts that is directly relevant to county government.

I also earned a degree in Political Science from American Military University, with a concentration in U.S. Constitutional Law. That educational background, combined with my professional experience, has served me well during my tenure as Vice Chair of the Pender County Board of Adjustment, where I have worked on land-use and zoning issues affecting residents across the county.

My wife and I moved to Pender County in 2019 and settled on a small homestead in Currie. Since then, I've watched the county grow rapidly. Unfortunately, I've also seen policies come forward without sufficient forethought regarding infrastructure, traffic, schools, and long-term impacts. That realization was my call to action.

With my military service, construction experience, and understanding of constitutional and local government principles, I believe I am well qualified to help guide

Pender County's growth responsibly and serve the residents of District 4 as their next County Commissioner.

2. If you are an incumbent, what have been your greatest accomplishments for the community while in office? If you are not an incumbent, what inspired you to run for this office and what changes would you make?

I am not the incumbent. I decided to run because I believe Pender County needs stronger oversight and better planning as we continue to grow.

First, I want to bring a deeper level of understanding and accountability to county construction and infrastructure projects. For example, when new schools are built, we should be asking whether they are designed to accommodate future growth—such as foundations capable of supporting additional floors—rather than forcing taxpayers to fund entirely new facilities later. Asking the right questions up front can save millions of dollars in the long run.

Second, I do not accept money from builders or special-interest groups. I believe elected officials

should be accountable to all citizens, not a select few with financial influence. My campaign finance reports reflect that commitment, and I encourage voters to review them.

Finally, I will prioritize accessibility and transparency. I plan to hold monthly in-district meetings, separate from regular commissioner meetings, so residents have consistent, face-to-face access to their commissioner. Even if only one person shows up, those meetings will continue. That kind of direct engagement is what separates a politician from a true representative of the people.

3. Please name 3 goals you would work to complete during your term if elected.

First, I will work to amend Pender County's **Voluntary Agricultural Districts (VADs)** and **Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural Districts (EVADs)** programs. Currently, the county follows the state's 10-5-20 acreage requirements. While those standards serve a purpose, the county has the ability to lower local thresholds. Doing so would allow smaller farms, homesteads, and hunting lands—many of which are currently excluded—to

benefit from protections that promote agriculture, reduce land-use conflicts, and preserve our rural character.

Second, I will work with my fellow commissioners to amend the **Unified Development Ordinance (UDO)** through targeted text amendments to better manage overdevelopment. Growth is inevitable—we cannot stop it—but we can guide it responsibly. Smart planning can ensure development reflects the values of Pender County while protecting farms, homesteads, and property rights without stifling economic opportunity.

Third, I will focus on fiscal accountability while maintaining—or potentially lowering—county tax rates. Waste exists in every level of government, and county government is no exception. Any savings identified should benefit the people directly—whether through better incentives to retain high-quality teachers, infrastructure improvements, or tax relief to offset rising property valuations. Citizens deserve transparency, accountability, and a real voice in how their money is spent.

EARLY VOTING FEBRUARY 12-28TH

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**VOTE | MAX BECKWITH**

PENDER COUNTY COMMISSIONER ★ MAXFORPENDER.COM

# Elizabeth A Temple for U.S. Senate, District 13



**1. Tell us a little about yourself, including the position you are running for and what are your qualifications for the position you are seeking.**

I am a teacher and business woman, good writer.

**2. If you are an incumbent, what have been your greatest accomplishments for the community while in office? If you are not an incumbent, what inspired you to run for this office and what changes would you make?**

National level you have a chance to make a difference. I will support the MAGA agenda wholeheartedly.

**3. Please name 3 goals you would work to complete during your term if elected.**

Homelessness, ban alcohol, support decriminalization of cannabis, Drill, baby, Drill for OIL.

I AM RUNNING TO:

- Address significant issues such as wealth inequality though continued Capitalism, not Socialism or Communism, and address homelessness.
- Focus on legislation to address risks

posed by AI (Artificial Intelligence) in the areas of robotic soldiers in warfare, massive job dislocation, and unprecedented wealth and income concentration for the few that will decrease the standard of living for average Americans.

- Engage in discussions on AI and make a legislative impact with bipartisan efforts to address the challenges and opportunities of Artificial Intelligence on society as a whole, including the companionship of AI rather than fellow human beings and how it might affect the birth rate and nuclear families.

- Develop clear messaging like President Trump has and leadership qualities in the youth of the next generation, in order to preserve the nation as in its founding documents and save the U.S. Constitution while promoting prosperity for black Americans over further immigration.

- Make it a requirement that all elected officials in the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, as well as Mayors, be born in the city, town, state, and country that they represent and to pledge that they will strive to promote legal immigration and closed borders, in order to preserve our history and culture of the United States of America.

- Prepare for the 20% unemployment increase due to AI over the next one to five years and protect children, animals, and the elderly and note the lack of concern for loss of life with robotic soldiers, and how this could impact our freedom and sovereignty as a nation. (There is far too little discussion in Congress on this issue of AI and Robotics and I will be a willing participant on this matter, as "Work will become optional and money irrelevant," according to Elon Musk.

# Thomas Johnson for US Senate



**1. Tell us a little about yourself, including the position you are running for and what are your qualifications for the position you are seeking.**

I am Thomas Johnson, and I am running for United States Senate in North Carolina's 2026 Republican primary.

My story is one of overcoming. I was born into foster care and adopted at age five, arriving in my new home with a stutter, undernourished, and filled with fear. Through my mother's prayers and my own determination, I rose from those circumstances to graduate as class valedictorian, beating out the prom king, cheerleading captain, and football star who all wanted that honor.

I went on to the United States Air Force Academy, where I made both the Dean's List and Commandant's List.

After graduation, the CIA recruited me to study space commercialization and build intelligence satellites at the National Reconnaissance Office. I escaped certain death at the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, by mere minutes.

My qualifications span military service, intelligence work, and business leadership. I built Agile Immersive, a multimillion-dollar strategy consulting firm serving Fortune 500 clients including T-Mobile, MetLife, and FedEx. I am an internationally recognized expert in organizational transformation, serving as a visiting lecturer at Goethe Graduate School of Business in Frankfurt, Germany. I understand how large systems work—and how to fix them when they don't.

North Carolina needs a Senator who has overcome real adversity, who understands both national security and kitchen-table economics, and who will fight for working families. That's exactly what I bring.

**2. If you are an incumbent, what have been your greatest accomplishments for the community while in office? If you are not an incumbent, what inspired you to run for this office and what changes would you make?**

While I have not previously held elected office, my greatest accomplishments for the community include my work improving foster care outcomes across all 100 North Carolina counties through Agape of North

Carolina. As someone who grew up in the foster system, this cause is deeply personal. I've invested significant time and consulting expertise to strengthen the support systems for vulnerable children.

I serve on the Board of Directors for Main Street Alliance, advocating for small businesses nationwide, and Entrepreneurs in Christ (EPIC), helping Christian business owners succeed and give back. I also host an annual charity car rally called "The 007 Rally," raising funds for the CIA Officers Memorial Foundation to honor intelligence officers who gave their lives for our country.

What inspired me to run is simple: I see North Carolina families struggling. I see mothers doing math at the grocery store, choosing between milk and medicine. I see fathers filling up their trucks and watching their paychecks drain away. I see families working harder than ever and falling further behind.

The changes I would make center on what I call "Groceries & Gas We Can Afford"—a comprehensive plan to drive down the costs crushing working families. This includes extending tax deductions for grocery store energy efficiency, eliminating regulatory bottlenecks that inflate freight costs, and modernizing gasoline infrastructure to bring relief at the pump. Washington needs an overcomer who understands both boardrooms and kitchen tables.

**3. Please name 3 goals you would work to complete during your term if elected.**

**Goal 1: Religious Freedom:** I have already contacted Senators Grassley, Lee, Schmidt, Langford and Hawley to extend the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) so that what happened during COVID in 2020-1 will NEVER happen again. Houses of worship will stay open in crisis. We need God and must be able to turn to Him in times of emergency.

**Goal 2: Deregulate Freight Bottlenecks and Modernize Transportation Infrastructure:** Thirty percent of what you pay for groceries goes to freight costs. I will work to eliminate outdated DOT fees, support expansion of critical infrastructure like the Colonial Pipeline, and advance autonomous freight corridors to reduce shipping costs. This isn't about ideology—it's about making the supply chain work for families, not against them.

**Goal 3: Modernize Gasoline Infrastructure for Immediate Price Relief:** I will advocate for strategic use of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to stabilize prices, reform the Renewable Fuel Standard to reduce blending costs, and invest in refining capacity and pipeline infrastructure. North Carolinians pay above-average gas taxes; they deserve a Senator fighting to offset those costs through smarter federal policy. My target is reducing gas prices by \$1.30-\$1.90 per gallon through coordinated federal action.

# Camille Costin Harrell for Pender County Clerk of Superior Court



**1. Tell us a little about yourself, including the position you are running for and what are your qualifications for the position you are seeking.**

My name is Camille Costin Harrell, and I am running for Pender County

Clerk of Superior Court. I am a lifelong resident of Pender County. My husband, Randy, and I have been married for 34 years. We have two children and one grandchild.

I was raised in a humble home of hard-working parents. By their example, I learned that hard work, honesty and respect for others was a way of life. These values have guided me every step of the way.

I was educated in Pender County School System, a graduate of Pender High School. I continued my education at Cape Fear Community College, where I earned an associate degree, and later completed NC Real Estate Course to become a licensed broker.

With nearly 13 years experience in the Clerk's Office, I have learned the importance of accuracy, responsibility, and serving people

with fairness and care. I am committed to applying the law consistently and fairly, supporting and training staff, and ensuring the Clerk's Office operates professionally and transparently.

**2. If you are an incumbent, what have been your greatest accomplishments for the community while in office? If you are not an incumbent, what inspired you to run for this office and what changes would you make?**

The citizens of Pender County are my inspiration for running for Clerk of Court. I believe the public deserves complete confidence in the Clerk's Office, built on ethical leadership and a steadfast commitment to doing what is right – even in difficult situations.

If elected, I will work to ensure the Clerk's Office operates efficiently, professionally, and with clear accountability to the public it serves.

I would prioritize supporting and training the staff so they have the tools and guidance needed to do their jobs well. My goal is to ensure everyone who comes through our doors, whether in person or online, has a smooth, straightforward experience. I want the Pender County Clerk of Court to be a place people can trust.

**3. Please name 3 goals you would work to complete during your term if elected.**

My goals for office:

- \* Provide hands-on public workshops to help citizens navigate the electronic filing system
- \* Support Teen Court programs that educate and guide our youth
- \* Promote employee longevity through training, support and a positive workplace culture

## Joshua Patti for NC State House, District 16

**1. Tell us a little about yourself, including the position you are running for and what are your qualifications for the position you are seeking.**

My name is Joshua Patti, and I am running for the North Carolina House of Representatives in District 16. I am a father of eight, an educator with more than 20 years of experience, and a local elected official currently serving as Councilman of the Town of Holly Ridge. My background is rooted in public service, education, and community leadership. I have worked directly with families, students, and local governments, which has given me a practical understanding of how state policies affect everyday life. I bring experience, accessibility, and a strong commitment to serving constituents rather than political insiders.

**2. If you are an incumbent, what have been your greatest accomplishments for the community while in office? If you are not an incumbent, what inspired you to run for this office and what changes would you make?**

I am not an incumbent. I was inspired to run because I believe our district deserves a representative who

shows up, listens, and stays connected to the community. Too often, people feel disconnected from Raleigh and unheard in the decision making process. I want to change that by being an active, visible, and responsive legislator. I believe in common sense solutions, fiscal responsibility, and collaboration to ensure growth, education, and infrastructure decisions are made with long term impacts in mind.

**3. Please name 3 goals you would work to complete during your term if elected.**

My first goal is to promote fiscal responsibility and transparency by ensuring taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and efficiently with accountability at every level.

My second goal is to support education in all its forms by strengthening public schools while also respecting and supporting private, charter, and homeschool options chosen by families.

My third goal is to advocate for responsible growth and infrastructure investment so roads, schools, water, sewer, and emergency services keep pace with growth and protect the quality of life for current residents.

### NC State House DISTRICT 16 PENDER & SOUTHERN ONSLOW

**PUTTING  
PEOPLE FIRST  
AND  
DELIVERING  
REAL RESULTS.**

**VOTE**

Mark Your Calendar:  
**March 3rd**

Make Your Vote Count!

Follow on Facebook: [Joshua Patti for NC State House](#)

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✓ Fiscal Responsibility

✓ Sensible Growth

✓ Education that Works for Families

✓ Supporting Small Businesses and Farmers

✓ Improving Infrastructure

✓ Support for Emergency Services

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**ELECT**

# **CAMILLE COSTIN HARRELL**

**Pender County Clerk of Court**

**Integrity You Can Trust.**

**Compassion You Can Feel.**

**Experience That Delivers.**



**Nearly 13 years'  
experience working  
in Pender County  
Clerk's office.**

**Served as Interim  
Clerk.**

**Lifelong resident of  
Pender County.**

Paid for by the Committee to Elect Camille Costin Harrell Clerk of Court

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## CFCC to Launch Flooring Installation Course at Surf City Center to Meet Regional Workforce Demand

Cape Fear Community College is launching a new Flooring Installation course beginning March 2, 2026, at the Surf City location. This new course addresses a critical workforce shortage in the growing floor-covering industry across southeastern North Carolina.

Over the past decade, the Southeast has experienced a decline of

approximately 4,000 to 6,000 flooring installers, even as residential and commercial development continues to expand in Pender and New Hanover counties. To help close this gap, CFCC is partnering with the Floor Covering Education Foundation to provide hands-on training that prepares students for in-demand careers in

flooring installation.

The 300-hour program will focus on installing hardwood, carpet, tile, and luxury vinyl plank, equipping students with the technical skills needed to enter the workforce immediately upon completion. Graduates will be prepared for careers in the floor-covering industry, where median annual salaries

for carpet installers range from \$50,000 to \$70,000.

Classes begin March 2, 2026. Enrollment is limited to 10 students. The cost of the course is \$215. For more information and to register for completion, visit [cfcc-register.fundfive.com/](http://cfcc-register.fundfive.com/)

## Make History: Volunteer for the First in Freedom Festival

### Moores Creek Battleground Association

The Moores Creek Battleground Association, in collaboration with regional partners and Moores Creek National Battlefield, is calling on volunteers to help launch a once-in-a-generation celebration of America's 250th anniversary.

Volunteers have a rare opportunity to be part of history during the three-day First in Freedom Festival, February 26–28, at Moores Creek National

Battlefield. Assignments include logistics support, book signings, visitor guides, and more—each playing a vital role in commemorating this milestone moment in our nation's story.

"This is going to be historic—and a fun, meaningful way to create lifelong memories while celebrating America's 250th anniversary," said Jason Collins, Chief of Interpretation, Education and Volunteer at Moores Creek National Battlefield.

The First in Freedom Festival serves

as the national kickoff of America's 250th anniversary. Events will feature exactly 250 years to the day of this guided tours, living history historic commemoration. Volunteers can choose the dates appearances—including Outlander author Diana Gabaldon—and wish to serve," Collins added. additional experiences that bring the Revolutionary era to life.

For more information about volunteering with the America 250 Moores Creek National Battlefield, Anniversary Committee, contact Southeast North Carolina's only Moores Creek National Battlefield at national park, marks the site of the first Patriot victory of the Revolutionary War. The Battle of Moores Creek Bridge [aybala\\_yilmaz@partner.nps.gov](mailto:aybala_yilmaz@partner.nps.gov).

## More Than a Meal: A Holiday Tradition of Caring

### By Tom Darenau

For many, the holiday season means full tables and familiar faces. For others, it can be the loneliest—and hungriest—time of year. Each winter, when the regular Meals on Wheels deliveries pause over the Christmas and New Year holidays, a community effort begins.

For the eighth consecutive year, the Coastal Pender Rotary Club has partnered with the Topsail Senior Center and Share the Table to deliver holiday food baskets to local residents in need. This past season this collaboration delivered 45 meals to seniors and others who rely on daily food assistance and could otherwise face empty cupboards during the holiday break.

The effort begins weeks before the holidays, when the Topsail Senior Center reaches out to the regular Meals on Wheels recipients to identify those who could use extra support and then establish delivery routes. From there, Share the Table assembles baskets filled with non-

perishable foods designed to help stretch meals over several days. Deliveries are made twice during the holiday period, covering routes throughout Hampstead, Surf City, and Scotts Hill.

The Coastal Pender Rotary Club funds the project and personally distributes the baskets—but the mission goes beyond food. Volunteers take time to check in, share a conversation, and make sure each person is safe and well. Over the years, these visits have made a real difference, from identifying urgent medical needs to connecting individuals with home repairs or replacing essential appliances.

Often, the most meaningful part of the delivery is simply the human connection. A friendly visit, a few minutes of conversation, and the reassurance that someone cares can be just as nourishing as the meals themselves.

Anyone interested in learning more about the Coastal Pender Rotary Club and the community collaborations is encouraged to do so

by contacting: [coastalpenderrotary@gmail.com](mailto:coastalpenderrotary@gmail.com)

Rotary believes that community collaborations, in many forms, help to make a positive difference within our community.



Rotarians making deliveries (left to right): Nancy Nugent, Paul Newell, Jamie Tyson, Barbara Page, Colin Page



Gather all ingredients. To make the cream cheese icing: Beat confectioners' sugar, cream cheese, and 1 teaspoon vanilla together in a large bowl with an electric mixer until smooth. Thin with 1 tablespoon milk to achieve a pourable consistency.

Set glaze aside. To make the pancakes: Whisk flour, white sugar, cocoa powder, baking powder, and salt in a mixing bowl until evenly blended; set aside. Beat eggs in a separate mixing bowl until smooth. Whisk in buttermilk, 1/4 cup milk, food coloring, vinegar, and remaining 1 teaspoon vanilla. Stir in flour mixture until moistened. Drizzle in melted butter; stir until incorporated and small lumps of flour remain. Heat a lightly greased griddle over medium-high heat. Drop batter by large spoonfuls onto the hot griddle. Cook until bubbles form and the edges are dry. Flip and continue cooking until browned on the other side. Repeat with remaining batter. Drizzle pancakes with cream cheese glaze to serve.



## Red Velvet Pancakes with Cream Cheese Glaze

1 cup confectioners' sugar, sifted  
1 (4 ounce) package cream cheese, softened  
2 teaspoons vanilla extract, divided  
1 tablespoon milk, or as needed  
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
2 tablespoons white sugar  
1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder or more to taste  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
1 teaspoon salt or to taste  
2 large eggs  
1 cup buttermilk  
1/4 cup milk  
2 teaspoons red food coloring  
1 teaspoon distilled white vinegar  
1/4 cup melted butter  
cooking spray

## Word Search: Valentine's Day

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



Admirer  
Romance  
Red Roses  
Bouquet  
Champagne  
Valentine

Date  
Cupid  
Sweethearts  
Love  
Be Mine  
Boyfriend

Girlfriend  
February  
Chocolates  
Cherub

## CFCC's Bridge to Independence Program Expands Career Pathways for Adults with Disabilities

Cape Fear Community College is expanding access to education and employment through the Bridge to Independence Program, designed to support adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities as they prepare for more active roles in the community. The program will also educate local employers on inclusive hiring practices.

The Bridge to Independence Program focuses on helping participants identify their strengths, explore career options, and build necessary employability skills, while continuing academic instruction in reading, math, and computer literacy.

Through hands-on instruction and personalized support, students gain practical experience in areas such as career exploration, resume development, interview preparation, and workplace readiness.

"Bridge to Independence is about creating real opportunities," said Erin Easton, Vice President of Economic and Workforce Development and Continuing Technical Education. "We're supporting individuals with disabilities as they work toward independence, while also partnering with employers to build workplaces that benefit the entire community."

In addition to student-focused services, the program places a strong emphasis on employer engagement. CFCC will work directly with local businesses to share the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities, providing training and resources for employers, and supporting successful job or volunteer opportunities. This collaborative approach helps ensure that both students and employers are set up for long-term success.

Program offerings include:

\***Career Exploration** to help participants discover paths aligned with their interests and strengths

\***Career Preparation** through hands-on training, resume building, and interview coaching

\***Community Connection** via employer outreach and advocacy for inclusive hiring

\***Job Placement Support** that matches students with careers aligned to their goals

\***Academic Skills** development in reading, writing, math, and computer literacy

For more information about the Bridge to Independence Program, visit [cfcc.edu/academic/career-readiness/bridge-to-independence-program/](http://cfcc.edu/academic/career-readiness/bridge-to-independence-program/).

## VFW Post 9983 Announces Their 2025-2026 Youth, Education and Public Servant Awards

VFW Post 9983 is happy to announce their 2025-2026 Youth, Education and Public Servant Awards.

Starting with the Youth Awards, this year's Patriot's Pen Patriotic Written Essay Award winner is Dixon Middle Schools student Kohen Kelly. The Grand Prize for this Award is \$5,000.

Moving to the Voice of Democracy Patriotic Audio Essay Award, the honor goes to Benjamin Mills, a Dixon High School student. Benjamin also won at the District level. This Award's Grand Prize is a \$35,000 scholarship. Lastly, Oliver Paradysz of Southwest High School was awarded JROTC Cadet of the Year.

All the Education Awards went to Dixon Area Teachers. Andrew Goodwin, was awarded High School Teacher of the Year at the Post and District level. Jeremiah Williams was named Middle School Teacher of the Year and Kristen Kelly Elementary School Teacher of the Year at the Post level. Lastly, the Onslow County Sheriff's Office

swept the Public Servant Awards. Detention Officer of the Year was Devon White, winning at the Post and District level. Law Enforcement Officer of the Year was Dylan O'Dwyer. SRO of the Year went to Flora Ortiz. Scott Gabler won the Public Servant of the Year.

# Guns for Women

By Dorothy Royal / Surf City Guns & Ammo, Holly Ridge, NC / [surfcityguns.com](http://surfcityguns.com)

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, I took 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 the 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 require 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 than any other round. The purpose of a gun is to **PREPARE** 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 women. 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 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 activate 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?** Check with local laws. Handguns and long guns can now be purchased in NC with a background check done on site for NC residents.

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