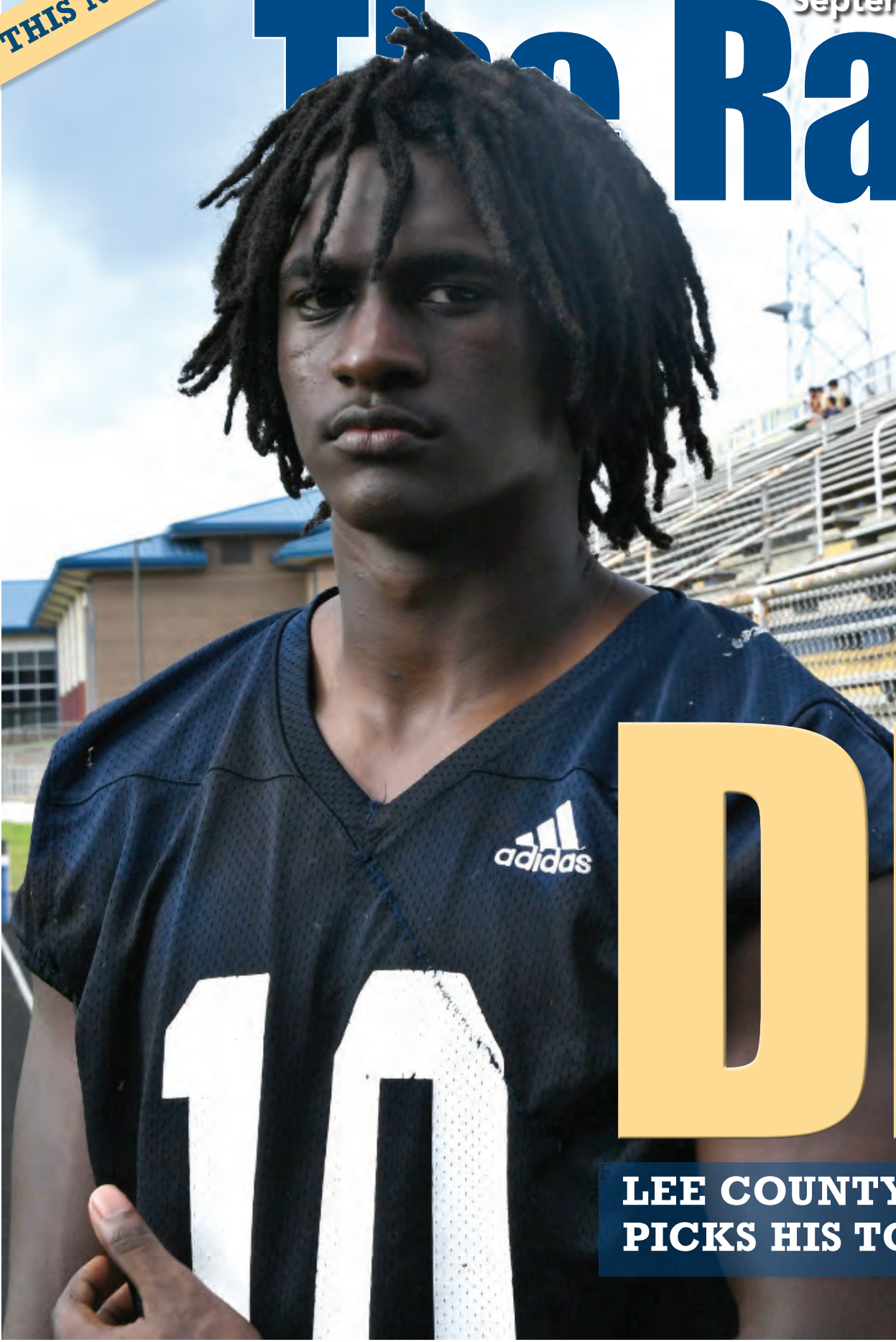


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The Rant *Monthly*

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ABOUT THE COVER

Look ... The Rant isn't what you'd call "the authority on high school sports in Lee County." But we do like a good story — and when one of the top recruits in the entire nation (a 6-foot-6 defensive end who's only getting stronger and faster), you can bet we're interested. With apologies to our friends over at Southern Lee, the September edition of The Rant Monthly features Desmond Evans and the Lee County Yellow Jackets. Enjoy! Cover photo by Billy Liggett.

STORY: PAGE 12

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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'Sorry, not sorry' for the unbalanced sports coverage

Let's start with this — we love Southern Lee High School. Absolutely love it.

Go back several years to when your friendly neighborhood *Rant* editors were working for the other paper in town. Southern Lee High School had just opened, and it was shiny jewel of a school, while its neighbor across the county — Lee Senior — was falling apart.

Our coverage that year was very Cavalier heavy, and rightfully so. The new high school changed the landscape of education in our city, and its addition eventually led to the desire for major work done at Lee Senior.

We bring this up, because at the time, there were several *Herald* readers who voiced their displeasure at our tilted coverage to the orange and blue side of the county. We tried explaining that “news is news, pal,” but we understood the com-

“We love you, Southern Lee. And before you send us a politely worded letter or email stating your displeasure in our blue and gold edition, remember the days when you were the new kid in town.”

plaint (we didn't necessarily agree, but we understood). A daily newspaper should go out of its way to provide balanced coverage in its community, whether it's the schools, the politics or the local businesses. It's a tough teeter to totter, but the good ones find a way.

All that said, *The Rant* isn't a daily newspaper. We're not even a weekly. This isn't even real paper.

But we do think of ourselves as a community paper, and look ... we are completely aware that this edition of *The Rant* is very, very Lee County High School heavy. Look at the kid on the cov-

er. The eight pages written about Yellow Jacket football. The other page about an LCHS grad now coaching baseball at Georgia Tech.

This isn't an edition Cavalier fans are going to want to hang on their walls. We accept that, and we hope you do, too.

Because news is news, pal. And right now, Lee County High School boasts one of the top young football players in the nation, and a team that — should it figure out how to go deep in the playoffs — has a good chance of making a little history this season.

We love you, Southern Lee. And before

you send us a politely worded letter or email stating your displeasure in our blue and gold edition, remember the days when you were the new kid in town.

We gave you all of our love and attention. We endured when Lee Senior acted out to get noticed. We told him to be patient and understand that the new addition to the family needs this special time. While he didn't always love the situation, we feel like he understood and adapted.

Well, Southern Lee. It's big brother's turn now. Your time will come again. It just probably won't be because of football this year. Sorry.

□

*Send all positive vibes about this edition of *The Rant Monthly* to billy@rantnc.com. Send all of your negative comments or complaints to gordon@rantnc.com. Be extra mean in those, please.*



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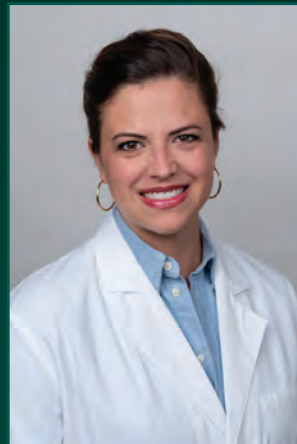
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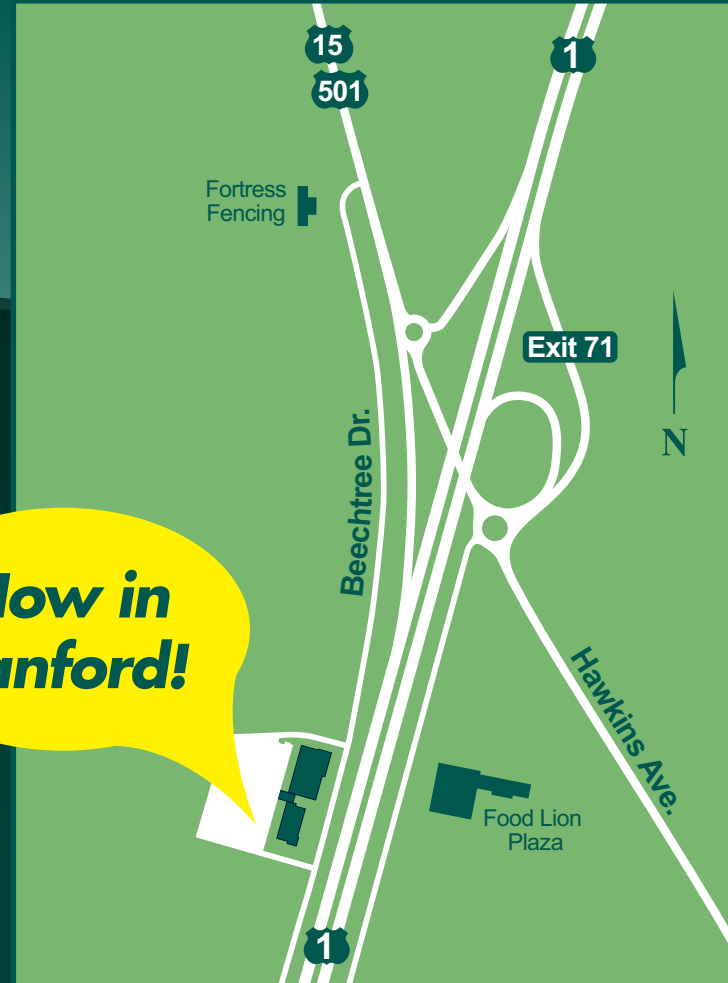
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RALEIGH EXEC JETPORT TERMINAL



The new terminal at the Raleigh Executive Jetport in northern Lee County was nearing completion as of the publication of this paper, with airport leaders are saying they expected the project to be “substantially completed” some time during the first week of September, with move-in coming later in the month. The \$4 million terminal building is part of a facility that generates \$61 million in annual economic activity. Plans will be announced soon for events to mark the opening, likely in October. Photo by Gordon Anderson.

Judge dismisses lawsuit against Lee Christian

A lawsuit against Lee Christian school alleging that its board of directors was illegally constituted was dismissed by Superior Court judge in August. Greensboro attorney Scott Meyers, representing Lee Christian, argued that the nonprofit private school had “no members,” and that the parents who brought the suit therefore had no standing to sue, leading Judge Cindy Sturges to allow his motion for dismissal.

Parent April Stone, founding director Vicki Gentry and several other parents brought the suit — which didn’t seek financial damages and asked that the school’s membership meet and properly elect directors — in in the spring and maintained throughout that they weren’t attempting to injure the school, but were concerned about actions taken by the board including the borrowing of \$2 million for the construction of a daycare and the hiring and firing of various administrative personnel.

The plaintiffs’ attorney, Jon Silverman of Sanford, had argued that the board’s own actions were inconsistent with its claim of not having members, including a notice of a “special meeting of members” sent out in July. Stone said her two children were denied re-enrollment at the school prior to the lawsuit’s dismissal. Bruce MacInnes, the board’s chairman, gave credit for the victory to Jesus Christ.

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THE RANT

LOCAL MATTERS

United Way's 211 line to provide homelessness services

Thanks to the United Way of Lee County and the S3 Housing Connect, Lee County's homelessness task force, anyone experiencing homelessness here can call 211 at any time to speak to a trained specialist who can determine the caller's needs and refer them to the agencies best suited to meet them and even begin the intake process for shelter stays if necessary.

"Creating and utilizing a coordinated entry process for receiving services has been a major goal of S3," said S3 Housing Connect Chair Sherry Shudra. "This is a tremendous step for our community to continue responding in a trauma-informed manner with respect, care and compassion to those who need our services most."



Kiwanis Park reopens with new playground, splash pad

The splash pad at Kiwanis Park opened to the public at the end of August, and an official grand opening will be held at the facility 10 a.m. on Sept. 21.

In addition to the splash pad, the park includes an inclusive play area, a paved walking trail, two shelters, shade structures, and increased parking. Hours of operation for the park are sunrise to sunset, and the splash pad will be open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekends and 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. on weekdays until October.

The project began in November 2018 and portions of the park had been closed since. The splash pad in particular was part of a collaborative effort by Sanford and Lee County Government "to provide updated amenities, increase walkability throughout Sanford, and revitalize our neighborhoods."

The county donated 14 acres of land at Kiwanis Park for the project, which was funded by a \$2 million parks and recreation bonds approved by city voters in 2013. An additional \$350,000 was provided by a Parks and Recreation Trust Fund grant.

Sheriff defends firing of deputy in lawsuit

Carter: Marital problems, not religious beliefs, prevented deputy from training women for LCSO

In response to a federal lawsuit filed against Lee County Sheriff Tracy Carter claiming that he refused to allow a religious accommodation for a now-fired deputy who said his religious beliefs prevented him from training female colleagues, Carter has responded that it was the deputy's "toxic attitude, insubordination, his constant complaining" that caused the firing.

Further, the response — filed Aug. 28 in North Carolina's middle district — claims that Manuel Torres had trained multiple other female deputies before saying his religion precluded him from doing so, and that the real reason for his refusal was "he was tired of arguing with his wife" and "she did not want him working with female deputies."

"Plaintiff had previously trained new female deputies in the past while serving as a Lee County Deputy Sheriff, including Deputy (now Detective) Turnmire in 2015, without expressing any complaint or apparent reservations in doing so," the response reads. "As part of training Deputy Turnmire, the Plaintiff rode with her alone in his patrol car and otherwise was alone with her for significant periods of time."

"On or about June 15, 2017, the Plaintiff expressed to a fellow male Deputy Sheriff that Plaintiff's wife had demanded he not allow Deputy Burton to ride with him in his patrol car and that Plaintiff and his wife had been arguing about it on a daily basis," the document continues. "It is further admitted that the Plaintiff subsequently complained to his Sergeant ... that he no longer wanted to work with Deputy Casey Burton, whom Plaintiff had trained during several previous shifts without complaint, because the Plaintiff and his wife were having marital problems and that she did not want him working with

female deputies."

Torres is seeking \$300,000 in damages from the sheriff's office, as well as from the towns of Apex and Siler City, both of whom he said denied him employment based on information they'd received from the sheriff's office.

According to Carter's response, Torres' superior officer Sgt. Jeff Oldham (who suffered serious injuries in July while chasing a suspect) "did his best to accommodate Plaintiff's request to not ride or work with Deputy Burton."

"However, given the small size of the Lee County Sheriff's Office and the limited number of deputies on duty during certain times of the day and night, and the limited availability of experienced senior officers like the Plaintiff who were qualified to train new Deputies, it was not always possible to accommodate the Plaintiff's request," reads the document. "Accommodating the plaintiff's demands that he never have to work alone with female Deputies imposed a serious hardship upon the

Sheriff of Lee County."

The response also indicates that Torres' superiors asked him if his religious beliefs would preclude him from coming to the aid of a lone female officer and that his "half-hearted response" caused concern.

Torres is also claimed to have been "openly bitter" about a promotion that Oldham received over him, and that Chief Deputy Randall Butler had "counseled (Torres) regarding his ongoing and open disrespect for Sergeant Oldham."

Finally, the response states that Torres was "openly disrespectful and hostile during a telephone conversation" with another superior that ended with Torres hanging up the phone. That conversation took place on a Friday; the response says Torres was terminated the following Monday.

Carter declined to comment, citing the ongoing litigation. Torres did not respond to a message sent Aug. 29. Read the entire response in the web version of this story.

Local Dems accuse GOP of accepting discounted rent

The Lee County Republican Party accepted illegal donations in the form of discounted rent over a six year period at its Steele Street headquarters in downtown Sanford, local Democrats have alleged in a complaint to the N.C. Board of Elections.

According to the complaint, campaign finance reports on file with the state show the Lee GOP having made 30 rent payments over 72 months to Raleigh-based Sugartree Properties. The payments totaled \$10,800, which a press release from the Democratic Party says is “a \$66,720 discount off the estimated market value of comparable commercial property.”

It’s a class 2 misdemeanor under state law for political candidates and parties to accept donations — including in-kind donations — from corporations.

In total, Democrats say campaign finance reports show the Lee GOP making nine \$300 rent payments in 2018, the same in 2017, three \$300 payments in 2016, no rent payments in 2015, nine \$500 payments in 2014, and no rent payments in 2013. The total

amount paid, the complaint states, is \$1.39 per square foot per month, or 11 cents per square foot per year. If the funds paid by the GOP to Sugartree had been remitted on a monthly basis, it would amount to \$150 per month.

The complaint cites as evidence of an arrangement for free or discounted rent video from a meeting of the local GOP at which Chairman Jim Womack introduced Robert Abee — the registered agent of Sugartree Properties — as “a great benefactor” and someone who made “a major contribution to the party through an in-kind type of service.” The report also indicates that the GOP has occupied 1,292 square feet of space at 101 S. Steele St. since roughly 2013, but also notes a discrepancy between that number and a claim made by Womack in a *Triad City Beat* article from June about his failed bid to become the chairman of the N.C. Republican Party:

“We have the largest Republican headquarters in the state in Lee County, in little of Lee County,” Womack said during a debate about the state chairmanship. “8,000 square feet, and almost every room is occupied. We got a bar.

We got a dancefloor. We got a barbershop. We got a prayer room. Folks, we got it all. And we’re right in the middle of downtown Sanford. A year-round presence, we keep the headquarters open. We got Democrats coming in there and they’re converting to our party.”

The Lee GOP didn’t respond to a message from *The Rant*, but Womack told *The Sanford Herald* the day after the Democrats’ press release that the complaint was “specious” and that Democrats are “desperate to demonize us any way they can.”

“This is a specious complaint and I think the state board of elections knows that,” Womack is quoted telling *The Herald* on Aug. 21. “It’s completely contorted, twisted and framed in a way to make it look like the Republican Party is doing something illegal.”

Abee likewise couldn’t be reached for comment, and Patrick Gannon, a spokesman for the state elections board, declined to confirm or deny the existence of a complaint. Under a law passed in 2017, sworn complaints about campaign finance violations are not public

records while they’re being investigated.

“They are scofflaws, plain and simple. Apparently, Republican County Chairman Jim Womack and Treasurer Max Dolan don’t believe the North Carolina election laws apply to them,” John Kirkman, chairman of the Lee County Democratic Party said in the press release.

Rent isn’t the only financial issue Democrats noted in their complaint. The complaint also raises questions about funds derived from gun raffles and alleges that the GOP failed to report \$12,000 in such contributions. State law calls for potentially heavy penalties for “an individual, person, political committee, candidate, or other entity” which “intentionally makes or accepts a contribution or makes an unlawful expenditure in violation of this Article.”

“That entity shall pay to the State Board, in an amount to be determined by that Board, a civil penalty and the costs of investigation, assessment, and collection. The civil penalty shall not exceed three times the amount of the unlawful contribution or expenditure involved in the violation,” reads N.C.G.S. 163A-1451.

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THE RANT

OPINIONS

READER RESPONSE | KENDALE PLAZA SOLD

I would love to have something family friendly — sort of like in Fayetteville where the Omni Theater and Putt Putt is right beside one another. Both are affordable and family friendly. There are not too many things to do in Sanford for the family.

Tonya Kivett Newell

I really hope something great is done with this area. It has a ton of potential, and a lot of folks have great memories of that shopping center in its heyday.

William Sturkie

It's definitely an eye sore. Look around at other communities like Pinehurst, Cary or Aberdeen. Get rid of the unsightly no-use plaza and get something for adults *and* kids.

Linda Williams

Hopefully they decide to put some stuff in here that actually draws people to our city. Give us some more stuff to do, things to eat and drinks to be had. But I won't hold my breath on that.

Keith Lauria Lynn

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. Email us (addresses on Page 3) or send a message to our Facebook page.

My grandfather's greatest gift was simply his presence

I don't remember why I needed the tie. I just remember looking in the mirror at my grandparents' house, dumbfounded at the thought that I could take this long, skinny piece of cheap fabric and somehow make myself look more "professional" by wearing it.

I remember my grandfather appearing behind me in the reflection of that mirror ... we called him Papa. His reassuring, tight-lipped smile was there, as it always was. He could have poked fun at my dilemma — as he would do occasionally — but I think he sensed my frustration in this moment. Not just with my inability to tie a tie, but in my disappointment that I was 16 years old and never had the occasion to have to wear one.

"Here ya go, Billy," he said, taking the tie into his hands and starting the process as we both looked ahead. "The half Windsor is easy. I'll show you the full Windsor, too."

I concentrated harder on those hands than any lesson I'd had before it. I nailed the half Windsor in two tries. I've tied a million of them since.

My grandfather, Charles Stearns, was a rock for my family. Even more for me.

My parents' divorce. The terrible step parents that followed. Those divorces. Tough financial times. Tough emotional times. I was surrounded by instability as a teenager — but my grandfather was there. I sought him for advice or when I just needed somebody to vent my frustrations to. We talked a lot about football — he played collegiately for Rice University in 1950, the year they finished fifth in the nation and beat UNC in the Cotton Bowl.

We talked a lot about a lot of things.

I lost my grandfather last month after

his lengthy bout with various illnesses, a weak heart and progressing dementia. I visited him in Texas the week before he died — he didn't remember me, but on occasion would ask me about North Carolina.

I was asked to speak at his funeral as his oldest grandchild. In my speech, I focused on the calm he brought to not only me, but to just about everybody in my family (I love them to death, but there can be some drama amongst my tribe).

Friends and family have described me as a very laid back person, almost to a fault. Some compliment my ability to take stress in stride and to not fold when the world is crashing around me. I feel like this is the greatest gift my grandfather gave me, and in my speech, I challenged my family and our friends in the audience to strive to become that calm — that rock — for the people around them.

The tie was another gift, but I couldn't bring myself to share that story without tossing out everything my grandfather taught me and becoming a blubbering fool on the stage.

Six years before he died, my grandfather was putting on his best suit for another funeral — his wife of 50-plus years. My grandmother.

His dementia was in the beginning stages, and when my mother asked me to walk back to his room to check on him, I walked in to a familiar scene.

My grandfather, loose tie in his hands, staring at a mirror. Unsure what to do next.

"Here ya go, Papa," I said, taking the tie into my hands and starting the process as we both looked ahead.

"Let's go with the half Windsor."



Billy Liggett is a writer and co-founder of The Rant. He can be reached at billy@rantnc.com

Sanford had a pretty good little August

New jobs. New investments. New recreation. A new school. It's hard to see it any other way — August was a pretty good month for Lee County.

Probably the most transformational news was with regards to business. Pfizer announced a half billion dollar investment at its gene therapy plant, a move that will result in 300 new jobs — all without any new tax incentives on the table.

Sanford and Lee County are also in negotiations, it came out not long after, with a company that is looking to invest another \$170.9 million (not \$1.5 billion, as was reported elsewhere) to bring several hundred new manufacturing jobs to the region. That project involves a sizeable incentive package, but the investment in tax base and prospect of even more new jobs for the region aren't something to take lightly. We should know before long whether that second project becomes reality.

"To be able to make the Pfizer announcement and be having this discussion in the same week is incredible — it would be incredible to do both of the same year," Michael Smith, CEO of the Sanford Area Growth Alliance told the Rant in August.

There's more to be happy about than just job growth. Lee County's eighth elementary school, W.B. Wicker opened to students (or re-opened, depending on your view) at the end of the month, as did the revamped Kiwanis Park, complete with a splash pad that's free to the public. A new terminal at the Raleigh Executive Jetport is scheduled to open sometime this month, a significant upgrade to an already impressive facility that generates \$61 million in economic activity annually.

All of this comes just a month after both Sanford and Lee County lowered their property tax rates. And each of these things — directly and indirectly — will play a large role in the quality of life for Lee County.

Some news has been less than positive, tragic even: Sanford saw three shootings over the course of August that left two people dead and several injured, all of them between the ages of 16 and 29. But crime is one of those things that's impossible to eliminate completely, and the Sanford PD has as of this writing arrested three suspects alleged to be involved in two of the shootings.

There's no perfect place to live and work, and it's hard to have a perfect month. For Lee County, August was about as close as it gets.

READER RESPONSE



Editor's Note: The August edition of The Rant provided a first look at the new W.B. Wicker Elementary School in Sanford (a new building born from a long-vacant old school with a rich history). The following are some of your views on the new school's arrival:

I was there in the late 70s, and while I was not the model student, I remember some great folks like L.W. Swann and Ben Bullock. It's wonderful to see new schools in older urban areas.

Todd Powell

A lil' piece of heaven ... a light on the hill. What a great article! One for the history books. I attended W.B. Wicker from first to 12th grades. It was an extension of life for all of us. We were molded and taught to be whom and what we are today and always. Though a new modern facility is ready to open, to the alumni and supporters, it's still W.B. Wicker School — home of the Tigers.. Thank you, Lee County commissioners, board of education and attorneys Bill Wilson, Kate Rumley and Robert Reives.

Margaret Murchison

This looks historical and inviting on the inside. A great place to start a new STEAM program, just exciting and edgy in itself. My mother taught in Lee County for about 27 years and retired from W.B. Wicker. She was there during the assault on a young girl, and I remember her classroom after being broken into and seeing a blood trail down the sidewalk where the criminal cut himself on the window

glass. She, Anita Wicker, died last week before I told her of its new revitalization. She would have been thrilled for this. And I, too, am seeing that school from the time I was 4 or 5 until now at 42. I'm loyal to Sanford, the school systems and the city development.

Becca Medlin

This should be a model for all cities in the U.S. to have an arts-based primary school. Lobby for your city! I was impressed that all three are native Sanfordites — makes a huge difference. More schools in Sanford should push to get more of these arts programs. Heck, every school!

Patricia Freeland

Great piece. Revitalizing Sanford, unlocking our heritage and history for others, the "Open for Business" agenda is all working. Bringing this school back to life — I was a student there in the late 70s — is a cornerstone in our expanding downtown revitalization. It's a perfect example of a school system working with a city and a county to achieve something greater for our whole community. Being for this project is to be on the right side of history. The detractors were wrong. This new "old" school will be the envy of many, and its STEAM designation will become another calling card for a city on the rise. I'm proud of Sanford and Lee County for supporting this project.

Chet Mann, Sanford mayor

This is a lovely story — I love getting the history of the area and building. My nephew is attending Wicker this coming school year.

Danielle Kathleen

Some of my best memories were from my time at W.B. Wicker — so great to see it come back to life!

Shay Perkinson Benton

Looks beautiful. It's so great to see an old building restored instead of knocked down. Way to go, Lee County!

Sheila Miller

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COVER STORY



North Carolina's top high school football 5-star recruit is a 6-foot-6, 245-pound edge rusher from Lee County High School. The scary part — Desmond Evans is only getting bigger and better.

Story and Photography by Billy Liggett

Weather postponed the actual game, so Desmond Evans spent the first Friday night of his senior high school football season putting Twitter into a frenzy.

The five-star defensive end from Lee County High School — considered one of the Top 25 high school football recruits in the country and the top prospect coming out of North Carolina this year — announced his Top 5 college choices on Aug. 23 with a tweet at 8:40 p.m. that night.

UNC. South Carolina. Virginia Tech. Tennessee. Florida.

The long-awaited announcement (Evans has been sought after by Div. I programs ever since his freshman year) elicited a few thousand likes, hundreds of retweets and hundreds more comments — from excited fans of the five schools to all-out trash talking from grown men eager to see what Evans can do for the Gator, Volunteer, Hokie, Gamecock or Tar Heel faithful on Saturdays.

And you can't really blame them for being pumped.

At 6-foot, 6-inches tall and a lean 245 pounds, Desmond Evans looks like a man among boys on a high school football field, towering at least a head taller than most of the kids around him. He's quick. He's strong. He possesses a nice blend of "quiet and humble" off the field and "focused anger" on it.

"Since the day I met him, he's been one of the most humble kids I've ever been around," says Head Football Coach Steve Burdeau, entering his second season at Lee County. "You'd think with the situation around him, he'd be big-headed. But he's been the same kid the whole time."



Considering some of the schools that have made up the more than 20 serious offers Evans has received in the last few years, that's impressive. The schools interested in him that didn't make his Top 5 are a murderers' row of elite programs — Alabama, Clemson, Ohio State, Nebraska and Penn State ... to name a few.

The five he chose aren't so bad, either. The national recruiting website 24/7Sports — who compares him to NFL star Jason Pierre-Paul and even projects him as a potential NFL first-rounder — has all along listed UNC as the

Desmond Evans takes on a blocker during Lee County High School's season opening 47-18 win over E.E. Smith in Sanford on Aug. 26. Evans played both defense and offense (he even saw time on special teams) during the win. Photo by Billy Liggett.



"Development, success and, most importantly, education." Those are the three things Desmond Evans is looking for in a college. UNC, South Carolina, Virginia Tech, Tennessee and Florida made the young man's Top 5, announced on Aug. 23.

favorite to land Evans (he's made several unofficial visits to the campus and has even posed for photos wearing Carolina blue). The young man, about to turn 17, says there are no favorites among his Top 5, though he admits Florida and Tennessee might be more of a surprise to even the people who know him well. When he

comes down to it, he says, he wants three things from his college.

"Development. Can I go there and grow both as a person and an athlete?" he says. "Success. Can we compete, and can we win?"

"Most important is education. At the end of the day, when you leave college, you're getting into real life. If football doesn't work out for me, I want to be successful."

Desmond Evans always been tall.

He looked like he could be in high school the first time he stepped onto a football field at 8 years old. He was bumped straight to varsity as a freshman at Lee County High School, and four games into his high school career, Evans received his first offer from a college.

That's right. Four games into his freshman year. The University of Kentucky (who might have had an ulterior motive with basketball in mind) sent him his first recruitment offer when he was 14.

"I didn't believe it at first," recalls Evans, who says former LCHS Coach Burton Cates

handed him the news (and the letter) on the field after that fourth game. "I mean, I understood the process, and I thought it'd happen one day. But I didn't know people were interested that early."

The following year as a sophomore, Evans registered 14 sacks. As a junior — with teams smartly choosing to run away from whatever side he lined up on — he tallied 12 more sacks, 69 total tackles (25 of those behind the line of scrimmage), forced a fumble and recovered a fumble.

Entering his senior year, Evans seems to have topped out at 6-6, but what has coaches at the college ranks excited is that there's room to "bulk up." That process began in earnest over the past summer, according to Defensive Coordinator Andrae Jacobs, who joined Burdeau's coaching staff last season.

"I wish I had a picture to show of what he looked like in the spring of 2018 — that first spring when I met him," Jacobs says. "And I would put that picture next to what he looks like now ... it's night and day. He took everything really seriously this past offseason. He got to work."

The coaching staff's strategy for using Evans



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“A kid with his ability, it doesn’t matter where we put him on the field ... the other team is going to game plan for it.”

— Andrae Jacobs, LCHS defensive coordinator

this season was on display during the season opening 47-18 win over E.E. Smith. Evans lined up on both sides of the defensive line, though much of the opposing offense found a way to avoid his area. He also saw time as a receiver on offense, played upback on kick returns and rushed the punter on fourth downs.

Any thoughts that the Yellow Jacket coaching staff would rest its five-star recruit or keep him off the field to avoid injury were put to rest in Week 1. And according to his coaches, Evans wouldn’t have it any other way.

“Dez has extremely high expectations,” Burdeau says. “As the season goes, he probably

won’t get to play as much as he wants to — and he won’t like that.”

His defensive coordinator loves seeing him play both sides of the ball.

“Anytime he’s on the field, he’s going to draw attention,” Jacobs says. “He likes to compete — and it’s our job to put him in the best position to be successful as a team. A kid with his ability, it doesn’t matter where we put him on the field ... the other team is going to game plan for it.”

Out of uniform, Evans is still noticed (the height will do that). But his humble qualities his coaches rave about and his quiet, almost

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(Above and below) Running back A.J. Boulware on two of his touchdowns against E.E. Smith in the season opener. (Right) Quarterback Colin Johnson has a 24-2 career record as a starting quarterback at LCHS. (Left) Defensive coordinator Andrae Jacobs and head coach Steve Burdeau.



shy, demeanor comes forward in person. Asked about his “laid back” personality, Evans smiles.

“Laid back? Definitely,” he says. “That changes big time on the field. I don’t know why or what it is ... it just happens.”

Like him, Evans’ favorite NFL players can be found all over the field — defensive end J.J. Watt, wide receivers DeAndre Hopkins and Odell Beckham and free safety Jalen Ramesy come to mind first. He’s met and talked to another pro he looks up to — UNC and Carolina Panthers legend Julius Peppers, who offered the young man some advice heading into this final stretch of high school and college recruitment.

“He just said go to the school I want to go to,” he says. “At the end of the day, it’s my choice. Others can have input, but it’s my choice. He also just told me to chill and have fun doing it.”

Asked about his goals in college or maybe even at the professional level, Evans says he has them. But he’s focused on his senior year of high school first.

“I want to win every game this season and get that ring, basically,” he says. “If we don’t

win it all, is it a disappointment? Should be.”

Asked again about his final college choice, he smiles and says everybody will have to wait.

As for the pros?

“That’s the end goal, but that’s a long way off,” he says. “That’s the plan, but if it’s not for me, that’s why I’m going to college. There’s always something else out there.”

The Lee County Yellow Jackets are a regular season powerhouse.

That’s not exactly a “positive” statement for Steve Burdeau.

In Burdeau’s first season as a head coach, Lee County was riding high as 12-0 before being knocked out of the second round of the Class 3-AA playoffs in a tough 29-26 loss to Dudley.

In 2017, the last season in Lee County for legendary head coach Burton Cates, the Jackets were again 12-0 heading into the second round of the playoffs against Cape Fear. That team had nine shutouts in its first 12 games and had allowed a total of 37 points all season.

Cape Fear rolled them, 24-7.





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Mysterious stroke sidelines linebacker

A single mother of three boys, Stacey Sumpter got a call no parent wants to receive at work on Aug. 19.

Her oldest son, Jaylin, a 17-year-old senior at Lee County High School, had no feeling in his right side. His brother Kamron, 14, found Jaylin after he collapsed on the floor, unable to speak.

Stacey met the boys and their grandmother, Shirley, at Central Carolina Hospital, where Jaylin was diagnosed with a possible stroke. He was then airlifted to UNC Hospitals, where he remains as of this publication.

The stroke diagnosis confirmed, Jaylin is now on the long road to recovery. Stacey told The Rant on Aug. 29 that he is getting use of his right side back, slowly, with intensive treatment. He is also talking more clearly.

The cause of his stroke remains a mystery. Doctors have been unable to pinpoint a root cause through several different tests.

“He’s always been a very healthy child,” Stacey Sumpter said. “He’s had bumps and bruises — normal boy stuff, you know. It was a big shock for all of us. I was more scared than anything.”

Sumpter is a starting linebacker for the Lee County Yellow Jackets and works part-time at Wendy’s in Sanford as well. His mom said not being able to play football has weighed heavily on Jaylin’s mind and drives him in his rehabilitation.

“That’s his main focus. That’s all he talks about,” the mom said. “He’s like ‘Mom, this is my senior year. I have to get back out there with my brothers.’ It’s bittersweet as a parent, because I don’t want him to push himself too hard, but I know he wants to get back out there.”

Family friend Nicole Campbell set up a GoFundMe campaign to assist Stacey, who will need to stay with Sumpter the entirety of his rehabilitation, to compensate for lost wages and other expenses. The campaign is nearing its goal of raising \$2,500 for the family.

“I am so grateful for the support,” she said. “It will be a huge help. We’re just taking it one day at a time. I am exhausted, but I’m trying to stay strong for him.”

To make a donation, visit www.gofundme.com/support-for-sumpter.

By Jonathan Owens

Jahmir Smith listed as Notre Dame's RB2



Desmond Evans was a sophomore at the time, but it was Jahmir Smith making the headlines for Lee County High School football two years ago.

Smith — the record-breaking running back who scored a ridiculous 41 touchdowns as a junior —

was featured in local, state and even national publications for not only his acumen on the football field, but for his performance in the classroom, too. Smith ended up choosing Notre Dame, as the school not only provided a power-

house football program, but a great opportunity to pursue a career in the medical field as well.

Smith saw limited action as a freshman, getting a few carries and a catch, but he’s listed as the RB2 for the Fighting Irish heading into the 2019 season (which kicked off Sept. 2 against Louisville). Senior Tony Jones and junior Jafar Armstrong will split time as the lead back, according to several published reports.

Smith reportedly broke his hand during a practice in early August, but stayed on the field wearing a cast and didn’t miss significant time.

By Billy Liggett



Desmond Evans recorded 14 sacks as a sophomore and 12 as a junior defensive end for Lee County High School. He and Appalachian State commit De'Andre Prince make up half of a pretty stout defensive line for the Yellow Jackets this season.

It was a third-round exit in 2016. First round in 2015. First round in 2014.

An undefeated regular season and a Cape Fear Valley Conference title won't be enough for the 2019 Yellow Jackets. But it takes more than declaring such if Lee County is going to take the next step this November and, hopefully, December.

"I told the boys and their parents this year that any time they get a calendar or a schedule from me, it's going to end with the state championship," says Burdeau. "So how do we get there? One thing I evaluated when I got here was our strength — I thought it could be improved. We want to be stronger, so our returning players gained a combined 5,000 pounds this past year. We're going to be bigger and stronger this year, and that's going to be big for us the deeper we go in the playoffs."

Lee County is also, for lack of a better term, "stacked" this year. Even without the state's top prospect, the Jackets have several players getting serious looks from Div. I schools. And that starts under center with quarterback Colin Johnson, who has a 24-2

record as a starting quarterback.

Running backs A.J. Boulware (2,200 yards and 34 touchdowns in 2018) and Larry Baldwin (455 yards rushing and 10 touchdowns) are a potent 1-2 punch in the backfield. Defensive back Jayden Chalmers has committed to UNC, and Evans' linemate De'Andre Prince is coming off a 2018 campaign that saw 31 tackles for loss and 12 sacks.

"We've got a big opportunity to do something great this year," Burdeau says. "No one has higher expectations than me."

Lee County is Burdeau's first head coaching gig after several years as a coordinator at Middle Creek, Richmond County and, most recently, Orange. He says job offers at other schools were there, but Burdeau was patient and held off until the right job came along.

He thinks he's found that in Sanford.

"I want to be here a long time," he says. "This is a great school, and the community support here is great. I've had success at my previous schools, but I was never in a hurry to leave those jobs. Being patient has definitely paid off for me."

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September 6th **@ Douglas Byrd**
September 13th **@ Hoke County**
September 20th **FIKE**
September 27th **ANSON**
October 4th **OPEN DATE**
October 11th **@ Triton**
October 18th **UNION PINES**
October 25th **@ Harnett Central**
November 1st **@ Western Harnett**
November 8th **SOUTHERN LEE**

SOUTHERN LEE High School



August 23rd **HOKE COUNTY**
August 30th **@ Pinecrest**
September 6th **@ Northwood**
September 13th **CEDAR RIDGE**
September 20th **FRANKLINTON**
September 27th **CENTRAL VIRGINIA**
October 4th **OPEN DATE**
October 11th **WESTERN HARNETT**
October 18th **TRITON**
October 25th **@ Union Pines**
November 1st **HARNETT CENTRAL**
November 8th **@ Lee County**

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THE RANT

LOCAL MATTERS

Local attorney says he'll get tased if he reaches fundraising goal to fight opioid abuse

Chas Post, a Sanford-based attorney and city councilman, has agreed to be shot with a taser if the community can raise \$5,000 to benefit a nonprofit fighting opioid addiction.

Donors can make pledge to the North Carolina Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (NCATOD). When pledges reach \$5,000, Post will allow a deputy with the Lee County Sheriff's Office to shoot him with a taser for five seconds.

"The opioid crisis is one of the biggest issues facing our community. I see it every day and like everyone else who has seen the problem up close, I want to do something about it," Post said. "That's why I helped lead the effort to create a city opioid task force, and that's why I'm willing to be tased if we can raise \$5,000 for NCATOD, an organization that does great work in our state with regards to the treatment of opioid addiction. And between my work in the courthouse and in government, I'm sure there are more than a few people who will pony up to see me get tased. Here's your chance."

To pledge, visit ncatod.org/chas-post-fundraiser/

Laudate named new director of Downtown Sanford Inc.

Sanford native Kelli Parrish Laudate has been named the next full time director of Downtown Sanford Inc.

According to a press release from the organization, which was formed in 1984 to carry out the Main Street program on behalf of the city of Sanford, Laudate previously was the organization's promotions coordinator and has served as interim director since the June departure of former Director Jennifer St. Clair.

"I am honored to accept the position of DSI's executive director," Laudate said in the press release. "I look forward to building upon the great work of my predecessors while continuing the beautification, economic growth and vitality of our downtown. With the support of our DSI board, city staff, elected officials, and downtown business and property owners, we will brand Downtown Sanford as a destination — not only for our citizens but for all visitors to our community. I am thrilled to roll up my sleeves and get to work."



Photo courtesy of Lee County Schools

WELCOME BACK

Lee's newest school, W.B. Wicker, brings a focus on the arts

Ten-year-old fifth grader Brianna knew before classes started at the newly-reopened W.B. Wicker Elementary that the school contained a dance studio, but she had no idea that dancing would be part of her education there.

"I knew the school had a dance room," Brianna said on her third day of classes at Wicker, which over the course of the last year has been entirely renovated and expanded upon for use as the county's eighth elementary school. "But I did not think it was going to be a dance class for everyone."

There was a lot that Brianna, who had previously attended J. Glenn Edwards Elementary from kindergarten through fourth grade, wasn't expecting about her new school. She listed the sheer size of the building and the number of kids (Wicker has about 700 kids for now, and will accommodate another couple hundred more over the next few years), the level of technology (there are

TV-sized touchscreen computers in many of the classrooms which can serve any number of instructional purposes), and, like she said before, the dance classes.

"I went to daycare here," she said, referring to a time when the campus consisted mainly of what's being referred to as "historic Wicker" and not the new construction and refurbished auditorium and gymnasium. "I felt so weird coming down this hall — I think I got in trouble in this hall once."

Another new student at Wicker, 6-year-old first grader Karter, attended J.R. Ingram Elementary for kindergarten, said he wanted to attend the school because "I wanted to paint."

And paint he did, on day two. He explained that even though he doesn't like jellyfish, he painted a picture of one.

"I wanted to mess it up," he said with a smile.

The dance, the painting — they're both part of an approach at Wicker that employs the STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) model for educating children.

Tina Maples is one of the school's new teachers after spending four years as a math and science instructor at Greenwood Elementary. She said that even though her focus is on math and science, integrating the arts was one of the big draws to the new school for her.

"It's a really good combination," she said. "Science is my passion when it comes to fifth grade, but I've always worried that they'd cut the arts. Here, the arts are integrated into the whole curriculum."

While the school draws some of its students on a geographic basis from the surrounding neighborhoods and others from a lottery system much like is the case at year-round Tramway Elementary, Maples said the location of the school also played a part in her

choice to apply for a job at Wicker.

“The first draw for me was this community,” she said. “I grew up very similar to many of the children in this community, and I felt like my relationship to them would be key. I also like a challenge — not that I wasn’t being challenged before, but this is both a challenge and an opportunity for me to have a new beginning.”

Wicker’s principal, Wendy Carlyle, is in the same boat as a lot of her staff.

Carlyle, who has plenty of experience in education as a teacher, a former school board member and a central office administrator, describes her new job as “my first principal gig,” and notes that the majority of her staff at the school is constituted of new or newer educators, some of whom came here from out of state. She said that rather than any of those details being a hindrance, they’ve contributed to an early feeling of togetherness at Wicker.

“We spent a few days together in July at a training in Raleigh,” Carlyle said. “We started that first morning as strangers, but by the time we left at the end of the day, we were truly a Wicker family.”

Abby Brummett, a media specialist who

worked at Ingram last year, said that a new school attracts a certain kind of person by nature, which has played a role in that camaraderie.

“Everyone who is here chose to be here,” she said. “We’re all willing to take risks, so that’s in our personality.”

Maples agreed, noting that the staff has no choice but to be collaborative. “We’re all very open to everyone’s ideas,” she said.

Wicker’s history is one of its most interesting — and important — features. The campus first went up in 1927 as one of the Julius Rosenwald schools (this was decades prior to integration, and Rosenwald had donated millions of dollars to advance educational opportunities for African American students across the country) and at the time was called the Lee County Training Center. It was renamed for its founding principal, William Bartelle Wicker, in the 1950s.

After integration in 1969, the school served at various times as a middle school and elementary school through the 80s and early 90s before closing altogether. It didn’t take time for the unused structure to fall into disrepair, but

in 2006 Central Carolina Community College made it into an auxiliary campus. It served that purpose until last year, when ground broke on the new construction.

Carlyle, Maples and fifth grader Brianna all agreed that the school’s long history was a draw. “A lot of the kids here have parents or grandparents who went here,” Carlyle said. “I got stopped at the grocery store the other night by a guy who had gone here and he was asking when he’d be able to tour the school. So we have history here, and we’re also building history here.”

Maples said the students are particularly drawn to the age of “historic Wicker.”

“The first place they all wanted to see was the historic building,” she said. “Many of them knew about the history here from their own families.”

Even Brianna said she was awed by what she’d learned. “When we took the tour, they told us about how old the floor and the lights were,” she said. “But if we talked about everything we’ve already learned about Wicker, we’d be here for hours.”

The first few days of school anywhere are going to be hectic. But in the case of a new school, there may be best practices to follow, but there aren’t any established routines or institutional memory to use as guideposts. Carlyle acknowledged that being a challenge, but said all she’s learned in just a couple days tells her that everything will be just fine.

Coordinating bus operations, for example, has been a challenge.

“We’re very concerned about safety and want to make sure we get the right children on the right bus at the right time so they can get home. We’ve had to learn some new routes and tweak some others,” Carlyle said. “But we’ve also been able to get help from the older kids, the fourth and fifth graders, to step up for the younger kids if a stop is missed or if a younger child doesn’t know where to go.”

Similar examples abound at Wicker, but Carlyle said the staff simply looks at it as a chance to learn and grow — and ultimately benefit the hundreds of kids who attend each day. “Every day so far has been different,” she said. “But we’re learning our way through and I know that very soon everything will be to where this is the way it works and the way we want it to work at W.B. Wicker.”



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A YELLOW JACKET AGAIN

Sanford native, former Yankees pick Danny Borrell to coach pitching at Georgia Tech

By Jonathan Owens

The details are lost to time, but Sanford native Danny Borrell threw his first pitch in a youth league game on a dirt field somewhere in Lee County in the 1980s.

“I still remember my team – Lee Builder Mart,” he said of his days on the rec fields of Lee County. “I was an athletic kid and I could throw strikes, and that’s really all we needed.”

Borrell doesn’t remember that first pitch, but it was the start of a journey that would take him to the highest ranks of the sport. After 18 years as a pitching instructor and coordinator with the New York Yankees, Borrell accepted a new adventure in early August.

He was named pitching coach for Georgia Tech, a job change that includes a “significant pay increase” according to the *New York Post*.

Learning the game as a youth in Sanford, he helped Lee Senior High School win its first state championship as a star pitcher and first baseman in 1996 — the first of two for Lee head coach Charlie Spivey. He then shined as both a pitcher and everyday player at Wake Forest and was drafted by the Yankees in the second round of the 2000 MLB draft.

Borrell played nine seasons in the minor leagues before the Yankees hired him as a pitching coach. He eventually was named as pitching coordinator for the entire Yankees organization in 2015.

With the Yankees, he worked with some of the game’s best pitchers — the Yankees don’t usually lack for talent at any position. All Stars Dellin Betances and Luis Severino rank among the 34 pitchers he helped get to the majors.

“Working for the Yankees was absolutely amazing,” he said. “I have been lucky enough

to be a Yankee lifer. I spent 18 years in pinstripes. It was an absolute honor.”

He said the lessons he learned from Spivey — particularly his attention to detail — have helped him achieve success at every level of the game.

“I still call him coach. I can’t make myself call him Charlie,” Borrell said of Spivey. “He had a huge influence on my life and my career.”

Now he’s embarked on a new journey, returning to the college game for the first time in two decades. At least the mascot will be familiar.

“I’ve come full circle,” Borrell said, referring to both Lee County and Georgia Tech’s mascot — the Yellow Jackets. “I’ve had a lot of offers to coach at a lot of places over the years. This one just felt different. I’m at a point in my life where my resume is full. I just felt like this is a great situation for me and my family

that I couldn’t pass up.”

Lee County may be the only high school in the country with two pitching coaches among the elite collegiate ranks. In addition to Borrell, UNC’s longtime pitching coach Scott Forbes hails from Sanford as well.

Borrell said Forbes was one of the first people to reach out to him to welcome him to the Atlantic Coast Conference. Forbes is now the Tar Heels’ Associate Head Coach, and is likely among the favorites to take over as head coach in the future.

Borrell said he didn’t know what the future holds, but for now he’s happy to focus on pitching.

“I want to do what I love, and that’s developing pitchers,” he said. “I honestly don’t think I’m smart enough to coach both sides of the ball. I just want to use my gifts and knowledge to help young player succeed.”



The Deep River Northview 9 and under baseball team made the most of its trip to Florida for the Cal Ripken League World Series in early August. The team won three games in the tournament and were just one win away from playing in the World Series Championship. They lost 7-5 to the Okeeheltee Tribe from West Palm Beach on Friday morning in the Semifinals of the single-elimination bracket. The boys won the consolation game to finish third in the tournament overall. "The coaches are so proud of these players for what they have accomplished this summer through their All-Star journey," said Northview head coach Tommy Harrington. "The kids have embraced the team approach all season. Everyone knows their role on this team. We truly do not have any superstars. These kids understand the importance of playing as one unit."

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An architect's signature lives on

Early Sanford builder's bell-shaped gable vents found on some of city's oldest buildings

By Gordon Anderson

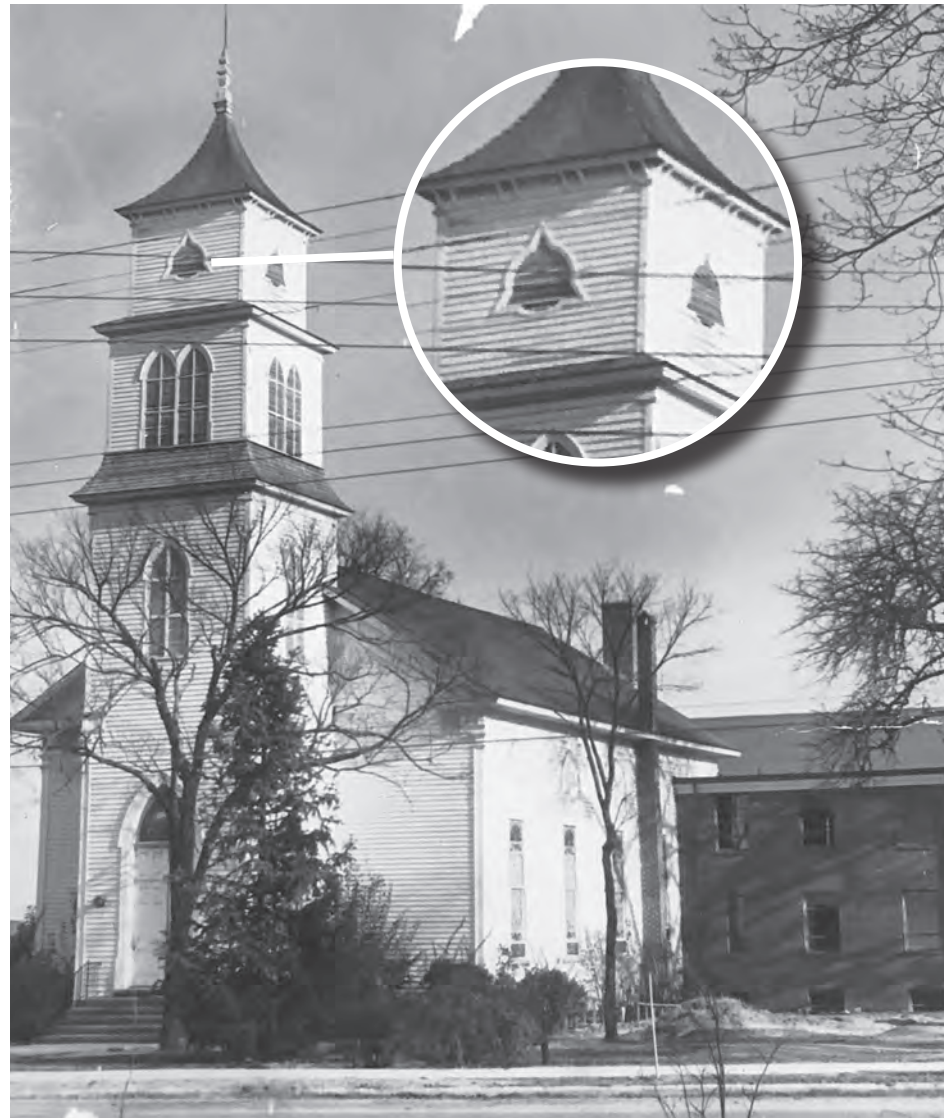
Nearly two centuries later, John B. Masemore's signature hides in plain sight on some of Lee County's most historic structures.

Masemore isn't a common name in Lee County, and there's really only so much to know about the 19th Century contractor who built Buffalo Presbyterian church in 1879, as well as several other contemporaneous structures. Born in 1828, he lived on Chatham Street and claimed to have built the first home in downtown Sanford, according to J. Daniel Pezzoni's *The History and Architecture of Lee County, North Carolina*.

And beyond a Google search that shows some members of Masemore's family (his wife and two daughters, but apparently not Masemore himself) being buried in the cemetery at Haywood Independent Bible Church just across the Deep River in Chatham County, as well as his apparent involvement with the then-prominent McIver family (more on that in a bit), there's not much else to be easily found regarding Masemore and his life's work.

But like the first sentence of this story referenced, Masemore's signature is easily visible in at least two locations if you just know where to look. We're not talking, however, about a John Hancock signature. With regards to Masemore's buildings — including some that no longer stand, but of which photographs remain — his trademark flourish appears to have come when placing gable vents near the roofs of his work.

A review of buildings that went up around Masemore's time — again, he worked in the area from at least the mid-



John B. Masemore's bell-shaped gable vents can still be seen two of Sanford's three remaining Masemore structures (pictured right) — Buffalo Presbyterian Church, built in 1879, and at a home less than a half of a mile away on Buffalo Church Road near the Mallard Cove apartments. Above is the now-demolished Jonesboro Methodist Church and a building in what is now Downtown Sanford.

to-late 1800s — shows almost as many styles of these attic ventilators as there are structures. Masemore's preference appeared to be that these vents were perfect circles with triangular protrudences at even intervals, making the whole thing look like a bell.

This bell-shaped gable vent can be seen on two of three remaining Masemore structures *The Rant* is aware of in Lee County (photos of that third building, the 1855-built John D. McIver farmhouse on Windmill Drive in the Westlake Valley

area, don't appear to show any gable vents at all, bell-shaped or otherwise). One of them is the current Buffalo Presbyterian Church, which went up in 1879 (although the congregation had occupied buildings there for nearly a century prior); the other is a home less than half a mile away on Buffalo Church Road just opposite of the Mallard Cove apartment complex.

That home, first occupied by Wesley McIver (brother of the aforementioned John) and his wife Jane, was also built in 1855, and Pezzoni's book indicates that

“the town of Sanford was established partly on land owned by Wesley and his brother.” So while Masemore's “signatures” may be just an interesting-to-some wrinkle of the period's architecture, they're also something of a symbol of Sanford's foundational period.

Masemore's — and the McIvers' — role in early Sanford also sprawled into the commercial realm. Although it no longer stands, Pezzoni's book identifies the McIvers Store building at the intersection of Chatham and McIver streets across from



the still-standing Lutterloh building as “Sanford’s leading mercantile emporium” and “the largest general store in Moore County” (Lee County wouldn’t form until 1908). And just like the Buffalo Church, and just like Wesley McIver’s homes, photos of the store show Masemore’s distinctive bell-shaped gable vents.

That store was demolished sometime around the 1930s. Later, the old Jonesboro Methodist Church at the intersection of Academy and Main streets (which the Rant couldn’t factually connect to Masemore, but did feature his bell-shaped gable vent) was likewise demolished, leaving the Buffa-

lo Church and the Wesley McIver house as the known remaining structures to bear his signature. But records indicate variously that Masemore also worked in Moore and Chatham counties, leaving open the possibility that his method of leaving his name upon his work — work that was integral to the beginnings of Sanford and Lee County — may still stand elsewhere.



If you have any information or photos of John Masemore-built structures anywhere in the area, send them to gordon@rantnc.com.



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WITH LOVE, MARILYN

Erin Sullivan brings the complex world of Marilyn Monroe to the Temple Theatre stage



"I'm not a theme park impersonator," says actress Erin Sullivan, of her stage performance, *With Love, Marilyn*. "I want to establish that she is a strong, smart, confident woman who has a rattled and rocky foundation."

By Corbie Hill

For all her fame, Marilyn Monroe was desperately lonely.

Monroe, who was born Norma Jeane Mortenson, had a rocky upbringing. Her mother was committed to a mental hospital at a young age. As for her father, she never knew who he was. Young Monroe was raised in foster care and bounced from family member to family member. As an adult, then, all she wanted was a good home life, says Erin Sullivan.

"That's what I think hurt the most," Sullivan continues. "She was the most famous person in the world, but she was going to bed by herself, and unfortunately for so much of her life abusing pills and alcohol and trying to fill that void of true loneliness. [In 2019] it's more verbal with people who are expressing depression and expressing loneliness. Back then, you just hid all that stuff."

This educates Sullivan's performance in

With Love, Marilyn, which comes to Temple Theatre Friday, Sept. 6 at 7:30 p.m. Sullivan recently moved to the Triangle after 18 years in New York City, where she was in a number of shows, touring professionally in *Hairspray*, *Shrek*, *The Wedding Singer* and *Grease*. *With Love, Marilyn* is special to this seasoned actor, who co-wrote the show and is one of its producers. It's important to Sullivan to present Monroe's complexities. She doesn't dwell on the darkness, sure, but she doesn't run from it, either, when she plays one of the most famous women in 20th Century cinema.

"I'm not a theme park impersonator," Sullivan says. "I don't stand out on Hollywood Boulevard and take photos with people. I'm an actor."

Monroe performed live all of twice. *With Love, Marilyn* was written as the dress rehearsal for the fictional third show — the one Monroe never got to do. She was friends with Sinatra and the Rat Pack, Sullivan points out, and was in talks to do a Las Vegas show. Sullivan even has the date — *With Love*,

WITH LOVE, MARILYN

7:30 p.m. | Friday, Sept. 6
Temple Theatre (templeshow.com)

Marilyn takes place on July 1962, mere weeks before the star's death. The show is comprised of 11 songs — some famous, some obscure — which are integrated into stories about Monroe's short but fascinating life.

"She was incredibly smart and she does not get a nod of recognition for that," Sullivan says. "In my piece, I want to establish that she is a strong, smart confident woman who has a rattled and rocky foundation."

While Sullivan didn't experience the rocky upbringing Monroe did, she has experienced her share of show business frustrations — the biggest one of which led to the creation of *With Love, Marilyn*. Sullivan was born in Connecticut and was bitten by the theater bug at 7. By 9 or 10, she had her first

Broadway audition. When her family moved to Wilmington, Sullivan got deeply involved in its theater scene, acting in more than 100 productions in eight years.

This was the '90s, and Wilmington was booming with regards to the performing arts. Hit teen drama *Dawson's Creek* filmed there, and Sullivan connected with top-notch resources. As a kid, the money she made acting went right back into dance classes. When she missed school, it was for exciting reasons.

"You couldn't have gotten more involved in the [theater] community than I was as a teenager," she says.

When Sullivan graduated high school and started at the American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York, she already knew how to navigate the city and its theater world, having experienced it as a child living in Connecticut. This was one fewer thing to learn, but there were still hurdles aplenty.

"New York is an extremely difficult city, and as much energy as she gives you, she also takes," Sullivan says. Maybe life is different for actors whose wealthy parents pay their rent, she wonders, but that wasn't her experience. "When they say the struggle is real, it is! You are constantly working to make ends meet on top of getting up at 5 a.m. to go to an audition. It's extremely exhausting when it comes to just pursuing your craft."

Beyond that, the theater industry has changed since Sullivan moved to New York in 2000. Most frustratingly, plays no longer make it to Broadway unless they're packed with celebrities. Requiring actors to already be famous creates a Catch-22, making it nigh impossible for working actors to get their break anymore. The hardest day of Sullivan's career,

in fact, was the day she learned she had lost a coveted role for that reason.

So she followed the advice she gives younger actors: "If they're not going to let you perform, create your own work," as Sullivan puts it. "Don't sit there and feel sorry for yourself because that's not going to help anything."

This is why *With Love, Marilyn* is so special to Sullivan. She's been doing her show for about three years, putting it on four or five times annually. It's a good pace for Sullivan, in particular because it gives her time to hire local musicians. At Temple Theatre, for instance, she'll be working with in-house musicians, but this will also be the first time Sullivan works with an in-house musical director and technical director (usually she travels with her own). Sullivan is admittedly excited, and she hopes her show ignites in her audience the same fascination she feels for Monroe, whose complexities are often overlooked and whose relevance has not faded.

"Especially right now, with the #MeToo movement, I feel like her presence is very strong because she was one of the first women in Hollywood who played up her sexuality, but then she wanted to form her own production company because people didn't take her serious," says Sullivan. "She was kind of a pioneer in saying 'f__k you' to men in the early 1960s when it came to her career."

□

Corbie Hill is a journalist and editor who lives on three wooded acres in Pittsboro with his wife and daughters. His work has appeared in the News & Observer, No Depression, StarTrek.com, Bandcamp Daily and a host of other outlets. Follow him on Twitter @afraidofthebear.



Erin Sullivan has been doing *With Love, Marilyn* for three years now; and at Temple Theatre, she'll be working in-house musicians and (for the first time) an in-house musical director and technical director. All photos courtesy of withlovemarilyn.com

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WITH LOVE, MARILYN

Sept. 6 | Temple Theatre |
7:30 p.m. | \$25

Before her recent return to North Carolina, Erin Sullivan spent 18 years living in NYC and touring with Broadway musicals. Read our feature about her one-woman Marilyn Monroe show on page 26. Tickets can be purchased by calling (919) 774-4155 or visiting templeshows.com.

RETRO CANDY

Sept. 6 | Hugger Muggger Brewing |
8 p.m. | free

Was this name a dictionary pick? Regardless, what you get here is the poppier side of 20th century rock.

OLIVER!

Sept. 12-29 | Temple Theatre |
Times vary | \$17-\$29

More? You want more? The award-winning Broadway is a musical based upon Charles Dickens' classic *Oliver Twist*. Performance will mark the first of Temple Theatre's 2019-2020 main stage season. Tickets can be purchased by calling (919) 774-4155 or visiting templeshows.com.



EmiSunshine, a 15-year-old music prodigy who's been compared to a young Dolly Parton or Janis Joplin, will perform on Sept. 19 at the Mann Center in Sanford. Photo courtesy of TheEmiSunshine.com.

LET THE SUNSHINE IN

Teen country music star EmiSunshine coming to Sanford Sept. 19

Rolling Stone named EmiSunshine among "10 Country Music Artists You Need to Know," but the teenage singer/songwriter is more than country. Her songs are a unique blend of Americana, bluegrass, blues, rock, gospel and jazz, encompassing such diverse subjects as love, loss, family, friendship, poverty, life in America and autism.

The 15-year-old musical prodigy from will perform many of her old favorites, as well as new ballads from an upcoming album, when she headlines an all-ages show at the Mann Center of North Carolina in Sanford on Sept. 19.

EmiSunshine has been attracting national attention since she was 9, with appearances on *The Today Show*, NBC's *Little Big Shots*, *Pickler & Ben*, *Song of the Mountains* and elsewhere,

EMISUNSHINE

7:30 p.m. | Thursday, Sept. 19
Mann Center (manncenternc.org)
Tickets: \$17 and \$22

including 14 performances at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, as well as performances at major festivals like CMA Fest and MerleFest.

In 2018, she made her motion picture debut in the Grammy-nominated Elvis Presley documentary film *The King* alongside Rosanne Cash, Emmylou Harris, Ashton Kutcher, Alec Baldwin and other stars. EmiSunshine wrote three songs for the movie, which she performed while riding in the backseat of Elvis' Rolls Royce. She also performed at the movie's premiere at the

Cannes International Film Festival in France. Her YouTube videos have garnered more than 16 million views. Her music has been praised by such luminaries as Loretta Lynn, Emmylou Harris, Tim McGraw, Ricky Skaggs, Marty Stuart and The Grateful Dead. Writers have compared her to a young Janis Joplin and Dolly Parton.

A native of East Tennessee, EmiSunshine hails from a family of musicians, with a touring band comprised of her father, Randall Hamilton; her brother, John Hamilton; and uncle Bobby Hill. As a young girl, she started writing songs with her mother, Alisha Hamilton, and is now working with established songwriters in Nashville and legendary record producer Tony Brown.

EmiSunshine's music is available through iTunes, Amazon and other digital outlets.



AMERICAN PRIDE (STATLER BROTHERS TRIBUTE)

Sept. 22 | Mann Center |
7:30-10:30 p.m. | \$17 or \$22 | manncenter.org

They're in both the Country Music Hall of Fame and the Gospel Music Hall of Fame. In addition to a wildly successful career of their own that includes scores and scores of awards, they spent the better part of a decade backing up country music icon Johnny Cash. Author Kurt Vonnegut once referred to them as "America's poets."

It's safe to call the Statler Brothers legends. On Sunday, Sept. 22, the Mann Center of Sanford will present American Pride, an act that honors those legends.

American Pride, a quartet that pays tribute to legendary country gospel quartet the Statler Brothers. Members Bill Tomlinson, Mike and Jimmy Whetsel (like the real Statlers, only two members of American Pride are brothers), and Jamie Lambert have perfectly captured the authenticity of the Statlers' sound, keeping the legacy alive and promoting traditional country music. Concert goers can expect songs spanning the Statlers' more than four decade career, during which they set the standard for the combination of traditional country music and gospel songs. Some of their better known songs include "Flowers on the Wall," "We Got Paid by Cash," and "Bed of Rose's."

SUPERSEPTEMBER MINI BEER FEST

Sept. 14 | Camelback Brewing |
1-5 p.m. | free

Check it out: Camelback is welcoming local brewing peers Hugger Mugger, Railhouse and Southern Pines Brewing to the parking lot of 804 Spring Lane for an afternoon of beer and live music.

JUJUGURU

Sept. 13 | Smoke & Barrel |
8:30 p.m. | free

Electric blues with lots of guitar. You know the drill.

HENRY CHO

Sept. 17 | Temple Theatre |
7:30 p.m. | \$30

In which actor and Grand Ole Opry regular Henry Cho brings his clean comedy to Sanford. Tickets can be purchased by calling (919) 774-4155 or visiting templeshows.com.

JIMMY KEYS

Sept. 19 | Temple Theatre |
7:30 p.m. | \$20

Musical comedy's a tough schtick, but musical comedian Jimmy Keys has opened for Willie freakin' Nelson. There must be something funny going on. Tickets can be purchased by calling (919) 774-4155 or visiting templeshows.com.



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JOE HERO

*Sept. 19 | S. Steele Street,
Downtown Sanford | 7-9 p.m. | free*

Joe Hero is a Raleigh-based band covering grunge and alternative music from the 90s — sometimes doing a full Foo Fighters tribute set — and who sometimes bring out the occasional original. They'll be headlining the fourth Downtown Alive! concert on Steele Street in Downtown Sanford — food trucks and beer stands will be on hand.

**CORY LUETJEN &
THE TRAVELIN' BLUES BAND**

*Sept. 20 | Smoke & Barrel |
8:30 p.m. | free*

This five-piece Asheboro blues outfit knows its way around classic rock and beach music tunes, too.

ICARUS AIRLINE

*Sept. 20 | Hugger Mugger Brewing |
8 p.m. | free*

Is it something in the water? Sanford obviously loves the blues — here's another chance to get your fill.

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*Sept. 28 | Mann Center |
11 a.m.-8 p.m. |
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Dodson begins push for concealed carry vote in county

The concealed carrying of firearms in some county owned buildings by those with permits is inching toward becoming reality again after the introduction of a new ordinance by a county commissioner who has called business owners who oppose firearms on their properties “idiot, ignoramus, jackass morons.”

Kevin Dodson, a Democratic at-large member of the Lee County Board of Commissioners indicated in an Aug. 4 video posted in the wake of mass shootings in El Paso, Texas and Dayton, Ohio that he would push an ordinance allowing concealed carry in a small number of county facilities.

At the same time, he cast aspersions on any business owner which wouldn't allow the same.

“These morons that put these signs on the doors, that's right, you're a moron,” Dodson says in the video as he points at the camera. “You're an idiot. You're trying to get people killed.”

At a commissioners meeting later in August, Dodson brought up the measure, which will require a public hearing and a series of votes before becoming reality. Concealed carry in county facilities has ping-ponged a few times in recent years — the board made it legal in 2012, but that ordinance was repealed following the 2014 election which saw Democrats take control of the board. Although there are still four Democrats on the board, Dodson's willingness to cross the aisle on this issue means he likely has the votes for passage.

At the August meeting, Commissioner Andre Knecht, a Republican, asked county staff to modify the 2012 ordinance so that it reflects subsequent changes to state law and then present it to the board at its meeting in September. If the board elects to move forward with a new ordinance allowing concealed carry, a public hearing and a series of votes are likely to settle the issue again for the time being (it could pass in one vote if the vote is unani-

mous, but that's unlikely). County Manager John Crumpton will also present to the board a personnel policy regarding concealed carry by county employees at the next meeting.

“This is in light of the El Paso shooting and the Dayton shooting, but I've been thinking about this for some time,” Dodson said at the August meeting. “Enough is enough.”

Dodson at the same time said he wouldn't support the open carrying of firearms in the same places. “Absolutely not,” he said. “Only concealed carry, because these individuals have been vetted.”

Former County Commissioner Jim Womack, who currently chairs the Lee County Republican Party, spoke at the same meeting and bemoaned the “inconvenience” of not being able to carry concealed weapons in county facilities.

“I know it's a great inconvenience to have

to go into certain government facilities and to have to secure your weapon somewhere else,” he said.

Counties and cities are within their rights to limit concealed carry within their facilities. Additionally, state and federal laws bar concealed weapons in a host of public places including courthouses, schools, and other government buildings. Further, privately-owned buildings which house government functions — such as the Buggy Factory in downtown Sanford — are entitled to make their own decisions about whether firearms are allowed. And often, those private decisions are driven as much by concerns about liability issues as they are anything else.

If the measure passes, gun owners permitted to carry concealed would be allowed to do so in just a handful of local government buildings, including the Government Center on Hillcrest Drive, the Enrichment Center,

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the downtown Board of Elections office, the county animal shelter, and the Administration Building on Summit Drive. Some park facilities could also be impacted at different times, depending on varying factors.

Dodson was originally elected to one of the board's at large seats in 2016 as a Republican, but switched parties less than a year later after expressing dissatisfaction with the local GOP's leadership, particularly on the issue of economic incentives. In addition to owning a gun outlet in the Tramway area, Dodson at the time was an officer with the Siler City Police Department.

After switching parties, he mounted a campaign for sheriff against Republican incumbent Tracy Carter, losing in a 69-31 landslide. During that election campaign, Dodson was criticized for leaving the United States Army after going absent without leave in 1983, and later was terminated from his job with the Siler City PD. Since losing the 2018 sheriff's race, Dodson has been absent from several meetings of the board. His term expires next year, and while he has not said whether he plans to seek re-election, he said shortly after losing the sheriff's race in 2018 that he planned to run

again in 2022.

Asked earlier in August to expound on his comments in the video, Dodson said he understood that changing the county's concealed carry ordinance would only impact a few buildings and that he doesn't support concealed carry in the courthouse because "there are usually armed officers in the courthouse."

He also said he stands by the words he used to describe business owners or others who don't want firearms on their property.

"Yes, I do stand by those words," he said. "These business owners that post these signs simply don't understand. You know as well as I do that a criminal is not going to obey these signs. If they knew that there possibly was a law abiding citizen carrying a firearm they may think twice before thinking about inflicting violence on unsuspecting citizens."

And although he describes in the video a situation in which a citizen leaves their firearm in a vehicle to comply with a business owner's wishes and then encounters an attacker, he said he wasn't encouraging anyone to disobey "no firearms" signs.

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NEWS YOU CAN USE

Clinic reopens in Broadway, headed by Moncure native

Central Carolina Hospital recently reopened its newly renovated Central Carolina Sandhills Family Care practice, located at 101 Church Street in Broadway.

Certified Physician Assistant Julia Gumpert began seeing patients at the new facility on Aug. 13. Starting Sept. 3, Gumpert will see patients at the clinic Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Friday from 8 a.m. to noon.

“Re-opening this clinic location means we are restoring a key primary healthcare access

point for the community,” said Spencer Thomas, chief executive officer (CEO) of Central Carolina Hospital. “We are so pleased that Julia will be leading our efforts to advance our mission of Making Communities Healthier at Central Carolina Sandhills Family Care, and we look forward to the many ways she will positively impact the health and well-being of patients in this area.”

Gumpert is a native of Moncure and attended school at Grace Christian School in Sanford. She currently lives in Lillington with her family. She is currently employed with Apollo MD as a hospitalist at Central Carolina Hospital.

“I’m thrilled to have the opportunity to join Central Carolina Sandhills Family Care and help enhance the health of the Broadway community and surrounding areas,” Gumpert said. “I look forward to working closely with my patients to help them achieve their health goals.”

Gumpert has experience in family medicine, geriatrics, cardiology, internal medicine and urgent care. If you have questions or would like to make an appointment, please call 919-258-6521.



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Large convenience store to replace small one in Tramway

A lot of questions have popped up about the work being done at the Tramway Exxon/Circle K store across from the Food Lion shopping center, and some news on the construction finally has surfaced.

According to the Sanford/Lee County Planning Department's website, a permit was issued in July to construct a "new Circle K convenience store" at the location. There have been rumors of the new gas station being something called a "mega store," and while *The Rant* hasn't been able to explicitly confirm that, the permit calls for a nearly 5,000 square foot building on the site.

The former location was just 600 square feet, for comparison.

Yamato becomes Sanford's latest restaurant casualty

Yamato Japanese Steakhouse and Seafood at 2610 S. Horner Blvd. — which had been serving hibachi meals and (occasional) sushi — has shut its doors.

The restaurant hung its "closed" sign for good in late July. The building is located in a growing section of Sanford that has seen several new restaurants and retail businesses in recent years.

Despite there being other restaurants with the same name, Yamato isn't a chain restaurant. But the closing is the second in as many months for Sanford's restaurant landscape. Sagebrush Steakhouse shut down without any warning in June.



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**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF CENTRAL CAROLINA**

SAVE THE DATE: OCTOBER 15, 2019
Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Carolina
18th Annual Golf Tournament

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benefiting the Boys & Girls Clubs of
Central Carolina. Breakfast and lunch
provided by Chick-fil-A. Breakfast and
check in begins at 8:00 am with a
9:00 am start time.**

the shootings took place. As of Aug. 30, officers hadn't made arrests in the Cross Street shooting. Anyone with information is asked to call the Sanford Police Department at (919) 777-1051.

Simmons named 'Community Hero of the Month'

Daniel Simmons, CEO of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Carolina, was named U.S. Rep. Mark Walker's "Sixth District Community Hero of the Month" in August, according to a press release from the congressman's office.

Simmons, a Randolph County native, came to the organization in 2015 and became CEO of the merged Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Carolina the next year. He also volunteers as a Guardian ad Litem, representing the interests of children involved with the court system due to abuse and neglect, according to Walker.

"I know firsthand what it's like for kids who deal with tough familial challenges and disadvantaged circumstances, as my mother was a single mom who worked very hard to provide for us," Simmons said. "In addition to support from my grandparents, I saw how individ-

uals outside our family mentored and even welcomed me into their families when things got tough, expanded my horizons and made sure I knew my potential. I'm able to see very similar things in action every day in leadership at Boys and Girls Club. As a Guardian ad Litem, I have a strong voice in the courtroom in advocating for the best interests of children and improving their trajectory of their lives. I've always wanted to serve the community and the world through Rotary due to their investment in me when I was young."

Simmons, who was presented with a certificate and a flag that was flown over the U.S. Capitol, lives in Sanford with his wife Jessica. The Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Carolina currently serves more than 1,000 children per year in Lee and Chatham counties. The organization opening its third location, the Robin Paige Boys and Girls Club in Lillington on Aug. 26.

"Daniel is an excellent example of how one person can serve their community in a variety of ways, and he's accomplished all of this before the age of 40," Walker said. "Daniel remembers what it's like to be in need and I'm inspired by his commitment to invest in the next generation in very tangible ways."



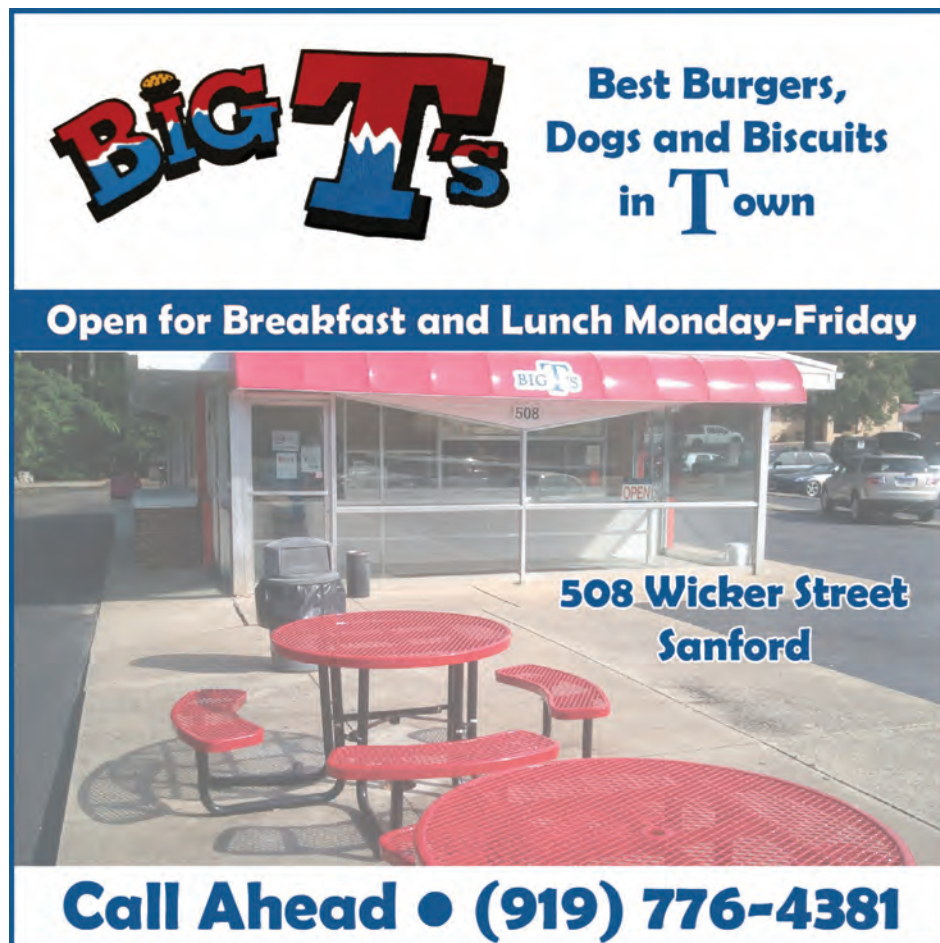
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THE RANT

NEWS YOU CAN REUSE

Kendale Plaza sold to N.C. developer; plans unknown

Two thirds of the decaying Kendale Plaza shopping center were sold in July to a Moore County-based commercial development firm, and the director of forthcoming locally-based charter school said he expects to close on the lower third by the end of the month.

Regarding the occupied parts of the shopping center — the two buildings surrounded by Lee Avenue, Main Street, Judd Street, and Cameron Drive — a deed on file at the Lee County Courthouse shows a transfer on July 16 from Kendale Partners to a West End-

based LLC called Par 5 Holding.

Par 5 Holding appears to be connected to Par 5 Development, which is described on its website as a “preferred developer” for Dollar General and PetSuites of America. A person answering the phone at Par 5 Development said the company did not wish to discuss what plans, if any, the company has for the site.

That said, the website hosts photos of some of the company’s current holdings, which at the very least appear to be more modern and of a higher quality than what currently exists at Kendale. Further, language on the site offers some hope that the company is willing to work with Sanford city government to see the location improve.

“At Par 5 we understand how important it is to cooperate and work with local officials to ensure that each project is designed and built to the local ordinances and regulations,” the site reads. “From appearance to environmentally sound stormwater practices, we aim to deliver a building that the municipality and neighborhood are delighted to have as a part of their community.”

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WILL HARRIS

Vice President

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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2019 Football Schedules

Wake Forest Demon Deacons

Aug. 30 UTAH STATE (Friday)
Sept. 6 @ RICE (Friday)
Sept. 13 NORTH CAROLINA (Fri.)
Sept. 21 ELON
Sept. 28 @ BOSTON COLLEGE
Oct. 12 LOUISVILLE
Oct. 19 FLORIDA STATE
Nov. 2 NC STATE
Nov. 9 @ VIRGINIA TECH
Nov. 16 @ CLEMSON
Nov. 23 DUKE
Nov. 30 @ SYRACUSE

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Appalachian Mountaineers

Aug. 31 ETSU
Sept. 7 UNC CHARLOTTE
Sept. 21 @ NORTH CAROLINA
Sept. 28 COASTAL CAROLINA
Oct. 9 @ LOUISIANA (Wed.)
Oct. 19 ULM
Oct. 26 @ SOUTH ALABAMA
Oct. 31 GEORGIA SOU. (Th.)
Nov. 9 @ SOUTH CAROLINA
Nov. 16 @ GEORGIA STATE
Nov. 23 TEXAS STATE
Nov. 29 @ TROY

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NC State Wolfpack

Aug. 31 EAST CAROLINA
Sept. 7 WESTERN CAROLINA
Sept. 14 @ WEST VIRGINIA
Sept. 21 BALL STATE
Sept. 28 @ FLORIDA STATE
Oct. 10 SYRACUSE (Thurs.)
Oct. 19 @ BOSTON COLLEGE
Nov. 2 @ WAKE FOREST
Nov. 9 CLEMSON
Nov. 16 LOUISVILLE
Nov. 21 @ GEORGIA TECH (Thurs.)
Nov. 30 NORTH CAROLINA

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Duke Blue Devils

Aug. 31 ALABAMA (At Atlanta)
Sept. 7 NC A&T
Sept. 14 @ MID. TENN. ST.
Sept. 21 @ VIRGINIA TECH
Oct. 5 PITTSBURGH
Oct. 12 GEORGIA TECH
Oct. 19 @ VIRGINIA
Oct. 26 @ NORTH CAROLINA
Nov. 9 NOTRE DAME
Nov. 16 SYRACUSE
Nov. 23 @ WAKE FOREST
Nov. 30 MIAMI

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UNC Tar Heels

Aug. 31 SOUTH CAROLINA (Charlotte)
Sept. 7 MIAMI
Sept. 13 @ WAKE FOREST (Fri.)
Sept. 21 APPALACHIAN
Sept. 28 CLEMSON
Oct. 5 @ GEORGIA TECH
Oct. 19 @ VIRGINIA TECH
Oct. 26 DUKE
Nov. 2 VIRGINIA
Nov. 14 @ PITTSBURGH (Thurs.)
Nov. 22 MERCER
Nov. 30 @ NC STATE

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East Carolina Pirates

Aug. 31 @ NC STATE
Sept. 7 GARDNER-WEBB
Sept. 14 @ NAVY
Sept. 21 WILLIAM & MARY
Sept. 28 @ OLD DOMINION
Oct. 3 TEMPLE (Thurs.)
Oct. 19 @ UCF
Oct. 26 USF
Nov. 2 CINCINNATI
Nov. 9 @ SMU
Nov. 23 @ CONNECTICUT
Nov. 30 TULSA

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CAROLINA PANTHERS

Sept. 8 LA RAMS
Sept. 12 TAMPA BAY (Thurs.)
Sept. 22 @ CARDINALS
Sept. 29 @ HOUSTON
Oct. 6 JACKSONVILLE
Oct. 13 OPEN DATE
Oct. 27 @ SAN FRANCISCO
Nov. 3 TENNESSEE
Nov. 10 @ GREEN BAY
Nov. 8 @ PITTSBURGH (Th.)
Nov. 17 ATLANTA
Nov. 24 @ NEW ORLEANS
Dec. 1 WASHINGTON
Dec. 8 @ ATLANTA
DEC. 15 SEATTLE
Dec. 22 @ INDIANAPOLIS
Dec. 29 NEW ORLEANS
Jan. 4 PLAYOFFS



Note: Game Dates/Times are subject to
change for weeks 5 through 17.

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