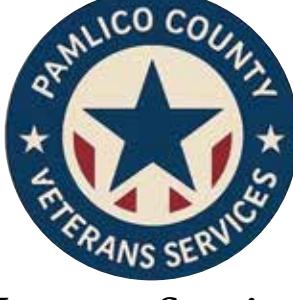


The Pamlico News

Wednesday, January 14, 2026

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Veterans Services Office Relocation Notice

The Pamlico County Veterans Services Office will be relocating from the Human Resources Building to the Pamlico County Courthouse, effective January 26, 2026.

The new office will be located on the 2nd floor of the Courthouse, adjacent to the Board of Commissioners Room.

To allow time for the physical move and office setup, Veterans Services will be temporarily unavailable from Monday, January 19 through Friday, January 23, 2026.

Normal office hours and services will resume beginning the week of January 26, 2026, at the new Courthouse location.

New Physical Address: 202 Main St. Bayboro, NC 28515

New Phone Number: 252-497-3076, Ext. 233

We appreciate your patience during this transition and look forward to continuing to serve Pamlico County veterans in our new location.



The Old Theater

Annual Membership Meeting January 25th

The Old Theater invites all its members to an Annual Membership Meeting and Reception on Sunday, January 25, 2026, at 3:00 pm at The Old Theater. Past members and those who are interested in joining the theater are also invited and will have an opportunity to join before and after the meeting. There will be social time with refreshments by Mariposa before it all begins. The Board of Directors will present a review of 2025 events/finances and share their vision going forward in 2026. A question/answer session will follow the business meeting giving members an opportunity to provide input and ask questions. Entertainment afterward is provided by popular local talent, the Notta Band with Tom (Mac) McWilliams, George Bailey and Dave Holt.

80th Anniversary

Eighty years ago, The Old Theater was the local movie theater. Many residents remember when movies cost a quarter and popcorn was a dime. The theater has always been a cornerstone of life in Oriental with a unique heritage. The Old Theater continues to provide a venue for civic and cultural events as well as performing arts for Oriental and Pamlico County. The 501(c)(3) non-profit organization is grateful for the support of its members and their donations which help in maintaining the building, operating with the latest electronic equipment, and renovating the inside for the comfort of its patrons. All memberships and donations are tax deductible and greatly appreciated. Donations can be mailed to: Old Theater Corp., P.O. Box 521, Oriental, NC 28571. Contact the theater at mail@oldtheater.org or visit online at www.oldtheater.org.

by: Hiram Lupton

A couple of weeks ago we looked at the candidates for upcoming elections for local races. Now, we will take a quick look at the crowded field of candidates vying to see who will represent you in Washington D. C. in the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives. First the Senate. When an incumbent announces that they will not be seeking reelection, there is often a plethora of candidates who line up seeking to fill the soon to be vacated spot. That is what has happened since Republican Senator Thom Tillis made that announcement last year. Six Republicans, six Democrats, and one Libertarian will be on the primary ballot.

Republican

Donald Brown, Richard Dansie, Thomas Johnson, Michele Morrow, Elizabeth Temple, Michael Whatley

Democrat

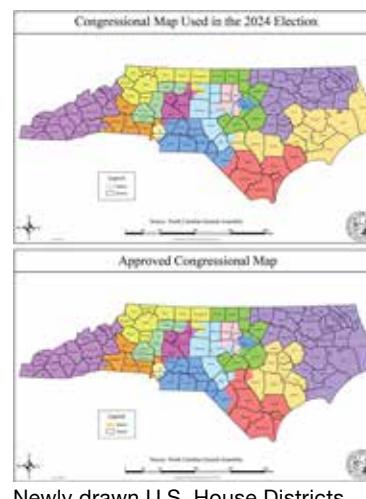
Robert Colon, Roy Cooper, Justin Dues, Daryl Farrow, Orick Quick, Marcus Williams

Libertarian

Shannon Bray

Probably the two most recognized names are former North Carolina Governor, Roy Cooper, and former Chairman of the Republican National Committee, Michael Whatley.

The race for who will represent North Carolina's 1st Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives, which includes



Newly drawn U.S. House Districts

Pamlico County, is not quite as crowded, but no less interesting. The interesting and somewhat controversial part is the redrawing of North Carolina's Congressional Districts by the North Carolina Legislature. This realignment puts Pamlico County, which was in the 3rd District, now in the 1st District. Greg Murphy is currently the Representative for the 3rd District, but since Pamlico County will now be in the 1st District, we will have a new Representative. Incumbent Don Davis, who is the current Representative for the 1st District is seeking reelection in his newly drawn District and is the only Democrat running. The Air Force Veteran from Snow Hill, NC has held his seat since 2023. There are five Republicans and one Libertarian lining up for the opportunity to challenge Davis in the fall.

Democrat
Don Davis,
Republican

Asa Buck, Laurie Buckhout, Bobby Hanig, Ashley-Nicole Russell, Eric Rouse,

Libertarian
Thomas Bailey

While there are several recognizable names among the challengers, perhaps the most familiar to Pamlico County is Bobby Hanig. Hanig is currently a State Senator but was once Pamlico County's Representative in the N.C. House of Representatives. He was also one of the driving forces in defeating last year's proposed shrimp trawl ban in the North Carolina Legislature which would have adversely affected the commercial fishing industry in our area. Also a familiar name is Asa Buck, who is currently the Sheriff in neighboring Carteret County.

With early voting scheduled to begin on February 12th, and primary election day on March 3rd, the election is quickly approaching. Many of these unfamiliar candidates may become very familiar names by then as each one, or at least each one with the available funding, will seek to get their name and viewpoints known in a quest for votes.

Flu Season Hits Hard

by: Hiram Lupton

If you have experienced it first-hand, or have a family member who has, you already know that the 2025-26 edition of the flu season has been a particularly rough one. Just before Christmas break, The Pamlico School System went to virtual online learning in grades K through eight for the last day and a half before break to curb student exposure. Last Monday, CarolinaEast Medical Center in New Bern instituted visitor restrictions, limiting patients to only two visitors at a time and no visitors under the age of twelve years of age. So why is it so bad this year? It has much to do with the strain of influenza that is going around. The flu, like most infectious diseases, often goes through mutations, causing variations to the parent strain year-to-year. This season there have been seven different mutations identified from the flu strain we normally experience, H3N2 Influenza A. The worst variant, and most prevalent, has been named by health experts Subclade K. The other factor making this flu season especially severe deals with the vaccine. To manufacture the vaccine for a flu season, medical researchers must develop it several months before the first cases are even reported. Although much research goes into this, every year it can be a bit of a guessing game. Some years the vaccine is highly effective, some years not so much. This year is one of those "not so much years," as Subclade A has shown itself to be resistant to this season's vaccine. So, what

are we to do, lock ourselves in the house and avoid all physical contact with other humans until spring? For most of us, that just isn't possible, but according to the Pamlico County Health Department (PCHD), there are steps we can take to limit your chances of catching the flu, and to decrease its severity if you do. "It has been repeated many times, but washing your hands frequently really does decrease your risk," says Director of Nursing at the PCHD, Lynn Hardison. "Avoid touching your nose or mouth as much as possible is also good practice. Covering your face when you sneeze or cough also limits the spread of the flu and other air-borne diseases." She adds, "the best protection is still getting your flu shot. Even though the current vaccine may not give you full protection from the current strain, it could lessen the severity." If you think it is too late to help protect yourself by getting vaccinated this flu season, think again. Often February is the peak of the season so getting your shot now can still help. You can get these from your primary care physician, many pharmacies, and of course the Pamlico County Health Department. If you do begin to feel sick do your best to limit the spread. "Social distancing by staying home if you have symptoms and not sending your kids to school if they are sick helps reduce the spread" says Hardison. "Until you are free of a fever for at least 24 hours without the aid of a fever reducer, you are contagious."



Carolina Coastal Railroaders' Train Show is Back

The 2026 Train Show will be February 21 and 22 at the Riverfront Convention Center in New Bern. Open Saturday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm and Sunday 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Admission is good for both days. Ten operating train layouts, including LEGO, will be on display. Over 100 Vendor Tables selling and buying all kinds and scales of railroad equipment. We look forward to seeing you at another exciting Train Show! Come join the fun!

Contact: Dennis Korn, President, Carolina Coastal Railroaders, a 501c3 organization.
dkorn69@gmail.com

LIKELY WEATHER OVER THE WEEKEND



Saturday, January 17th **57°Hi** Episodes of sunshine



Sunday, January 18th **47°Hi** Cooler with variable cloudiness



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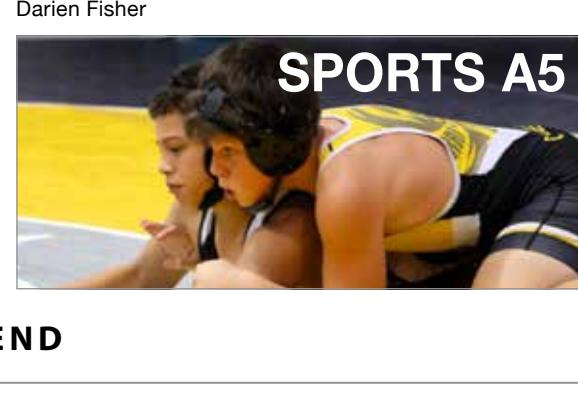
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Pamlico Community College

Led by community colleges' efforts, North Carolina ranks No. 1 for workforce development

Submitted by Pamlico Community College

North Carolina has been ranked No. 1 in Site Selection Magazine's annual Workforce Development Rankings, in large part because of the role the state's community colleges – including Pamlico – have in training men and women for great careers in the state's everchanging economy.

Through programs including NCEdge Customized Training, ApprenticeshipNC, the Small Business Center Network and BioNetwork, North Carolina's community colleges work directly with employers to deliver industry-aligned training that supports both expansion and competitiveness.

"This recognition affirms what companies experience every day when they locate and grow in North Carolina," said Dr. Jeff Cox, president of NCCCS. "Our workforce development model is built on strong partnerships, local responsiveness and a clear focus on employer needs, which gives North Carolina a decisive advantage."

For his part, PCC President Zac Schnell said the No. 1 ranking from Site Selection Magazine demonstrates the commitment Pamlico and the state's other 57 community colleges have to preparing workers for rewarding careers.

"We are proud of the work our instructors do to meet the workforce demands of our state's growing economy," he said. "As a college, we try to be nimble so we can respond to market demands for high-quality employees in the growing sectors of the economy. As technologies change, all of us at Pamlico are ready to embrace new economic opportunities and prepare men and women for success."

North Carolina's No. 1 ranking by Site Selection Magazine comes just months after the state was named CNBC's "Top State for Business" (2025), an honor that highlighted North Carolina's robust and dynamic business climate across key sectors such as life sciences, advanced manufacturing, automotive, aerospace, defense, technology and food and beverage production.

John Loyack, vice president of economic development for NCCCS, said the ranking reinforces the System's role as a strategic partner to industry.

"Our colleges operate at the intersection of education and economic development," said Loyack. "We work side by side with employers to solve real workforce challenges, whether that means



Pamlico Community College works to prepare men and women for great careers in the region's everchanging economy. Contributed photo

businesses, helping drive job creation and local economic growth in communities statewide.

Katie Shorter leads Pamlico's Small Business Center.

* BioNetwork further strengthens the state's workforce ecosystem by delivering specialized training, biomanufacturing support and applied research services that enable life sciences and biotechnology companies to innovate and scale.

Together, these programs deliver employer-driven workforce solutions across North Carolina, supporting companies from startup through expansion.

"As president, I take pride in the work our instructors do to prepare our state's 21st century workforce," Schnell said. "We're ready to work with employers and others to grow our economy and move our state forward."

The president continued, "We at PCC want to be an anchor of opportunity to help get you to where you want to go! In workforce development sectors or something else of interest to you, we are the place for you to start."

For more information about workforce training at Pamlico Community College, please contact the college's Continuing Education division at 252-249-1851, ext. 3015.

launching a new facility, adopting advanced technologies or upskilling an existing workforce."

Central to this success is NCEdge, the System's customized training program, which partners with businesses across the state to provide tailored workforce solutions. In the past four years alone, NCEdge has trained more than 100,000 North Carolinians, helping employees master new technologies and improve productivity.

In addition to customized training, the System delivers a coordinated set of workforce solutions that support employers across industries and regions:

* ApprenticeshipNC expands registered apprenticeship throughout the state by combining paid, on-the-job learning with classroom instruction to strengthen talent pipelines and improve workforce retention.

* The Small Business Center Network provides counseling, training and access-to-capital support to entrepreneurs and small

MARINER
REALTY, INC.

**Land/Home Sales
Property Management
Appraisals Development**

Agent of the Week

Linda Hoff

Broker

Here's what one of Linda's customers had to say...



We recently purchased a house in Oriental with the assistance of Linda Hoff. She was very helpful identifying properties that would interest us. Within a few days we found a house that met our requirements. Linda helped us during price negotiations and assisted us with doing the transaction remotely. We were very pleased to work with Linda and look forward to moving to the nice, small town of Oriental from a nice, big town in Arizona!

Bruce and Donna Phillips



NEW BERN – Fairwinds 2BR/2BA Condo in Fairfield Harbor. Open floor plan, screened deck and open deck, roof replaced last year. Community boat dock, pool, golf course, and restaurant.

OFFERED AT \$209,000



ARAPAHOE – Prime Commercial Opportunity, 12,000 sf on 1.43 acres near Arlington Place, Minnecott Beach and the Arapahoe Charter School. Not in a flood zone. Expansive paved parking, large loading bay door on side.

OFFERED AT \$249,500



GRANTSBORO – Unrestricted 1.57 acre mini-farm, 1,792 sf, 3BR/2.5BA with heated and cooled 2-car garage, detached workshop, detached poultry barn with outside fencing & a carriage barn building. Home built in 1980 & roof replaced w/architectural shingles in 2018.

OFFERED AT \$305,000



MERRITT – Waterfront 3BR/3BA 2,023 sf home on 1.02 acres with dock on deep water Ball Creek. Includes fire pit, spacious back deck, covered patio, 2 detached storage buildings, and a carport. Plenty of windows, laundry room, extra room for office, kitchen island and walk-in-shower & soaking tub in primary bath.

OFFERED AT \$325,000



ORIENTAL – 3BR/2BA 1,894 sf open floor plan, deeded boat slip on 1 acre lot. Screened outdoor entertainment area & fire pit. Bright, open spaces indoors and inviting outdoor areas surrounded by mature trees and natural beauty. Being sold as-is.

OFFERED AT \$545,000



MERRITT – Waterfront 3BR/2BA with deep water deeded boat slip on Ball Creek. Wide water views, 2.27 acres, 1,919 sf, metal roof, zoned HVAC, & LP Smartside exterior for rot-resistant long-life durability. Gas log fireplace in living room, & Widow's Walk with views of the Pamlico Sound.

OFFERED AT \$625,000

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 24, 10-3 PM

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704 Broad St, PO Box 750, Oriental, NC 28571



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

by: Hiram Lupton

- January 14th – 1784, The treaty of Paris which officially ended the American Revolutionary War was ratified by Congress.
- January 15th – Today is National Bagel Day.
- January 16th – 1985, Playboy magazine announced that they would no longer be stapling their centerfold models into their publication. I bet that was painful for those nice young ladies.
- January 17th – Today is National Hot Buttered Rum Day.
- January 18th – Today is National Winnie the Pooh Day. I'm more of an Eeyore kind of guy.
- January 19th – Today is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.
- January 20th – Today is National Cheese Lover's Day.

BIRTHDAYS THIS WEEK

January 14th – 1741, Ex American patriot turned traitor Benedict Arnold
 January 15th – 1929, Civil Rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
 January 17th – 1706, Benjamin Franklin
 January 17th – 1922, Actress Betty White
 January 17th – 1942, Boxing Champion Muhammad Ali
 January 19th – 1943, Singer Janis Joplin
 January 19th – 1946, Dolly Parton
 January 19th – 1947, Chef and Author Paula Dean



CAROLINA EAST FOUNDATION

Joe Brown Band Celebrates Ten Years With Valentine's Day Event To Benefit Carolina East Foundation

The Joe Brown Band is offering the community an elegant evening of celebration, connection, and fundraising to celebrate their 10-year anniversary. On Saturday, February 14th, a special Valentine's Day experience with "Cupid's Shuffle" will take place at Maola at Riverside, 1400 N. Craven Street. Doors open at 6:00 pm.

"This is the 4th year for our annual Cupid's Shuffle, and we wanted to do something special since it's also the milestone tenth anniversary of our band," said Joe Brown. "We have partnered with CarolinaEast Foundation so that a portion of the proceeds from the event will help their mission to further important healthcare initiatives in our community," he explained. A preview of last year's event is available at www.joebrownband.com. Tickets for the 2026 Cupid's Shuffle are available at Mitchell Hardware, Eventbrite (CSVDE2026.eventbrite.com), or by contacting him at 980-234-1721 or joebrownband@gmail.com. The cost is \$75 per person or \$150 per couple for

this enchanting dinner-dance event, catered by The Flame.

Sponsorships are encouraged and welcome to help offset the expenses associated with the event to maximize the benefit for the CarolinaEast Foundation. An exclusive Community Champion Sponsorship at \$2,500 offers top-tier recognition including prominent logo placement on all marketing materials, a chance to make brief remarks at the event, and six complimentary tickets. Other opportunities with specific benefits and complimentary tickets include Supporting Sponsorships at \$500 and Leading Sponsorships at \$1,000. For details and to make sponsorship arrangements, contact Joe Brown directly.

"So, whether you are in love, looking for love, or just loving yourself, come celebrate this delightful and upscale evening with us on Valentine's Day with a lot of laughs, friendship, dancing, and great live music," said the band leader, Joe Brown.

Concerned about your drinking?

You are not alone, there is help available!

Come join others who have found a Solution!

Alcoholics Anonymous: New Bern Hotline (252) 349-0898

Meetings in Pamlico County:

(If you think you may have a problem, you are welcome to attend)

Tuesday 8pm - Oriental Group - Open Discussion Meeting held at the Free Will Baptist Church 600 Ragan Rd. in Oriental, NC (2nd brick building on left off Hwy 55)

Thursday *7:30pm** - Recovery and Beyond Group - Beginner/Open Discussion Meeting at Alliance United Methodist Church, 687 Main Street in Bayboro, NC (close to DSS/Senior Center)

Friday 8pm - Oriental Group - Open Discussion Meeting held at the Free Will Baptist Church, 600 Ragan Road in Oriental, NC (2nd brick building on left off Hwy 55).

Sunday *7pm - Oriental Sunday Night Group - Big Book/12 & 12 Study Meeting held at St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 402 Freemason St. in Oriental, NC (2nd brick church on the left)

<https://aaeasternnc.org/> <https://aanorthcarolina.org/> <https://www.aa.org/>

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Publisher

Sandy Winfrey

Office Manager

Katherine Winfrey

Editor

Sandy Winfrey

Photographer Reporter

Hiram Lupton

Advertising Sales

Jeannine Russo

Production

J.P. Miller

Distribution

Neal McCraw

We place ethical and professional principles of journalism at the center of everything we do in the production of The Pamlico News.

Press Releases, Events, News

editor@thepamliconews.com

Photographer Reporter

hiram@thepamliconews.com

Advertising

frontdesk@thepamliconews.com

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COMMUNITY

OBITUARIES



Amy Barnes McCotter, 72, of Vandemere, NC passed away January 6, 2026, at Bayview Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in New Bern.

Amy was known for speaking her mind – you always knew exactly where you stood with her. She lived life on her own terms and enjoyed it to the fullest. Fiercely loyal and deeply loving, her family meant everything to her. She especially adored the children in her life, proudly wearing the title of "Aunt Amy," doting on her nieces and nephews with endless affection.

Amy had a true love for the beach, where she found peace and joy, and her animals held a special place in her heart. Her dogs were family, treated with the same devotion and care she showed those she loved most. She was preceded in death by her parents, Kelly and Jean Barnes, and her sister, Bett Jackson.



Ruth "Ruthie" Jaques McGhee, 90, of New Bern, NC passed away on January 6, 2026, at CarolinaEast Medical Center.

Ruthie was a member of Spring Hope Free Will Baptist Church, where her faith guided her throughout her life. Her church and her family were the center of her world, and she lived her life as a reflection of her love for both. Known for her quiet strength, faithfulness, and nurturing spirit, Ruthie was a blessing to all who knew her.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Frank and Thelma Jaques; her sons, Joseph F. McGhee and Robert W. McGhee, Jr.; her brother, Frank Jaques; and sisters,

Amy shared nearly 45 years of her life with her devoted husband, Pat McCotter. Together they built a life filled with memories, love, and unwavering companionship. She is survived by her husband, Pat; children, Kimberly Whorton, David McCotter and wife, Jackie, and Johnny Warren and wife, Christina; her son-in-spirit, Pete Rae; brother, Ben Barnes and wife, Tina; sisters, Melissa Barker and husband, John, and Mary Zahran and husband, Sam; grandchildren, Jennifer McCotter, Christian McCotter, Stacey Weible, Jessica Kramer, Ashley Warren, and Spencer Warren; 10 great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews who will forever cherish her memory.

A private service to celebrate Amy's life will be held at Daniels-Sadler Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, please consider memorial contributions to any pet rescue organization or local SPCA.

Arrangements by Daniels-Sadler Funeral Home & Crematory, Alliance, NC.

Doris Norbury, Audrey Whitford, Joyce Eubanks, and Betty Middlestetter.

Ruthie is survived by her loving husband, Robert "Bobby" W. McGhee, Sr.; her son, David Earl McGhee and wife, Angie; daughter, Lillian Buttitta and husband, Chris; daughter-in-law, Linda Davidson; six grandchildren, James Williamson (Crystal), Justin Buttitta (Melinda), Abigail Hester (Matt), Ashley McGhee (Michael), Jason McGhee, and Eric McGhee; four step-grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren.

A funeral service was held Sunday, January 11, 2026 at Daniels-Sadler Funeral Home Chapel. Private interment at Greenleaf Memorial Park.

The family received friends and relatives prior to the service at the funeral home.

Arrangements by Daniels-Sadler Funeral Home & Crematory, Alliance, NC.

Due to an ongoing shortage of bus drivers, some bus routes may experience delays, and in some cases, buses may be required to run double routes. This means your child's bus could arrive later than usual both in the morning and afternoon. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we work to transport students as safely and efficiently as possible.

As a reminder, Pamlico County Schools does offer the Find the Bus App which allows you to see the real time location of your child's bus.

The Student Code is your Student's District ID number (formerly their Powerschool number). If you do not have it you may contact your child's school to get it!

If you would like to become trained to be a bus driver for Pamlico County Schools please contact Lindsey Willis, Director of Transportation at (252) 745-4601

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- Once you confirm your information, you're ready to begin

Download on the App Store  GET IT ON Google Play 
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Horoscopes



ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Minor obstacles are in your path, Aries. It's easy to get frustrated right now. Once you clear the hurdles it will be smoother sailing before long. Remain patient.



TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

You treasure family and friends, Taurus. This week calls for an important decision that could affect them all. It may be challenging, but you will make the right call.



GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

Gemini, you may have to reset your priorities, as new information has come to the surface. Prioritize responsibilities so major issues are taken care of first.



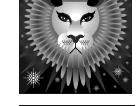
CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

Unavoidable situations may cross your path this week, Cancer. It is important that you stay the course. Committing to tackling things head-on is the most productive approach.



LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

It may be tempting to shirk your responsibilities right now, Leo. Resist that temptation. Keep your head down and keep on working. It will soon prove worth it.



VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, be confident and listen to your instincts, Libra. Do so before taking on any important tasks that might turn up in the days or weeks to come. A surprise might be around the corner.



LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 22

Your energy will remain high this week, Libra, enabling you to come up with some innovative ideas that have true staying power. Pursue your options.



SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

The conditions are right for finishing an important task, Scorpio. You will be able to come up with wonderful ideas that have true staying power. Pursue your options.



SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, you have been working hard lately and this may result in an overactive and tired mind. You should factor in a break so you can recharge your body and spirit.



CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Focus on keeping your cool even if that proves difficult, Capricorn. Be the bigger person in all of your interactions. You have a strong ability to control your emotions.



AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Fe 18

Aquarius, you may feel uneasy or worried for unknown reasons. Trust your gut in this instance and steer clear of trouble should it try to get in your way this week.



PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Family tops your list of priorities right now, Pisces. You are likely to spend considerable time with loved ones in the days to come. Relish in all the opportunities to connect.

CAPRICORN Traits & Overview

Smart, hardworking, and fully in control of their destiny, Capricorn signs will always get what they set their mind to, in both personal and professional life—no excuses

FINANCIAL FOCUS

Putting your aging parents' wishes first



As your parents grow older, it may be time to talk with them about financial and aging issues, which may involve difficult conversations.

You'll want to be careful how you approach this. Mention ahead of time that you'd like to talk to them about their future plans and reassure them that you want to understand their wishes, so their affairs will be taken care of as they would like.

If your parents are agreeable, choose a comfortable location and ask whom to invite (or not invite). Then, think about how to open the conversation, preferably not with what they want to do with their money, as this could be interpreted as your seeking information about your inheritance or being skeptical about their financial decisions. Instead, build a broader discussion about their vision for their aging years. A series of shorter conversations may allow you to cover topics more comfortably rather than trying to solve everything at once.

Try to address these areas:

- **Health care** – Seek to learn whether your parents have established appropriate health-related legal documents such as a health care power of attorney, which gives someone the authority to make decisions about their medical care if they become unable, and a living will, which spells out the extraordinary medical treatments they may or may not want.

- **Independence** – As people age, they may begin to lose their independence. Have your parents considered options for long-term care, such as an assisted living community, a nursing home

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.
Edward Jones, Member SIPC

or a home health aide? If they plan to receive support from family members, do your parents' expectations match yours?

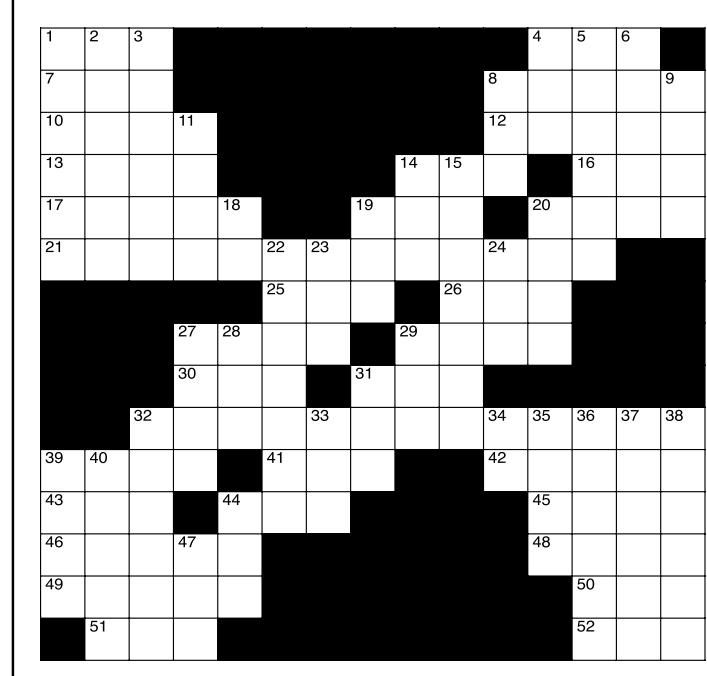
- **Financial goals** – Focusing on the personal and financial aspects of the legacy your parents want to leave can be a valuable conversation. Have they updated their will or other estate documents, such as a living trust? Have they created a durable power of attorney for a trusted family member to make financial decisions for them if they become incapacitated? Do they have the proper beneficiary designations on their insurance policies, retirement plan and bank accounts? If you position these issues around your parents having control over transferring their assets, rather than curiosity over "who will get what," you'll more likely have a productive conversation.

- **Last wishes** – You'll want to learn whether your parents have instructions in their will about their funerals and last wishes. Express that you or another close family member should know who is responsible for making sure their wishes are met in a timely fashion.

Money, independence and aging can be sensitive topics. You don't have to go it alone, though — enlist help from another close family member. Or, if your parents work with an attorney, financial professional or other trusted advisor, consider asking if they're interested in having them participate in your talks. You might even be able to introduce your parents to one of your advisors.

In any case, keep talking. These conversations can be challenging, but if handled correctly can be of great benefit to your parents and your entire family.

CROSSWORD



CLUES ACROSS

1. Former CIA	30. Actor DiCaprio
4. Language	31. High schoolers' test
7. Constrictor snake	32. Mr. October
8. Demand	39. Sign of healing
10. Rich man	41. One's grandmother
12. Short-tailed marten	42. Entrap
13. Zoroastrian concept of holy fire	43. One who simultaneously buys and sells
14. Superconducting super collider	44. ___ Francisco
16. International group of countries within the Americas	45. Web-based data provider of marine life
17. Sacred state for Muslims	46. Type of snake
19. Shock therapy	48. Dark mark or stain
20. Engrave	49. Member of the Salis
21. Localities	50. Former measure of length
25. Paddle	51. CNN's founder
26. Periodical	52. Witness
27. 30	28. 33
29. 31	34. 35
30. 32	36. 37
31. 33	38. 39
32. 34	40. 41
33. 35	42. 43
34. 36	44. 45
35. 37	46. 47
36. 38	48. 49
37. 39	50. 51
38. 39	51. 52

CLUES DOWN

1. Acquire	24. Strong tree
2. Console	27. Commoner
3. Hunting expedition	28. Electroencephalograph
4. Pie ___ mode	29. ___ Mahal
5. Simple shoes for peasants	31. Congressman
6. Eurasian shrub	32. Disorderly crowd
8. Reciprocal of a sine	33. 007's creator Fleming
9. Work together in harmony	34. Atomic #55
11. Grenade	35. Part of a door
14. File extension	36. Short-tail martens
15. Minute pores in a plant	37. Baltimore ballplayer
18. Medal of Honor	38. Cuddle
19. Make a mistake	39. Gang in "The Outsiders"
20. Advance slowly, as if by inches	40. Of Croatia
22. Sandwich meat	44. Body cavity
23. An awkward stupid person	47. Get free of

Z PUZZLE SOLUTION



Don't be afraid to make mistakes in life's comedy show, they just make for better improv!"

3 metrics that can help people gauge their financial health



Effective money management can help men and women achieve their short- and long-term goals. Wise investment strategies and a commitment to saving for retirement are great ways to manage money over the long haul, but it's important to seek ways to do so in the short-term as well.

Monitoring financial health is a short-term strategy that can keep individuals on a path toward long-term security. While various metrics can be looked to as indicators of financial health, adults can keep these three variables in mind as they look to utilize short-term strategies to ensure their long-term success.

1. **Debt-to-income ratio:** Debt-to-income ratio can be a good indicator of financial health. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau defines debt-to-income ratio (DTI) as all your monthly debt payments divided by your monthly gross income. Lenders utilize DTI to determine the creditworthiness of loan applicants, but individuals also can use it as a metric to gauge their financial health. Monthly debt payments include mortgages, auto loans, student loans, and other debt payments, including credit cards. Individuals whose debt payments total \$2,000 per month and who earn a gross monthly income of \$6,000 have a 33 percent DTI. The credit experts at Experian suggest a DTI of 35 percent or less is indicative that debt is being handled well, so that's a figure to keep in mind.

interest as they did throughout the 1980s and 1990s. According to Nasdaq, savings interest rates climbed as high as 8 percent in the 1980s, but have fallen below 0.25 percent since the financial crisis of 2008. That's led some to devalue savings, but savings balances can be a good indicator of financial health. A substantial savings account can help individuals avoid taking on debt when costly emergencies and expenses arise unexpectedly, thus helping them keep their DTI in a financially advantageous range.

3. **Credit score:** Credit score is another strong, and easily accessible, indicator of personal financial health. Individuals can now access their credit scores for free each month through their banks and credit card providers. Experian notes that credit scores range from 300 to 850, and where a score falls in that range can indicate if a person is managing credit in a healthy or unhealthy way. Experian reports scores 740 and above are very good, while scores between 670 and 739 are considered good. Scores between 300 and 579 are considered poor, while a score between 580 and 669 is considered fair. Scores below 669 indicate there's room to use credit more wisely, which involve reducing reliance on consumer credit, making payments on time and ensuring payments are more than the monthly minimum.

These three metrics and others can be utilized by individuals looking to gauge their financial health in an effort to realize their short- and long-term goals.

2. **Savings balances:** Savings accounts don't generate as much



COUNTY OF PAMLICO PUBLIC NOTICE

County of Pamlico has issued a public notice regarding the intent to extend a lease with the **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)** for office space in Alliance, NC

Lease Details

- **Location:** 13724 NC Highway 55, Alliance, NC 28509
- **Space:** 2,650 rentable square feet (RSF)
- **Proposed Rate:** \$13.14 per RSF, totaling \$2,901.75 monthly and \$34,821.00 annually.
- **Duration:** The extension would expire on January 31, 2029.

Timeline and Next Steps

- **Public Notice Period:** A 30-day public notice is required before final approval can be granted.
- **Board Approval:** The proposal is scheduled for final approval at February 16, 2026, Board of Commissioners meeting.

Please note the following:

During regular business hours, the full text of the following proposed amendments can be obtained from the Clerk to the Board at the County Manager's Office located at 302 Main Street, Bayboro, NC (Phone Number: 252-745-3133, Email: tracy.boyd@pamlicocounty.org)



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SPORTS

Hurricanes on the Mat

by: Hiram Lupton

The Pamlico County High School wrestling team hosted a pair of non-conference foes in duals action last Thursday evening. While wrestlers compete individuals, duals wrestling is a competition where points are awarded to the team for different types of wins such as a pin, a forfeit, decision, major decision, or technical fall. The highest number of team points awarded for a match win, 6 points, is by a pin or a win by forfeit. Points all add up. An individual wrestler can lose but still help their team by avoiding a pin and keep the score with their opponent within 7 points. This is considered a win by decision, and the winning team is awarded 3 points. In Thursday's matches, Pamlico took on North Pitt followed by bouts against West Craven. Typically, when three teams are involved in dual competition, the two visitors face off in the first matches, followed by the home squad versus the visitor who traveled from the farthest to compete with the home team and closest competing team finishing out the evenings matches. In Pamlico's first match, they were defeated by North Pitt, 10-10. The Hurricanes bounced back in the final matches, besting West Craven by a score of 54-30.



Brayden Jones squares off against North Pitt.



Riley Treacy lifts his West Craven opponent.



Donny Campbell gets the edge against his North Pitt adversary.

Middle School Athletics – Wrestling

by: Hiram Lupton

Pamlico County Middle School took on a pair of conference opponents in team wrestling action last Friday evening in matches that had been postponed from last December due to weather. Pamlico held their own but lost both close matches, 58-48 to Tucker Creek Middle School and 58-46 to Grover C. Fields Middle School. Despite the team losses, the young Hurricanes continued to gain valuable experience.



"Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving."
– Albert Einstein

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Pamlico Vistas

vista /vis-ta/ n / : a distant view through or along an avenue or opening



Dawson Creek

Photo by: Hiram Lupton

According to the American Cancer Society, the average age a man is diagnosed with prostate cancer is about 66. In fact, six out of every 10 prostate cancer diagnoses are in men who are 65 and older. Though prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death among American men, most men diagnosed with the disease do not die from it. Screening could play a role in that, and the ACS recommends that men thinking about getting tested for prostate cancer learn as much as they can about screening so they can make the most informed decisions possible. Speaking with a personal physician about screening is recommended, as the effects of screening continue to be studied by researchers.

The Trump Administration loses most of their court cases. They want people to believe the judges are at fault. After losing they call out the judges by name, calling them deranged, crooked, rogue, lunatics and radical leftist.

They lose because the judges base their decisions on the facts and the law and the Administration does not have the facts and law to support their claims. Their unconstitutional lawlessness violates the U.S. Constitution.

The judges took an oath to honor the U.S. Constitution and they follow it. The President and his Cabinet took a similar oath and they violate it.

Jimmy Ragan
Retired Judge

Paid for by Jimmy Ragan



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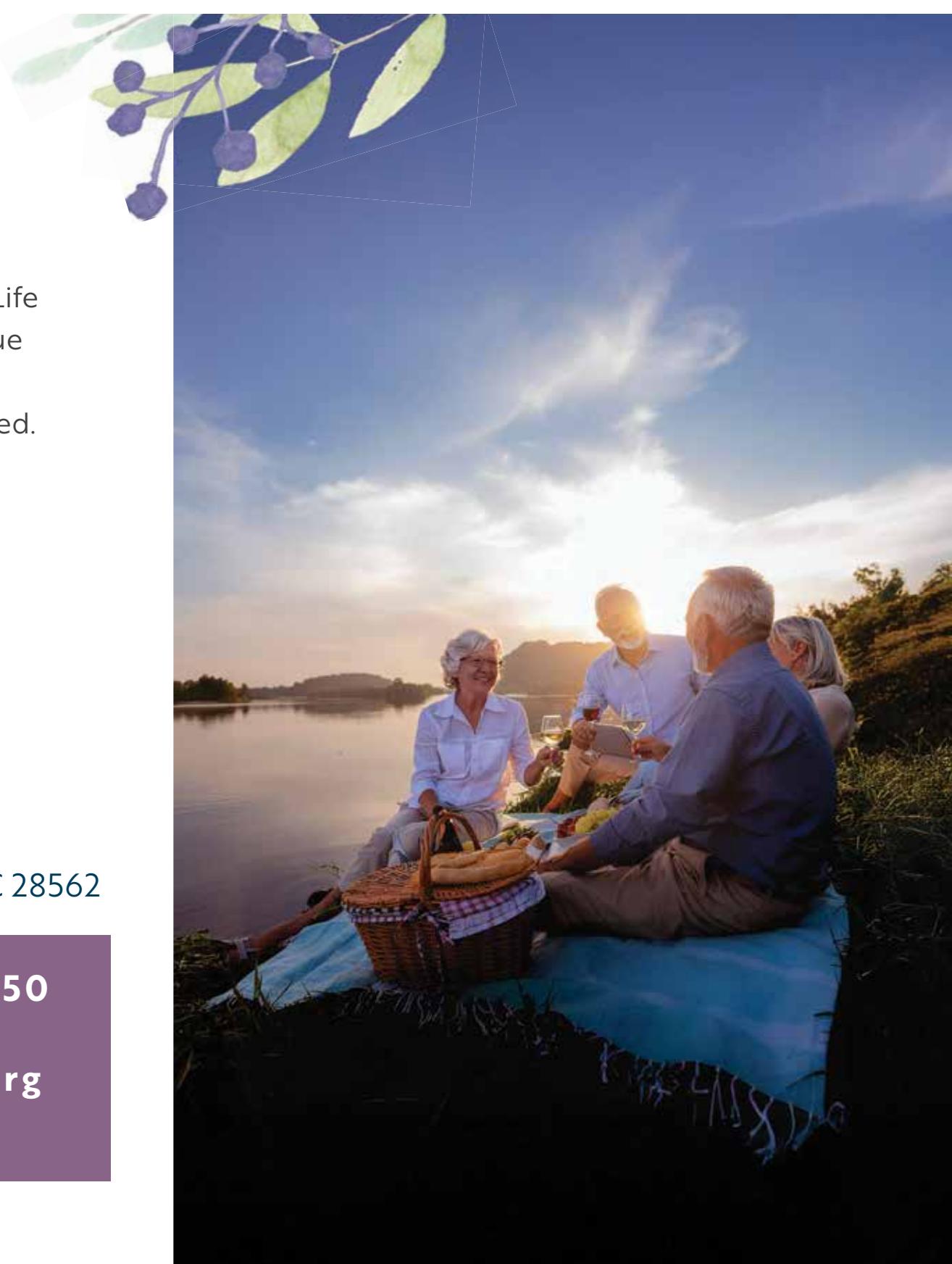
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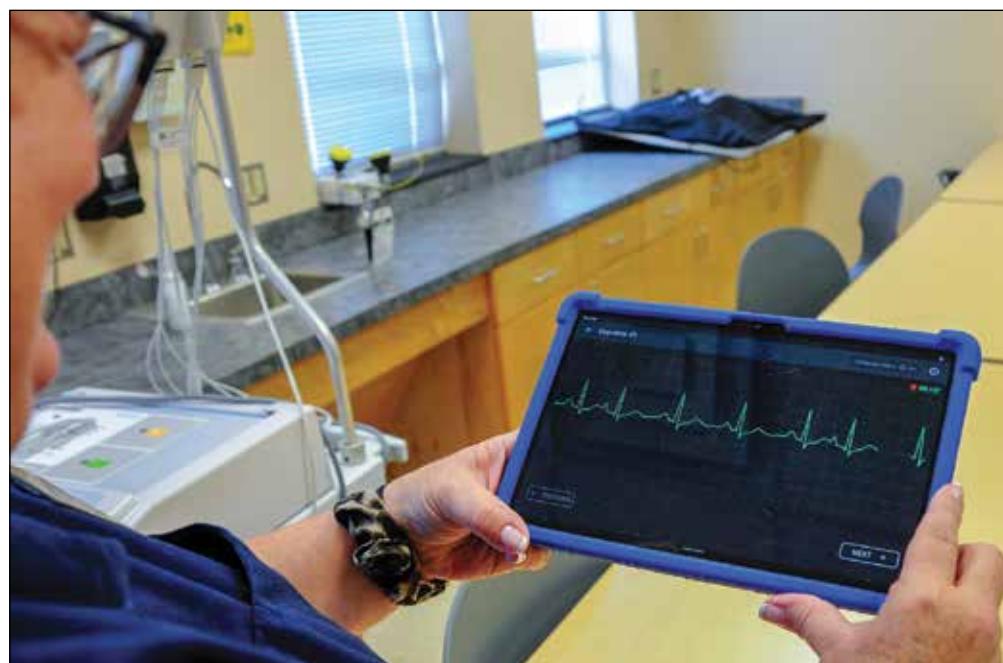
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- * **Community Health Worker, Begins Jan. 27!**
- * **Dialysis Technician, Course starts Feb. 3!**



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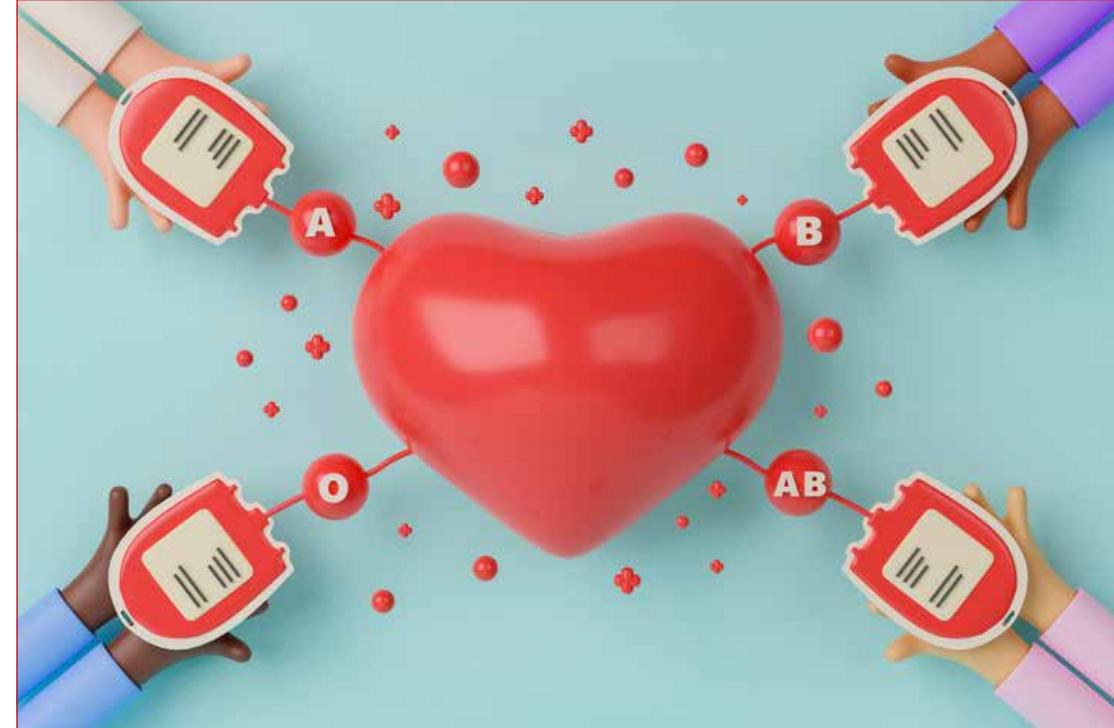
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Health & Wellness

National Blood Donor Month

January 2026



According to the American Red Cross, winter is "one of the most difficult times of year to collect enough blood products to meet patient needs." That's because of, among other things, busy holiday schedules and bad weather often resulting in canceled blood drives. Furthermore, seasonal illnesses such as the flu force potential donors to forgo their blood donations.

That's just one of the reasons that National Blood Donor Month, which has taken place each January since 1970, is such an important observance. Donating blood saves many lives and improves health for many people. According to the World Health Organization, "blood is the most precious gift that anyone can give to another person — the gift of life. A decision to donate your blood can save a life, or even several if your blood is separated into its components — red cells, platelets and plasma." Let's learn more.

National Blood Donor Month timeline

1628 - Book gets the blood going- English physician William Harvey publishes "On the Motion of the Heart and Blood," describing his account of the circulation of blood through the human body.

Early 1900's - Are you my type? The Austrian Dr. Karl Landsteiner develops the ABO blood group system. Jan Jansky, a Czech doctor is credited with the first classification of blood into four types: A, B, AB, and O.

1907 - Ottenberg makes the first transfusion - Based on Landsteiner's discoveries, the American physician Reuben Ottenberg performs the first successful blood transfusion using blood typing and crossmatching at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York.

1937 - Physician opens first blood bank - Hungarian physician Bernard Fantus establishes the first hospital blood bank in the United States at Cook County Hospital in Chicago.

How to Observe National Blood Donor Month

1. Donate - Not just in honor of National Blood Donor Month, but in the simple spirit of providing the stuff of life to those who need it most. Donate now. Donate again in eight weeks. Repeat.
2. Inspire - National Blood Donor Month can inspire people to donate. And those donations can in turn inspire others to donate, creating an exponential increase in blood donations when and where they're needed the most.
3. Learn and remember your blood type - What's your blood type? Some examples: O positive donors are needed more often than other blood types. O negative donors are considered "universal donors." AB positive donors are "universal recipients."

5 Amazing Facts About Blood Donations

1. Not enough blood for all of us - According to the American Red Cross, about 38 percent of the U.S. population can donate blood — but only 10 percent actually do.
2. Fill 'er up with regular — donations - Brookhaven National Laboratory says that people who begin donating blood at age 17 and donate every eight weeks will have donated 48 gallons of blood by age 76.
3. Donate blood and get medical info - When we donate blood, labs examine the donation for multiple infectious diseases, such as HIV and West Nile virus.
4. Dogs can donate, too! - Your dog can donate blood, too. Check with your veterinarian and the Humane Society to make sure you know the local rules and regulations for this type of donation.
5. The multiplier effect is huge - Every time we donate one pint of blood, the potential is there to save three lives.

Why National Blood Donor Month is Important

1. Donating blood save lives - Someone needs blood every few seconds in the United States. And more than 4.5 million Americans would die every year without lifesaving blood transfusions. National Blood Donor Month helps us remember these vital statistics.
2. It's the gift that keeps on giving - The American Red Cross needs 13,000 blood donations every single day to maintain an appropriate blood supply. Fortunately, eligible blood donors can donate blood every eight weeks.
3. It's good for donors, too - The American Journal of Epidemiology reports that blood donors are 88 percent less likely to have a heart attack.

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COASTAL LIVING

Chris Lee pinned as new Marine Patrol Colonel

MOREHEAD CITY – Chris Lee was formally pinned during a ceremony today as the new Colonel of the N.C. Marine Patrol, the top law enforcement officer at the Division of Marine Fisheries.

Lee, who has worn the Marine Patrol uniform for 18 years and most recently served as Captain of Marine Patrol District 1, was pinned by his father with the golden eagles of a colonel at a ceremony at the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality's Division of Marine Fisheries headquarters in Morehead City. A pinning ceremony marks a significant advancement in a law enforcement officer's career.

The Marine Patrol Colonel manages more than 64 individuals, including 57 officers and six dispatchers, and directs law enforcement efforts over 2.7 million acres of ocean and coastal fishing waters in 21 eastern counties.

"The N.C. Marine Patrol plays a vital role by enforcing fishing regulations and providing water, air and ground support to other DEQ divisions, including during emergencies," said DEQ Secretary Reid Wilson. "Colonel Lee will do an outstanding job because of his tremendous experience, vision, and commitment to the Marine Patrol's mission."

Lee took over as head of Marine Patrol Jan. 1, replacing Col. Carter Witten, who retired Dec. 31, 2025.

Lee brings a wealth of experience in rescue operations, which will help in strengthening the Division's work with the N.C. Department of Emergency Management in keeping North Carolinians safe.

One of Lee's most notable accomplishments is that he helped form and then served as captain of the Marine Patrol's Swiftwater Rescue Team.

"That's been one of the most rewarding things of my career," Lee said. "The relationships we have made across the state have done wonders for us as an agency, and we are providing a better service to the citizens of North Carolina."

Lee started building and training the rescue team in late 2019, and in 2021, it became the first state law enforcement-certified swiftwater rescue team in North Carolina. Lee says he cannot take sole credit for the team, as he has had to train alongside them.

"We were all learning together and trying to make it happen to better serve in times of need," Lee said.

The team has been deployed numerous times across the state. In the fall of 2024, the team was one of 71 swiftwater rescue teams deployed to Western North Carolina to assist with rescuing motorists and residents from floodwaters of Hurricane Helene.

In addition to performing water rescues, Marine Patrol officers have flown DEQ staff to survey the extent of shoreline erosion and flooded animal waste operations after hurricanes, provided security in business districts hit by tornadoes, and helped transport food to flooded communities.

One of Lee's goals as Colonel is to make the Marine Patrol even more of an asset to the people of North Carolina through training



Col. Chris Lee Sworn in surrounded by his wife Melissa and sons Sonny and Banks.

and working with North Carolina Emergency Management, while continuing to serve as the fisheries law enforcement agency.

Originally from Colerain, Lee spent his youth fishing on the Chowan River. In his free time, he helped his best friend's family fish pound nets, crab pots and gill nets.

"My father instilled in me at a young age to respect the resource," Lee said. "Law enforcement and enjoying the outdoors have been a major part of my life for as long as I can remember."

Lee's father was a deputy sheriff and later both parents were training coordinators for NC Department of Corrections. When he was 17, while vacationing with his family at Kill Devil Hills, Lee spotted a 26-foot N.C. Marine Patrol Regulator boat.

"That was the first time I'd ever heard of Marine Patrol," Lee said. "To me, it sounded like a dream job."

After high school, Lee attended N.C. Army National Guard boot camp and became an Infantryman in Bravo Company 1/120th. In 2003, he served in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Lee returned from overseas and began Basic Law Enforcement Training at Beaufort Community College and later worked for the Edenton Police Department before joining the Marine Patrol in March 2008. Lee worked his way through the ranks serving as a patrol officer in District 1, later as Sergeant and then as Captain of District 1, which runs from Ocracoke to the Virginia state line.

Lee completed his degree in criminal justice after joining the Marine Patrol. He was also certified as a general instructor and specialized firearms instructor through the N.C. Criminal Justice and Training Standards Commission. In 2012, Lee received the NC Marine Fisheries Enforcement Officer of the Year award from the Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards Program.

Lee was joined in his pinning by his wife Melissa, who pinned his badge; sons, Sonny and Banks; parents, Vernon and Tammy Lee; brother, Bryan Lee; and mother-in-law Kathy Rea.

I'm not saying I'm overreacting. I'm just saying there are good times. There are bad times. And there are bad times to hand me a chainsaw. –Funny Sayings About Life

Pamlico County's Library and Small Business Center introduce:

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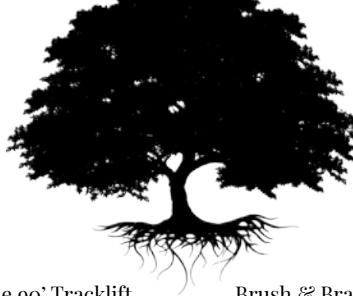
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 Run Dates
1) January 7, 2026
2) January 14, 2026
3) January 21, 2026
4) January 28, 2026
NOTICE OF SERVICE OF
PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA,
PAMLICO COUNTYIN THE SUPERIOR COURT
BEFORE THE CLERK
FILE NO. 25SP001040-680

Velma Barrett, Petitioner v. David Coleman, Jr., Anthony Cox, Jr., Tanya T. Neil Cox, Samantha Cox, and Michelle Best, Respondents.

TO: ANTHONY COX, JR.

Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled special proceeding. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows:

1. Petition to Partition requesting the sale of certain real property located at 1302 Silverbrook Road, Oriental, NC 28571 and more particularly described as follows:

A certain tract or parcel of land in Pamlico County, State of North Carolina, described as follows:

Lying and being on the Silverbrook

Notice to Creditors
North Carolina,
Pamlico County

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against the Estate of Joyce Grey Cagle, deceased, of Bayboro, NC, are notified to present the same to the personal representative listed below on or before April 7, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. All debtors of the said estate are asked to make immediate payment. This the 7th day of January, 2026.

 Guillermina Gregg, Ancillary Executrix
of the Estate of Joyce Grey Cagle
c/o Quay & Associates, P.A.
412 Broad Street
New Bern, NC 28560

 PUBLICATION DATES:
01/07/2026, 01/14/2026,
01/21/2026, 01/28/2026

NOTICE TO CREDITORS:

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against the Estate of Clara Jean Ensley, deceased, of Pamlico County, N.C., File No.: 25E001221 are notified to present the same to the undersigned on or before April 7, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. All debtors of the said estate are asked to make immediate payment.

This 7th day of January 2026.

 Randy R. Beeman, Administrator
of the Estate of Clara Jean Ensley,
deceased

 c/o John W. King, Jr.
King & Moss PLLC
Attorneys at Law
PO Box 1112
New Bern, NC 28563
(252) 638-1103

 Run Dates
1) January 7, 2026
2) January 14, 2026
3) January 21, 2026
4) January 28, 2026
NOTICE OF SERVICE OF
PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA,
PAMLICO COUNTYIN THE SUPERIOR COURT
BEFORE THE CLERK
FILE NO. 25SP001040-680

Velma Barrett, Petitioner v. David Coleman, Jr., Anthony Cox, Jr., Tanya T. Neil Cox, Samantha Cox, and Michelle Best, Respondents.

 Publication dates:
01/07/2026
01/14/2026
01/21/2026

TO: ANTHONY COX, JR.

Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled special proceeding. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows:

1. Petition to Partition requesting the sale of certain real property located at 1302 Silverbrook Road, Oriental, NC 28571 and more particularly described as follows:

A certain tract or parcel of land in Pamlico County, State of North Carolina, described as follows:

Lying and being on the Silverbrook

Road near Oriental beginning at a cedar stake on the South side of the Silverbrook or Main Road, the western corner of the Henry Ormand property, and the northeast corner of a lot of land owned by Henry Collins in Hudstontown, and runs thence a southeastwardly course with Henry Collins line 50 feet; thence a northeastwardly course parallel with the Main road 100 feet; thence a northeastwardly course with the first (Henry Collins) line 50 feet; thence a southwesterly course 100 feet to the Beginning, being one lot of land in the western corner of the tract of land formerly belonging to Henry Ormand, known as the Henry Ormand property, being the same deeded by G.H. Roberts and L.F. McCabe to Henry Ormand, by deed of record in Book 56 at page 545, Pamlico County Registry, and being also the same lot conveyed to Commissioner to Pamlico County, by deed of record in Book 101 at Page 425, Pamlico County Records, also the same property conveyed to Allied Mortgage & Development Company, Inc. by Trustee's Deed recorded in Book 139, Page 75 of aforesaid records.

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2. Private sale of the property under N.C.G.S. § 1-339.3A.

3. Reimbursement or contribution from the Respondents for a pro-rata portion of any carrying costs proven.

4. Reasonable attorney's fees in accordance with N.C.G.S. § 46A-3 and other applicable law.

5. Any other relief the Court deems necessary and appropriate in the interests of justice.

You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than February 16, 2026 and upon your failure to do so the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought.

This the 7th day of January, 2026.

 /s/ John W. Moss
JOHN W. MOSS
N.C. Bar No. 54932
King & Moss, PLLC
P.O. Box 1112
New Bern, NC 28563
Phone: (252) 638-1103
Fax: (252) 638-0400
Email: jmoss@newbernlaw.com

 Publication dates:
01/07/2026
01/14/2026
01/21/2026

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TO: MICHELLE BEST

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 Publication dates:
01/07/2026
01/14/2026
01/21/2026
NOTICE OF SERVICE OF
PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA,
PAMLICO COUNTY
 IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
BEFORE THE CLERK
FILE NO. 25SP001040-680

Velma Barrett, Petitioner, v. David Coleman, Jr., Anthony Cox, Jr., Tanya T. Neil Cox, Samantha Cox, and Michelle Best, Respondents.

 Publication dates:
01/07/2026
01/14/2026
01/21/2026

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01/21/2026

LEGALS

 PAMLICO COUNTY
SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
AND DEBTORS OF
JAMES A MASON
File No.: 25E001231-680

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against deceased, are notified to exhibit them to JO ANN CLAY EXECUTOR on or before APRIL 7, 2026 at the address listed below or be barred from their recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment to the above-named EXECUTOR.

This 7TH OF JANUARY, 2026

 ESTATE OF JAMES A MASON
C/O JO ANN CLAY
PO BOX 147
BAYBORO, NC 28515

Publish JANUARY 7, 14, 21 AND 28, 2026.

 NORTH CAROLINA IN THE
GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE
PAMLICO COUNTY
SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
AND DEBTORS OF
DAVID ALAN PETERSON
File No.: 25E001234-680

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against deceased, are notified to exhibit them to VERONICA P. LANCE, EXECUTOR on or before APRIL 14, 2026, at the address listed below or be barred from their recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment to the above-named Executor.

This 14TH DAY OF JANUARY
2026
 ESTATE OF DAVID ALAN
PETERSON
C/O VERONICA P. LANCE
3954 NC HWY 304
BAYBORO, NC 28515
Publish JANUARY 14, 21, 28 and
February 4, 2026
 NORTH CAROLINA IN THE
GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE
PAMLICO COUNTY
SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
AND DEBTORS OF
PAUL C. BRADY
File No.: 25E001201-680

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against deceased, are notified to exhibit them to PAULA B. PHILLIPS EXECUTOR on or before APRIL 14, 2026 at the address listed below or be barred from their recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment to the above-named EXECUTOR.

This 14TH OF JANUARY, 2026

 ESTATE OF PAUL C. BRADY
CO PAULA B. PHILLIPS
625 HEARTWOOD DRIVE
GRIMESLAND, NC 27837
Publish JANUARY 14, 21, 28 AND
FEBRUARY 4 2026.NOTICE OF SERVICE OF
PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA,
PAMLICO COUNTY
 IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
BEFORE THE CLERK
FILE NO. 25SP001040-680

Velma Barrett, Petitioner, v. David Coleman, Jr., Anthony Cox, Jr., Tanya T. Neil Cox, Samantha Cox, and Michelle Best, Respondents.

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TO: MICHELLE BEST

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AROUND THE COUNTY

Pamlico **Betty Jo Rodgers, Correspondent**



The pelicans are here every morning for breakfast and are getting fat and sassy. The trout must really be a favorite breakfast treat for them. As the sun begins to slowly rise and highlight them on the pier pilings, they amaze me with their smooth movements even though they are an awkward looking bird.

Still see an occasional deer when I come home late in the afternoon. I am glad that deer season is over, because I will see more of these beautiful animals as winter continues.

This has been a sad week for the Stonewall community. Charles Alexander has changed residence to his heavenly home. Charles had been the mayor of Stonewall for 40 years. He was the patriarch of his family and his church. He will be missed by many family and friends, but his legacy will live on in those he loved and shared his life with. Memories will light the shadows of our minds every time we see something that reminds us of him – like a green John Deer

tractor, or the “Seasons Greetings” sign, or the American flags on the fourth of July, etc.

Baptism of the Lord Sunday at Stonewall Methodist Church was well attended. There were several visitors, including more families with young children. Before closing everyone was asked to remember their baptism and take a small stone as a remembrance.

My article this week will be short. Please remember Penny \$ Farmer and her family in your prayers.

Celebrating birthdays in January are Amy Gatlin (1/13), Shelby Sutton, Elizabeth Farmer Tillman (1/15), Kelli Hinson and Ruth Ireland (1/16), Ned Ferris (1/21), Kate Moye, Ellen Lupton, and Jenny Lupton (1/22), Desiree Brinson (1/25), Ann Smithwick (1/26), Willy Hope (1/28), Nan Gilbert, Becky Sadler (1/30), and Shari Roberts Hale (1/31).

Have a blessed week. eXhausted? Take Vitamin X. “But refuse profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.” (1Timothy 4:7)

Grantsboro **Jeff Roberts, Correspondent**



Good morning, good afternoon and good evening. Hope all of you are doing well, I apologize for missing last week, completely my fault. There are weeks when the news comes easy; events, gatherings, celebrations that seem to write themselves. And then there are weeks like this one, quieter on the surface but heavier underneath. Over the past few days, I've heard the same words repeated again and again in different conversations: Did you hear? Names spoken softly. Pauses where answers should be. Loss has a way of moving through a community quietly, touching far more people than we often realize.

Driving the back roads of Pamlico County, I found myself stopping one morning at Trent Free Will Baptist Church in Merritt. The building sat calmly under the night sky, lights glowing warmly against the dark, just as they've likely done for years. There was nothing dramatic happening, no cars in the lot, no doors opening or closing, just the steady presence of a place that has witnessed countless moments of joy, sorrow, and everything in between.

Churches like this aren't just places of worship. In small communities, they're landmarks of memory. They are where families gather in celebration and where they lean on one another in times of grief. They are where generations pass through the same doors first carried in, later walking on their own, and eventually returning with children of their own. Even when the building is quiet, it carries the weight of those stories.



Trent Free Will Baptist Church is part of a long Free Will Baptist tradition rooted deeply in eastern North Carolina, a tradition that has emphasized community, accountability, and shared responsibility for generations. While specific dates and milestones may fade with time, the role these churches play remains clear. They are places where people come together not because life is perfect, but because it isn't.

Standing there with my camera, I thought about how light behaves at night. It doesn't overpower the darkness, it simply pushes back enough of it to guide the way. That's what places like this do. They don't erase loss or answer every question, but they offer something steady when the world feels uncertain. A familiar doorway. A sanctuary. A reminder that no one walks through hardship entirely alone.

In times like these, when our community feels the weight of loss more than celebration, it's worth remembering the quiet strength that exists all around us. It lives in buildings that have stood through decades of change. It lives in people who show up, even when it's hard. And it lives in the simple act of gathering to remember, to grieve, and to carry on together.

Some weeks don't call for loud headlines or big announcements. Some weeks ask us to pause, to reflect, and to acknowledge what truly holds a community together. On Florence Road in Merritt, beneath a dark sky and a steady light, that reminder stands quietly just as it always has. I hope that you all have a blessed week.



By Jim Kellenberger & Beth Obenshain 1-8-26



The Rotary Club was back in full swing at our first meeting of 2026 on Monday, January 6 at Brantley's. 2026 marks the 75th anniversary of our club's founding, and Beth and I intend to tell the readers of this publication some of the things we have done over the years and some of the things we intend to do.

A look back to December 2025 shows a busy bunch of Rotarians. Club members rang the bell for the Salvation Army on two occasions in front of the Piglet, decorated and rode in a float for the Oriental and Bayboro Christmas parades, and cooked and served food for 150 folks at the annual Luby's Breakfast. Over the last six months, our Happy Dollar Man, Jim Kellenberger (sporting a fine shape in attached photo) coaxed \$513 out of our members. These donated \$\$\$ gave the giver a chance to reflect on why they were happy that night. In December, Rotary donated this money to Pamlico County Fishes and Loaves Outreach to support their mission which is to accumulate and distribute high-quality, nutritious food to those who need assistance in Pamlico County, regardless of race, ethnicity, or religious affiliation.

Rotary Club of Oriental Happenings

Vandemere **Sandra Snipes, Correspondent**



My apologies for not having written since last year. True to being a village by the sea, we entered 2026 full of maritime adventure.

We are fortunate to have dedicated adults in our area who actively support the Sea Scouts program. Sea Scouts is a nationally recognized, adult-mentored youth leadership and maritime program for young people ages 14 to 20. Sponsored by the Boy Scouts of America, the program focuses on building confidence, seamanship skills, and leadership through hands-on experiences on the water.

Participants learn boating safety, navigation, sailing, marine engineering, environmental stewardship, and teamwork—all while developing responsibility, service-minded values, and lifelong skills. Sea Scouts promote character, citizenship, and personal growth, preparing youth for both maritime careers and leadership roles within their communities.

Locally, Jeff Michal, Vicky Jones, and Steve Withrow are three mentors who have created meaningful opportunities for youth to learn and grow. Since 2023, this group—made up of various Sea Scout Ships—has organized the annual Commodore's Cruise. This year's theme is "Chasing Tall Ships."

As part of this exciting experience, the Sea Scouts will embark on a two-week summer journey to Baltimore, visiting points of interest along the way and taking part in a remarkable opportunity to escort tall



Sea Scouts at Up the Creek Marina, Vandemere, NC, learning about boat maintenance. From Left to Right: Steve Withrow, Anya, Ava, Lindsey, Sophia, Nick, Jeff Michael, and Vicky Jones



The Eladene approaching Hobucken

ships into port during a 22-mile passage. Before undertaking such voyages, Sea Scouts must meet requirements (like earning badges), such as boat maintenance, seamanship proficiency, and safety training.

We wish this outstanding team great success as they prepare for what promises to be an unforgettable journey this summer. Fair winds and following seas!

On another maritime adventure, the Eladene is finally back home in Vandemere. If you remember, we previously embarked on a journey via the Intracoastal Waterway to see the fireworks in Washington, D.C. On our return trip, we struck a submerged log. The Eladene made it to Coinjock, NC, before we realized the extent of the damage and had to pull her out of the water. The "money pit" stories are real—but completing the journey home was highly gratifying.

The waters were like glass as we made our way south through locks, swing bridges, train bridges, and across the sounds. Coinjock is a must-stop; not only for the excellent customer service, but also for the best prime rib around. Dowry Creek, near Belhaven, was another memorable stop, offering outstanding hospitality, peaceful surroundings, and majestic views that truly leave an impression.

We look forward to the next maritime adventure. In the meantime... Come see what Vandemere is all about at www.vandemerenc.com.

"Life is short. Smile while you still have teeth." – Unknown

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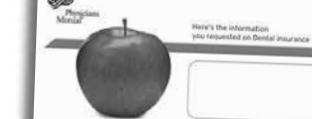
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ACS had a busy holiday season including a countdown to winter break spirit week.
Pictured below some of our "Ugly" Holiday Sweater day participants.



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