

APRIL 2019

# The Rant

SANFORD, NORTH CAROLINA

*Monthly*

## THE PRINCE DILEMMA



**FIRST EDITION**



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# The Rant *Monthly*

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### Editorial

Gordon Anderson | gordon@rantnc.com  
Billy Liggett | billy@rantnc.com  
Jonathan Owens | jonathan@rantnc.com

### Advertising

Brandon Allred | brandon@rantnc.com  
919.605.1479

### Contributors

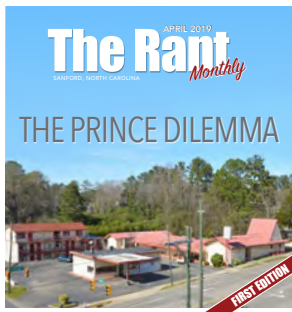
Lisa Whelchel, Kim Fields, Mindy Cohn, Nancy McKeon, Charlotte Rae, Mackenzie Astin, Cloris Leachman, Felice Schachter and Julie Piekarski

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### ABOUT THE COVER

The Prince Down Town motel has been the site of more than 130 calls to the Sanford Police Department and numerous arrests over the past two years. Conditions of the nearly 70-year-old structure are poor, as are the living conditions inside. But the Prince does serve a purpose for the city — it's one of the only options for many who can't afford long-term housing. The Rant looks at the problems at the Prince and the possible solutions.

STORY: PAGE 8

The Rant Monthly is located in beautiful Sanford, North Carolina. Please address all correspondence to LPH Media LLC, 3096 South Horner Boulevard #126, Sanford, NC, 27332. Editorial email: gordon@rantnc.com or billy@rantnc.com. Advertising: brandon@rantnc.com. The Rant Monthly is published monthly (obvs). The Rant Monthly is wholly owned and operated by LPH Media LLC, a North Carolina corporation. Submissions of all kinds are welcome. This publication is free — one per reader, please. Removal of this newspaper from any distribution point for purposes other than reading it constitutes theft, and violators are subject to prosecution. Printed by SunBelt Press in Dunn, North Carolina. Copyright 2019, LPH Media LLC, all rights reserved.

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# If print is really sinking, then let's all just go down with the ship

By Billy Liggett

The newspaper industry has been in decline for 25 years now. Nearly half of the people who were reading papers in 1994 are still reading them today.

And on that note, I'm excited to announce The Rant has launched a new print product.

~\\_(\ツ)\\_/

If I sound less than confident, it's because I was going for what we "in the business" call a humorous anecdote to start my first column in the first printed newspaper I've ever owned (or, "co-owned," as I'm contractually obligated to say henceforth). In actuality, I'm practically Panglossian (look it up) to be doing this.

Damn the statistics. I'm home.

I'm sure there are many questions to be answered. Why print? Why paper and ink? Why do I have to physically turn these pages instead of clicking a button? Why can't I



*"The real question is 'Why not print?' We've got ink in our bloods and mortgages that need to be paid."*

watch Youtube on here? Is this flammable?

These are all mostly great questions.

And while my answer probably won't satisfy industry analysts, there's a very simple reason why we're doing a printed version of The Rant.

It just feels right, Mark. It just feels right.

There's more, of course, for those looking for further justification. This decision has been anything but hasty. A little history, if I may?

The Rant was formed way back in 2008 when I and fellow *Sanford Herald* writers Gordon Anderson and Jonathan Owens branched out and started a small weekly 90-minute radio show on Central Caroli-

na Community College's public airwaves, WDCC 90.5 FM. The show was odd — we mixed in the news of the week from the paper with attempts at comedy — and we loved it. It trudged along with the occasional hiatus until 2013, when a meddling state representative, *Friend of the Rant* Mike Stone, had us kicked off the air unceremoniously for criticizing him. (Again, look it up ... it made the news!)

Part revenge and part desire to keep being The Rant, we turned our website into a news site in 2014. In 2017, we made a conscious effort to invest more time and energy into the site. Our traffic grew exponentially that year. It got bigger in 2018, and this year we're on pace for more than 1 million page views. All the while, Sanford's more

established news source continues to work behind a paywall online, opening the door for "nobodies" like us to make an impact.

To summarize, this paper you're holding in your hands today and will one day line your bird cage, puppy's pee corner or your child's bed when you're too tired to do laundry ... this paper is 11 years in the making. Despite our best efforts, The Rant is an established local brand. And The Rant is growing.

So the real question here is: Why not print? We've got ink in our bloods and mortgages that need to be paid. If it fails, it fails. At least we're going to have a good time dying.

□

*Billy Liggett is one-third of The Rant and one-fourth of a short-lived all-ukulele Beatles cover band. His column will appear in every edition of The Rant Monthly until we sell out to a large conglomerate looking for a tax write-off.*

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## COVER STORY

# THE PROBLEM WITH THE PRINCE

*Crime and drugs are mainstays, and surrounding neighborhoods and businesses are fed up. But calling the Prince Down Town a ‘public nuisance’ is complicated ... for many, it’s all they have.*

*Story and photos by Billy Liggett*

**O**f the group of five men and women gathered in the parking lot — chatting and drinking from brown bag-covered bottles around noon on a mild mid-March Sunday — only one agrees to talk about what it’s like to live at the Prince Down Town.

“Bob” isn’t here because he wants to be ... like others, he’s here because there are few other options.

The living conditions are poor — working heat, electricity and running water aren’t always reliable. Crime, on the other hand, is. But where else can a man, woman or family find a roof over their heads for as little as \$30 a night?

“It is what it is,” says Bob, who asked that his real name not be used as his stay at the Prince is related to what he calls “domestic issues.” “It’s a place for drugs. A place for prostitution. But it’s also just a place for some people who are down on their luck. It happens to everybody.”

More than 130 calls were made to the Sanford Police Department regarding complaints made or alleged crimes at the Prince Downtown Motel from January 2017 through February 2019, according to SPD reports made

public to The Rant in March. From those calls, more than 40 arrests were made in that two-year span, many of them on physical assault and drug- or alcohol-related charges.

Not everybody who lives or stays at the Prince is a criminal, and not all of the crimes reported at the Prince in the last two years have been committed by its residents. But whether it’s coming from people living in the historic neighborhoods that surround the motel, the city officials and businesses looking to revitalize Carthage Street and Downtown Sanford or the men and women who take the time to make weekly visits there to bring food and clothes to its residents, there is one thought shared by them all.

Something needs to change at the Prince Down Town.

“Everybody knows what’s going on here, and nobody’s doing anything about it,” says Bob, who in his next breath defends the motel’s owner and says you’ll find similar problems in other parts of Sanford or at a similar motel on U.S. 1, the Palomino. “I understand the perception. But everybody understands what this place is. They know what goes on here. As long as it stays in its place, they’re not going to do anything about it.”

**'TO PUT IT BEST, IT'S POOR'**

The Town House Motel was built around the 1950s and early 60s, around the time Carthage Street doubled as U.S. 1 through Downtown Sanford (today's route was constructed in 1957). The motel has gone through a number of transformations through its nearly 70 years.

According to Sanford City Councilman and historian Jimmy Haire, the Prince's current office was originally a Gulf gas station next door to the motel. Later, it became a real estate office and eventually was purchased by the motel. At one point, the building served as a makeshift bar to which patrons could bring their own alcohol — this was prior to the passage of “liquor by the drink” in the late 1970s — and drink on site.

According to records available on the North Carolina Secretary of State website and at the Lee County Register of Deeds, current owner Bhadresh Shah purchased the property in 2006, before which it had operated as the Economy Inn for several years.

Shah declined to comment for this story in March when asked about the perception of his motel, the police reports from the past two years and the condition of his rooms. He also asked two representatives of The Rant to leave his property.

The Prince today is a far cry from the shiny motor lodge it was in its early days. Based on outward appearances alone, it's a dump. The paint is peeling, windows are boarded up in the former lobby area, stairwells are littered with empty bottles and cigarette butts, and on this day in March, trash was strewn in the grassy area near the motel along Vance Street (next to an empty shopping cart).

While The Rant is unable to provide first-person accounts to describe the condition of the rooms, there are numerous online testimonies that paint an accurate picture of the motel today. Of the 42 Google reviews of the Prince posted in the past two years, more than half rate it as a one-star motel.

“I've stayed in some sketchy places, and this is by far the seediest I have seen anywhere in the country,” wrote Brandon Wheeler. “The room was decrepit with exposed wiring and drywall. We checked for bed bugs under the mattress and instead found roaches. There is mold on the ceiling and cobwebs everywhere. The bathroom included exposed drywall, no hot water and dirty tiles.”

A 90-second profanity-laced video posted to YouTube by Lamont Jordan showed cobwebs



The Prince Down Town was first built around the 1950s-60s and was originally called the Town House Motel — guests were mostly travelers of U.S. 1 around the time when today's Carthage Street served as the major highway before the new (and current) route was completed in 1957. Above is a comparison between the Town House Motel then and the Prince Down Town today.

in his room, boarded-up windows, rotting wood under his sink, numerous holes in his ceiling and several tears in his mattress. Jordan said in the video he paid \$55 for the room.

The Rev. William Sabiston, the associate pastor at St. Luke United Methodist Church in Sanford, brings a group of teens and volunteers to the Prince each Sunday to provide food and clothing to the families and their children — both long-term and short-term residents of the motel. While his group does not enter the rooms during these visits,

Sabiston on several occasions has knocked on doors to tell people they're there to help. His description of the rooms from the doorway confirm what can be read online.

“First, it's a motel room,” Sabiston says. “So if you can imagine a Super 8-style room, that's all there is to it. But here, it's very run down. Very poor conditions. [Residents] have told us the water comes in and out. The heat and electricity comes in and out. The cable they pay for goes in and out. Many find more enjoyment and better conditions in the chair

they roll from their room to the porch over what they have inside. To put it best, it's poor.”

**THE NUISANCE**

Mary and her husband recently purchased their first home in the Rosemount-McIvler Historic District — the young military couple was drawn to area because of its proximity to Downtown Sanford, a place they saw as “growing and thriving.” They liked being within walking distance of parks and downtown restaurants, shops and breweries.

They were unaware of the Prince — located just blocks away — when they bought their home. A week after the move, before all of the boxes were unpacked, Mary's car was broken into — one of several on her street that night. It's happened again several times since. During the day, the couple is visited regularly by men and women knocking on their front door or approaching them in their driveway to ask for money or work. More often than not, they'll let the couple know they're staying at the Prince.

"We had no idea the nuisance the Prince would be," says Mary, who asked that her full name not be used for this story. "Because my husband is in the military and is often away, it's frightening when someone is banging on your door at 6 a.m. and you're home alone."

The crime numbers from the Prince over the last two years do little to put Marie and her neighbors at ease. Since January 2017, 40 arrests have been made at the Prince for charges ranging from assault on a female (at least eight times) to various drug charges and disorderly conduct. In all, more than 130 calls were made to the Sanford Police Department

regarding complaints or alleged crimes at the Prince during that same time span.

But those numbers don't tell the whole story — the list is much longer if you include crimes reported or arrests made within the quarter-mile radius of the motel, which includes the Rosemount-McIver district. It's longer still if you include arrests made of men and women who used the Prince as their home address at the time of arrest (that number is difficult to track, as for many the Prince was a temporary home, and when they moved, their address is updated in online records).

There's been one murder at the motel in the past eight years — in September 2012, two men were arrested in the death of a 20-year-old Sanford man who was stabbed in the back during a fight at the Prince. Two other men received stab wounds during the fight.

Sanford Police Department Chief Ronnie Yarborough confirmed the Prince is a location in the city that receives a "high volume of calls."

"In general, when there's a location with a lot of activity, we look at the type of calls we



## AGENT SPOTLIGHT

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Will focuses on sales of Auto, Home, Business and Life Insurance. He serves as Board Chairman for the United Way of Lee County and on the Governing Board of Central Carolina Hospital. At home, he enjoys spending time with his wife and daughter.

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answer and whether they meet the criteria for any further type of investigation,” said Yarborough, who encouraged people living in or near the Prince to stay vigilant in contacting police. “Any activity that’s seen by people in the neighborhood could be useful and valuable to us. Please call us. It will always be confidential.”

The first time Phil (who also asked to keep his full name confidential) saw the Prince, he thought to himself, “My God. What an eyesore.”

Not long after his family moved to the Rosemount-McIver neighborhood about five years ago, a package was stolen off of his front porch. Phil saw the theft happen, chased the man and was able to snap a picture of him with his phone. He learned the man was staying at the Prince, and after a call to police, Phil got his package back.

He’s seen much worse in his five years living in what he had hoped would be a safe, family-friendly neighborhood. He recalls seeing two men smoking a crack pipe in a parked car in front of his house. He’s also been approached by several men asking for money or work. His cars have been broken into so often, he leaves his Jeep unlocked and keeps nothing but a Bible with a few dollars in it on the dashboard in hopes that if it’s stolen, some good may come of it (the Bible remains in the Jeep).

Phil and his wife have started a family since moving to Sanford, and they worry about the safety of their 3-year-old and year-old children.

“My wife and I have gone back and forth on whether we want to stay,” he says. “It’s hard to just let our children play outside with all the foot traffic — strangers — coming and going from that place. It’s concerning.”

Marie and her husband have also considered moving. But they have hope that things will get better — that the City of Sanford will consider action that would either shut down the Prince or make it a safer environment for the people living in or around it.

“We have a lot of hope that the historic district and downtown will continue to grow and be a thriving part of Sanford,” she says. “And I ultimately hope that the city no longer allows for a hotel that lets you to pay by the hour. This is not conducive to the positive growth and safety of a city.”



Trash and an empty shopping cart on Vance Street just outside of the Prince Down Town on a Sunday afternoon in mid-March and a shot of a stairwell at the front of the Prince.



### ‘IT’S COMPLICATED’

Mayor Chet Mann uses one word several times when talking about the Prince Down Town and its relationship with the City of Sanford.

“Complicated.”

“We don’t like the amount of calls we get there,” he says. “We know our police are frequently there. And we know people aren’t pleased with the way it looks. It’s complicated in that, in a sense, they’re good owners, because of all the crimes you listed, they self-report all of them. That absconds the Prince of liability and responsibility.”

Mann is referring to the process of nuisance abatement — where a government can effectively close a business or property deemed to be a nuisance based on several criteria. Nuisance abatements have taken place in Sanford a handful of times in the past decade or so — Mann points to the closing of the Tiki Lounge in Jonesboro, which was forced to shut down in 2016 after its liquor license was suspended for more than 90 police calls (including a fatal shooting).

State law provides the nuisance abatement mechanism to its Alcohol Law Enforcement agency, which would begin an investigation at the request of a district attorney, police

chief or sheriff of the jurisdiction in question. Those investigations are typically against properties “used for specified illegal purposes” including prostitution, gambling, the possession or sale of drugs “and repeated acts which create a breach of the peace,” according to the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation.

While it’s unquestionable that crime has been an issue at the Prince, it’s hard to say whether it rises to the level of the issues dealt with in 2009 at the former Club Bumblebee in Jonesboro or at a boarding house on Chisholm Street that was demolished in 2017. In the case of the former, neighbors of the club at the intersection of Frazier Drive and Industrial Drive complained of loud parties that spilled into the parking lot and gunfire coming into their homes when fights broke out. In the case of the latter, a man was beaten to death as he walked by the boarding house, which like the Prince was also the subject of multiple complaints about prostitution and drugs.

And although the city initiated nuisance abatement proceedings against Club Bumblebee in 2009, the owners ultimately shut the property down voluntarily. The Chisholm Street boarding house was another story, with a court ruling that the property be transferred from its owner to the city in

exchange for \$3,500.

Nuisance abatement can be effective, but city leaders are hesitant to use it as a first resort for the Prince, since taxpayers could be on the hook for the defendant’s legal fees if a case is unable to be proven.

The motel, Mann says, does serve a very important purpose to the city. It’s one of only a few places police officers or sheriff’s deputies can take a homeless person or somebody they’ve picked up late at night so they can have a roof over their heads. Often, Mann adds, the officers are paying for these stays out of their own pockets.

“It’s a Saturday night, and we find a guy with no shoes on, it’s raining outside, and he has nowhere to go,” he says. “He says he lives three to four hours away and has no money to get home. We take him to the Prince. They provide a service we simply don’t have here in Sanford — a place for people who need shelter. It’s important that we don’t lose that.”

Rev. Sabiston agrees. When he and his youth groups took a trip to Washington, D.C. last summer, they learned a lot about ways to help the homeless and struggling families in their hometowns. Over the past few months, his group has formed strong connections and relationships with Prince residents. He says they’ve counted at least eight children who live there — for many of these families, it’s the Prince or sleep outside.

“There are a lot of bad and negative things happening out there, but it isn’t necessarily the people who live there longer term,” Sabiston says. “We have to keep that in mind. They’re a part of our community. We appreciate what our law enforcement is doing there when things go bad, and the people who live there appreciate it, too. Especially those who have children living there.

“We can’t simply get rid of this place and toss these people out. There are other solutions.”

### EMPOWERED

Sabiston lived in an apartment when he first moved to Sanford four years ago. He recalls rent being about \$850 a month then for a nice place — safe, clean and well maintained.

He was floored to learn that some of the Prince’s long-term residents pay as much as \$750 a month to live there. If that sounds like too much for people who are forced to

stay there, consider this — the Prince doesn't require a contract, credit checks or background checks — making it an easier option for them over apartment complexes or nicer longer-stay hotels.

“My stance — and I'm speaking not for the whole church, but just as a pastor — is that the rooms shouldn't be as they are,” Sabiston says. “Things shouldn't be as they are there. There are places that keep and trap people who are homeless or down on their luck, and there are places that help and empower them. I feel that the Prince is the former. I want to see that change.”

“Phil” has represented the Rosemount-McIver Historic District at recent meetings and symposiums about future improvements for Carthage and Wicker streets, and he says the Prince is a common topic at these gatherings. The comments, he says, are never positive.

“I don't get a sense there's any sense of urgency to do anything about it,” he says. “I'd like to see it cleaned up and turned into a more legitimate business. I'd like to see it not be a total eyesore and a dangerous place for people to live. Or we can just shut it down

*“If we treat [the Prince] as a nuisance, we'll never truly fix the problem.” — The Rev. William Sabiston*

altogether — except then you're affecting a lot of good people who live there, too. Good people who don't deserve to live in those conditions; kids who don't deserve to live in a place like that.”

The city could follow the lead of Fayetteville to “force” improvements on the Prince. Fayetteville officials in February approved an ordinance requiring hotels and motels in the city that house people for more than 30 days to install a two-burner stove and small refrigerator over the next several years. Officials cited the fact that many residents were bringing their own cooking appliances, posing safety hazards. Residents argued this was the city's way of shutting down these motels and forcing them out. The motels have until March 2022 to comply.

Sanford's mayor says no similar ordinances are currently being considered by the city, but he hopes recent streetscape projects

downtown and the upcoming plans for Carthage and Wicker streets — which include roundabouts, bike paths and medians — will lead to new ideas and options for the Prince and other rundown or empty structures in that area.

“If the city can continue to reinvest and redevelop and continue to make the quality of life better, then I think that eventually someone will buy the place out. Hopefully put some money into it,” Mann says. “I understand the public outcry, but there's no immediate answer. We need to create the case for investment in that area.”

To Sabiston, the best way to create a safe environment at the Prince — and thus, in the area and neighborhoods surrounding the Prince — is by caring for it. And by caring for the city's homeless population. That goes beyond providing a bed to sleep in or shelter from the elements. It means creating more

programs to empower them — providing the resources that can lead to jobs, education and getting people back on their feet. It means creating more affordable housing options and facilities for people who need a place to stay when times are tough.

“It's a big misconception that people are homeless or forced to stay in places like this because they made that choice,” Sabiston says. “When we approach this with compassion, I think we can help everyone involved. But if we just look at the Prince as an annoyance, we're not making our city look good. If we do a better job at empowering the people in our community, then we won't need places like the Prince anymore, because nobody would need to stay there.

“That's the end dream. If we treat it as a nuisance, we'll never truly fix the problem.”



*Additional reporting by Gordon Anderson. Send us your thoughts on solutions to improving the Prince Down Town and the overall safety of the downtown area by emailing [billy@rantnc.com](mailto:billy@rantnc.com) or commenting on the online version (or Facebook post) of this story.*

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# THE RANT

## OPINIONS

### ICE raid affected entire community

If you tried to eat out at one of Sanford's many fine Mexican food establishments on Feb. 5 — or tried getting your car washed or your roof fixed or a building built — you might have run into a problem. There wasn't anybody around to do it.

The raid on Bear Creek Arsenal in Sanford — a manufacturer of AR-15s and other firearms — by agents from Immigration and Customs Enforcement led to a few dozen arrests for ID theft that day. And it did more than just turn the lives of the men and women arrested while working upside down (as if that wasn't enough). It practically shut down Sanford, too, as several in our community chose not to attend work out of fear that their place of employment would be targeted next. ICE maintains the Bear Creek arrests were targeted and not random, but word spreads fast in a community like ours. Students in our schools were also taken out of class that day by concerned parents — perhaps the saddest domino effect of all.

While many cheered and #MAGA'd over the news, what ICE's actions that day did more than anything was show that we are a community that relies heavily on our Latino population — American citizens and undocumented immigrants alike. We're a community that doesn't think twice about their contributions, yet is quick to get out the pitchforks and join "build the wall" chants when we're fed half-truths about undocumented criminals or caravans approaching our border.

The truth is, we're a weaker community without these men, women and children. And not because of the closed restaurants. When a considerable portion of our population is living in fear, none of us should feel good about it.

## Reflecting on the half-eaten sandwich

I was halfway through a Subway sandwich which my now-wife had brought to me at the office of the local newspaper on the day Billy Liggett rang my desk phone and asked me to come downstairs real quick.

That was late February or early March of 2010. Billy did a pretty admirable job as my executioner, letting me know gently, but without beating around the bush, that my employment as the crime and government reporter at the paper was being, uh, canceled.

There were probably more important questions in that moment than "can I go back upstairs and get my sandwich," but, hey, that was my lunch. It was one of those flatbread sandwiches Subway does so well, and I'm pretty sure I was working on a bag of Sun Chips too. Those things are delicious! Don't tell me you've never turned a mostly-empty bag upside down so you can shake whatever stragglers remain into your open mouth. Every calorie matters.

But so anyway, it was a question that proved awkward. They usually want you off the premises pretty immediately in situations like that. So I walked out of the building that day more annoyed that I didn't get to finish lunch than anything else.

So how in the Seven Kingdoms did I find myself nearly a decade later co-owning a media outlet made up of a website and a monthly print product?

I stayed friendly with Billy despite his

### Hey, look. It's Jay ...

Congratulations are in order for your first issue's publication, and as a witness to the Rant's evolution from radio show to podcast to wildly successful news blog I look forward to reading your first printed edition.

I'll bet that when *Friend of the Rant* Mike Stone managed to get your show off the air in 2013, he had no idea The Rant would become Lee County's trusted source for news, reviews, and snark that it is today (even as he lost all his influence). And, when Sherry Lynn Womack tried (and failed) to get Google to take down your story about her 2011 arrest, I'll bet she couldn't have realized that her wicked attempt at censorship would only lead to your greater success.



*"We've been lucky enough to develop our own voice ... and we expect that voice to be all over this print product."*

sandwich denial, as well as my colleague Jon Owens, because we always got along and there really wasn't any reason not to. We even kept doing the Rant, which was then a radio show. But it definitely wasn't in my plans to get another newspaper job. It just didn't seem very appealing.

So I spent the next several years doing other things. But the majority of them — working on political campaigns, freelance writing, doing grants for a nonprofit — employed the skills I'd learned in my eight years on the beat. When the three of us turned The Rant into a news website in 2014 (mostly as a hobby), nosing out stories and racing to publish them first came back pretty naturally.

So frankly, this next step — which is the result of a lot of deliberation undertaken when we looked up and realized we had an audience — is actually pretty exciting.

I don't have to tell you that you're reading something just a little different than your average daily newspaper. But we've been lucky enough to develop our own voice while doing this online, and we expect that voice to be all over this print product. We expect to keep breaking local news online and follow it up

Your readers look forward to more of the same, and whatever else The Rant will become in days future. And, the next time Olive Garden decides to open a store in Sanford, or the next time an AT-AT Walker descends upon Depot Park, or the next time the Jackets blow it out the, ahem... I know you'll be there.

**Jay Calendine**

### Let's think about the kids

Sanford needs a place for children to have fun. Sure, there is a splash pad on the horizon ... yay for the summer months. But what about the rest of the year — when it's raining out or cold, or you need a nice place to have a birthday party?

with more in depth reporting in print. We expect to talk about Lee County in a way that reflects all the positive transformations that have occurred in the last few years. We expect to let you know when people stand in the way of those positive things. We expect to cover your local government in a way that focuses on how it impacts your life rather than what people said in a meeting. We expect you to figure out where we stand on things, and even to disagree with our conclusions — but not with our facts.

So look. You never really know where things are gonna take you. I'd have laughed in your face if you told me in 2010 that this is what I'd be doing nine years later. But never let a good sandwich out of your sight. You may be able to go home again, but it doesn't mean someone hasn't thrown away your lunch.



*Gordon Anderson is one-third of The Rant and an avocado blogger by night. We are sad to inform him via "author bio" that this will be his last column with The Rant and he will need to leave the premises immediately.*

My sons are now both grown, but I'm speaking from experience. Whenever we wanted to have an "outing," we went to Fayetteville to Chuck E. Cheese or Fun Fun Fun, or we went to Raleigh to Adventure Landing or Durham to Frankie's Fun Park.

Either way, you had to leave the 27330 to take the kids anywhere ... and it's still the same way. Just last week, I had to drive to Cary to take my granddaughter to Jumpstreet to play. The banks, grocery stores, car washes, gas stations ... they are all good. But, can someone PLEASE bring something to Sanford for the children?

**Treva Thompson**

## West Sanford is losing it

I grew up in Broadway, and during that time, West Sanford was where it all was. Fast forward just 10 years and the *Walmart Effect* has turned the town a complete 180. In 20-plus years, the town is not even recognizable.

I am now a resident of West Sanford and miss those days where everything was here. It's sad to see how Sanford is growing, but not in the area where prime housing is located. Outside of the new Camelback Brewery, our area has seen no new perks to buying a home on this side of town. The failure of Riverbirch is probably the biggest hit. I can still remember the jingle, *Riverbirch Corner, your corner of the world*. Sadly it has become more of the *armpit of the county* lately.

As my kids get older, I hope to see something happen to this area and not have the memories I had in West Sanford devolve into memories of the boys going to "places near Walmart."

**Clayton E. Vought**

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Currently, consumer safety is in the hands of farmers and retailers because the FDA is still working on regulations. In this autonomous stage of the hemp industry, CBD Girl Next Door analyzed scores of lab results and learned that Smoky Mountain Medicinals is doing North Carolina proud in helping to set the "gold standard." Shop for locally grown product, processed by a reputable lab — not in a barn — and third-party tested by a local lab.

**Stephanie Sellers**

## Oh, that traffic ...

Why is it so hard to get into Sanford in the morning if you are headed southbound on U.S. 1 — at any point past the U.S. 421 business/Horner Boulevard exit?

The Spring Lane and N.C. 42 exits don't have lights and require you to cross busy lanes of traffic if you're turning left. Then further

## YOUR RANT

If we're anything, we're pretty good listeners. Each month, we'll reserve this space in our little publication for your opinions on anything and everything. All we ask is that you keep it clean, don't get personal with your fellow citizens and keep it short. Also, no fake names (include your a phone number with each letter so we can confirm it's really you and not your ex-husband). The Rant reserves the right to edit whatever you send for grammar and length — we will NOT, however, add our own subliminal messages to your finely crafted words. Email us (addresses on Page 3) or send a message to our Facebook page. We'll do our best to get you in the next Rant Monthly.

down U.S. 1 in the Tramway area, the median turn lanes going left are a game of Frogger with a bad accident waiting to happen.

Finally, at Tramway Road, the one left-turn lane backs up for several light cycles just to get through that intersection. And don't get me started on the terrible state of the U.S. 421 bypass — at least they seem to be repaving that area.

**Dan Cranston**

## The stink on the new landfill

Bobby Branch plans to build a 749-acre construction/debris landfill in Lee County along the Deep River. Most of the neighbors had heard nothing about the hearing on March 11, so only a few were present. Attorney Chip Post was able to show that insufficient time was given to prepare a case. The next hearing is Monday, April 8 at 6 p.m. in the old Lee County Courthouse.

Concerns include depreciation of residential property, protecting the water supply as the property is in a flood plain, loud noise coming from wood chippers, rock crushers, truck back-up alarms and increased traffic on N.C. 42 and Plank Road. There is the potential that North Plank Road will need to be widened to accommodate the commercial traffic, and it has been suggested the bridge crossing the Deep River won't support the weight of the trucks crossing it each day. Attorneys have been hired and are preparing a case against the landfill.

We would appreciate your support at the upcoming hearing. Additional information can be found at [anfandnc.net/agendacenter](http://anfandnc.net/agendacenter).

**Debra King**

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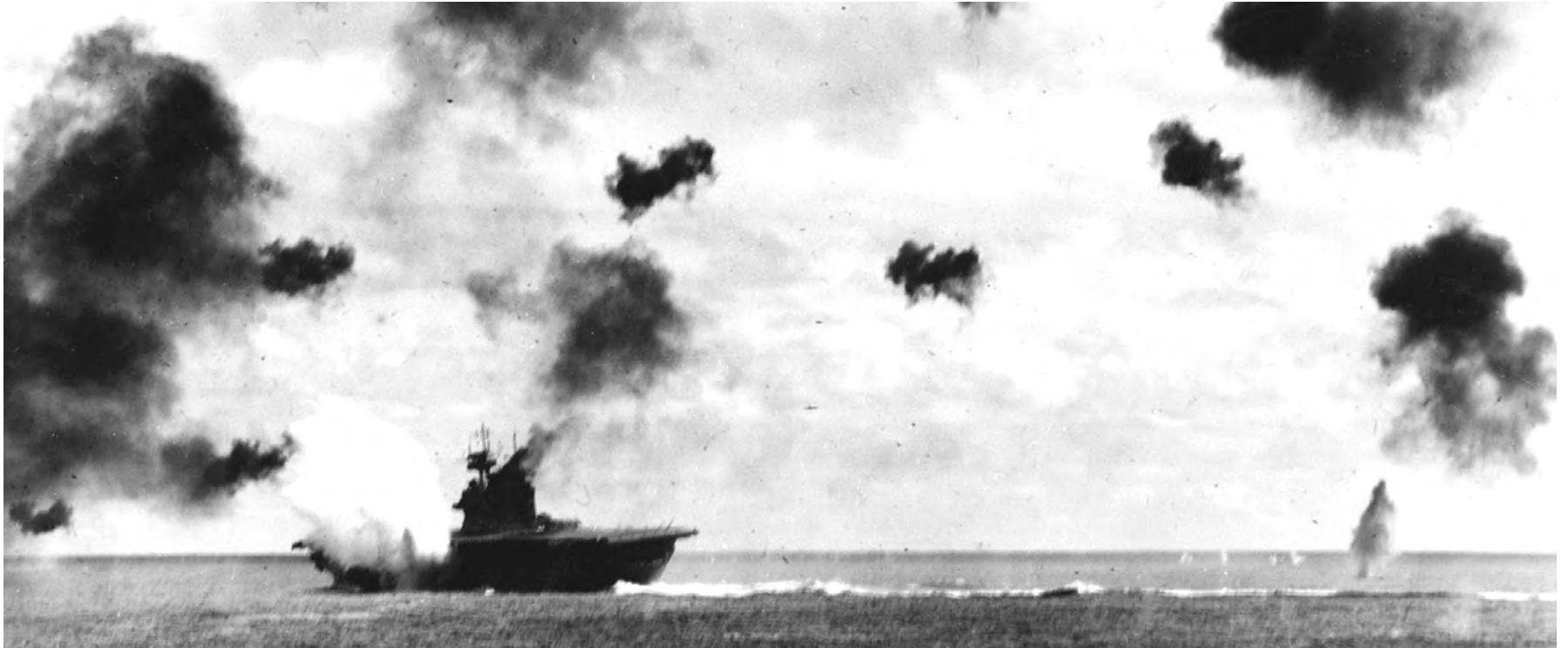


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U.S.S. Yorktown at the moment of impact of a torpedo from a Nakajima B5N during the Battle of Midway in June 1942. Photo from Wikipedia

# THE LAST SURVIVOR

*George Weise was the last man rescued from the U.S.S. Yorktown before it sank into the Pacific Ocean during WWII's Battle of Midway. Weise would live another 76 years.*

By Gordon Anderson

Even though the injuries George Weise sustained in World War II stayed with him for the rest of his life, it was a long time before he talked much about them.

In fact, those injuries – which included a fractured skull that left much of his right side paralyzed – meant that Weise had a good bit of trouble speaking at all.

“When I was a kid, my dad couldn’t talk well,” said daughter Carolyn Weise, who lives in Cape Coral, Fla., but was in Sanford recently for her father’s funeral following his death at 97 years old in early March. “His speaking wasn’t good – it wasn’t quite a stutter – but the words were jumbled.”

As such, Weise and her sisters – one of whom, Donna Fancher, now lives in Lee



George and Jean Weise — Jean passed away in 2013 and George, a World War II veteran and survivor of the Battle of Midway, died in March at 97.

County’s Carolina Trace community not far from where George made his home in the final decades of his life – didn’t know many of

the details of their father’s war story until the mid-1990s.

That was when author Walter Lord conducted an interview with George for *Incredible Victory*, his New York Times best-selling account of the Battle of Midway in the war’s Pacific theater.

“When he talked to Walter Lord, he talked for hours without making a single mistake,” Carolyn Weise recalled. “We found it fascinating.”

Not only was it fascinating for Fancher and Weise to hear their father talk at length with such ease, the sisters were fascinated by the details themselves. Not only had George served at 21 years old aboard the ill-fated U.S.S. Yorktown, one of the U.S. fleet’s most significant at the battle, he was final person rescued from the destroyer before it sank into the Pacific Ocean.

Born in Astoria, Queens in New York City in 1921, George Weise enlisted in the Navy in 1940, several months before the Japanese Empire’s surprise attack at Pearl Harbor.

“I was a real dumb boot,” Weise wrote in a recollection of his time in the service that his daughters now have in a binder full of keepsakes and memories about his life. “It took me the longest time to figure out how to tie a bowline, at least two weeks. Fine way for a future boatswain’s mate to start off.”

It wasn’t long before George Weise found himself aboard the Yorktown, which in turn found itself at Midway in June 1942. Midway, by all accounts, is seen as a crucial juncture in the war, the point at which American forces not only denied the Japanese a repeat of their surprise at Pearl Harbor, but also put a hard stop to Japanese expansion into the Pacific.

Weise wrote that he’d transferred off of a phone desk and onto the ship’s flight deck not long before Midway because “if anyone was going to shoot at me, I wanted to be able to shoot back.”

And that’s how George Weise came to be manning an anti-aircraft gun in early June 1942, when a Japanese attack force came roaring toward the Yorktown outside Midway, an atoll several hundred miles northwest of Hawaii.

“We finally had a plane come a little off



George Weise was 21 when he was aboard the ill-fated U.S.S. Yorktown during the Battle of Midway in 1942.

the center where we could shoot at it,” Weise wrote in that informal memoir. “However, he released his bomb right down the stack. Was told we got him, but I wouldn’t know. At that time I was blown over the stack to land on the flight deck. Sure glad no planes were landing or taking off. This all happened in the first attack. After all that I don’t know

who took me anywhere.”

That’s the point at which the skull fracture occurred, along with other injuries that left his arm and leg in makeshift casts. But Weise was somehow – he wrote that he didn’t remember – able to make it to the ship’s sick bay, where a Corpsman in charge decided him to leave him

as others were abandoning ship “because I was dying anyway.”

“I do not remember getting to the main sick bay,” he wrote. “The first thing I remember was when the battle horn started to blow and the PA announced ‘abandon ship.’ There were no lights, only the blue battle lanterns. The first class said ‘leave him, he’s going to die anyway.’ I began swearing a blue streak at him, making all kinds of threats. I must have passed out about that time.”

The next 26 hours must have been hell for Weise and the one other seaman with him in the sick bay, an 18-year-old named Norman Pichette. But Weise apparently convinced Pichette, who was suffering from a shrapnel wound to his stomach, to wrap a sheet around his injury and make his way back to the flight deck to fire a machine gun in an effort to get the attention of the remaining U.S. forces in the area.

That plan worked – the last two men on the Yorktown were saved not much later by a rescue party, although Pichette later died of his wounds. Despite efforts to save the aircraft

**Continued, Page 30**



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# THE RANT

NEWS YOU CAN REUSE

## Spring Lane Cinemas changes ownership, announces price drops

A February of problems upon problems for Spring Lane Cinemas in Sanford ended on a positive note with a big announcement to kick off March.

East Coast Entertainment — formerly All-Star Entertainment and former owner of the Sanford theater — reacquired Spring Lane from Frank Theater, management announced on March 2. East Coast also owns Northgate 10 in Durham, according to Northgate's website.

The news has meant significant (positive) changes for customers, according to Assistant Manager Jared Campbell, from facility improvements to significantly lowered prices for tickets and concessions.

"This is the best news we could have received for this place," said Campbell, who's been with Spring Lane for about seven years. "[The acquisition] has been a long process, but once it's all said and done, it will be a significant change for the better for this town. I'm really excited about the future here."

Campbell said new carpet and digital menu boards will be added in the coming weeks, and a needed paint job is on the way. But the biggest change has been the lowered prices, which went into effect soon after the acquisition. Adult tickets have dropped from \$11 to \$9.50, and the new "Take 5 Tuesdays" now features \$5 tickets. A large popcorn now costs you \$7 (down from \$10), and candy has dropped from \$4 to \$6 down to \$2.50 to \$3.50. Hot dogs are now \$3.50 (formerly \$6), and bottled water — the top seller, according to Campbell — is now \$3.50 (down from \$5.50).

The theater reopened on March 1 after closing its doors for two days because of a reported computer virus. *The Pilot* in Southern Pines reported in January that Frank Theaters filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in December after losing more than \$10 million in 2018.

According to Campbell, the theater will maintain regular hours as improvements are made.

## Valenti's Italian restaurant to build new location in Jonesboro area

After a vote by the Sanford City Council on March 6 to rezone a plot of land in Jonesboro for commercial use, the path is clear for the owners of Vass-based Italian restaurant Valenti's to build a second location here.

VRRH, the company which owns Valenti's, purchased the lot at Main and Dalrymple streets in Jonesboro behind the Piggly Wiggly store in 2016, and in January filed a plat map with the Lee County Register of Deeds giving a hint

at what the property will look like when developed.

Valenti's has operated in Vass since 1996, offering pizza by the slice, Italian sandwiches, and pasta dishes. While the city's downtown streetscape projects have boosted commercial enterprises in downtown Sanford, similar development in downtown Jonesboro has lagged, meaning the new restaurant could be some of the first such new growth for the area.

Owner Adam Valenti said there are still some hoops to jump through, but that he hopes to have construction under way later this year.

"In my mind I'm hoping to start in July, but I can't confirm anything until I hear from the Planning Committee," he said. "We have an architectural review meeting with them at the end of the month, so hopefully then we will know more."

□

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Laura Bridges and Terrance Watson star in "Blood of the Mummy," which will have its final screening at Alamo Drafthouse in Raleigh on April 6.

## NEXT-LEVEL HORROR

*Christine Parker's 'Blood of the Mummy' leans on Sanford talent to up the ante on blood and gore*



Daphne Reeder, Tremayne Blair, Gill Thornton and Fareed Alquran in Christine Parker's "Blood of the Mummy." Photo courtesy of Sick Chick Flicks.

By Gordon Anderson

**B**lood. Gore. A towering monster who kills violently and indiscriminately. An ancient curse that plagues a young woman's life.

"Blood of the Mummy" is independent writer-director Christine Parker's fifth feature-length horror film under her Sick Chick Flicks banner, and it contains all the hallmarks of a genre that's currently experiencing something of a revival. Shot and edited over about three years in locations across North Carolina, it premiered in March at the Cary Theater in Cary.

Parker has lived in Apex since 2013 but lived in Sanford for about a dozen years prior to that and began her film career here in the mid 2000s. She said "Blood of the Mummy"

was originally conceived of as a short film, but quickly expanded to feature-length after she found investors willing to fund her vision.

"I wanted to do an (Edgar Allen) Poe story, and I found a short story about a mummy," explained Parker, who by day works as a digital media specialist. "It really wasn't his best story, and it ended up turning into its own thing. It doesn't have much relation to the Poe story other than there being a mummy."

Two Sanford residents were critical in helping Parker achieve what she wanted with the film.

Bill Mulligan, a science teacher at Lee County High School, has worked with Parker since "Second Death," one of her earliest short films. He plays a central character in "Blood of the Mummy" and, as usual, helped put together many of the film's special effects,

including some of the bloodiest scenes.

“The vision is one thing, but the reality is that we only have the resources to do certain stuff,” Mulligan said recently, noting that all the stand-ins for blood and internal organs that go flying when the titular mummy begins one of his rampages can present challenges over time.

Enter Ceirra Doll, a Sanford-based makeup artist for whom “Blood of the Mummy” was her first feature length project with Sick Chick Flicks. Doll’s husband had been a student of Mulligan’s several years back, and although she’d met Mulligan and Parker a time or two, they were largely unaware of her talents, which in addition to makeup include face painting and creating masks out of modeling clay.

Doll worked with Mulligan to create the costume for the film’s monster — which looks foreboding whether on film or being held up by its creators on a bright spring day on Moore Street in downtown Sanford.

“This (film) is pretty next-level,” explained Doll. “We were determined to make this one pretty gory.”

Mulligan and Doll laughingly described the arduous process of creating the effects for a scene in which a character’s cranium — and we’re not trying to spoil anything here — is

irreparably damaged by the mummy, noting that due to the independent nature of their work they had very few chances to get the job done right. Thanks to the pair’s expertise, though, they were able to get their disturbing shot.

“It was the most disgusting thing,” Mulligan said.

“It was wonderful,” Doll replied with a chuckle.

Those interested in seeing “Blood of the Mummy” can attend a screening on April 6 at the Alamo Draft House in Raleigh, which will also feature a special effects demonstration and a Q & A session with the cast and crew. Parker said there’s also a party for the film planned on June 8 in Pittsboro that will double as a fundraiser for Parker’s Sick Chick Flicks Film Festival.

Parker, Doll and Mulligan all feel like “Blood of the Mummy” is some of their best work to date. For Parker, a big part of that that is due to her wanting to do something a little different.

“Once I had the idea, I did a lot of research, watching old mummy films,” she said. “They’re usually about trying to defeat the

**Continued, Page 29**



Laura Bridges (left) and Sanford effects and make-up artist Ceirra Doll on the set of “Blood of the Mummy.” Photo courtesy of Sick Chick Flicks.

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The 2019 Sanford Block Party will address the area around Temple ballpark at Third and McIver streets near Downtown Sanford.

**2019 Block Party to focus on Temple ballpark area in east Sanford**

The ninth annual Sanford Block Party — a volunteer event aimed at beautifying city neighborhoods — is set for Saturday, April 27.

The Block Party began in 2011 as a public-private partnership to address blighted areas, and in 2018 boasted nearly 200 volunteers and community leaders painting interior and exterior areas of homes, trimming and landscaping, repairing wood and more.

The 2019 event will address the area around Temple ballpark at Third and McIver streets, an area which city leaders have said they hope to see redeveloped through the incentivization of private owners to reinvest in properties.

The Block Party is open to people of all ages, and volunteers aren't required to have any specific skills. It runs from 8 a.m. to around 2 p.m., and volunteers are served lunch. Potential volunteers and

**Landfill hearing April 8**

Lee County's Board of Adjustment will decide this month whether Lee County landowner Bobby Branch gets a special use permit to place a construction and debris landfill on several hundred acres between North Plank Road and the Deep River in northwestern Lee County.

The meeting is set for 6 p.m. on April 8 in the Old Courthouse at the Lee County court complex.

Branch submitted the plans, which also show a recycling plant and an area for

recyclable yard waste, to the county in December 2018. A hearing in March was postponed after area residents showed up with questions. Even if the board finds that Branch meets all of the required criteria to be granted the special-use permit, he will

still have to go before the county Board of Commissioners for a franchise, which is a legislative process where the commissioners have far more discretion than the adjustment board. It is quasi-judicial and deals primarily with findings of fact.

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donors should contact Bill Huggins at (919) 356-5109.

### State bill would expand Sanford's ability to accept voluntary annexation

Two bills in the state legislature would allow the city of Sanford to accept petitions for voluntary annexation from areas which are more than three miles from the city's corporate limits.

State Rep. John Sauls (R-Sanford) and Sen. Jim Burgin (R-Harnett, Johnston, Lee) introduced identical bills to their respective chambers that would strike the limit laid out in state law of being less than three miles in order to qualify for voluntary annexation.

In case it sounds a little boring, the issue is actually crucial to growth — particularly residential growth — in the area. Sanford is currently able to run water and sewer lines anywhere in Lee County that it wants, meaning that annexation expansion isn't strictly necessary in order to help residential developers wanting to offer home buyers city water and sewer service (Lee County hasn't had its own water system since 2002).

But the city maintains that the cost of running water and sewer lines — the latter costs about \$1 million per mile — is so high that even if users pay for water and sewer service at out of city rates, it would take decades to recoup the cost of doing so. And with with multiple residential and mixed use developments having been proposed, particularly in the Deep River area, the city sees this type of voluntary annexation of developers who desire those services as one of the best ways to expand its tax base — especially since the county's decision in 2012 to change the way sales tax revenues are distributed transferred millions of dollars in revenue from the city to the county.

The Sanford City Council voted unanimously in March to support Sauls and Burgin introducing the legislation; the Lee County Board of Commissioners passed a similar resolution in favor of the bills along party lines, with the board's three Republicans dissenting.

Sauls and Burgin's bills have been assigned to legislative committees.



### Chapman takes helm at Central Carolina Community College

April 1 is Dr. Lisa Chapman's first day as president of Central Carolina Community College.

Chapman, who comes to the school after a stint as senior vice president and chief academic officer of the state community college system in Raleigh, spent several years with CCCC as an instructor, a dean, and vice president. She holds a doctoral degree in education from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Chapman takes the reins from Dr. T.E. "Bud" Marchant, under whom the college had made significant strides, including the addition of various high school apprenticeship opportunities, an ROTC program, the opening of several new facilities at the school's three campuses, and the establishment of a K-14 program in cooperation with Lee County Schools which offers scholarships to qualifying students. Marchant was named president in 2008.

### Boys and Girls Club accepting donations for Easter event

The Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Carolina is accepting donations of candy and plastic Easter eggs for an April 17 egg hunt for the program's children.

Those wishing to donate can visit the club's Sanford facility at 1414 Bragg St. during club hours (2:30 to 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday), or by calling (919) 776-3525.



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Promotional photo

Asheville funk rockers Yo Mama's Big Fat Booty Band will take the stage at 7:30 p.m. on April 13 — right before that night's big fireworks show.

# DOWNTOWN, FUNK U UP

*Asheville rockers Yo Mama's Big Fat Booty Band to headline third Downtown StreetFest*



Cory Leutjen & The Travelin' Blues Band will play the main stage at the April 13 Downtown Sanford StreetFest at 5 p.m.

By Billy Liggett

**F**ACT: If your headliner band is called “Yo Mama's Big Fat Booty Band,” it's going to be a fun time.

The Asheville funk rockers will close out the annual Downtown Sanford StreetFest and Fireworks show on April 13, a daylong celebration of downtown's recent revitalization. Last year's StreetFest — which featured Chapel Hill's own Southern Culture on the Skids and ended with a 20-minute fireworks display — drew thousands for a day of music, food trucks, vendors, games and more. Long before festival-goers packed Depot Park for the light show that night, they were packing Steele, Carthage, Wicker and Moore streets for the music, food, mini-parades and games.

Organizers of this year's StreetFest are hoping for a repeat of 2018.

The Big Fat Booty Band formed in Boone in 2002 and has since shared the stage with funk legends Parliament Funkadelic, Galactic, Karl Denson's Tiny Universe, Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Ivan Neville's Dumpstaphunk, Maceo Parker and Bootsy Collins and have performed in some of the country's largest music festivals. The band's most recent album, “Funk Life,” was released in 2015.

What can be expected from their show in Sanford this month? “Deep cuts” and songs by female artists make their set lists, as do unexpected hip-hop offerings. “They fit in our ecosystem,” says Lee.

“We grew up with Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg,” says drummer Lee Allen, “but they

sample P-Funk, the Isley Brothers and classic funk. It's a nice mixture." There are also nods to Louisiana favorites like Dirty Dozen Brass Band because, as lead singer Mary Frances says, "Everybody likes to be taken to New Orleans."



Nakia Latrelle

Sanford favorite Nakia Latrelle will take the stage to open the festival at 1 p.m. on April 13, followed by Big Bump & The Stun Gunz and Cory Leutenjen & The Traveling Blues Band. The Booty Band will bring its "intergalactic funk" starting at 7:30 p.m. There will be a second stage all day with a live DJ and a showcase of local talent.

Downtown streets will close early on April 13 for The Salvation Army's Kettle Krush 5K Fun Run. Steele, Carthage, Moore and Wicker streets will remain closed all day. Downtown restaurants will be open all day and feature StreetFest specials. Food trucks will be set up around downtown for lunch and dinner, including Mr. Mongolian, Kat-n-Around Authentic

German Food, Tacos Las Gringas, Will and Pops, Baton Rouge Cuisine, NC Wings & Things, Hibachi Xpress, Tacos El Primo, Kono Pizza, The Dream Cream and Kona Ice.

The festival's Fun Zone will be located on Carthage Street with a game truck, inflatables and face painting. Several demonstrations are scheduled throughout the day, including a martial arts display by Black Belt Leadership Academy and a salsa dancing demonstration by Sanford Latin Dance. There will also be kid-friendly activities at many of the vendor booths. As the live music winds down, festival goers will head to Depot Park for a dance party before the fireworks show.

StreetFest is sponsored by Central Carolina Hospital, the Visit Sanford Tourism Development Authority and local businesses and nonprofits.

To join the festival as a sponsor, entertainer or volunteer, contact Jennifer St. Clair at (919) 718-4659 x 1400. Stay updated at [www.sanfordstreetfest.com](http://www.sanfordstreetfest.com) or join the Downtown StreetFest & Fireworks event on Facebook.

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- 8a | Kettle Krush 5k Race
- 10a | Downtown Stores open for business
- 11a-1p | CARA on Wicker Street
- 12p | Food Trucks, Vendors, and Fun Zone open
- 12p | Cornhole Tournament in Depot Park
- 1p | Main Stage: Nakia Latrelle
- 1p | Second Stage: Black Belt Leadership Demo
- 1:30p | Second Stage: El-Lunatico & Dominic Kash
- 2p-4p | Car show on Wicker Street
- 2p | Second Stage: Carolina Performing Arts Choir
- 2:30p | Mural Dedication at the Main Stage
- 2:30p | Second Stage: Sanford Latin Dance Demo
- 3p | Main Stage: Big Bump & The Stun Gunz
- 3p | Second Stage: Billy O'Brien
- 3p-7p | Imagine Circus performers!
- 3:30p | Second Stage: newhope church band
- 4p | Second Stage: BGC Freedom Dance
- 4:30p | Second Stage: Daryl Andre
- 5p | Main Stage: Cory Luetjen & The Traveling Blues Band
- 5p | Second Stage: LCHS Show Choir
- 5:30p | Second Stage: Temple Teen Ensemble
- 7:30p | YO MAMA'S BIG FAT BOOTY BAND!
- 8:30p | Dance Party in Depot Park
- 8:45p | Fireworks!



### COREY LUETJEN & THE TRAVELIN' BLUES BAND

April 5 | Smoke & Barrel | 8:30 - 11 p.m. (Free)

From nearby Asheboro, Cory is an accomplished musician with many influences, but his passion and strongest background hails from progressive and classic blues artists..

### CHADBURN SPIVEY

April 6 | Camelback Brewing Company | 7 p.m. (Free)

Hear all your favorite Chadburn tunes.

### SPRING MATINEE RACES

April 6 | Pinehurst Harness Track | 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

The Pinehurst Harness Track, known as the "Winter Home of Champions," will host the 70th annual Spring Matinee Races on the historic track. The Matinee Races, presented by the Pinehurst Parks and Recreation Department and the Pinehurst Driving and Training Club,

have been a highlight of the spring season in Pinehurst. An estimated 2,000-4,000 harness racing fans are expected to attend.

### EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA

April 6 | Broken Plow Farm | April 6, 13, 19, 20 (\$10)

The farm's annual event will feature barrel rides, hay rides, farm animals and, of course, a visit from the Easter Bunny. Register to reserve time and day of choice at brokenplowfarm.com.

### AXE THROWING

April 11 & 25 | Hugger Mugger Brewing | 5-10 p.m.

Bury the hatchet in 2019 — for \$10 you can try your hand at a caveman skill that pairs well with your Paleo diet.

### PIRATESSA

April 11 | Mann Center | 11 a.m.

Bring your class or group to see the matinee performance of PiraTessa — a fast-paced musical comedy about rival pirate crews who are shipwrecked on opposite sides of the same island.

### WING NIGHT WITH TUFF'S SAUCES

April 11 | Camelback Brewing Company | 5-10 p.m.

Camelback has teamed up with Tuff's Sauces & Spices, crafted in Sanford, to offer some awesome wings and brews. Tuff's has developed signature artisan sauces including some using Camelback's beers.

### THE SOUND OF MUSIC

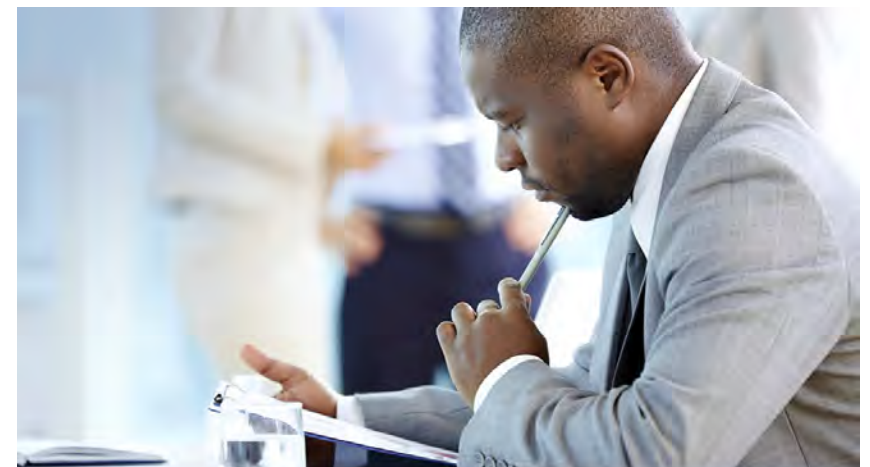
April 4-7 | Lee County High School Auditorium | 7-9 p.m.

Yellow Jacket student production of the Rodgers and Hammerstein classic. Tickets \$8 (adults) or \$5 (students)

### SOUTHERN VOICE

April 5 | Temple Theatre | 7:30 p.m.

Southern Voice will take to the Temple stage to bring you an upbeat and positive performance that's sure to be fun for the whole family.



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**DARK HORSE DUO**

April 13 | Camelback Brewing Company  
| 7-10 p.m. (Free)

Playing all the country and southern rock classics, the Dark Horse Duo make their Camelback debut.

**OCCASIONALIST**

April 19 | Hugger Mugger Brewing |  
7-8:30 p.m. (Free)

Low anthropology acoustic content from occasional band Occasionalist.

**SATCHMO BABCOCK**

April 19 | Smoke & Barrel | 8:30-11  
p.m. (Free)

A quartet of seasoned musical scholars that brings audiences old school R&B, blues, soul, rock & roll and a little coun-



Pete Pawsey from Chapel Hill's Clowns of Sedation will perform a solo set at Camelback Brewing Company in Sanford on April 27.

try. Includes present and former members of the legendary Stinging Blades.

**THE B-SIDES**

April 20 | Smoke & Barrel | 8:30-11  
p.m. (Free)

Whether they're performing drinking

songs, songs of struggle or trucker tunes, the B-Sides are tight and always put on a great show. Drawing influence from artists like Waylon, Willie and Merle, you're in for a great night of genuine country and honky tonk.

**GREASE**

April 25-May 12 | Temple Theatre

An eight-year run on Broadway and two subsequent revivals, along with innumerable school and community productions place Grease among the world's most popular musicals. Tickets at templeshow.com

**PETE PAWSEY**

April 27 | Camelback Brewing Company  
| 7 p.m. (Free)

Solo set from the singer of Chapel Hill-based Radar's Clowns of Sedation, described as "the blues kids used to sneak away from their parents to hear — the blues that used to get banned from the radio."

**WHISKEY REVIVAL**

April 27 | Smoke & Barrel | 8:30-11  
p.m. (Free)

Sanford's own Brandy Heldt (lead vocals/guitar) and Adam Beck (lead guitar/vocals) combine their talents to form Whiskey Revival. Their sound is a combination of classic country and rockabilly that always delivers a great time.

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## Mummy

Continued from Page 21

mummy. We tried to tell the story from the perspective of a young woman who was the reincarnation of the mummy's lost love."

As such, the film has several twists and reveals that add depth to the characters and balance the blood and gore with plenty of mystery and intrigue.

Parker and Mulligan both said Doll's addition to the team helped them make an important step forward with their craft.

"I wish we'd had her on board a long time ago," Mulligan said. "This was her first movie with us, but not her last."

Parker concurred.

"Bill has always been great. He's always been reliable, and he always has good ideas," she said. "Ceirra added a new dimension. She's really good with the artistry and the makeup, and she's a joy to work with."

Parker said that ultimately, the film — like all of her projects — is a labor of love.

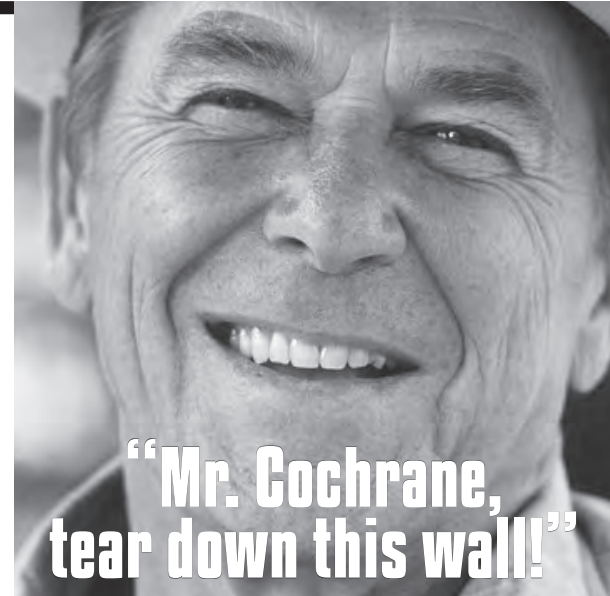
"You're not doing it for the money, that's for sure," she said. "Even though we had a decent budget and that's great, you still have to learn to be really creative. And if people are in it for egos or glory, they don't usually last very long. You have to be able to get along and love working together, and we do. That's why we keep making films together."

Going forward, Parker hopes to get the film distributed via online outlets like Hulu and Amazon, as well as get it screened at various film festivals. Meanwhile, she's got an idea for her next film, which also has its roots in the fiction of Poe, and which she hopes will be even better than "Blood of the Mummy."

"I learn a little bit more with each one so hopefully I'm getting better each time," she said. "I love that we were able to take this one to the next level, particularly with sound and the sets we used for this one."



*Many of Parker's older films are available on YouTube at her Sick Chick Flicks channel. She's planning to launch a Sick Chick Flicks website soon which will host all of her work, including "Blood of the Mummy."*



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## Survivor

Continued from Page 17

carrier, it wasn't long before a Japanese torpedo sealed the ship's fate, sinking it into the sea on June 6, 1942.

Weise had been the last man aboard during the battle who was taken off in the aftermath.

□

Incredibly, George Weise declined a medical discharge following the incident and continued on active duty with the Navy until his honorable discharge in 1946.

His life after the war was normal – he married his sweetheart Jean and worked for the next few years in construction and with the U.S. Post Office during the winter months before taking a job with Farmingdale, N.Y.-based Republic Aviation in 1950, where he eventually rose to the level of liaison officer for the general foreman.

Weise's daughters have plenty of keepsakes from this time as well, including a union ledger full of strike stamps and more. It was

during this time that the three daughters were born, and their memories of their father are of his work, his love for nature and animals (they once referred to him as “deer man” after he left boxes worth of doughnuts outside for the deer around his home in the Poconos region of Pennsylvania).

They also admired his determination to lead a normal life despite his injuries – one of his passions was golf, which eventually played a large role in his desire to retire to the Carolina Trace community in the 1990s – as he had trained the working side of his body to do everything the non-working side had once done. He was even able in recent years to take part in a “Flight of Honor” which helped him travel to Washington, D.C. in order to see the World War II Memorial there.

But mostly, he enjoyed a quiet – but active – retirement.

“He golfed a lot when we moved down here,” Fancher said. “He golfed with a group of people and he never let the injuries slow him down. He drove until three years ago.”

Weise's wife Jean passed away in 2013.

“My father swore he would stay alive for as long as she needed him,” Fancher said. “Which he did.”

□

After George Weise's death last month, the family held a celebration of life at the Carolina Trace Country Club, complete with military honors. But his journey isn't over, and his final resting place will be more in line with his surroundings over those terrifying days in 1942.

“He has been cremated, and we've got his remains in a biodegradable urn,” Fancher said. “He's gone to Fort Bragg, and will eventually be sent to Norfolk, where he'll go out on a ship and eventually be buried at sea.”

In Weise's obituary from the Smith Funeral Home in Broadway, just a single line references his heroic story – “he was the last survivor off of the USS Yorktown at the Battle of Midway” – but his daughters say he probably would have liked it that way.

“The older he got, the more open he got,” Fancher said. “But he still didn't talk about it much. I don't think the people who knew him even knew what he'd been through.”



George Weise earned a Purple Heart for the injuries he suffered during the Battle of Midway in the Pacific during World War II.

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