



The Pamlico News

Wednesday, December 3, 2025

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The Old Theater
Oriental, NC

The Perfect Ensemble New Productions at The Old Theater

The Old Theater has a rich heritage of producing plays going back to the Pelican Players in 1987, productions involving many talented individuals appearing on and off stage. There is a new director in town breathing new life into the old theater. Tiphannie Gillespie is the new Productions Coordinator at the theater and she has a lofty ambition to get a cast of actors on stage and a talented crew working behind the curtain. Many people in town miss the creative spark, the excitement of a performance, and the camaraderies of an ensemble that we once had. For our purposes, an ensemble is an organized group of interested parties who each have a talent or skill needed to form a production company.

Mrs. Gillespie will be holding a meeting of all interested parties at the theater on Friday evening, December 5th at 5:30 PM. The purpose of this meeting is to discover if there is an interest in the community in producing more plays and thus the need for a production company. All interested parties are invited to attend including writers, directors, actors, musicians, stagehands, set builders, costume designers, makeup artist... anyone who wants to be involved in stage production. The goal of this first meeting is to become aware of each other, share a love of theater, and get organized to plan the next meeting, select a play and start rehearsing. The perfect ensemble would be those who are willing, able and interested with talent in the mix. This meeting will direct our efforts going forward.

The 2nd Annual Richard Hudson Memorial Cornhole Tournament

by: Hiram Lupton



Tourney winners
The Warehouse



The top PCA alumni team,
The Hudson Brothers

After early rain the skies cleared to a beautiful blue as Saturday turned into the perfect day for the second annual Richard Hudson Memorial Cornhole Tournament. The event is a fundraiser for Pamlico Christian Academy's Capital Campaign and was hosted by Broad Creek Christian Church in Olympia. Richard Hudson was a dedicated supporter of Pamlico Christian Academy (PCA) and was instrumental in its inception. Richard passed away in 2021 and this tournament not only memorializes him but raises money to help carry on the work he started at PCA. While cornhole was the focus, there was much more including some great food including delicious sea-food, Low Country Boil style,

along with plenty of activities for both young and old. Twenty-six teams entered the tournament and tossed the bag vying for the championship title and a first-place prize of \$300 and when the final tosses were made, The Warehouse emerged as champion. Buster City took second while Too Young Men claimed third. There was also a special prize for the top finish-



ing PCA Alumni team entered and that went to The Hudson Brothers. A great day of fun and fellowship all supporting a great cause. The organizers would like to thank all the participants, donors, sponsors, and the many volunteers who helped make this year's tournament a success.

Leslie Kellenberger to be Honored

by: Hiram Lupton



When someone who has displayed dedication and hard work that has been above and beyond, a little special recognition is in order. Leslie Kellenberger has been at the center of The Ol' Front Porch Music Festival since its inception as one of the founders, taking on whatever role, she was needed for, and doing it successfully. She has served three, 3-year terms on the OFPMF Board and the by-laws of the board now require her to rotate off at the end of the 2025. The OFPMF will be showing their appreciation to Leslie for her years of hard work serving on the Board this Saturday December 6 between 4:30 and 5:30 PM at The New Village Brewery and the entire community is invited to come out for a thank you celebration for her and to recognize her outstanding work. Although she is rotating off the Board, Leslie will continue to work and support the festival the same way she always has, with her infectious enthusiasm and zeal.

PCHS NJROTC Food Distribution

by: Hiram Lupton



It is the season of giving and what better thing to give than an essential to life, food. The Pamlico County High School Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC) did just that last week at their annual pre-Thanksgiving holiday food distribution. The NJROTC had plenty of help loading boxes and bags as PCHS football coaches and players as well as wrestlers pitched in to help. Over 100 bags of food, much of which supplied by the by the

Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina were packed and distributed. Our local Walmart of Grantsboro was also a huge help in providing hams. All this food would be hard to load if you didn't have something to put it in and Harris Teeter of New Bern supplied the bags. A great event from a great group of young people and their leaders. There is another food distribution scheduled for December 19th, just in time for Christmas.

How a drive-thru pantry works

There are many opportunities at our national office and the network of food banks to help communities get the food and resources they say they need to thrive.

- 1 Drive up. Food Bank staff and volunteers will guide you through the line and help you get food quickly.
- 2 Check-in. You will check in at your car. You may be asked about your family members, income and dietary preferences.
- 3 Get your food. Pre-packed boxes or bags of food are loaded into your trunk. Make sure you have plenty of room. Once you have the food, you can drive off.

www.feedingamerica.org



Ollison honored by the Board of Commissioners

by: Hiram Lupton



Violet Ollison and her husband Carl

The Pamlico County Board of Commissioners took some time to honor a county employee for her 29 years of dedicated service to the citizens of Pamlico County. Violet Ollison officially retired on November 26th, and on Monday evening, the Board read into the official record a proclamation recognizing her for her outstanding career. Mrs. Ollison began working for the county in April of 1996 and in September of 2013 she became the Director of Pamlico County Senior Services where her caring attitude and demeanor helped enrich the lives of the senior population of the county. Happy retirement Violet, may you enjoy every minute of it.



Red Cross urges
holiday cooking and
decorating safety to
prevent home fires

LIKELY WEATHER OVER THE WEEKEND

Saturday, December 6th **59° Hi** Partly Cloudy

Sunday, December 7th **72° Hi** Patchy rain throughout the day



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TURNAGE

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Pamlico Community College



Pamlico Pantry donation

Former Pamlico Community College employee Myra Hardison, left, delivers food items her Chair Yoga class collected recently for the Pamlico Pantry. The college opened the Pamlico Pantry in 2024 to fight food insecurity among PCC students and their families, thereby helping students succeed in their academics. Vice President of Student Services Jamie D. Gibbs accepts the class's generous donation. Earlier this year, the Pamlico County Community Foundation donated \$1,500 to the Pamlico Pantry initiative. Contributed photo



Walk around campus

Pamlico Community College Instructor Niki Costiglio, fourth from left, joins some students from the PCC Community Living class for a late Autumn walk around campus recently. For more information about the college's Community Living program, please contact Lori Giles at 252-249-1851, ext. 3015. Contributed photo

Enroll now at PCC!
There's no reason to wait until January!
New and returning students can sign up for Spring 2026 classes now!



Advent Calendars are a common sight in many households each December, and some historians believe this unique tradition can be traced to a creative nineteenth century German housewife. Though Britannica notes the precise origins of Advent calendars are still debated, one theory behind the popular tradition suggests a woman in Munich created the Advent calendar as a way for her young and impatient yet excited son to count down the days to December 25. Though details are fuzzy and difficult if not impossible to confirm, this legends suggests the

crafty German mother filled 24 different small boxes with a baked treat, allowing her son to open one each day during Advent, the nearly monthlong period of preparation for Christmas that begins on the fourth Sunday before the holiday and ends by Christmas Eve. While this origin story connects Advent calendars with Christianity, and many Christians still make it part of their Christmas celebrations, many modern people with no such affiliation also incorporate the calendars into their holiday season routines.



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



Agent of the Week

Allen Propst
 Owner/Broker/GRI

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

Home buyers can go their entire life without finding the perfect Realtor. We know; we spent 5 years looking for our dream house up & down the east coast, until we found Oriental & Allen Propst. If professionalism can be applied to real estate, Allen fits the bill. You won't know him long before you will understand why. He is among, if not, the top real estate agent in Oriental. He brings everything to the table particularly his finely honed negotiating skills. If you require an agent that will fight for your dream and exceed your expectations contact Allen and don't look back. Allen was most definitely our dream catcher.
 Barbara & Ed - Oriental



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



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 – Spectacular waterfront views of Smith & Green Creeks from first floor unit at Oriental West Condos. B-7 is a **2BR/2BA** unit w/ a 40' x 16' boat slip w/5' controlling water depth.
OFFERED AT \$339,000



NEW BERN – Handicapped-accessible, waterfront **2BR/2BA** fully-furnished condominium located in Oriental Harbor Place Condominiums. Community pool, air-conditioned commercial elevator (rated 2,500 pounds), and views of surrounding water.
OFFERED AT \$359,500



ORIENTAL – **3BR/2.5BA** w/FROG is a Stuart Hardy built house nestled on wooded Sail/Loft lot. Not in a Federally-designated Flood Zone. Two-garage attached garage, detached 1-car garage/workshop, studio / sunroom, screened porch overlooks pristine back yard with handicap ramp.
OFFERED AT \$425,000



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

See all Listings & Visual Tours at
www.orientalncwaterfront.com
 1-800-347-8246 • 252-249-1014
 Or contact Allen Propst
 252-671-4644
 704 Broad St, PO Box 750, Oriental, NC 28571

ARE YOU READY FOR 2026 TAX SEASON?

BOOKKEEPING AND TAXES FOR SMALL BUSINESS

Tuesday, Dec. 9th, 6-8 pm
 (with Kelly Michaud from Solid Rock Accounting)

Learn about:

- Bookkeeping practices & getting your finances organized
- Prepping your small business for the 2026 tax filing season.

701 N. Main St
 Bayboro, NC 28515
 252.670.2468

REGISTER FOR FREE AT

www.PamlicoSBC.com

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

by: Hiram Lupton

- December 3rd – 1931, Alka Seltzer was sold for the first time. “Plop, pop, Fizz, Fizz, oh what a relief it is.”
- December 4th – Today is National Cookie Day.
- December 5th – Today is National Bartender Day.
- December 6th – 1865, The 13th amendment to the U. S. Constitution was ratified abolishing slavery.
- December 7th – Today is Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.
- December 8th – Today is National Brownie Day.
- December 9th – 1965, “A Charlie Brown Christmas” airs on CBS-TV

BIRTHDAYS THIS WEEK

- December 3rd – 1948, Singer John Michael Osbourne (Ozzy Osbourne)
- December 3rd – 1960, Actress Julie Anne Smith (Julianne Moore)
- December 4th – 1964, Actress Marisa Tomei
- December 5th – 1932, Rock pioneer Richard Penniman (Little Richard)
- December 7th – 1947, Musician Gregg Allman
- December 8th – 1943, Singer and poet Jim Morrison
- December 8th – 1964, Actress Terri Hatcher
- December 9th – 1922, Actor and comedian John Sanford (Redd Foxx)



Pamlico Vistas

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



The Hobucken Canal, a part of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway - Hobucken

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

On Friday November 21, 2025 fourteen year old Armani Floyd was shot and killed at 10:30 PM in Chicago. If he had been home in bed after doing homework all evening he would still be safe and sound. In situations like this it is the parents who need to be involved, not federal troops.

Bill Deighton
Arapahoe

The Pamlico News Editorials and Opinions section features opinion articles, newspaper editorials and letters to the editor on the issues of the day.
The views and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of The Pamlico News. Any content provided by authors are of their opinion, and are not intended to malign any religion, ethnic group, club, organization, company, individual or anyone or anything.

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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The Pamlico News Editorials and Opinions section features opinion articles, newspaper editorials and letters to the editor on the issues of the day. The views and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of The Pamlico News. Any content provided by authors are of their opinion, and are not intended to malign any religion, ethnic group, club, organization, company, individual or anyone or anything.

COMMUNITY

Heath Elected as BOC Chair

by: Hiram Lupton



Ken Heath

As is custom, the Pamlico County Board of Commissioners chooses its leadership at their first December meeting and on Monday evening, Township 5 Commissioner Ken Heath was elected by his fellow Commissioners as their new Board Chairman. Outgoing Chairman Edward Riggs was elected Vice-Chair. The Board also reaffirmed the appointments of County Attorney David Baxter, County Manager Mark Brewington, and Clerk to the Board Tracy Boyd.

Pamlico Pickleball Doubles Teams Finish 1-2 in New Bern Tourney

Two Pamlico Pickleball men's doubles teams finished first and second in the 65-74 age group last Wednesday (November 19), in the Neuse River Senior Games fall tournament at Creekside Park in New Bern.

Dale Montgomery and Carl Wilson bested Bill Sloan and Joe Geraghty for the championship. The latter pair won seven straight matches to reach the final, after dropping their first game in the double-elimination tournament. Their seventh win came against the eventual champs, who until then had no losses. Thus, with both teams having one loss, the final game determined the winners.

All four players have represented the Pamlico Pickled Herons in the region's Coastal Plain Pickleball League, which Montgomery coaches.

"They (Sloan and Geraghty) played the best I've ever seen them play," Montgomery said. "Unfortunately for them, so did we," he added with a laugh. "They just ran out of gas after playing seven straight games."



Joe Geraghty (foreground) and Bill Sloan (yellow cap) playing against Dale Montgomery (far right) and an unidentified partner in Coastal Plain Pickleball League action, in Havelock earlier this year. (Photo by Teresa Casey)

Tree of Light and Names

Since 1989, a Tree of Lights has been lit in Lou Mac Park. The Park location was chosen so that the lights could be seen from the river as well as the land.



The names of those for whom donations are given adorn the tree on wooden tags that resemble candles. They are hung with red bows for Remembrance and green bows for Honoring.

Join us on Thursday December 11, 2025 at 5:00 at Lou Mac Park.

There will be a **Town Wide Cookie Exchange. "Bring a dozen - Get a Dozen."**

Oriental Parks and Recreation will have **Hot Chocolate** available.

There will be Christmas Caroling with members of the Pamlico Chorale, accompanied by the Oriental UHOO's.

Winners of this year's Light Up Oriental will be announced as well.

A Donation of \$5.00 will provide you with a candle for someone special and/or a beloved pet. The money will be given to the charity of choice this year: **Oriental History Museum.**

Check One:

In honor of: _____

In Memory of: _____

Your Name: _____

Contact Number: _____

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Donations and Names will need to be mailed to: Meta Jones, 301 Midyette St. Oriental, NC 28571

FINANCIAL FOCUS

Is this a good year for tax-loss harvesting?



Dan M. Roberts

Thanks to market swings, evolving tax laws and new technology, it may be a good year to consider tax-loss harvesting – a strategy that can help reduce taxes and improve long-term returns.

What is tax-loss harvesting? When you sell an investment for less than you paid, you may be able to use that loss to offset gains from other investments, potentially reducing your overall tax bill.

If your total capital losses exceed your gains, you can use up to \$3,000 of those losses to reduce ordinary income each year. You can carry any remaining losses forward to future tax years. The strategy doesn't eliminate taxes altogether; it simply defers them, which can free up money to reinvest elsewhere.

How it works. Imagine an investor who sold one stock for a \$10,000 gain and another for a \$10,000 loss. The two transactions cancel each other out, meaning no capital gains tax is owed for that year. The investor can then reinvest the proceeds while following the IRS's "wash-sale rule." This rule prevents you from claiming a loss if you, or your spouse or a related party, repurchase the same or a "substantially identical" investment within 30 days before or after the sale.

Because of this rule, you should consider how tax-loss harvesting will affect your investment strategy, as the benefit of holding on to that investment (and letting it grow over time) may outweigh the benefit of lowering your capital gains tax bill for a given year.

Good candidates for tax-loss harvesting include investments that no longer fit your strategy (when rebalancing your portfolio, for example), have poor investment potential or can be easily substituted with other investments.

Why 2025 may be favorable. Several factors suggest 2025 may be a good time to consider tax-loss harvesting.

First, **market volatility** has created more opportunities to realize losses. The first half of the year saw sharp market swings that left some portfolios uneven. Many large asset managers have already harvested billions in losses, using them to help lower clients' tax liability while keeping investment strategies on track.

Second, **tax law changes** are on the horizon. With major tax reform provisions scheduled to expire in the coming years, many investors are motivated to manage their gains and losses proactively. Those in higher tax brackets stand to benefit most, as the savings increase with your tax rate.

Finally, **technology** has made the process more efficient. In the past, investors typically harvested losses near year-end. Today, automation and direct indexing allow for continuous monitoring and harvesting throughout the year, capturing losses as they appear.

Putting it into practice. Tax-loss harvesting isn't right for everyone, and it's not a reason to overhaul your investment strategy. The approach works best for investors with taxable accounts, current or expected capital gains and a long-term perspective.


Consult your financial advisor and a tax professional before making decisions. When used thoughtfully, tax-loss harvesting can help you navigate a volatile market, reduce taxes and keep more of your money working toward your future goals.

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

Edward Jones, Member SIPC


*"He ran out of talent about halfway through the corner."
– Buddy Baker*

Edward Jones > edwardjones.com | Member SIPC



Season's greetings

During this holiday season, we wish you all the best.



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EJB-9811F-A-E-DA AECSPAD 2680671



Pamlico County

Cold Weather Boredom Busters!



Kait Neeland
4-H Agent

This week the weather has taken a swift turn, it makes me think of stringing dried oranges, and decorating for the holidays. However, with how chilly it has been outside adventure seem a bit daunting! My favorite cold weather boredom buster is 4-H Science Experiments!

There are many things to love about science experiments, the mess, the questions that get asked, the laughter. Many of our 4-H Science Experiments can be done with things you already

have in your home. 4-H has a ton of super fun experiments. I have a few favorites, one of those is 'What's an Experiment?' which is all about teaching kids about the scientific method. It's a great way to get kids asking questions, and even better seeking answers.

What is an Experiment? An experiment is the process used to test a hypothesis (idea), or to demonstrate a fact. So how do we go about learning? By actually observing, hypothesizing, and conducting an experiment. We start with an empty 16 oz bottle, ½ a cup of white vinegar, one side of a tissue pulled apart, and two tablespoons of baking soda. (If you want to have a lot of fun add some food coloring.) Place your bottle in a tray to catch the over through. Gather the kids around, add the vinegar to the bottle, add the two tablespoons of baking soda, and let the kids observe.

Ask the kids what they observed. Then hold up a plastic baggy and ask them if they think they can make it explode with the right combination of vinegar and baking soda. Ask them to choose three amounts of vinegar ranging from ¼ a cup to 1 ½ cups of vinegar. Then ask them to choose three amounts of vinegar between 1 tablespoon and 5 tablespoons. Then ask them to hypothesize which combination will make the baggy explode. It's important to remember to use the tissues as a delayed release, otherwise the gas created by the reaction will escape and will not make the baggy explode. You can access a free print out of this experiment on our website.

If you're looking ahead to 4-H Fun in the spring you can also sign up for the the Coastal Plains Chicken Show project The



Coastal Plains Chicken Show is an annual youth program that gives youth the opportunity to learn all about poultry and poultry care. It is a great introduction to livestock Agriculture. Chickens are easy to raise, and can be kept in most places. This year youth will be raising laying chickens. During this project our youth will develop skills in the proper care of chickens through the various stages of development. They will learn how to safely water their chicks when they are very young to prevent them from drowning. They will also learn the best methods to provide proper nutrition for birds to grow. Along with all of these practical skills youth will be developing skills in personal responsibility, prioritization, and time management.

One of the things I value the most about 4-H as a program, are the friendships not just within the county program, but across the state, the nation, and internationally that I and so many others have been able to create and keep. The ability to connect with others, to learn about their world, traditions, and to share our own in turn is a paradigm shifting experience. If you are interested in participating in this program or would like more information you can access it on our website.

Registration for the 2026 Coastal Plain Chicken show has opened. Registrations must be turned into the Pamlico County Extension Office December 8th. If you would like more information about the 2026 4-H Coastal Plains Chicken Project or our upcoming programs please give us a call or check out our Pamlico 4-H page. You'll find all the details and registration info on our website: pamlico.ces.ncsu.edu. To complete your registration, you'll also need to enroll in 4-H Online it's required for all NC 4-H programs. Don't worry if you're new to the process, the link is on our website, and if you have any trouble at all, just give us a call. We're happy to walk you through it step-by-step! Want to stay in the loop about future programs and events? Be sure to sign up for our Pamlico 4-H email list so you never miss an update. If you have questions or just want to learn more about what 4-H has to offer here in Pamlico County, reach out to Kait Neeland at (252) 745-4121 or kait_neeland@ncsu.edu

Top video games for holiday gifting this year

Gaming remains a wildly popular pastime. According to TechJury, more than 3.3 billion people worldwide played video games in 2025, and gaming is a mainstream hobby across all generations. The Entertainment Software Association's 2025 Facts About the U.S. Video Game Industry report indicates the average player is 26-years-old and female and male gamers are nearly evenly split (47 percent versus 52 percent). Baby Boomers and even older generations also play video games each week and benefit from the mental stimulation and relaxation the hobby offers. Given the popularity of gaming, gifting video games for the holidays can be a smart tactic. The following are some 2025 releases that can be wrapped up as gifts this year.

- **Donkey Kong Returns HD:** Players will blast out of barrels, ride mine carts, stomp enemies, and more in this popular game newly imagined for the Nintendo Switch. Players join Donkey Kong and Diddy Kong on their wild adventures to retrieve their stolen banana horde.



- **Split Fiction:** In this game, a player and partner become Mio and Zoe, two writers who are trapped in a simulation of their own imaginations after a high-tech attempt to steal their creative ideas goes awry. This unlikely duo will need to work together in order to escape with their memories intact from a world filled with dragons, trolls, cyber ninjas, and robo-parking attendants. The game is available for PlayStation 5.
- **Star Wars Episode 1: Jedi Power Battles:** Video games often tap into nostalgia, which is perhaps why gamers were excited to find out that this popular Star Wars game was being remastered for modern consoles. This enables players to enjoy the original experience

with only minor updates that include a simpler control scheme.

- **Citizen Sleeper 2: Starward Vector:** This role-playing game is a sequel to the popular game from 2022. Players control an escaped android with a malfunctioning body, a price on its head and no memory of the past. The goal is to get a ship, find a crew and take on contracts.

- **Doom: The Dark Ages:** This game is a prequel to the popular Doom experience, including Doom and Doom Eternal. It tells an epic story, and players inhabit the boots of the Doom slayer in this medieval and sinister war game.

- **Elden Ring: Nightreign:** This game is a standalone adventure within the Elden Ring universe. It's crafted to offer players a new gaming experience by reimagining the core attributes of play. Players join forces with others to battle the creeping night and become heroes. Video games are popular gift ideas, and 2025 doesn't disappoint with its newest crop of exciting releases perfect for gamers of all ages.

★★★★★ PAMLICO COUNTY LIBRARY ★★★★★

AMERICA 250 NC BOOK CLUB

America 250 NC Book Club – December
The Last Ballad by Wiley Cash
Meeting: December 17 • 6 PM

Join the America 250 NC Virtual Book Club in person at the Pamlico County Library or online! Borrow a physical copy (first-come, first-served) or access the eBook via Libby. Gather in the library to join the discussion or join virtually, meet fellow readers, and explore North Carolina-based historical fiction.

Virtual Link: <https://www.america250.nc.gov/book-club>
Free & open to all – no membership or minimum attendance required!

AMERICA 250 NC

Holiday Giving Made Easy
Make a difference this Holiday Season.

Give a Gift No One Will Return!



Share the joy and give the perfect, lasting gift.

PAWS

DONATIONS can be made to celebrate someone special, honor a pet or person who has touched your life. Include the name and address of the recipient with your donation—which can be made on our website pamlicopaws.net using PayPal or by mail to **PAWS**, PO Box 888, Oriental, NC 28571.

PAWS inherited a sum of money that is designated exclusively to build a no kill shelter. Donations are still needed to help the animals of Pamlico County in many ways.

See you for Spirit of Christmas in front of the Oriental Village Veterinary Hospital for hot dogs on Friday and chili on Saturday.

The Pamlico Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of animals in Pamlico County.



Daniels-Sadler Funeral Home & Crematory
52 Bryant St., PO Box 99, Alliance, NC 28509
252-745-4966 | info@dssfurnerals.com

Serving Pamlico, Craven, Beaufort and surrounding counties with courteous, compassionate and professional service



Formerly Bryant Funeral Home, under new ownership
Preplanning | Full-Service Funeral Establishment
Monument Sales | Crematory Onsite
Final Expense Insurance Sales | Affordable Pricing

Website: danielssadlerfunerals.com

Breath of HEAVEN

A READY TO SING CHRISTMAS

Stonewall Methodist Church will be performing their Christmas Cantata "Breath Of Heaven" to be held on Sunday, December 7 at 6pm. All are invited to come and share an evening of music, worship and fellowship.
You will receive a Blessing.

SPORTS

Mariner Basketball

by: Hiram Lupton

Pamlico Christian Academy hosted Bethel Christian Academy last Tuesday evening in a pre-Thanksgiving matchup, and the Mariners had a feast as they took both games from the Trojans. In the first of the two games, the Lady Mariners jumped out early to a 10-point lead behind a pressure defense, and held that advantage the entire game going on to win, 45-34. The PCA boys took command also early and blew things open in the 3rd quarter for a 64-37 win. After a little break for Thanksgiving, PCA will be back on the court this week, hosting Terra Ceia Christian on Tuesday and then participating in the New Bern Christian Academy Tournament on Friday and Saturday.



Addison Alcock is fouled while shooting a three



Deadly from outside, Allee Jones shoots from the 3-point line.



Fun ways to showcase local businesses

Small businesses are the backbone of local communities. Various statistics illustrate how money spent at local businesses stays in the communities where they are located. According to the American Independent Business Alliance, the local multiplier effect means money spent within a local community circulates through the local economy two to four times more than money spent at a non-local company. These dollars benefit communities in myriad ways, including job creation.

People have plenty of reasons to patronize local businesses, including more tailored customer service and niche products that may not be available elsewhere. There are fun ways residents can get behind local businesses, and entertaining ways businesses can interact with their communities. Explore these ideas.

Sports sponsorship

Customers who are regulars can ask their favorite shopkeepers or service providers in town to sponsor a local sports team. The name of the sponsor will be emblazoned on the backs of uniform shirts or on signage at fields or stadiums, and the team can enlist the sponsor to do more. He or she can participate in things like throwing out the first pitch or a halftime slam dunk contest or special interaction with a team mascot.

Giveaways

Many organizations, including schools, utilize tricky tray gift auctions to raise money. Such events require donated merchandise and service vouchers. Community residents can ask businesses to sponsor these functions by donating items. Businesses get their name and products out to those who may be unfamiliar, and they are associating their products or services with an enjoyable event where people are having a good time.

School or club chats

Local business owners can be invited to speak to students or youth groups about their experiences. This will give children and young adults information about how local enterprises work and the products they produce.

Parades and festivals

Local businesses may want to participate in various events that take place in the community. For example, a food merchant or restaurant may want to set up a booth at a fair or festival to introduce new customers to their foods. Business owners and their employees can march in parades through Main Street during holiday celebrations. Residents may have fun trying to hit the target and fell a prominent local business owner in a dunk tank. Someone who owns a trucking company can have big rigs on display so that children can take a picture in front of or inside of them.

There are plenty of entertaining ways to connect local businesses with their communities. Residents get to see a fun side of the businesses, and the owners enjoy unique ways to get their brand or message out to the masses.



Basketball's Humble Beginnings:
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Who is NC's youngest community college president?



Mebane Rash - EdNC
November 5, 2025



From left to right, Instructor Larry Monk, President Zac Schnell, and Hunter Martin, a student studying to be an electrician, has taken classes with Schnell. What makes a good teacher? "His personality," said Martin. "Bubbly is good." But Martin also cited his methods of teaching. "A lot of teamwork is involved, problem solving, critical thinking. You learn it yourself by putting your hands on it."

Zac Schnell, 36, is the youngest community college president in North Carolina, and as far as we know, the youngest sitting president of a public, two-year community college in the United States. Schnell has served as acting director of Pamlico Community College (PCC) since November 2024, and the State Board of Community Colleges approved Schnell's appointment as president in January 2025.

"He is young, energetic, and extremely smart," said Bob Lyon, chair of the college's Board of Trustees, in a press release. "He is going to lead the college in new directions and add to its program offerings. It's an exciting time at Pamlico Community College."

"We're only going to be small for so long," said Brandon Hill, the director of the college's Environmental Science Technology (EST) program. Pamlico Community College's total headcount was 1,220 in 2024-25, according to the N.C. Community Colleges System, making it the state's smallest community college.

Prior to becoming president, Schnell led the EST program. The county is located on North Carolina's intracoastal waterway, and PCC is the only community college to offer the program. Schnell, who lives in Arapahoe and grew up in Wilmington, has continued to teach since becoming president.

"I'm still on the ground," Schnell said, which grounds his presidency. He has been an instructor at the college since January 2016, and he understands the student experience at the college, the faculty dynamics, and the community's perception of PCC — all a strategic advantage when you compare the experience of other new community college presidents who may also be new to their college, their community, and sometimes even the state.



Lining many of the hallways of PCC is Schnell's photography from his travels all over the world. Courtesy of Zac Schnell.

Schnell previously served in the Peace Corps in the Philippines, and he carries that community-based focus and commitment with him in his approach to leadership. "Putting the community back into community college," is what he hopes will become the tagline of his presidency.

That's especially important in a rural county where there isn't industry and manufacturing. If you look up the largest employers in Pamlico County, you will see local businesses, the YMCA, the school district, the county, Walmart, and the correctional institute. No surprise, then, that a 2023 economic impact study of the community college's programs focused on public safety, health assistants, education, construction technologies, and business and office technologies — the jobs that are available locally.

In addition to the community focus of his leadership, the spirit of his presidency is also important to Schnell. An amateur magician, he is known locally as "Magic Zac."

"I want to bring that spirit and a touch of magic to this new role," Schnell said in the press release announcing his presidency.

The model of education itself is changing

On Schnell's desk in his office is a handbook on artificial intelligence (AI) guidance for community colleges in North Carolina.

Schnell knows from his time in the classroom that instruction and classroom design are changing as instructors compete for student's attention with their phones. "It's truly an amazing time to be alive," he said, noting how AI, virtual reality, and other innovations will shapeshift education as we know it.

Schnell is on the leading edge of understanding those trends and has been asked to give multiple presentations locally and around the state on the topic this year. In his own classroom, he

remains focused on student engagement; fostering connections among students, including opportunities for conversation; and the acquisition of skills, especially adaptability, which he believes will be key for workers in the age of AI.

Hill says PCC students don't just graduate with content knowledge. "When it comes to how to train students, how to prepare them, we're about students getting more skills so they have a portfolio when they graduate," he said. Hill and Schnell want students to be able to go to prospective employers and say, "Let me show you what I have done."

Hunter Martin, a student studying to be an electrician, has taken classes with Schnell. What makes a good teacher? "His personality," said Martin. "Bubbly is good." But Martin also cited his methods of teaching. "A lot of teamwork is involved, problem solving, critical thinking. You learn it yourself by putting your hands on it."

Serving students at the Pamlico Correctional Institute

Pamlico Correctional Institution (PCI) is a medium custody facility for men located in Bayboro. Pamlico Community College works with PCI to provide educational opportunities for students, giving them a second chance that has been featured on PBS.

First Lady Anna Stein, among other statewide leaders including Sen. Norman Sanderson, R-Pamlico, has focused more attention recently on rehabilitation and reentry.

North Carolina's most valuable resource is its people, including those reentering society after serving a jail or prison sentence. People leaving incarceration too often struggle to access employment, housing, and health care. First Lady Stein believes that bolstering programs available to currently and formerly incarcerated individuals can both reduce recidivism and build our North Carolina workforce and the stability of families. She also knows that ensuring improved rehabilitation outcomes necessitates supporting and strengthening our corrections workforce.

— First Lady Anna Stein's website

PCC's program, which is described as "life changing," serves close to 200 students at PCI with about six hours of in-person instruction each day. The program includes a wide variety of offerings, from HiSET (the high school equivalency test) to the opportunity to earn an associate degree in Human Services Technology (HST), a curriculum designed to prepare students to foster the well-being of individuals.

"We have people who get their high school diplomas. We have people that get skills certificates. We have people who get associate degrees," says PCC Chair of Correctional Education Ed King. Loved ones come from across the state to attend the graduation ceremonies.

Some students go through every class offered, King notes. Instructors say the program is so highly regarded that those incarcerated at other correctional facilities apply to transfer to PCI with up to a two-year waiting list.

Schnell would like to expand the program. He and the instructors believe the more education they can provide, the more they can reduce recidivism.



PCC Chair of Correctional Education Ed King, PCC Coordinator of Prison Education Services Mary Grammer, Harvey Rountree, HST Instructor George Royal II, and President Zac Schnell. Courtesy of PCC.

Harvey Rountree completed his associate degree in HST while he was incarcerated at PCI. Rountree was released from state custody on April 30, and he was the first PCI student to participate in an on-campus commencement.



Courtesy of the N.C. Department of Adult Corrections.

PCC sometimes serves students at other correctional facilities, such as if they are transferred close to graduation. In February, Davidson Correctional Center celebrated Chubasco Reaves, who earned his associate degree with honors in HST from

PCC while serving his sentence. Schnell attended the ceremony to personally present Reaves his diploma.

These leaders believe in these students, seeing in them the capacity to be "rock stars." King has been working in corrections for more than 17 years.

"The reason I have been doing this for so long is I feel like it is our responsibility to make sure they have the skills they need when they get out to be productive taxpayers, productive members of society. When people look at television, they think these are hardened criminals. A lot of these students look like the guy next door," he said. "We are a proven commodity. When we provide them with a degree or a skill, they don't come back."

The goal, King said, is to provide a high-quality education so graduates have the ability to get a job, support their family, "and stay out." Of the 87 graduates who have earned an HST degree, only one has returned, said the instructors. King cites a moment of pride when he ran into a former student at the local Walmart and the student was able to introduce King to his family. These instructors often also serve as mentors.

Joshua Evens' story includes going from dropping out of college to being addicted to drugs to being convicted of a felony to now being a PCC graduate.

"Prison has accomplished its goal. It has corrected me," he said.

PCC is serving students from all educational settings

Walking through the main building at PCC, you would notice classrooms with doorways identified with PCA, which stands for Pamlico Christian Academy. The private school's campus for grades 6-12 is currently located at PCC as the academy breaks ground on a new 40-acre campus.

"The Career and College Promise (CCP) partnership with Pamlico Community College allows juniors and seniors to begin their occupational or college transfer pathway as dual-enrolled students by earning college credit and saving families thousands of dollars in higher education costs," says a 2023 letter from the PCA board of directors.

CCP is a program known statewide more widely for serving public school students. A new \$67 million public consolidated middle and high school that is under construction is within walking dis-

tance of PCC's Bayboro campus.

Pamlico Community College serves students from all educational settings: the local public schools, a charter school, home schools, and PCA.

Recently, about 40 high school students got an inside look at many of the STEM-focused programs offered by the college.

PCC recently brought students from Pamlico County High School, Arapahoe Charter School, and PCA together "to explore academic programs and opportunities offered by colleges and universities throughout North Carolina and beyond," according to this Facebook post.

Forty-one institutions participated in the College and University Fair, according to PCC, and the students were able to meet "with counselors and recruiters to ask questions and gather information about admissions, financial aid, and campus life."

The community college also offers a Fast Track to STEM summer camp.

Other ways PCC is serving the community

On any given day, you can find community members from Pamlico County on campus. Some are getting a haircut or massage from students studying cosmetology. Seniors are taking a class to learn basic computer skills. Others are taking a class in grant writing to learn how to raise funds for local nonprofits. PCC is also where community members learn CPR, how to operate a forklift in one day, or take the class needed to become a notary. PCC also offers cultural and life enrichment courses, like quilting, for community members.

The community college's library includes 5,000 comics and graphic novels from classics in the 1960s to modern anime and manga.

During EdNC's visit to PCC, we met with students and faculty, checked out specific programs, participated in judging a competition for students in cosmetology, met with instructors who serve students at PCI, and learned more about the challenges and opportunities facing Schnell and this community college.

"The reason I wanted to introduce you to all these people, the reason I wanted you to see the different things going on, the reason I wanted you to see our community is because that is me," said Schnell.

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NORTH CAROLINA IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE PAMLICO COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND DEBTORS OF DANIEL JOSEPH BARRETT
File No.: 25E001191-680

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against deceased, are notified to exhibit them to NICOLE DANNIELLE BARRETT ADMINISTRATOR on or before February 10th, 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 ADMINISTRATOR.

This 12TH OF NOVEMBER 2025

ESTATE OF JOSEPH BARRETT
C/O NICOLE DANNIELLE BARRETT
120 OLD MILL ROAD
CENTER CONWAY, NH 03813

Publish NOVEMBER 12, 19 AND 26 AND DECEMBER 3, 2025.

NORTH CAROLINA IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE PAMLICO COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND DEBTORS OF MARK F. ZETTL
File No.: 25E001200-680

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against deceased, are notified to exhibit them to CRYSTAL Z. PETERSEN, EXECUTOR on or before FEBRUARY 10, 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-name Executor.

This 12TH DAY OF NOVEMBER 2025

ESTATE OF MARK F. ZETTL
C/O CRYSTAL Z. PETERSEN
168 COVERED WAGON TRAIL
WEST HENRIETTA, NY 14586

Publish November 12, 19, 26 AND DECEMBER 3, 2025

NORTH CAROLINA IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE PAMLICO COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND DEBTORS OF SYLVIA LEE NORMAN
File No.: 25E001203-680

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against deceased, are notified to exhibit them to SANDRA NORMAN WING EXECUTOR on or before February 10th, 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 12TH OF NOVEMBER 2025

ESTATE OF SYLVIA LEE NORMAN
C/O SANDRA NORMAN WING
PO BOX 373
ORIENTAL, NC 28571

Publish NOVEMBER 12, 19, 26 AND DECEMBER 3, 2025.

Notice to Creditors North Carolina, Pamlico County

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against the Estate of Kathleen A. Wilkinson, deceased, of Merritt, NC, are notified to present the same to the personal representative listed below on or before February 26, 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 26th day of November, 2025.

Douglas Trevor Wilkinson, Executor of the Estate of Kathleen A. Wilkinson
c/o Quay & Associates, P.A.
412 Broad Street
New Bern, NC 28560

PUBLICATION DATES: 11/26/2025, 12/3/2025, 12/10/2025, 12/17/2025

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE 25SP001047-680

Under and by virtue of the power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust made by Theodore William Schroeder and Lynette Schroeder (PRESENT RECORD OWNER(S): Theodore William Schroeder) to PBRE, Inc., Trustee(s), dated July 31, 2018, and recorded in Book No. 639, at Page 783 in Pamlico County Registry, North Carolina, default having been made in the payment of the promissory note secured by the said Deed of Trust and the undersigned, Substitute Trustee Services, Inc. having been substituted as Trustee in said Deed of Trust by an instrument duly recorded in the Office of the Register of Deeds Pamlico County, North Carolina and the holder of the note evidencing said indebtedness having directed that the Deed of Trust be foreclosed, the undersigned Substitute Trustee will offer for sale at the courthouse door in Bayboro, Pamlico County, North Carolina, or the customary location designated for foreclosure sales, at 12:00 PM on December 8, 2025 and will sell to the highest bidder for cash the following real estate situated in Merritt in the County of Pamlico, North Carolina, and being more particularly described as follows:

TRACT ONE: On the west West side of the road leading into Whortonsville (Secondary Road 1326), BEGINNING in the western edge of said road, at a point located the following two courses and distances from the intersection of the centerlines of Secondary Road 1326 and 1327: Southwardly along the centerline of Secondary Road 1326 461 feet; thence North 87 deg. 45' West to an iron stake, the point of beginning; thence from

the beginning point, it being the northeast corner of a lot conveyed by Richard V. Fabrizio and wife to Joe M. Pegram and wife by deed dated December 5, 1973, South 89 deg. 45' West with the north line of said Pegram lot and extension thereof 210 feet; thence North 2 deg. 15' East 210 feet; thence North 89 deg. 45' East 210 feet to the western edge of Secondary Road 1326; thence South 2 deg. 15' West with the road edge 210 feet to the BEGINNING, containing one acre, more or less.

The above-description is from a survey and map by Floyd L. Suitt, Jr., R.L.S., dated November 24, 1973, copy of which is attached to the deed recorded in Book 173, Page 716, Pamlico County Registry. Said land is the same lot which was conveyed by T. R. Lupton and R.D. Lupton and wife to Charlie Deimo and wife, Rosa, by deed dated December 29, 1949 and recorded in Book 112 at page 560, Pamlico County Registry, except for the northern portion of approximately 12 feet, which is a part of the land conveyed to grantors by Geneva Lupton Woodard and husband by deed dated February 4, 1971 and recorded in Book 139 at 145 of said registry. This deed is made for the purpose of conveying the 12-foot strip on the northern side of the lot to take the place of the 12-foot strip which was taken from the south side of the one-acre lot and included in the conveyance to Joe M. Pegram and wife hereinabove referred to.

TRACT TWO In the Village of Whortonsville and containing 1.00 acres and being shown on the attached map entitled "BOUNDARY SURVEY FOR ROSA LUPTON DEIMO" by Dennis Fornes and Associates, dated October 21, 1994, said map is incorporated herein by reference. Together with improvements located thereon; said property being located at 66 Old Lupton Road, Merritt, North Carolina.

Trustee may, in the Trustee's sole discretion, delay the sale for up to three hours as provided in N.C.G.S. §45-21.23.

Should the property be purchased by a third party, that party must pay the excise tax, as well as the court costs of Forty-Five Cents (\$0.45) per One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) required by N.C.G.S. §7A-308(a)(1).

The property to be offered pursuant to this notice of sale is being offered for sale, transfer and conveyance "AS IS, WHERE IS." Neither the Trustee nor the holder of the note secured by the deed of trust/security agreement, or both, being foreclosed, nor the officers, directors, attorneys, employees, agents or authorized representative of either the Trustee or the holder of the note make any representation or warranty relating to the title or any physical, environmental, health or safety conditions existing in, on, at or relating to the

property being offered for sale, and any and all responsibilities or liabilities arising out of or in any way relating to any such condition are expressly disclaimed. Also, this property is being sold subject to all taxes, special assessments, and prior liens or prior encumbrances of record and any recorded releases. Said property is also being sold subject to applicable Federal and State laws.

A deposit of five percent (5%) of the purchase price, or seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750.00), whichever is greater, is required and must be tendered in the form of certified funds at the time of the sale.

If the trustee is unable to convey title to this property for any reason, the sole remedy of the purchaser is the return of the deposit. Reasons of such inability to convey include, but are not limited to, the filing of a bankruptcy petition prior to the confirmation of the sale and reinstatement of the loan without the knowledge of the trustee. If the validity of the sale is challenged by any party, the trustee, in its sole discretion, if it believes the challenge to have merit, may request the court to declare the sale to be void and return the deposit. The purchaser will have no further remedy.

Additional Notice for Residential Property with Less than 15 rental units, including Single-Family Residential Real Property

An order for possession of the property may be issued pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 45-21.29 in favor of the purchaser and against the party or parties in possession by the clerk of superior court of the county in which the property is sold.

Any person who occupies the property pursuant to a rental agreement entered into or renewed on or after October 1, 2007, may after receiving the notice of foreclosure sale, terminate the rental agreement by providing written notice of termination to the landlord, to be effective on a date stated in the notice that is at least 10 days but not more than 90 days, after the sale date contained in this notice of sale, provided that the mortgagor has not cured the default at the time the tenant provides the notice of termination. Upon termination of a rental agreement, the tenant is liable for rent due under the rental agreement prorated to the effective date of the termination.

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AROUND THE COUNTY

Grantsboro Jeff Roberts, *Correspondent*



Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening. I hope that this finds you all well with good health and full hearts from Thanksgiving. I know my family ate well the past week, as the leftovers must be eaten! We spent time with my dad, it was just him and my wife Branda as everyone else was just too busy. That is quite alright though sometimes those intimate gatherings are nice as you are able to have that time without multiple interruptions.

We are now in the Christmas season although Walmart has been in it since before Halloween! I love seeing all the decorations being displayed through the windows and yards throughout Grantsboro and surrounding areas. It makes for such a warm and inviting drive as you are out and about. Pamlico Gifts is one of those businesses that I see first one my way to anywhere, and their display can be seen as soon as I round the corner at Tideland EMC. The small business community always seems to decorate the best this time of year as those businesses are deeply tied to our communities. Now that I have my own small business I understand much better how much work is involved in running one. I couldn't imagine how much it takes for someone with a storefront.

I am sure there are quite a few events and gatherings coming up and I will do my best to post them here next week. My wife and I

joined my dad with his church at Mike's Farm this year and what an amazing time we had. I love the homestyle way they serve everyone. I used to visit Daniel Boone Inn in Boone, NC and they do the same style. It's nice to sit down with a large group and have a meal together like that. When we were done we enjoyed a lovely hayride which was spectacular to see all the lights and different scenes they had created.



I will leave you with this picture this week of a great blue heron. They always look like a grumpy old man to me.

Pamlico Betty Jo Rodgers, *Correspondent*



There was a planned turkey or ham give away at PCHS on Monday afternoon at 4:00 pm. The PCHS JROTC assisted with this event. The JROTC won their events at Ravens Rock State Park and have qualified to go to the national competition in Florida in March, 2026. We have many things to be proud of in Pamlico County, but especially our youth.

Broad Creek United Church of Christ hosted the five churches in the union on Sunday, November 30, 2025. They always gather at one of the five churches in the county for a joint service on fifth Sunday.

The Stonewall choir continues to prepare for their performance of the Christmas cantata, "Breath of Heaven," on December 7, 2025, at 6:00 pm. We are blessed to have Brooklyn Franklin, Joy Hanson, Greg Hubbell, Lily McGowan, Kaitlynn Mizelle, and Ann Stackhouse from Pamlico joining the regular choir members this year. Everyone is invited to come and share an evening of music, worship, and fellowship downstairs after the performance.

I guarantee you will receive a blessing.

Oriental will celebrate The Spirit of Christmas on December 12 and 13 this year. The Pamlico Chorale, the luminaries, the parade, the Baptist Church choir, the children's live nativity, and many other activities make this a special weekend in Oriental. But bundle up; it will be brrrrr ... cold.

Stonewall Methodist Church will have their Blue Christmas Service on December 21 at 7:00 pm and a Candlelight Communion on Christmas Eve at 6:00 pm.

Celebrating birthdays in December are Denise Baldwin (12/3), Sandra Norman Wing (12/5), Hannah Grace Rodgers (12/8), Claudia Bemis (12/11), Jimmy Jones (12/13), Carly Muse (12/15), Ernest Dunn and Sam Lane (12/21), Beth Stowe Wood (12/23), Savannah Alexander (12/24), Jesus (12/25), Larry Gwaltney (12/26) and Pam Hannah (12/27). Tommy and Jenny Lupton will celebrate their wedding anniversary on December 6.

Have a blessed week. Scared? Take Spiritual Vitamin S. "Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard." (1 Samuel 22:23)

Vandemere Sandra Snipes, *Correspondent*



Greetings from Vandemere! OMG the holidays and December are here! We hope everyone was surrounded with love, family, and friends as we enjoyed Thanksgiving this past week. Make sure to take a moment to recognize how blessed we are and how we can pay it forward and be a blessing to others

I am blessed to be in a community that values taking a small moment to celebrate together. Vandemere's holiday celebrations are right around the corner.

Our Christmas Tree Lighting will be held on Saturday, December 6, beginning at 5:30 p.m. Enjoy an evening filled with music by the Pamlico County High School Jazz Group, the Saint

Peter Missionary Baptist Church Choir, great fellowship, and singing around the bonfire. There will be a few small surprises for the children, along with everyone's favorite treat—s'mores!

On Monday, December 8, the Town will host its annual Holiday Potluck starting at 6:30 p.m. The Commissioners will provide the main dishes and drinks, and guests are invited to bring their favorite side dish to share. Expect plenty of laughter, retro holiday songs, and a fun game or two. Please RSVP at 252-745-5480 for this event.

Let's keep the joy, warmth, and community spirit alive as we navigate through the holiday season. See what Vandemere is all about at www.vandemerenc.com

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ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

The Town of Oriental is seeking bidders for the repair of the Dinghy Dock and seawall. The RFP and associated documents are available at www.townoforiental.com under BIDS, or at Town Hall, 507 Church St Oriental, NC between the hours of 8AM and 4 PM M-Th, 8AM-3PM F.

The proposals will be opened at Town Hall (address above) on December 22, 2PM.

The Board has the right to reject any and all proposals. A mandatory pre-bid meeting will be held December 16th, 2025, 2PM at the dinghy dock.

Questions can be directed to Diane H. Miller, MPA, ICMA-CM at manager@townoforiental.com.

PRIME TIME DECEMBER

Breakfast with Friends
Brantley's Restaurant
Thursday's - December 4, 11, 18
8:30 am
Please join the group at Brantley's (Center Room) for breakfast. The breakfast will continue every Thursday at 8:30. (Except for when they are closed). Come as you are able. Breakfast is on your own. All are welcome!

Prayer Shawl
Thursday's - December 4, 11, 18
10:00 am
Oriental United Methodist Church - Fellowship Hall
Crochet, knit shawls or lap robes to share with those that are in need of comfort and support. Please call Leigh Price for details. 919.219.2446.

Game Day
Wednesday - December 10
2-4pm
Oriental United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall
Join us for an afternoon of fun filled board games, cards and fellowship! All skill levels are welcome!

Creative Card Making Class
Wednesday - December 10
10am - Noon
Oriental United Methodist Church
The card making class meets monthly on the 2nd Wednesday. The class is led by Cheryl McAskill, a Stampin' Up demonstrator. Cost is \$25/month. Advanced Registration.

Digital Skills Session - Telehealth - Connecting with your Doctors Digitally
Monday - December 15

10am to noon at Oriental United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall

Learn how to utilize your computer or phone to connect with your health care team virtually. This course will help you maximize your time with your health care professionals. This is the 4th session in a 5 part series.

Fun, Food and Fellowship
Oriental United Methodist Church
Thursday - December 4
10am - 1pm
Join us for a simple cooking session, mild exercise and meaningful connections! All are invited! Hands on culinary lessons for healthy eating, mild exercises to stay active and build new friendships. Call 252-675-0909 to make your reservation.

Prime Time's mission is to provide services and activities promoting the well-being for the 50 plus community in Oriental and Pamlico County. Prime Time brings together many resources helping area residents sustain an independent and enriched quality of life. All are welcome! Have a suggestion for a program or day trip, please contact Debora Steenson @ 252.675.0909 or email director@primetimepamlico.org

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
TOWN OF MINNESOTT BEACH

The Town of Minnesott Beach Board of Commissioners will have a Public Hearing at 7:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter can be reached, on the 9th day of December, 2025, at the Minnesott Beach Town Hall located at 11758 NC 306 S, Minnesott Beach, NC for the purpose of holding a public hearing proposing amending the Code of Ordinances to change violations of the Ordinances from misdemeanors to civil violations unless otherwise noted in an ordinance as follows:

- § 10.99 General Penalty
- § 70.99 Traffic Code General Provisions
- § 71.01 Required Obedience to Traffic Ordinance
- § 76.16 Unlawful Removal of Impounded Vehicle
- § 76.44 Penalty
- § 90.03 Street Repair
- § 91.07 Dilapidated Buildings and Abandoned Structures (E) (3)(d)
- § 93.51 Procedure is Alternative to other Authorized Procedures
- § 36.99 Penalty is hereby added to Chapter 36 Civil Emergency

The Regular Board of Commissioners' meeting will begin immediately following the Public Hearing.

COUNTY OF PAMLICO
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE is hereby given that the Board of Commissioners of the County of Pamlico, North Carolina has scheduled a Public Hearing as follows:
DATE: January 5, 2026
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: County Commissioner Meeting Room
202 Main Street
Bayboro, NC 28515

The purpose of this Public Hearing is to receive comments from the public on the following proposed amendment:
Consolidation of Human Services Agency

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)



PAMLICO COUNTY LIBRARY
SANTA PARTY

Free Photos and Storytime with Santa
 Read with Frankie
 Library Scavenger Hunt
 Craft

December 13th @ 11am

Imagine Pamlico Board Member Selected for Prestigious Rural Investment Collaborative Program



Imagine Pamlico's Founder, Dr. Lenn Murrelle, MSPH, PhD

Pamlico County, NC — December 1, 2025— Imagine Pamlico proudly announces that Lenn Murrelle, MSPH, PhD, founder and current board member of Imagine Pamlico, has been selected for the Rural Investment Collaborative's Community Investment Program, a highly competitive regional initiative supporting rural leaders who are driving innovative community and economic development. A primary goal of the Rural Investment Collaborative Program is to address the challenge of access to funding that rural communities such as Pamlico County face. The 16-week cohort begins in January 2026.

The Community Investment Training program convenes a select group of rural changemakers from across the region to strengthen their capacity to attract and manage community investments. Through technical assistance, peer learning, and expert-led training, participants will learn to design and advance transformational projects that enhance local resilience, equity, and opportunity. Participants were chosen based on the strength of their projects, intended community impact and the applicants' program readiness. Geographic representation was also taken into consideration with applicants representing rural regions within the Richmond Fed's service area (Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia). Each applicant is required to submit a community or economic development project to serve as their focus during the training along with confirmation from supporting partners that the project would support a broader community strategy.

"Dr. Murrelle's selection is both a tremendous honor and a reflection of the leadership on Imagine Pamlico's team," said Katie Shorter, fellow Imagine Pamlico board member. "This opportunity will bring national expertise and fresh strategies to support Imagine Pamlico's vision for a healthier, more connected Pamlico County community."

As part of the program, Dr. Murrelle will collaborate with peers, national partners, and funders to accelerate community investment efforts that align with Imagine Pamlico's Rural Health and Wellness initiative, which brings together local residents to improve the overall well-being of all who call Pamlico County home.

"I am deeply honored to represent Pamlico County in this national network of rural leaders," said Dr. Murrelle. "The knowledge, partnerships, and resources from this program will help us bring greater investment and innovation to our community's health and wellness efforts."

The Rural Investment Collaborative's Community Investment Program is supported by leading national foundations and institutions committed to advancing rural prosperity through equitable and sustainable investment. For more information about this announcement, access this link: https://www.richmondfed.org/press_room/our_news/2025/20251124_cit



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Red Cross urges holiday cooking and decorating safety to prevent home fires

The Red Cross responds to 20% more home fires during the holiday months

CHARLOTTE, N.C., NOVEMBER 25, 2025 — Home fires increase significantly during the holiday months, often sparked by cooking accidents, unattended candles or unsafe decorations. The American Red Cross North Carolina Region urges everyone to take simple steps to stay safe while celebrating – from keeping a close eye on what's cooking to checking holiday lights and decorations for hazards. By taking precautions now, families can help prevent tragedies and enjoy a safer, happier holiday season.

"One in five people the Red Cross assists after home fires are helped in just the holiday months," said Allison Taylor, Regional Executive, North Carolina Region. "Home fires can strike quickly, leaving you with as little as two minutes to escape. Help protect your loved ones by practicing your home fire escape drill until everyone can get out in less than two minutes."

COOKING SAFETY TIPS Follow these safety tips and visit redcross.org/fire for more information, including a fire escape plan to practice with your family.

- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling or broiling food. If you must leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- Use a timer to remind yourself that the stove or oven is on.
- Avoid wearing loose clothing or dangling sleeves while cooking.
- Keep kids and pets at least three feet away from cooking areas.
- Keep anything that can catch on fire — potholders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper or plastic bags, food packaging, and towels or curtains — away from your stove top and oven or any other appliance that generates heat.
- Clean cooking surfaces on a regular basis to prevent grease buildup.
- Consider purchasing a fire extinguisher to keep in your kitchen.
- Always check the kitchen before going to bed or leaving home to make sure all stoves, ovens and small appliances are turned off.

HOLIDAY DECORATING AND HEATING SAFETY December is the peak month for candle fires – which cause about 20 home fires a day on average in the U.S. – and heating equipment remains one of the leading causes of home fires.

- Provide at least three feet of space for all heating equipment. This is critical because most home heating fire tragedies occur when flammable items like furniture, rugs and drapes are too close.
- In addition, never leave space heaters unattended — as they're involved in most fatal home heating fires.
- If you must use a space heater, place it on a level, hard and nonflammable surface, such as a ceramic tile floor. Don't place it on rugs and carpets, or near bedding and drapes. And turn it off every time you leave the room or go to sleep.
- If you must use candles, keep them away from anything that could burn, and place them out of reach from pets and children. Never leave burning candles unattended.
- You can also help keep your family safe by testing your smoke alarms monthly and practicing your home fire escape plan until everyone can escape in two minutes or less.
- Visit redcross.org/fire for more information, including an escape plan to practice with your family. You can also download our free Emergency app (search "American Red Cross" in app stores).
- Smoke alarms save lives. Install a smoke alarm near your kitchen, on each level of your home, near sleeping areas, and inside and outside bedrooms if you sleep with doors closed. Use the test button to check it each month. Replace all batteries at least once a year. If you cannot afford to purchase smoke alarms or are physically unable to install one, the Red Cross may be able to help. Contact your local Red Cross for more information.

HOME FIRE CAMPAIGN SAVES LIVES Since October 2014, the Red Cross Home Fire Campaign, working with community partners, has saved at least 2,489 lives by educating families about fire safety, helping them create escape plans and installing free smoke alarms in high-risk areas across the country. To learn more about the campaign and how you can get involved, visit redcross.org/homefires.

About the American Red Cross:

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides comfort to victims of disasters; supplies about 40% of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; distributes international humanitarian aid; and supports veterans, military members and their families. The Red Cross is a nonprofit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to deliver its mission. For more information, please visit redcross.org or [CruzRojaAmericana.org](https://www.cruzrojaamericana.org), or visit us on Twitter at @RedCross.



Holiday with **Hoff 'n' Finch**
 a Benefit for The Old Theater

December 7
 at 3:00 PM

609 Broad Street in Oriental

A portion of the proceeds will go toward operation costs at The Old Theater

Tickets at Nautical Wheelers
 \$25 (\$20 for members, military, students)
www.oldtheater.org

More Information: mail@oldtheater.org



Tips for first-time holiday hosts

The holiday season is a busy time of year. From holiday shopping to readying the home for guests, there's no shortage of things to accomplish in a relatively brief amount of time. Seasoned holiday enthusiasts may be ready to put their game faces on and tackle tasks with ease. But for first-time holiday hosts, the prospect of crossing items off to-do lists may require a little extra assistance.

According to Dr. Vanessa Kennedy, a clinical psychologist at Driftwood Recovery, holiday hosting can "lead to the pressure to curate picture-perfect moments, creating stress and anxiety." The following are pointers those new to holiday hosting can employ to simplify the process and enjoy the holidays a little more.

- Do as much prep work in advance as possible. Giving yourself extra time to get things done can help immensely. Grocery shop one day, prepare food the next, clean the house one day, and set the table or arrange decor on another. Minor task can be left for the morning of the day guests arrive.
- Cook and freeze items. Utilize recipes that enable you to cook in bulk and then store foods until you need them. Casseroles, baked pasta dishes, freezable soups, and ready-to-bake cookie doughs made in advance will save a lot of time closer to the holidays.
- Stock the pantry. If holiday hosting involves overnight guests, be sure to keep easy items on hand so guests can help themselves. Dry goods or pre-packaged muffins for breakfast, chips or pretzels for late-night snacks, granola bars, or store made croissants can fit the bill. Put everything in a dedicated basket so guests can grab items as needed. Stock the refrigerator with water, seltzer, iced teas, and sodas, and make a full pot of coffee in the morning so guests can pour their own.
- Avoid complicated cocktails. You don't want to be stuck mixing drinks all evening. Instead, make it simple for guests to help themselves. Wine, beer, premade punches, or even one special drink are ideal.
- Consider hiring a caterer. If the idea of a homecooked meal feels like climbing Mount Everest, swap out some items for store-bought alternatives, or work with a favorite restaurant or caterer to secure foods that only need to be reheated and served.
- Free up closet and room space. Guests will be coming with a lot of stuff, particularly if you live in a cold climate. Make room in the entry closet for guests' coats and boots. Be sure you can accommodate suitcases or overnight bags. Set aside an area where guests can deposit their wrapped gifts.

Holiday hosting can be a whirlwind of activity, but novice hosts can quickly get into the swing of things.

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Ugly Sweater Party

Everyone loves an ugly Christmas sweater party. Invite your friends over, ugly sweaters required, host a contest for the best (ugliest) sweater, make spiked eggnog, and set up a DIY photo booth area with funny props. This Instagrammable Christmas party idea is a true crowd favorite and will never get old.

This is one of the few events where the motto is "the uglier, the better." When it comes to Christmas, nothing really gets you in a festive mood like seeing tacky reindeer, Santas, and light-up Christmas trees sewn into cozy sweaters. What better way to take in the holiday cheer than an ugly Christmas sweater party.

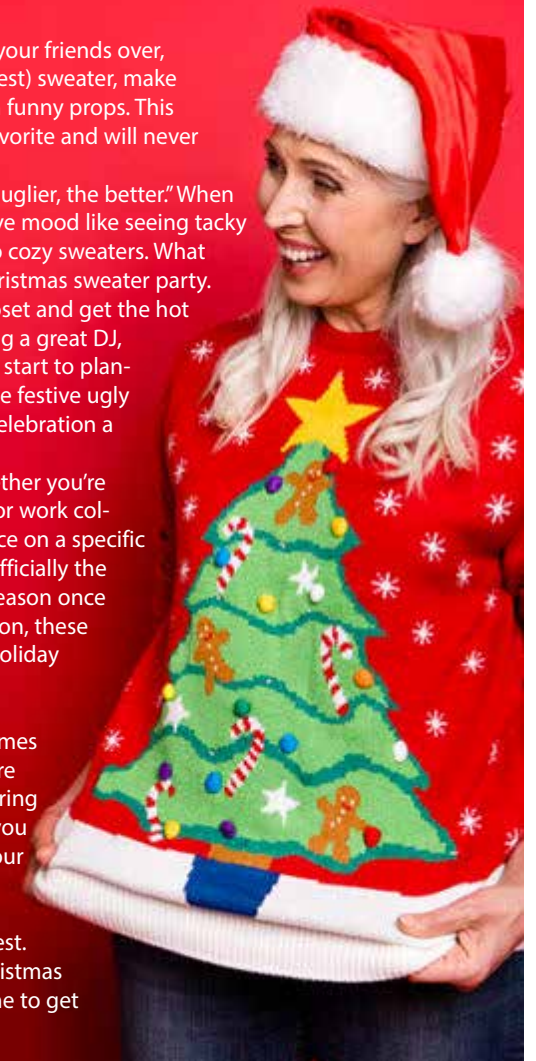
It's time to pull the cheesiest sweaters out of your closet and get the hot chocolate flowing because it's time to celebrate. Finding a great DJ, friendly Santa Claus, and finding winter decor is a great start to planning a memorable party. Luckily for you, we've got some festive ugly Christmas sweater party ideas to make this Christmas celebration a jolly good time.

This type of event can work in any environment, whether you're planning a day for your close friends, extended family, or work colleagues. The best part is that it doesn't have to take place on a specific day, although National Ugly Christmas Sweater Day is officially the third Friday in December. Whether you're starting the season once November ends or hosting a Christmas in July celebration, these ugly Christmas sweater party ideas will get you in the holiday spirit.

Ugly Sweater Themed Invitations

A party like this needs a fun introduction. When it comes to your invites, they can display all sorts of designs. We're talking quilt-style frames, clashing patterns, yarn and string light borders, needlepoint reindeer, and anything else you can think of. Going all out with this theme will make your party feel so much more fun.

You can find custom invites on Etsy, or for an extra special touch, you can DIY them with ideas from Pinterest. Send them off digitally or put them in multicolored Christmas themed envelopes so your loved ones will have a of time to get their sweaters ready!



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Tuesday, December 9 – Resident Panel

Featuring current ThriveMore residents sharing stories and perspectives on why they love calling a ThriveMore community home.

Wednesday, December 17 – Life Plan 101

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A Season of HOPE & SERVICE

Honoring Our Students, Serving Our Community,
Celebrating God's Faithfulness

Remembering Noah Sadler

A Life That Reflected Joy, Courage, and Christ

Pamlico Christian Academy is grieving the loss of one of our own. On Friday, November 21, our dear student Noah Sadler entered the presence of Jesus after a courageous battle with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Noah was a beloved member of our school community, having attended PCA from preschool through 10th grade. His passing leaves a space no words can fully fill, yet his life leaves an imprint that will remain with us always. Noah faced childhood cancer with a strength and gentleness that humbled everyone who walked beside him. Even as treatments intensified, Noah continued to share the same steady kindness, quick smile, and quiet humor that made him so loved among his friends and teachers. His journey reminded us—sometimes painfully—how unfair and fragile life can be. Childhood cancer is a burden no family should have to bear, yet Noah bore it with a grace far beyond his years.

Our Head of School shared, "Noah was one of the kindest, sweetest spirits I have ever had the opportunity to be around." In the hardest seasons, he carried a joy that didn't ignore suffering but somehow shone through it. Noah's life gently called all of us



to the better parts of ourselves. In these days of mourning, our staff has been challenged to honor Noah by extending the same kindness he so freely gave—even when hearts are heavy. Noah loved deeply, trusted fully, and lived with a faith that many adults spend a lifetime trying to understand. Losing someone so young naturally leads us to the mystery of God's timing—questions without easy answers. Yet even in sorrow, we cling to the promise that "weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning" (Psalm 30:5). Our comfort is knowing Noah is now healed, whole, and held securely in the arms of Christ.

Our Lower and Upper School directors offered words that echo throughout our halls: Noah was a fighter, a fantastic friend, and a joy to teach. He will forever be remembered for his kindness, his smile, and the way he inspired others simply by being himself. As a school family, we are supporting one another, offering safe spaces for students to ask questions, talk, pray, and grieve. Pastors and staff members are available for any student who needs someone to sit with them as they process this loss.

We invite our broader community to join us in lifting the Sadler family in prayer. Pray for peace that surpasses understanding. Pray for strength for each day. And pray for all families affected by childhood cancer—families who, like Noah's, walk roads most of us can hardly imagine.

Noah's time on earth was far too short, but he filled it—and us—with extraordinary light. His life is a reminder that even in the valley, God is near, and hope is real. We will carry Noah's memory forward with love, gratitude, and the quiet assurance that this goodbye is not the end of his story.



Sharing Christ's Love through Giving



During this **Season of Servitude**, our students and staff embraced projects that reflect PCA's core values of compassion and servant leadership. They assembled shoeboxes for children around the world and gathered food for families in need in our community—simple acts that show the love of Christ to those we may never meet. From classroom collections to community outreach, our students continue to show that faith in action doesn't require grand gestures—only willing hearts. We are grateful for every family who donated and prayed over these efforts. Because of you, many will experience hope this Christmas season.

Looking Ahead with Gratitude

As we prepare to move into our new building, our hearts are full of gratitude. What began as a step of faith is becoming a reality because of the commitment of families, donors, volunteers, and prayer partners. We look forward to welcoming students into this new space in January, celebrating a milestone God has made possible.

As Phase 2 begins, we are reminded that this work is far more than bricks and walls—it is creating spaces where students can grow, thrive, and be strengthened in their walk with Christ. Much remains to be built, and every prayer, every act of support, and every willing heart helps carry this mission forward. pamlicochristianacademy.org/capital-campaign/



Merry Christmas

and HAPPY NEW YEAR

During this season of celebration, we pray that your family experiences the peace, hope, and joy that only Christ can give.

Thank you for walking with us, praying with us, and building this community together. We are blessed beyond measure by each of you.

May God's presence fill your homes this Christmas and lead us all into a new year strengthened by His grace.



There are more stars in the universe than grains of sand on Earth.

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COASTAL LIVING

Spirit of Christmas 2025 Events

Light up Oriental Decorating Contest judging will be Monday, December 8 through Wednesday, December 10



Volunteers are needed for Luminaries. Schedule is as follows:

- Pre-lighting candles: Tuesday, December 9, 12 noon at 400 Ragan Road
- Luminary Assembly and deployment: Friday, December 12 from 1-4pm beginning at 400 Ragan Road
- Luminary Lighting: Friday, December 12 at 5pm
- Luminary Collection: Saturday, December 13 at 8am

****You do not need to volunteer for all of the events and there is no sign up, just pick an event and show up to help! Contact Marsha at 252-675-5142 for more information.****

Thursday, December 11 at 5pm the Tree of Names and Lights will be lit in Lou Mac Park, Light up Oriental winners announced, Townwide Cookie Exchange - bring a dozen, get a dozen while enjoying hot chocolate and caroling with the Uhoos.

Friday, December 12 activities beginning at 5pm
Lighted Kayak flotilla in the Harbor
Lighting of the Christmas Star in the Harbor
Luminaries after sunset
Oriental United Methodist Church Christmas Sing-a-Long with the Pamlico Chorale and a visit from Santa at 7pm

Saturday, December 13
Business Open Houses throughout the day
Breakfast with Santa at Brantley's from 8-11am, decorate a Gingerbread House from 9-11am in the back banquet room - first come, first served basis.
Oriental Christmas Parade at 1pm
Oriental United Methodist Church Live Nativity at 3:30pm

Questions?
Lighted Kayak Flotilla - Larry Summers - 252-675-0467
Luminaries - Marsha Paplham - 252-675-5142
Parade Master - Bobbi McKenney - 916-730-2014
Program/Events - Marsha Paplham - 252-675-5142



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Prospective home buyers are widening their home search areas to find new places to live. The National Association of Realtors says the median distance that buyers traveled to their new homes was 50 miles in 2022, which was triple the median distance that most people clocked in the 30 years prior. Still, the NAR 2022 Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers also indicated one-quarter of buyers studied traveled more than 470 miles to find new homes.

Home prices have been historically high in recent years and those prices are not expected to drop anytime soon, so a greater number of people may be looking for homes well outside of their current metro areas. Buying a house far from home base requires some extra know-how, and these tips can help the process.

- Hook up with a local real estate agent early on. Working with a qualified agent can facilitate the process of a long-distance move. As a long-distance buyer, you likely won't be available to drop into a new listing on a moment's notice if you live hundreds of miles away. A local real estate agent can visit homes and present his or her findings, or even provide video walk-throughs so you can see properties in real time. This person also will offer guidance through every step of a real estate transaction.
- Start calling for estimates. Once you've zeroed in on where you would like to move, start pricing out moving companies that can safely transport all of your belongings from point A to point B. Some homeowners prefer using a storage/moving service, par-

ticularly if there is a lag between when the current residence is sold and the new one is available. Also, storing items prior means having access to an entirely empty home to make improvements before furniture and other belongings are moved in.

- Make a plan and stick to the schedule. There are a lot of moving pieces to a long-distance move. It is important to make a task list early on and cross off each job as it is completed to help stay on track. Strongly consider purchasing moving insurance to protect belongings in the move, as many moving companies offer limited insurance, and check to see if your automotive and home insurance plans cover moving.
- Create an inventory and packing system. Itemize all of your belongings and establish a system for packing so that you'll know where each item is. This can help you recognize if any boxes go missing. Also, pack boxes with distance in mind, as things will likely get jostled more so than if they were only traveling down the street.
- Consider moving during the offseason. Lots of people prioritize moving in the spring and summer, particularly if they have children attending school. This is the busiest and most expensive time to move. Moving during less busy times of year to move can cut down on stress and may be more frugal.

These are just some tips to think about when making a long-distance move.

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December is National Safe Toys and Gifts Month

With the holidays just around the corner, gifts for children we love are top of mind. But many toys available today can be hazardous, especially if used incorrectly. About 200,000 kids end up in the emergency room with toy-related injuries each year.

Here are some guidelines to remember when choosing, giving, and playing with toys:

- **Age-appropriateness** – Toys intended for older children may pose a risk to younger, curious siblings. Consider your child’s age when purchasing a toy or game. Read all age guidelines on the package as well as instructions and warning labels. Separate toys by age when storing at home.
- **Choking hazards** – Look for small parts or other potential choking hazards before you settle on the perfect toy. Keep a special eye on small game pieces, things that resemble candy or food items, even soft, spongy toys that can be bitten into. Avoid marbles and balls with a diameter of 1.75 inches or less for children under age 3.
- **Toss out broken toys** – Check toys regularly for damage or broken parts. Sharp edges can cut, and small pieces are a choking hazard. If a toy is broken, make sure the child gives it to a parent to fix or throw away.
- **Have a helmet** – For riding toys like skateboards, skates, and scooters, make sure a helmet and safety gear are sized to fit and worn properly. Give appropriate safety gear at the same time with sporting equipment. Teach children how to use them.
- **Safe storage** – Put toys away when playtime is over to prevent trips and falls. Store toys in bins, baskets, on shelves or in a toy box. Make sure there are no holes or hinges that could catch little fingers. Outdoor toys should be stored in a safe, dry place to prevent rust, mold, and other damage.
- **Choose non-toxics** – When selecting art materials, including crayons and paint sets for young children, choose washable and non-toxic options. Look for those marked with the designation “ASTM D-4236.” This means the product has been reviewed by a toxicologist and is properly labeled for chronic health hazards.
- **Avoid the worst offenders** – BB guns, lawn darts, toys that shoot projectiles and other realistic-looking toy weapons are frequently listed among the most dangerous choices. Balloons, high-powered magnets, noise-making items, battery-operated toys and those that require electricity are also hazards for a variety of reasons.
- **After gifting** – Throw away packaging like plastic wrappers, small zip-ties, rubber bands and cardboard boxes promptly after opening as these can be choking hazards. If toys require assembly, have an adult put it together per the instructions. Demonstrate how to use the toy safely.
- **Stay up to date on toy recalls** – The organization Safe Kids compiles product recalls specific to children and sends twice-monthly e-mail alerts for recent recalls. Sign up for the latest recall information at <http://safekids.salsalabs.org/recalls-newsletter/index.html>.

Still, play time is an essential part of a child’s healthy growth and development, and toys can help support learning. Whenever possible, opt for toys that are creative, engaging, durable and environmentally friendly.

There are also a number of non-toy options for holiday gifts that children can appreciate. Art and craft supplies, books or audiobooks, board games and puzzles, tickets to a museum or special event, a camera, musical instrument, kitchen tools, camping gear, travel items, classes or subscriptions are all wonderful options to inspire a new hobby or provide special memories, all while ensuring a safe and happy holiday.



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