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NOVEMBER 2026

The Rant Monthly

SA



OH, MANN!

Sanford's Mann Center returning to its art-focused roots

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CARA CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY

CATERPILLAR'S BILLION-DOLLAR INVESTMENT

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The trip will be hosted in June 2027 and the deadline for all applications is Jan. 20. Scan the QR code or visit CEMCPower.com to apply or to find out more information.

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COLD OPEN

What's next for the Mann?

If you've had children in Sanford who have any interest in the arts —whether it's dancing in the annual Nutcracker or having their paintings or sculptures displayed by their schools — then there's a good chance you're familiar with the Mann Center for the Arts.

It's the old building that looks like a 1950s high school at the corner of North Horner Boulevard and Witherspoon. The building has had many functions over the last 100 years, and today it serves as Sanford's home for the arts. Concerts, art galleries, stage performances ... you name it.

It's possibly the most creative spot in our growing city. And in a world where AI is becoming more the norm than human thought, we need places like the Mann Center more than ever.



This month's edition of *The Rant* tells the history of the Mann Center and the dreams for it to become even more to the art community. If you're new to Sanford and are unaware of it, we hope our story inspires you to visit and even perhaps contribute to the creativity.

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LEE COUNTY GOVERNMENT
Parks & Recreation

NOVEMBER HAPPENINGS

PROGRAMS: Registration Open

Courtside Cheerleading: $30



- Girls ages 5-14 (6u, 8u, 11u, 14u)
- Tuesdays & Thursdays at 6pm
- *Registration Closes Nov. 6th*

Parent's Night Out; $30

- Saturday, December 12 (ages 4-12)

Ladies Night Crafting; $25



- Friday, December 11 (ages 18+)

Cupcakes & Canvas; $25

- Saturday, December 12 (ages 4-12)

Grinchmas Camp; $20



- Friday, December 18 (ages 5-12)
- Bob Hales Center
- 1:00pm - 5:00pm

Grinchmas Mini; $10

- Friday, December 18 (ages 2-5)
- Adult Participation is required
- Bob Hales Center
- 9:00am - 11:00am



SPECIAL EVENTS - FREE TO ATTEND!

Family Movie Night; GOAT - PG



- Nov. 13th 5:00pm - 7:30pm
- Kiwanis Family Park

Together We Trot 5k & 1-mile



- $25 for 5k, $15 for 1-mile
- Saturday, Nov. 14th
- Lee County Athletic Park

GYMNASTICS: Late Registration

- Session 6: Oct. 26 - Dec. 19
- All ages, abilities and genders

GYMNASTICS: Register Nov. 9

Session 6: Try-It-Out Class

- $12/class (Lee County Rate)
- Maximum of 2 classes - 11/9 - 12/19

Camp - Frosty Flippers: $75



- December 29-31, 2026
- 7:30am - 5:30pm

ATHLETICS: Register Oct. 5

Co-ed Basketball; 6u = $30; 8u = $50

- Ages 4-6: Tramway Elem.
- Ages 6-8: B.T. Bullock Elem.

Boys or Girls Basketball; $50



- 10u (9-10) Boys: Bob Hales Center
- 12u (11-12) Boys: Bob Hales Center
- 14u (13-14) Boys: W.B. Wicker Elem.
- 11u (9-11) Girls: W.B. Wicker Elem.
- 14u (12-14) Girls: W.B. Wicker Elem.

Check out our new registration portal:
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SCAN ME

Fees shown are for Lee County Residents. A non-Lee County Resident Fee of +$15 may apply.

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Finding Lung Cancer Early Can Make a Difference.



Lung cancer doesn't always cause symptoms in its early stages. That's why knowing your risk and talking with your health care provider about lung cancer screening can be so important.

If you're at higher risk, don't wait for symptoms. Ask if screening is right for you.

Talk to your provider about lung cancer screening.

Who can have a lung screening CT scan:

- Being between 50 and 80 years of age
- Being a current smoker or having quit smoking in the past 15 years
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- Not had a chest CT in the last 12 months



All patients scanned during the month of November will receive a pulpboard coaster card.

FirstHealth

FirstHealth.org/Lung

ITALIAN COMPANY PICKS SANFORD FOR $230M FACILITY

A multinational life sciences company based in Italy has announced it will establish a manufacturing plant in Lee County, investing $230 million in the local tax base and creating at least 200 jobs.

Bracco Imaging is "a world leader in imaging diagnostic products, contrast agents, medical devices, and related solutions for health care providers," according to the Sanford Area Growth Alliance. The new Lee County facility will be a sterile manufacturing plant for contrast media.

SAGA estimates the project will create an annual payroll impact of more than $20.6 million and be fully staffed by 2031. The average wage of the 200 jobs is expected to be $103,000 annually, with jobs on the lower end of that scale paying more than $80,000.

Bracco will receive an economic incentive worth just shy of $7 million over six years from Sanford and Lee County in exchange for hitting the mentioned investment and job creation targets.

Bracco, based in Milan and founded in 1927, specializes in technologies and agents that enable medical imaging such as X-Rays, CT scans, ultrasounds, and MRIs. It employs more than 4,000 workers globally with production facilities in Europe, Asia, and Canada, and operates in the healthcare sectors of more than 100 countries.

"With Bracco Imaging's project announcement, our community should be incredibly proud that Sanford is once again proving a vital link in the healthcare of millions around the world," said Sanford Mayor Rebecca Wyhof Salmon. "The investment and jobs from Bracco Imaging and the other healthcare companies that have chosen Sanford in recent years do more than provide new economic opportunities for our residents; they help reinforce our century-long tradition as a cutting-edge manufacturing community. Congratulations, Bracco Imaging."

— by Gordon Anderson

40 years of animal advocacy

CARA celebrates a milestone anniversary, but help is needed for an aging facilty

By Billy Liggett
billy@rantnc.com



Carolina Animal Rescue and Adoption (CARA) rescues and finds homes for more than 200 dogs and cats each year. The organization, located on Deep River Road in Sanford, is celebrating its 40th year.

Beefy was a shelter dog who thought he found a family, but was surrendered to Sanford's Carolina Animal Rescue and Adoption after about a year. No longer a puppy — and as a Cane Corso mix, a little too large for many tastes — Beefy spent the next three years under CARA's care before finally finding his "forever home."

"He's a heartwarming case — one of many," says Lynn Stephenson, CARA spokesperson and a fervent volunteer for the nonprofit dog and cat rescue organization. "His new family just glows about how wonderful of a dog he is. It's stories like this that show why the work CARA does is important and why I volunteer."

CARA began as an idea by longtime Sanford veterinarian Dr. Ron Myres when he opened his practice in 1977. One of his first clients was Pat Sprouse, who brought up the "growing crisis" of homeless animals in Lee County at the time. On Oct. 27, 1986, they founded the San-Lee Humane Society, which served as the county's primary animal shelter for nearly 20 years. In 2003, two years after becoming Lee County's first "no-kill" shelter, the Humane Society became CARA, a rebirth with renewed focus on rescue and adoption.

Since, the shelter on Deep River Road has taken in thousands of dogs and cats and found homes for them locally and throughout the state. Today, CARA rescues and adopts out more than 200 animals each year, despite running on a tight budget with a small paid staff and several dedicated volunteers.

The organization is one of several in the area that rescues animals from shelters like Lee County Animal Services before they are put down if not adopted. Once taken in by CARA, dogs reside in one of its nearly 20 kennels (cats have an indoor cat room) until an owner is found (after a vetting process).

Beefy's story is a bittersweet one, because of his long stay in the kennels. But Stephenson says dogs are well cared for by CARA — in Beefy's case, he had several short stays in her home and was adored by the staff and volunteers. She recalls another recent dog — a German shepherd mix — who stayed with CARA for over a year before finding a family, and now he's the "neighborhood favorite" and is spoiled at doggy daycare and training school.

"It's amazing the transformation these animals go through — learning to trust humans again, getting healthy and becoming lovable, adoptable dogs," says Stephenson, who's been with the organization for over five years.

She says that as CARA celebrates its 40th anniversary, the focus is on keeping the operation running smoothly despite a tight budget and trying to raise funds in a tough economy. As a no-kill shelter, CARA receives no county funding, and it relies solely on

donations and fundraising events like its Run For Their Lives 5K and Quarters for CARA. They also make appearances at several events and festivals throughout the region — like Wag-a-Ween in Fuquay-Varina and the Front Paige Media Book Fair in Raleigh, both held last month.

Funding is needed to not only keep CARA going, but to cover overdue repairs and renovations to its aging shelter. “Our steel doors were so rusty, you could see light through them. That was a $10,000 hit, but it had to be done,” Stephenson says. “The roof needs repair. We need a new ramp to our shed. We need funds for the materials, and we’d love to find volunteers to do the labor. And as always, we could use more volunteers — it’s like a church, you don’t want to burn out the same active members.”

❑

Learn more about the needs of CARA in its Letter to the Editor on Page 11 of this month’s issue.







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OPINION

EDITORIAL

Our endorsement: Time for change

The Rant has never been in the "endorsement" business. Yet, we've all worked for newspapers that did, and we've all sat in on those meetings with candidates — asking the same questions and getting, roughly, the same answers before usually endorsing the candidate we were going to endorse anyway.

Our decision in the past not to endorse wasn't based on our team being a bunch of fence-straddlers. Instead, we've viewed *The Rant* as more of a "We report, you decide" medium (a slogan once formerly used by a news outlet that very much tries to sway that decision).

But the 2024 election — led by Donald Trump's win over Kamala Harris and an easy Republican sweep locally — changed our mindset. We wrote about it in that following December's issue of *The Rant Monthly*, mostly focusing on the effects locally:

> *"Qui tacet consentit. Silence gives consent. We didn't like the outcome of this election, and the advice that is often tossed out to the losing side is 'do something about it next time.' The Rant has spent the last five years earning your trust and providing a forum for the community. Going forward, we're going to use our forum to point out the candidates we feel are most qualified."*

"Most qualified" in this election is all about how you feel the last two years have gone and how you feel the next six years should look.

Typically, we don't endorse straight-ticket voting. And we do encourage you to learn more about the candidates — our local and state elections have been covered extensively by *The Rant*, and you can read candidate Q&As at rantnc.com.

But we view this election as an opportunity to push back on the last two years under President Trump. Our economy is poor. Groceries are expensive. Health care is unaffordable. Gas prices remain high. We are at war with Iran for reasons few in this country understand. The DHHS and RKF can't be trusted. We are in Russia's back pocket.

Those are just the big things. And they're the things most Democratic and Independent candidates are focusing on as we head into November. Meanwhile, Republican candidates continue to beat the drum of "keep men out of women's sports" and "don't let schools give our kids a sex change." They are falling back on scare tactics rather than owning up to the mess they've commandeered.

We understand not every Republican candidate endorses these ideas, and not every Republican candidate supports the actions of the executive branch over the last two years. But unless they've openly come out against Trump and the direction of the party — we've re-read our local Q&As and have not seen this — having an (R) next to your name this November is an endorsement of the chaos since November 2024 … televised executions, reflecting pool lies and everything in between.

That's why our endorsement is simple. Vote for change. Support a blue wave. Then demand they actually stand up and fight.

This "wave" will not be a blue miracle pill — the next two years could become a giant stalemate in fact. But it's a start, and as long as we still have freedom of press (for now), it's a change we'd love to see.

COLUMN

Do it for the pups (and kitties)

By Billy Liggett

A few years before we had kids, my wife and I were in the market for a second dog. We were new to Sanford, we had just bought our first house, and our little Jack Russell terrier needed a friend. And we wanted that friend to be a rescue.



We found Carolina Animal Resue and Adoption (CARA) in 2008 and visited its kennel on Deep River Road after seeing a pair of cute puppies on its website. The pups — two impossibly cute black and white fur balls — were a brother and sister CARA found at the local animal shelter. We only wanted one, and we knew neither would last long (based on the aforementioned cuteness factor).

We got to CARA after work one afternoon and met the two pups — a boy and a girl. The girl was a little shy (understandably), but the boy was all about getting pets, licking our faces and wrestling around. We fell in love instantly.

We adopted Miles that day (don't worry, sister went the next day). We brought him home, and our other dog — an "only child" her whole life — instantly hated him. The next few months proved to be a bit of a challenge for us as well.

Miles loved to chew. We kept him in a gated-off room as a pup (our office at the time, which would eventually become a nursery), and he ate an entire love seat. Not in one sitting, but over about a month, he ate it. I'm not making this up.

Miles ate a lot of weird things in our house, and as he grew — a lot bigger than we ever expected — he also became a giant klutz. He knocked things over. He yanked our arms off during walks. He whined. He barked. And barked.

You're probably thinking this is an an anti-CARA column, and I assure you, it is most definitely not. I wrote a short feature on the organization (Page 8 of this edition of *The Rant Monthly*), which is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, and the letter on the opposite page here includes a statement on the need for more donations and volunteers.

When Miles grew out of his puppy phase — a phase so dramatic that my wife even wrote a well-read blog about the experience back when blogs were still a thing — he became the sweetest, most loving dog a family could ask for.

Miles was there for the births of all three of our children. He became a nanny to all three, in fact — protective to a fault and a reliable pillow for naps and fall-breaker as they learned to walk. When Honey, our Jack Russell, died of old age, we adopted another rescue to become Miles' friend. Unlike Honey, Miles loved the new pup with everything he had.

I miss Miles terribly. Probably the hardest I've ever cried was the day we said good-bye to him.

CARA made Miles possible for our family, and for that, I will always advocate for them. Like I said, this year the organization is celebrating its 40th year, and while that is a great milestone, 40 years also means a facility that has 40 years of wear and tear.

CARA needs funding. It needs renovations to its kennels. Beyond that, the organization needs volunteers — men and women who don't mind going out and spending time with the animals, getting to know them and loving them until they find their homes. It needs dog and cat food donations. It needs toys (a great idea for Christmas this year). It needs cat litter.

And it's not just CARA. Sanford and the surrounding area are home to several rescue organizations and veterinarians who volunteer their time and expertise to care for neglected dogs and cats.

As Sanford grows, these needs will continue to grow. So I ask you to consider CARA and these organizations during this giving season. And while you're at it, consider finding your own Miles.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CARA needs your help

I am with Carolina Animal Rescue & Adoption (CARA), a no-kill animal shelter, located in Sanford. CARA is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit volunteer driven organization that operates solely on donations and fundraising proceeds and receives no government funding. We have partnered with Lee County Animal Shelter in the past to rescue animals on their euthanization list along with other municipal county animal shelters.

CARA has been quite impactful over the last 40 years of its existence. But our shelter is showing its age. San-Lee Humane Society (now CARA) opened its doors on Oct. 27, 1986, and it's time to give the building that has sheltered so many dogs and cats much needed attention.

Over the years, we've prioritized what matters most: the animals in our care. CARA has consistently devoted about 88 percent of its expenses to operating the shelter program, leaving limited room for major repairs to an aging building. We've stretched every dollar where we could, but we're past that point. Our steel fire doors have rusted beyond repair. We eked 40 years out of them, but their useful life has come to an end. Our roof needs attention. The ramp to our storage area has to be replaced. We're struggling to keep the shelter cool in the summer and warm in the winter. And that's just the beginning of the list.

These aren't glamorous projects, but they're necessary ones. Taking care of this building means making sure CARA can continue to be here for the animals and the community that depend on us.

We recently launched a matching donation campaign with a generous matching gift from the Ruby and Ernest McSwain Worthy Lands Trust of $25K for much needed repairs for an aging building. Right now, every dollar donated to our campaign will be matched, dollar for dollar. But we can't do this alone without our community's help.

To learn how to donate or volunteer (and to see pets up for adoption), visit cara-nc.org.

Lynn Stephenson

A conversation that can save your life

When people think about checking their lung health, they often think about symptoms: a lingering cough, shortness of breath or discomfort in the chest. But lung cancer can develop before any of those warning signs appear. That is why a conversation about screening matters, even when you feel well.

November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month. As a pulmonologist, I want people in our community to understand that we have a proven way to look for lung cancer before symptoms begin. For those who qualify, an annual low-dose CT scan can help find cancer earlier, when treatment is more likely to be successful.

Lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer death in the United States. The American Cancer Society estimates that approximately 229,000 people will be diagnosed in 2026 and nearly 125,000 will die from the disease.

One challenge is that early lung cancer often causes no noticeable symptoms. Someone may continue working, exercising and going about daily life without realizing anything is wrong. Screening offers an opportunity to identify cancer during that quiet period. Research has shown that annual low-dose CT screening can reduce the risk of dying from lung cancer in people at higher risk. A low-dose CT scan uses X-rays to create detailed images of the lungs, with less radiation than a standard CT scan.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends annual low-dose CT screening for adults who are ages 50 to 80, have a smoking history of at least 20 pack-years or currently smoke or quit within the past 15 years. People who have never smoked can also develop lung cancer.

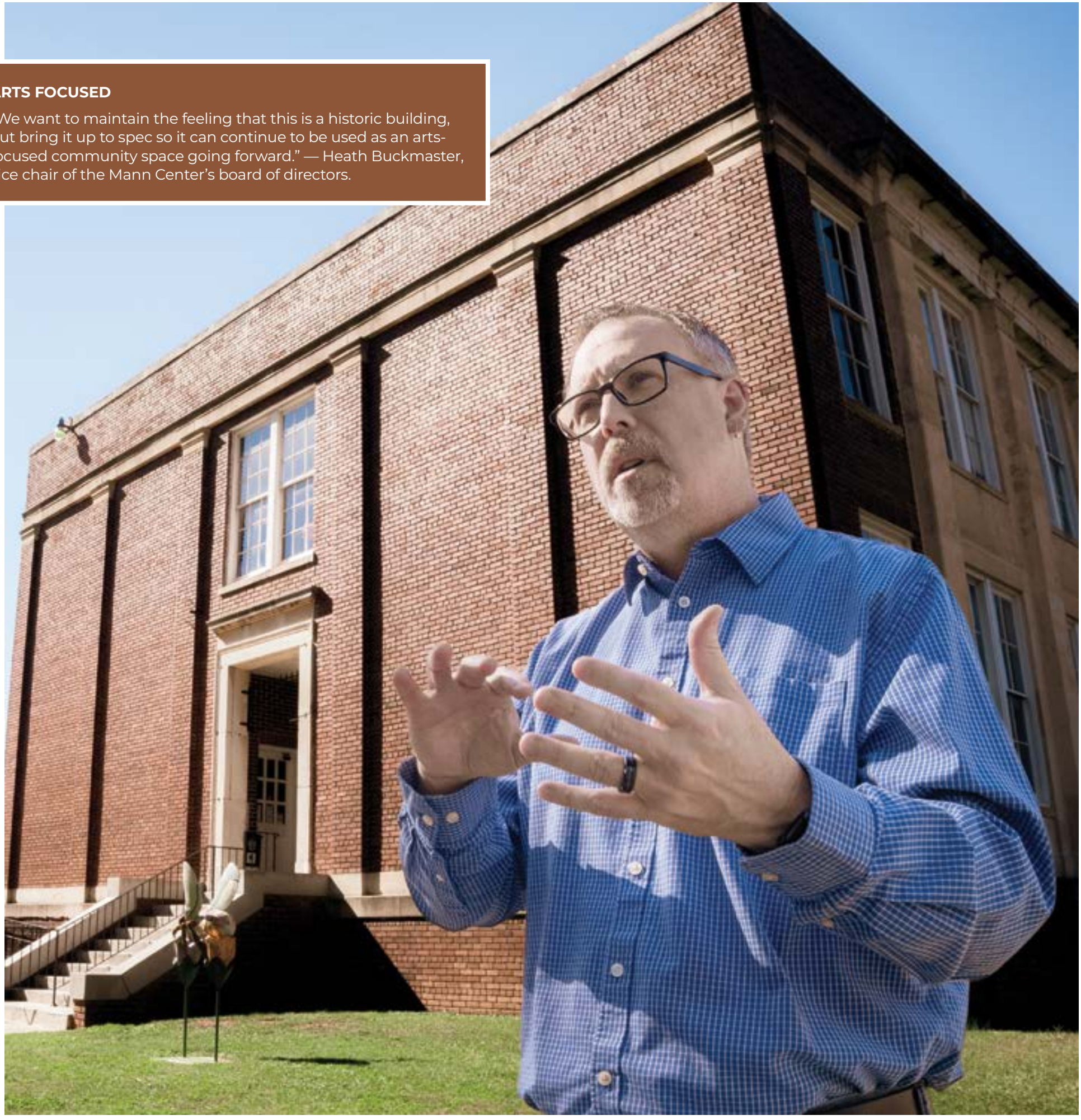
This November, ask your healthcare provider: "Should I be screened for lung cancer?" Start the conversation, share your history and learn what makes sense for you.

Dr. Bradley Icard
Pinehurst medical Clinic



ARTS FOCUSED

“We want to maintain the feeling that this is a historic building, but bring it up to spec so it can continue to be used as an arts-focused community space going forward.” — Heath Buckmaster, vice chair of the Mann Center’s board of directors.



COVER STORY

HOME FOR THE ARTS

THE BUILDING THAT HOUSES SANFORD'S MANN CENTER FOR THE ARTS HAS A RICH HISTORY AND A NEW FOCUS — TO BECOME THE CITY'S HUB FOR ARTISTS AND MUSICIANS

BY GORDON ANDERSON | PHOTOS BY BEN BROWN

In 1961, Mitchell Roberts asked Thanta Isenhour out on a date while the two walked the hallway in what at the time was known as Sanford Junior High School. They were both in the ninth grade.

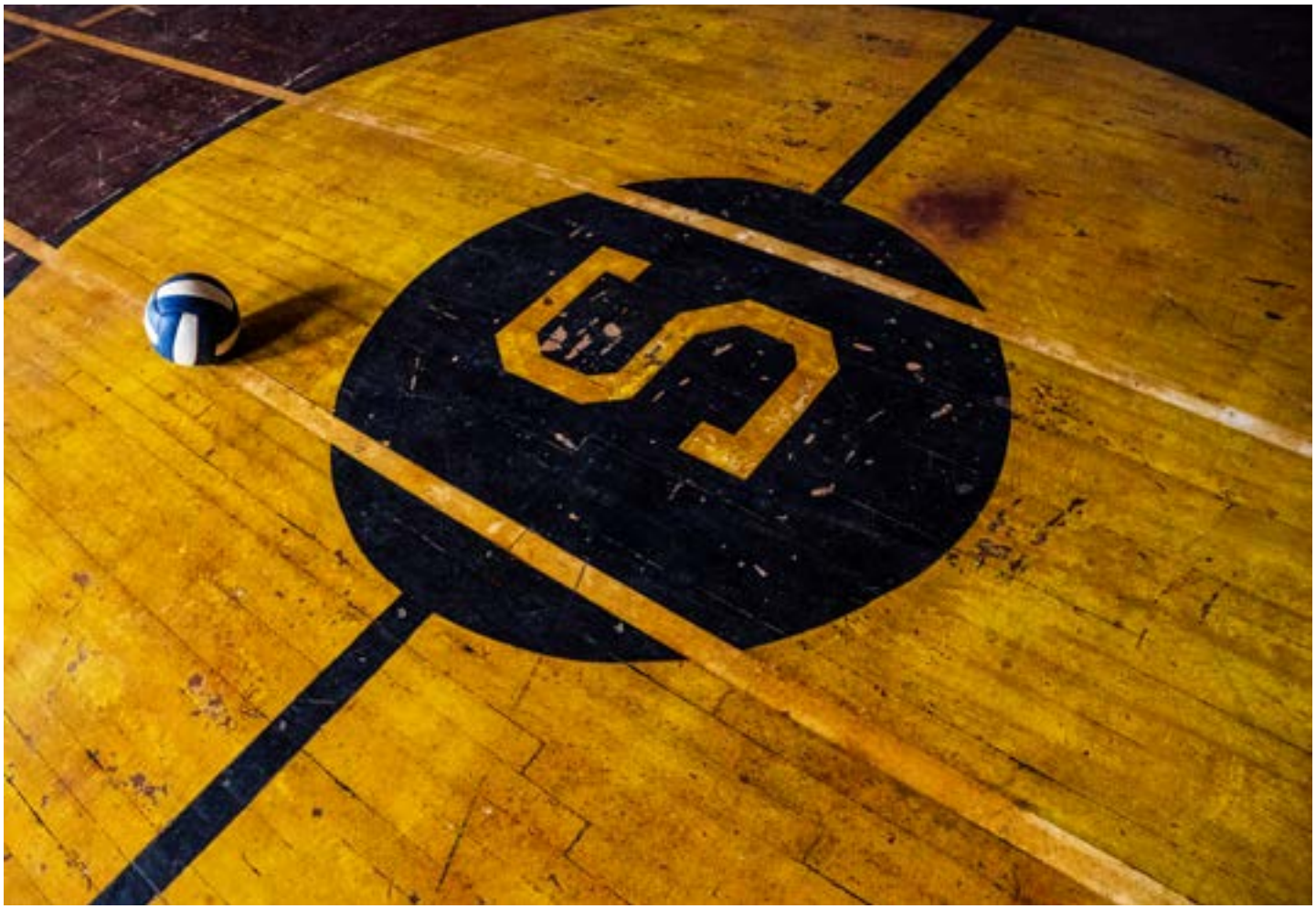
Isenhour accepted, and that date led to a six-year relationship. Roberts and Isenhour, like many young couples, eventually went their separate ways. Less commonly, they rekindled more than five decades later, and got married in April of this year — after a proposal from Roberts in the very same spot in the very same hallway.

It may have been the same spot in the same hallway, but most of the other details about the physical location have changed. The building is still on North Steele Street and laid out largely the same as it has for its 100-plus year existence. It's no longer Sanford Junior High School — or Sanford High School, as it was originally built in 1925, or even a school at all.

In 2026, it's The Mann Center for the Arts, a visual and performing arts venue which includes a 300-seat theater, art galleries, business offices, and more. And while there's been plenty of focus on the location's history — it was saved from demolition in the 1990s and placed on the National Register of Historic Places — the nonprofit group overseeing the building and its operations is more and more looking toward its future.



Thanta Isenhour and Mitchell Roberts met at Sanford Junior High School in 1961 and would reconnect and marry this April, 65 years later.



Formerly a high school, middle school and elementary school, the Mann Center for the Arts still has remnants of its school days — a gymnasium, auditorium and old classrooms still get use today.





"We want to maintain the feeling that this is a historic building, but bring it up to spec so it can continue to be used as an arts-focused community space going forward," said Heath Buckmaster, vice chair of the Mann Center's board of directors.

To be clear, the Mann Center and its use of the historic school building at 507 N. Steele St. aren't new. Sanford High School was completed in 1925 and served in that role until 1951 upon the opening of Sanford Central High School (now Lee County High School). That's when it became Sanford Junior High, and it was renamed Sanford Middle School in 1967. In 1971, it became Sanford Elementary and stayed that way until 1977 — its final year as a school.

That closure was the start of a new chapter for the building — one that wasn't entirely different in focus, if not scope, from the vision its current stewards have. In 1978 it became the Lee County Arts Center, serving as the home for multiple arts organizations as well as Lee County's Parks and Recreation Department.

But by the 1990s, that vision had largely petered out. Displayed in the Mann Center's hallway are several documents related to the building's history, including a 1993 petition signed by a number of nearby homeowners and renters and addressed to the Lee County Board of Commissioners — who at the time still owned the building — asking for its restoration. It's unclear exactly how much use the building got by that time, although the petition mentions "the 3,000 people who use the center."

By 1995, it had been saved from demolition, placed on the National Register of Historic Places, and transferred to the Mann Center's ownership. Without a whole lot of fanfare, much of the last three decades saw it used as office space for a number of local nonprofits, including the United Way, the Salvation Army, the Girl Scouts, the Helping Hands Clinic, the Red Cross, and more.

But those organizations, for the most part, "have outgrown" the Mann Center, according to former Sanford Mayor Chet Mann, now the chairman of the Mann Center board. Mann is the grandson of Tommy Mann Sr., himself a former mayor who was instrumental in the founding of the Mann Center nonprofit in the 1990s and the saving of the building.

Even during the years when the old school was known more as a hub for local nonprofits than a place for the arts, the Mann Center board retained an interest in promoting them, with the auditorium-slash-theater available for use by the community on a rental basis. But housing those nonprofit groups served a more fundamental purpose for the Mann Center — it kept the building in use, and therefore alive. With most of those nonprofit groups moving to dedicated locations of their own in recent years, the board decided there was an opportunity to shift focus and be a central part of the growing local arts community. The



The Sanford High School Class of 1936 in the building that now houses the Mann Center for the Arts.





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The Mann Center is still home to nonprofits and local businesses, but groups like the Sanford Brush and Palette Club and the Lee County Arts Council have made it a new “home for the arts” in the area.



group adopted the “Mann Center for the Arts” name in 2025.

“Now we’re looking to be more arts-focused again,” Mann said during an alumni day held at the center in early October.

That event was meant to bring people who attended school there into the building to get up to speed on how it is used today, and what the organization hopes to do with it going forward. Visitors took guided tours and heard a presentation from the board’s leadership about the property’s past and its future.

On that weekend, and still today, the halls were decorated to play up the building’s historic significance — including a display telling the story of Roberts and Isenhour in the spot where it occurred, photographs of graduating classes and sports teams from nearly a century ago, and the petition urging local government to save the building.

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"We had someone come in here not long ago asking about the Salvation Army," Buckmaster said during a recent walk-through. "The Salvation Army hasn't been here for years. That's part of why we became the Mann Center for the Arts, but it's about more than just a brand."

A big part of that new direction, interestingly enough, involves a similar strategy to the one the organization has employed since the 90s. The Mann Center is still home to nonprofits and businesses, but as organizations like the Salvation Army and the Helping Hands Clinic moved out, groups like the Sanford Brush and Palette Club and the Lee County Arts Council have moved in.

An adult daycare remains in part of the building but is expected to relocate in the coming months, and the Lee County Partnership for Children and Families occupies the building's third floor (if they ever decide to leave, Buckmaster said, that would give the Mann Center even more space to work with). More and more, what goes on in the building centers around the arts.

On a given day, you might find artists from the Sanford Brush and Palette Club working on their latest creations in one of the building's former classrooms. And on certain evenings, the building's old auditorium is once again filled with people, this time for live music. Earlier this year, the Mann Center launched a "Women in Country" concert series, bringing regional performers including Paige King Johnson and Julia Golden to Sanford for shows that also gave young audience members an opportunity to learn about songwriting.

The Brush and Palette Club currently has three artists in residence, and three dance companies also use the building. The hallways are adorned with locally made art, all of which is available for purchase. The center has also hosted fashion shows and other performances.



The hallways of the Mann Center for the Arts are adorned with locally made art, which is also available to purchase.





While significant upgrades have been made to the Mann Center, the vision for the building is more ambitious. Recent renderings show hopes for upgrades to the theater, the basketball court and the facade.





That's the vision, and it's not just for the future — it's here now. In November alone, there's a stand-up comedy show on Nov. 7 and a performance by the Heart of Carolina Jazz Orchestra on Nov. 21 (a fashion and talent show was held on Nov. 1, before this issue went to print).

"If you want to experience the visual arts in Sanford, it's all in this building," Buckmaster said. "You're going to find concerts and music performances at the top of our agenda, and we also envision lectures and community events of all kinds happening in the theater."

The Mann Center has even gotten in on the public art movement that has sprung up locally in recent years through murals and other art installations. There's a large bee outside the building's entrance near the intersection of Steele and Bracken streets, a work that was gifted to the center this year.

"We were asked if we wanted the public art bee, and we absolutely wanted the bee," Buckmaster said. "We're going to put in a pollinator garden around it and lean in to Sanford's reputation as a place for public art, and our status as a Bee City USA."

The center has already made significant upgrades to its lighting and sound systems, and further renovations could include new window coverings and interior paint to give the auditorium more of the feel of a modern performance space, while preserving historic details like the relief work etched into its upper walls.

But the vision is significantly more ambitious. Also adorning the walls during the alumni day were multiple renderings of what the facility could look like in the future. In addition to upgrades to the theater, there are multiple parts of the facility — including an old ground floor basketball court — which could be converted into event spaces available for rentals or performances put on by the Mann Center. There's also space that could become a cafe.

Right now, some of those ideas aren't so much plans as possibilities. The overhaul of any building that size would take lots

of capital, much less the overhaul of a century-old landmark. So raising money was another one of the purposes for the alumni day event.

"Our vision is a multi-phase restoration that will be done over time," Mann told *The Rant*. "And there are organizations that can help, but what they want to see is that we have a certain amount of skin in the game. That's where the community can help. The more we can raise locally, the more we can get in grants and matches and other kinds of gifts."

Buckmaster said that help from the community is essential, and it's not just dollars that matter. The Mann Center hasn't launched any official capital campaign at this time, instead choosing to increase their own visibility by inviting the community to be a part what they do.

"As a nonprofit, this is an organization that takes community support, whether that's money, volunteering, participation. Whatever that looks like," he said. "Arts organizations only survive if they exist in communities that support them."

During the alumni day, Mann spoke to the crowd on hand — about 100 people — about the vision he had for the facility when he was mayor of Sanford, and how seeing the Mann Center brought to its full potential by "making Steele Street an arts district" was "the last thing I didn't get done as mayor." He said he spent a large part of his childhood at his grandparents' house across the street from the Mann Center, and considered it his "personal playground." Now, he said he wants it to be a playground for the rest of Lee County.

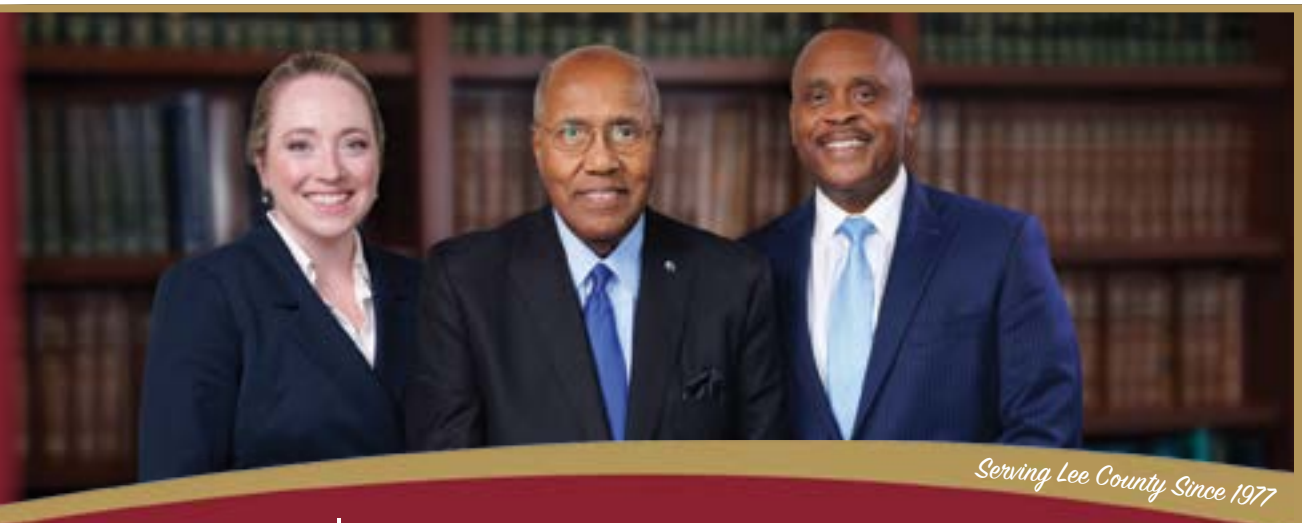
"I didn't get this done when I was in office, but I'm gonna see this through. This is my project now," he said. "You hear a lot of people talk about things that can't be done in Sanford. How many things have happened in Sanford in the last 15 years that people said couldn't be done?"



For more information about The Mann Center for the Arts, visit www.manncenterarts.org. To get in touch, visit www.manncenterarts.org/contact.

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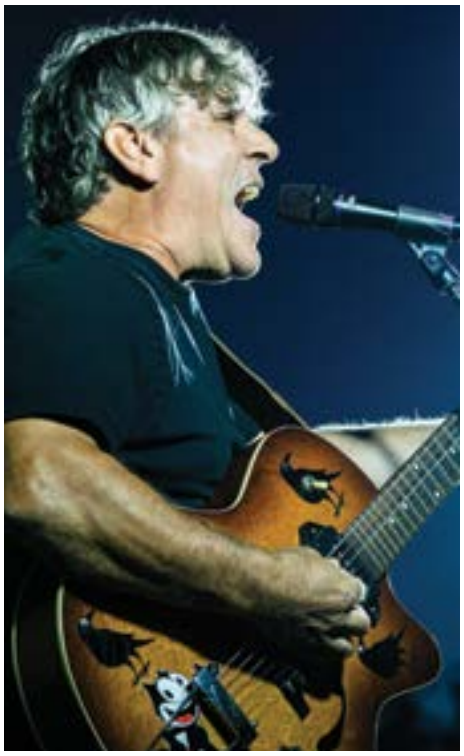
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SIGHTS FROM INDIE FEST

Perfect weather greeted the ninth Indie Fest, held in late September at Hugger Mugger Brewing in downtown Sanford. Ten diverse bands took the stage over two days in a celebration of music, art and food.

Photos by Ben Brown












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BELK, BOOT BARN AMONG NEW RIVERBIRCH STORES

Belk and Boot Barn are among newly announced tenants at Riverbirch Corner, which is undergoing a near-complete teardown in west Sanford. The redeveloped shopping center will be anchored upon reopening by a Target store.

Shannon Dixon, executive vice president of development and leasing for commercial developer and Riverbirch owner CASTO, provided the following statement to The Rant in October.

"We're excited about the progress at Riverbirch Corner and the continued growth behind the redevelopment. The project is bringing a mix of new retail, dining and service options to Riverbirch Corner, creating more opportunities for the community to connect close to home. Among the new additions, Target, Belk, Boot Barn and 7 Brew are all currently scheduled to open in late 2027 or early 2028 and we are looking forward to seeing these new businesses be part of the Riverbirch Corner community. There is more to come as the redevelopment progresses, and we're excited to share more updates and additional details in the months ahead."

Along with Target and the other listed retailers, the shopping center has been promised to include a "new to market" grocery store that has yet to be named.

.— by Gordon Anderson

Incentive packages approved for four new companies

By Richard Sullins
richard@rantnc.com

More than 600 new jobs with four different companies have been up for grabs as their selection processes near the finish line, and Sanford has landed the first of those projects.

On Oct. 27, Bracco Imaging, an Italian life sciences company previously identified only as Project Sunshine, announced it would establish a $230 million manufacturing facility in Lee County, creating at least 200 jobs with an average annual wage of $103,000.

Votes taken by Lee County's Board of Commissioners on October 19 cleared the way for incentive packages to be offered to three of the four projects, and Sanford Area Growth Alliance CEO Jimmy Randolph told the board that responses were expected from those companies in short order. Tuesday's announcement fulfilled that prediction, leaving two other projects awaiting decisions.

One other plan, known only by the code name of "Project Mustang," has asked the commissioners for more time to refine its proposal before it receives official consideration and could return to the agenda within the next few weeks.

If Lee County were to hit a grand slam and land all four projects as these companies look for just the right fit for their next expansions, the total sum of their local investments could be more than $300 million over a period of up to six years. To sweeten those deals, the county would provide cash incentives, mostly in the form of tax credits, that would total millions of dollars over the lifetime of the projects.



Bracco Imaging is the only one of the four projects that has been approved for incentives that has been officially announced.

What do these companies do?

❑ **Project Volt**: With an average annual wage of $71,707, Volt is expected to create 110 new full-time benefited jobs over the five-year life of its economic development support from Lee County. Volt proposes to purchase land and build a new facility, along with the purchase of machinery and equipment. Project Volt is an electrical materials company that will engage in manufacturing activities serving the transformer and power equipment industries.

❑ **Project Maize**: County records show that Maize is interested in the purchase of land and building a new facility and the purchase of machinery and equipment in a facility located in Lee County. Project Maize is a manufacturing company that engages in manufacturing activities for food service, retail, and industrial customer companies. It proposes to make $21 million in new taxable investments that would create 62 new jobs having an average salary of $60,000.

❑ **Project Mustang**: Although having withdrawn from consideration for now, Mustang may or may not return for review. If it were to return – and locate in Lee County — this project would manufacture, assemble, and package energy-related products for sale in the American marketplace. The company's proposed net new taxable investments of $33.4 million would create at least 300 new full-time jobs with benefits, having an annual starting salary of approximately $60,000.

Before the Oct. 27 announcement, Bracco had been known as "Project Sunshine." Randolph told the commissioners he continues to believe that the Sanford area has a very good chance of being selected by these companies, but competition for new jobs and investments remains competitive across the rest of North Carolina and in other states, especially among businesses in the biotech sector.

The Oct. 19 passage of the tax incentive packages opened the door for negotiations to finalize the remaining details of Lee County's offers to each company. Randolph said the vote by commissioners on tax incentives is the final step expected in the selection process, and though the county's package is an attractive one, it's not done until the ink is dry on every piece of paper.

County nixes proposed data center moratorium

By Gordon Anderson
gordon@rantnc.com

The Lee County Board of Commissioners voted down a 180-day moratorium on further data center development at their early October meeting.

The pause, proposed by Democratic Commissioner Robert Reives Sr., wouldn't have applied to a data center project on Lower Moncure Road, which has been a source of controversy since it was proposed in June. Even with that project administratively approved, Reives floated a moratorium on additional development in Lee County, saying "the process is flawed and should have been handled differently."

"The economic development situation is one we should take a closer look at," Reives said. "In this case, we're dealing with decisions the public never had a chance to have a say in."

Democrat Mark Lovick joined Reives in supporting the moratorium. Republicans Eric Davidson, Andre Knecht, Samantha Martin and Kirk Smith, along with Democrat Cameron Sharpe voted against.

Reives made the motion after a lengthy discussion on data centers during which the board called on Brady Herman, a Chapel Hill attorney specializing in zoning and planning matters whom they recently retained. Herman advised the board against enacting a moratorium, saying state law requires specific findings outlining the problems necessitating a pause, alternatives that have proven inadequate and a schedule for addressing those problems. He also questioned the need for a moratorium six months after the county adopted specific regulations governing data centers.

Herman also said additions to the UDO may not trigger "down zoning," or changing zoning rules to reduce development rights or permitted uses on a property.





CITY BREAKS GROUND ON NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUBDIVISION

The City of Sanford and Brick Capital Community Development Corporation held a groundbreaking ceremony on Oct. 28 for the new W.T. Wilson Ridge subdivision, which will address the city's affordable housing needs.

Located on Washington Avenue, the development will be built in phases — the first will provide a 16-unit apartment complex dedicated to permanent supportive housing.

This phase will also add 12 single-family homes, with another 36 to come in a future phase, using the community land trust model. Through the model, Brick Capital CDC maintains ownership of the land, meaning buyers only need to afford the home. Homeowners who choose to sell will receive a portion of the home's increased value and the home will be sold to another qualified buyer at an affordable price.

CCCC TO HOST EVENT SPOTLIGHTING MUSIC FROM WEST AFRICA

Central Carolina Community College is bringing touring musical artist Sean Gaskell to its Lee Main Campus for an event titled "The Griot Tradition: West African Music and Meaning."

The event is free and open to the public. It is set for Nov. 12, from noon to 1 p.m. in the auditorium of the Dennis A. Wicker Civic & Conference Center in Sanford.

Gaskell will perform songs on the kora, a 21-string West African harp, share West African history and culture, and answer audience questions. Gaskell has studied extensively under the instruction of master musicians. He has presented adult, youth and family programs to more than 400 audiences throughout the country.

State house candidate Taylor sues PAC over 'false' mailer

By Gordon Anderson
gordon@rantnc.com



Charles Taylor will face off against unaffiliated candidate April Montgomery for state representative in the Nov. 3 election.

Republican Charles Taylor has filed a lawsuit accusing a political action committee opposing his election to the North Carolina House of Representatives of libel.

The lawsuit against the Sandhills Citizens Alliance, filed Oct. 27 in Lee County Superior Court, seeks compensatory damages exceeding $25,000, plus punitive damages, interest and court costs. Taylor accuses the SCA of publishing statements it knew to be false in a mailer sent to voters in House District 51, which covers all of Lee County and part of Moore. Taylor, a member of the Sanford City Council, is running for the seat against unaffiliated candidate April Montgomery.

Among the statements in the SCA's mailer that Taylor challenges are claims that he is "running a casino," "owns an illegal gambling operation," and is "breaking the law himself" by doing so. Additionally, the mailer claims Taylor is "under a state ethics investigation."

According to the complaint, Taylor is the owner of a commercial property at 2101 Tramway Road in Sanford. Raleigh news outlet *The Assembly* reported in mid October that the property was home to what appeared to be an illegal gambling operation, and that Taylor had left that property and others off his statement of economic interest, a disclosure form many candidates and office holders in North Carolina are required to complete when seeking office.

The next day, *The Rant* reported that a Lee County resident filed a complaint with the State Ethics Commission over the omissions. The SCA mailer cited both *The Assembly* and *The Rant*, but Taylor's complaint says the mailer's claims were contradicted by the reporting it cited. It goes on to say that Taylor is the landlord of the property, not the owner of the business, that Ethics Commission officials told his attorney no investigation had been initiated against him, and that the commission lacked jurisdiction to investigate him because he is not a legislator "or other covered person."

Taylor filed an amended SEI on Oct. 15 disclosing the previously omitted properties and two limited liability companies.

Further, the lawsuit says the mailer is also at odds with SCA's website, which describes Taylor as the property's landlord, and describes the ethics matter as a complaint and not an investigation.

Taylor previously demanded that *The Assembly* retract its reporting about his property disclosures. His lawsuit now cites the same reporting to support his claims against SCA.

Taylor sent the SCA a cease-and-desist letter on Oct. 21, asking the PAC to stop publication of the mailer and retract the claims. The letter requested a response by 5 p.m. on Oct. 23.

The lawsuit claims the SCA subsequently failed to issue a retraction by that deadline. In an Oct. 24 story about Taylor's cease-and-desist letter, *The Sanford Herald* reported that SCA issued a statement saying "Mr. Taylor wants to make this about paperwork and mailers. It is about a city council member who is a landlord to a likely gambling operation, has not said who runs it, and who doesn't have 'any current intention' of removing it."

"I'm running because I care about the future of Lee and Moore counties and want to make a difference for the families who call this area home," Taylor said in a press release on Tuesday.

"The people of this district deserve a campaign focused on the issues that affect their lives, not false accusations and manufactured controversy."

The SCA is an independent expenditure PAC that isn't affiliated with Montgomery's or any other campaign. According to Taylor's complaint, the SCA lists David Knight as its treasurer and Joe Patton as its assistant treasurer. The PAC's listed address is in Sanford.

FRIDAY THE 13TH VI DIRECTOR TO SPEAK AT LOCAL CINEMA

Spooky season may be over for 2026, but Spring Lane Cinemas is keeping the spirit alive in November with a film screening of a horror classic — followed by a Q&A with the director.

The theater will celebrate Friday, Nov. 13 with a 7 p.m. showing of 1986's Friday the 13th Part VI. Writer and director Tom McLoughlin will be on hand to answer questions after the film. The screening is free with a purchase from the concession stand. McLoughlin will be available for photos and autographs beforehand.

Jared Campbell, Spring Lane's general manager, said any Friday the 13th — the date, not the film franchise — is an excuse to get people through the doors to enjoy a scary movie.

"Any time there's a Friday the thirteenth, we'll be showing a movie," he said. "There's a sense of nostalgia for a lot of people, because when we were kids horror movies were kind of off limits. It's a date that holds a special place for a lot of people, because you can take just about anything and make it horror."

Campbell says there's an element of camp to a lot of horror films, especially those from the 70s and 80s. He calls Friday the 13th Part VI "the first film in the franchise that was actually considered any good."

"The first five of those movies were basically the same movie, beat for beat," he said.

It's not the first time Spring Lane has hosted an event of this kind. In 2025, the theater screened the Texas Chainsaw Massacre as well as a Q&A with actor Allen Danziger. That's in addition to their weekly "Wayback Wednesday" screenings of older films.

"When Allen was here last year, there were just so many great questions," Campbell said. "Some of these people were kids — it was really amazing to see."



Campbell said the Texas Chainsaw Massacre was such a success that he immediately started looking for opportunities to do more. His friendship with singer Britton Buchanan, who appeared on NBC's The Voice in 2018, led to the chance to meet McLoughlin.

"Britton was friends with Tom, and I was able to meet him in February," Campbell explained. "He was an awesome dude — just a kind, gentle soul."

As with all of Spring Lane's special screenings, management will raffle off a poster of the film. Anyone attending will be eligible. Seating is limited and will be on a first come, first served basis.

SOUTHERN LEE BAND EARNS STATE HONOR

The Southern Lee High School Band has been named a Program of Distinction for the 2025-2026 school year by the North Carolina Bandmasters Association, recognizing the program's musical excellence, artistry, and community leadership.

"I think what is so cool about this award is that it acknowledges all of the hard work our students have put in over the years," said Band Director Angela Matthews. "It really is how much the students are getting out into the community and how much they are achieving in spite of whatever obstacles there may be."

Southern Lee musicians performed at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction in Raleigh, while several students earned spots in All-District Band and others qualified to audition for All-State honors.

"This year in particular we did a lot of new things," Matthews said. "Any opportunities that I could get for our kids to go out and play, we took advantage of them. It really was an exceptional year."

'TOGETHER WE TROT' 5K SET FOR NOV. 14

Lee County Parks & Recreation invites the community to lace up and join the inaugural "Together We Trot" 5K and Mile Fun Run at 9:30 a.m. on Nov. 14, at the Lee County Athletic Park.

Registration is open at leecountync.gov/MyRecPortal, and fees are $25 for the 5K and $15 for the 1-Mile Fun Run at the Lee County Athletic Park.

To support local families during the holiday season, Parks & Recreation will host a canned food drive benefiting the CUOC of Lee County. Participants and spectators are encouraged to bring unopened, unexpired canned or shelf-stable boxed foods with them on race day. Donations may also be dropped off at the Lee County Athletic Park office from Monday, November 9 through the event on November 14.

"We're excited to bring the community together for a morning that celebrates health, connection, and support for our neighbors," said Cindy Castle, Lee County Parks & Recreation Parks operations supervisor. "'Together We Trot' is all about enjoying the day however you choose — whether you take it at a sprint, a stroll, or something in between."

Got news to share with us? Email Billy Liggett at billy@rantnc.com!



FIRST REPSONDERS RECOGNIZED AS HOMETOWN HEROES

Four City of Sanford first responders were recognized as Hometown Heroes by the N.C. Automobile Dealers Association.

Nominated by John Hiester Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram of Sanford, two members of the Sanford Police Department and two members of the Sanford Fire Department were honored during a ceremony held on Oct. 21.

Sanford Police officers M. Hogan and P. Hanson were nominated for their response to a residential fire on Aug. 15. Hogan arrived on the scene before firefighters and learned an elderly occupant was still inside. He immediately entered the home and found the occupant unconscious. Hanson arrived shortly after and ran into the home to help Hogan. Working together, the officers were able to rescue the man and save his life.

Sanford Fire Capt. Clay Vaughan was recognized for his response during a tragic motor vehicle accident on June 5, when he helped multiple injured people at the crash site and helped less-experienced firefighters provide lifesaving care to a young victim.

Battalion Chief Lonnie Kiker was honored for his legacy of dedicated service to the community. Kiker retired in July after 35 years with the Sanford Fire Department, where he instilled the values of hard work, firemanship and community service.

TWO NEW COFFEE CHAINS COMING TO SANFORD

The Sanford-Lee County Planning Department reviewed several commercial development proposals in October, including for two competing drive-thru coffee shops on opposite ends of the city.

7 Brew Coffee, a drive-thru chain founded in Arkansas in 2017, is proposed at Riverbirch Corner in west Sanford, which is currently being redeveloped with Target as an anchor by Ohio-based commercial developer CASTO.

Across town, a Dutch Bros Coffee location is proposed for Adams Village, a new commercial development south of Walmart on N.C. 87 that will also be home to an Olive Garden restaurant, a Longhorn Steakhouse and more. Dutch Bros is also a drive-thru chain, and was founded in Oregon in 1992. It's now headquartered in Arizona.

The Dutch Bros location is one of two outparcels for Adams Village on the TRC agenda for October. The agenda doesn't specify what might occupy the second outparcel, but describes it as a 5,157 square foot building "for one or two tenants."

.— by Gordon Anderson

CCCC TO HOLD FAFSA HELP DAY FOR FAMILIES

The Central Carolina Community College Financial Aid office will host a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) Day from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Nov. 7.

The event will take place at the Academic Assistance Center in Marchant Hall on CCCC's Lee Main Campus, located at 1105 Kelly Drive in Sanford. CCCC Financial Aid staff will assist families in completing the 2027-2028 FAFSA.

Students and parents should complete an FSA ID application at www.studentaid.gov prior to the event and bring 2025 tax and asset information that day. For more information, email finaid@cccc.edu.

SUPA PERFORMANCE CENTER HOLDS GRAND OPENING

Special to The Rant

Supreme Athletics held a grand opening of the SUPA Performance Center of Sanford, located at 1613 Fire Tower Road. The center is a new multi-sport training and event facility built to deliver high-quality, low-cost indoor sports access to athletes and families across Central North Carolina.

The ceremony featured special invited guest North Carolina House Minority Leader Robert Reives II, a Lee County resident and champion for community development.

The SUPA Performance Center is co-founded by Latonya Brown, CEO of Supreme Athletics, who partnered with local Sanford resident and landowner Kenny Nivar, father of former UNC Women's Basketball standout and 2026 WNBA Atlanta Dream draft pick Indya Nivar.

Brown brings over 17 years of public service experience as the wellness manager at the Orange County Department on Aging, where she developed deep expertise in community health, active living, and inclusive program management. In 2024, identifying a critical gap in local youth athletics, Brown launched the SUPA Track Club in Chatham County to provide high-quality track and field training and competitive opportunities — a sport not offered at the elementary or middle school levels in the county.



Sanford Mayor Rebecca Wyhof Salmon and State Rep. Robert Rieves II joined SUPA Performance Center CEO Latonya Brown for a grand opening ribbon cutting ceremony in October.

The SUPA Performance Center concept is specifically engineered to eliminate financial barriers in youth sports by providing local communities with direct access to professional-grade equipment and surfaces at truly accessible rates.

Designed for multi-sport adaptability, the Sanford facility features premium multi-sport surfaces, basketball and volleyball courts, three full-size indoor pickleball courts and a Butterfly table tennis hub.

Animal Services releases survey

Lee County Animal Services has requested the public's participation in a short survey to guide strategic planning for future initiatives.

The survey is available online (link available at rantnc.com) and paper copies are available at the Lee County Government Center, located at 106 Hillcrest Drive, and the Lee County Animal Shelter, located at 1450 N. Horner Boulevard. Results will be collected for two weeks, with the survey closing on Nov. 4.

Lee County Animal Services announced in August it was going to improve the way it communicates with local animal rescue and foster groups (as well as the public) about availability and adoption options after several local groups raised concerns about the department's staffing shortages and lack of resources.

William Cain, Lee County's public health director, said that while the animal shelter does "tremendous work," more can be done to improve the program.

"A great deal of feedback has been shared recently, and we have heard many of you," he said. "This survey and the results will assist us in our strategic planning efforts to continue building our program."



Lee County Animal Services announced in August it was going to improve the way it communicates with local animal rescue and foster groups.



Donations to Match for Moore can be made at www.cccc.edu/give. Gifts will be matched dollar for dollar while matching funds remain available, through Dec. 31.

CCCC LAUNCHES $1M MATCH FOR MOORE CAMPAIGN

Courtesy of CCCC

Central Carolina Community College has launched Match for Moore, a new fundraising campaign that gives donors the opportunity to double their investment in the future of North Carolina's workforce.

Through the end of the year, every dollar contributed to the CCCC Foundation for the E. Eugene Moore Manufacturing and Biotech Solutions Center will be matched dollar for dollar, up to $1 million, through commitments from two anonymous donors. Each of them pledged up to $500,000 toward the match, creating the opportunity to generate $2 million for the Moore Center if the campaign reaches its $1 million fundraising goal.

This effort follows last year's successful match campaign that raised more than $1 million with the help of a $500,000 match.

"This is an extraordinary opportunity for our community to come together around a project that will power North Carolina's economy for generations," said Dr. Lisa M. Chapman, President of Central Carolina Community College. "A gift to the Moore Center is more than an investment in a building. It's an investment in students preparing for meaningful careers, in employers working to grow and compete, and in a region determined to create opportunity close to home. During Match for Moore, every donor has the chance to make that investment go twice as far."

CCCC is developing the Moore Center, located at 2101 Nash St. in Sanford, as a regional workforce and innovation resource focused on advanced manufacturing and biotechnology.

The Moore Center will expand CCCC's capacity for hands-on training while creating spaces where education and industry can work together to address workforce challenges. It is being developed with input from employers and with the flexibility to respond and adapt as technologies, occupations, and workforce needs evolve.

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EVENT CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 28

SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY DOWNTOWN

Shop Small. Win Big. Support Sanford. Skip the Black Friday crowds and #ShopSmallForSanford on Small Business Saturday in Downtown Sanford. DSI is celebrating its ninth year of Holiday Punch Cards, where you can be rewarded big for shopping small. Support participating downtown businesses and turn your local purchases into chances to win amazing prizes from downtown shops and restaurants.



NOV 1: Hugger Mugger Brewing will host Yoga & Beer from 11 a.m. to noon. Join Sanford Yoga & Community Center for yoga in the quiet of the beer hall the first Sunday of every month and finish it off with a beer among friends.

NOV 4: J. Glenn Edwards presents its annual Veterans Day Parade, celebrating the men and women who have served this country. Parade begins at 9:30a.m.

NOV 6: The Mann Center for the Arts will host a First Friday Art Reception from 5 to 7 p.m. Explore art galleries, pop-up exhibitions and studio artists in residence.

NOV 6: The Seekers: Where We Walk Together is a collection of atmospheric watercolor paintings exploring the relationships that we have with the landscapes we hold in our memories. The exhibition will run from Nov. 6 to Dec. 26 at the Mann Center for the Arts, and a reception for the exhibit will be held Nov. 6 and Dec. 4 from 5 to 8 p.m.

NOV 7: Grow and Flow Yoga at Kiwanis Park runs from 10 to 11 a.m. This free and rejuvenating yoga session will help you stretch, strengthen and center yourself in peaceful surroundings.

NOV 7: St. Luke United Methodist Church will host a Bazaar & Craft Fair from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Discover one-of-a-kind treasures and shop local this holiday season. Admission is free.

NOV 7: The Bad Dads Comedy Tour comes to The Mann Center in Sanford from 7 to 8:30 p.m. The show features stand-up comedians Mark Brady and Justin Scranton, who've been featured on Apple TV, Prime Video and Sirius XM. Tickets at manncenterarts.org.

NOV 8: The final Second Sundays Concert at Kiwanis Park will run from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

NOV 9: Meditations on the Mat runs from 7-8 p.m. at Seva Yoga in downtown Sanford. Join Gabby Murillo, Reiki master and meditation expert for a monthly space to pause, breathe and return to yourself.

NOV 12: J.S. & the Footlights will host a "honkytonkin, foot-stompin' time" at The Enrichment Center in Sanford from 7 to 10 p.m.

NOV 13: The Mixtapes will perform at Smoke & Barrel in downtown Sanford at 8:30 p.m.

NOV 15: The first of two line dancing events will be held from 2 to 5 p.m at Hugger Mugger Brewing. Dances for all ability levels. Entry ($20) includes a beer, instruction and social dance time.

NOV 19: Join Alchemy Wellness Center for a deeply grounding Medicine Drum Sound Bath held every third Thursday of the month from 6-7:30 p.m. This immersive sound journey weaves the steady, primal rhythm of the drum with intention, presence and collective healing.

NOV 21: The Sanford Farmers Market special Holiday Artisan Market event will run from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Pilgrim's Sanford Agricultural Market in downtown Sanford.

NOV 21: The Pint Sized Pasture will host Family Farm Day with Santa from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Nov. 21 and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Nov. 28. Admission is $10 a person (under 1 is free).

NOV 21: Raven Forge Games will host a Star Trek Commander Party at noon. Entry is free.

NOV 21: Kingdom Vibe Live is coming to the Wicker Civic Center for an "unforgettable day of worship, community and connection" celebrating the launch of Kingdom Vibe Network. Tickets at knlive.com.

NOV 28: The Merry Misfits Market comes to Alchemy Wellness & Spiritual Boutique from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Join Alchemy and Houz Plantz for a celebration of local creativity on Small Business Saturday at 2515 Watson Avenue in Sanford.

NOV 29: The Sunday with Santa Train and Tree Lighting ceremony will be hld at Depot Park from 3 to 7 p.m. This free family event will feature live music, visits with Santa, festive rides, holiday activities, candy canes, holiday music and more.

DEC 4: The Kevin Regan Band will perform at Smoke and Barrel in downtown Sanford at 8:30 p.m.

DEC 7: The Sanford Christmas Parade — the state's longest-running nighttime holiday parade — returns for a night of festive lights, joyful music and holiday magic. Learn more this year's event (and its new route) on the parade's official Facebook page.

DEC 11: 80s Unleashed will perform at Smoke and Barrel in downtown Sanford at 9 p.m.

DEC 12: The Broadway Christmas Parade will be held on Dec. 12, presented by the Broadway Lions Club. Leanr more at the parade's official Facebook page.

JAN 28-31: One Noble Journey, a Mike Wiley Production, will run for three days at Temple Theatre. The play tells the story of the miraculous quest for freedom of Elizabeth Craft and her husband William. Learn more at templeshows.org.

TUESDAYS: Hugger Mugger Brewing hosts Trivia Night with Trivia MasterZach at 7 p.m. every Tuesday night. Admission is free, and prizes await the winners.

WEDNESDAYS: The Sanford Farmers' Market have added an additional market day each week starting this month. The market — located inside the Pilgrim's Sanford Agricultural Marketplace downtown — will be held Wednesdays from 4 to 7 p.m. through Nov. 18.

THURSDAYS: Join Raven Forge Games for a night of Catan at 7:30 p.m. ever Thursday. Relax, roll the die and enjoy a fun community game night. Free entry.

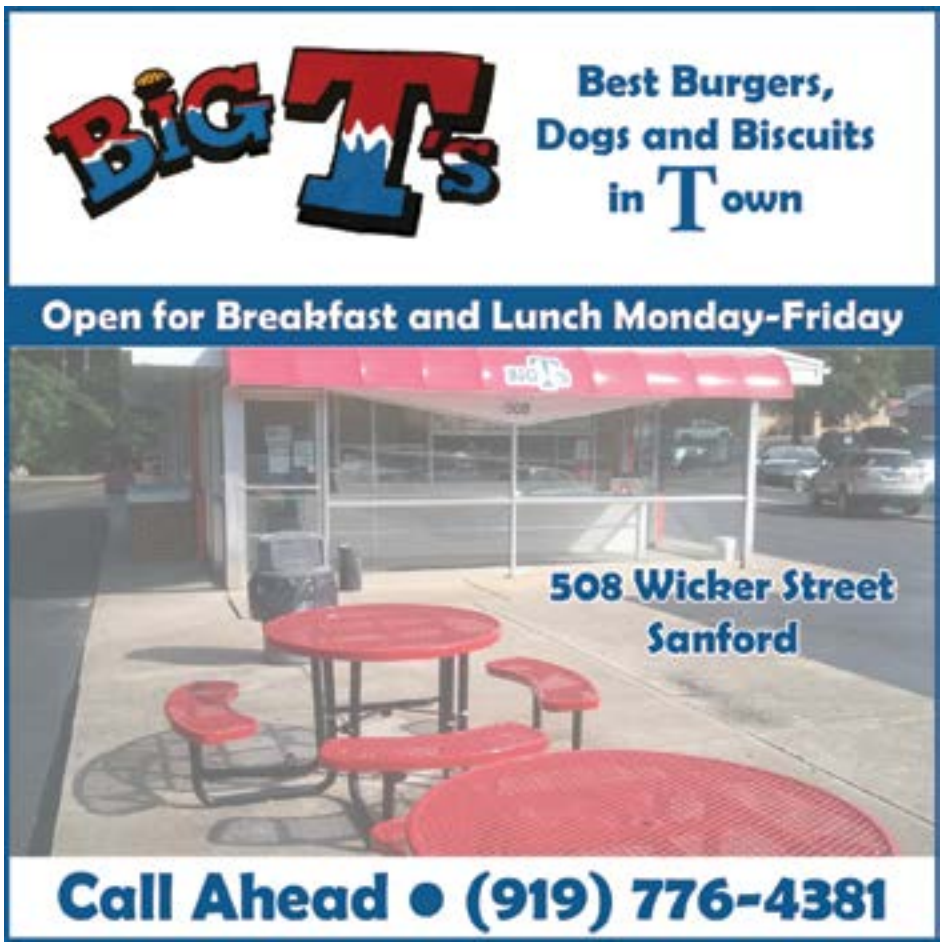
FRIDAYS: Live music at Wana Navu Kava Bar in Sanford every Friday night from 7 to 10 p.m.

SATURDAYS: Every Saturday night, the stage at Wild Dogs Brewing in downtown Sanford comes alive with incredible live music, featuring local talent and touring acts.

SATURDAYS: The Sanford Farmers' Market runs through Nov. 21 at the new Pilgrim's Sanford Agricultural Marketplace at 157 Charlotte Avenue in downtown Sanford. The market is dedicated to providing space for local food producers to connect with the community.



DEC 3-20: Temple Theatre will present **White Christmas** for three weeks leading up to Christmas. Based on the beloved film, this holiday classic features an iconic score with 17 legendary Irving Berlin standards, including "Sisters," "Blue Skies," "I Love a Piano," and the timeless title song. Celebrate the season with high-energy tap numbers, vibrant 1950s period costumes, and a "million-dollar production feel." Ticket information at templeshows.org.





SUDOKU

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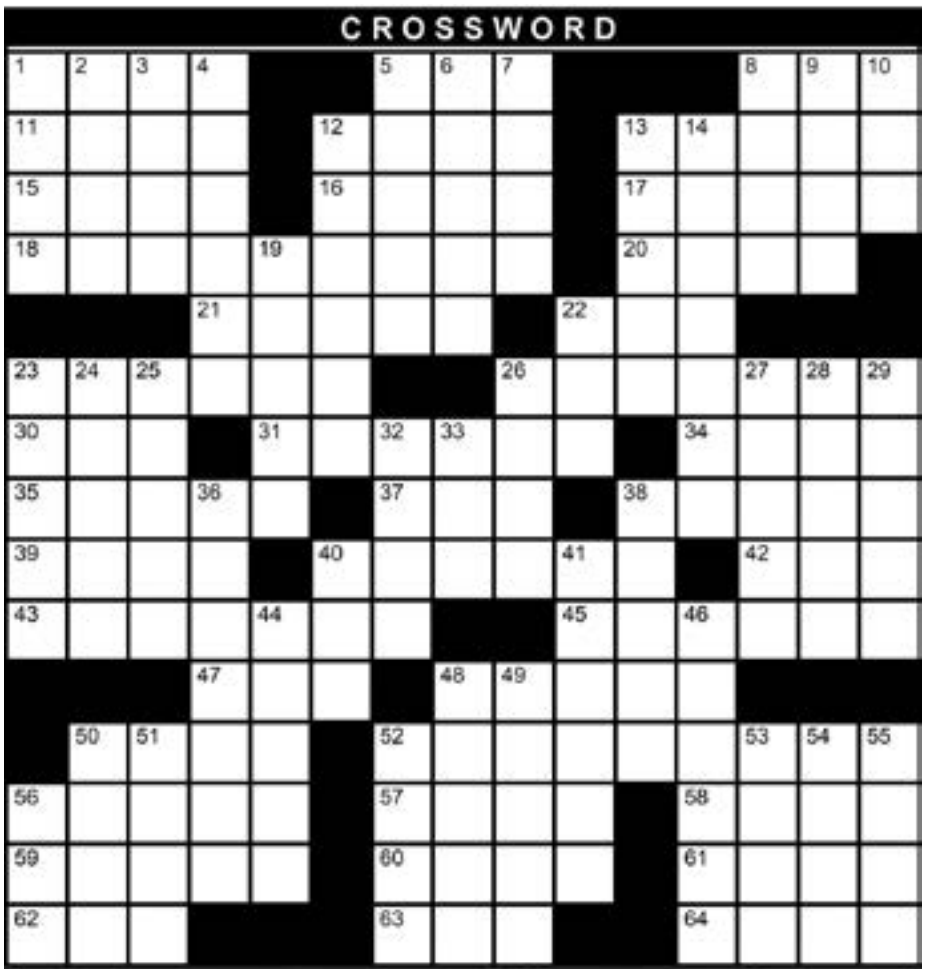
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CROSSWORD: For the birds

ACROSS
1. Consumer
5. Drivel
8. Mary of direct marketing fame
11. Taxon, pl.
12. Mosaic piece
13. Speculate
15. Similar
16. Eye part
17. Belgian port city
18. *"The Birds" producer and director
20. *"Mourning" bird
21. Kicks out
22. *"Birds do it, ____ do it," sing.
23. "Hot" prefix
26. Suggest
30. Treaty of Rome org.
31. Dump
34. *Horus' mother
35. Spills over a container edge
37. Hole puncher
38. Finals
39. Type of balsam
40. Thumb, anatomically speaking
42. *New Zealand parrot
43. Suppresses
45. *Big Bird, e.g.
47. Shark part
48. Yo-Yo's instrument
50. Bleak
52. *Bird with largest wingspan
56. *Popular origami bird
57. Mongolian desert
58. *Hen to chick
59. Silly and scatterbrained
60. Affirm with confidence
61. Sailor's call
62. Number cruncher, acr.
63. Color
64. Totes

DOWN
1. D-Day beach
2. H. H. Munro's pseudonym
3. Sign of escape
4. Ill will
5. Basketball foot maneuver
6. Smart ones?
7. Reach a high
8. a,k.a. Kyiv
9. Green Gables resident
10. Hitherto
12. U of A home
13. Poet Nash
14. *Albus Dumbledore's companion
19. Dark fertile soil
22. Board of Directors, acr.
23. MCAT and LSAT, e.g.
24. Serf
25. Cause for food recall
26. Pay a visit
27. Japanese port city
28. Sand clock, e.g.
29. Test form
32. Vietnam's neighbor
33. *Parliament member
36. *Barbara's ____ Cereal
38. Glorify
40. Mightier than sword
41. Oblong cream puff
44. British sailor, slangily
46. Conventional
48. Garlic unit
49. What tide did
50. Golf club handle
51. Pro ____
52. Lab culture
53. Pearl Harbor island
54. Urban haze
55. Simon does what?
56. Public health org.



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