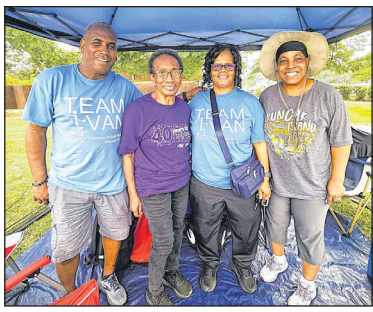


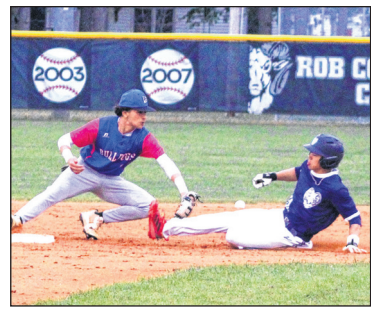
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**Relay for Life**

Annual cancer fundraiser set for May 1. **News 3A**



**AND...**  
**Why the Halifax Resolves matter**  
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**In today's paper**  
**SPORTS:**  
**Robeson Co. Slugfest semifinals**  
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# THE ROBESONIAN

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Wednesday, April 8, 2026 • Issue 26, Volume 157

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A Fresh Perspective

Local NEWS

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## Jury finds man guilty of Tazarie Butler's murder



Contributed photo | Shanna Lowery  
Tazarie Butler, left, who was murdered in June 2023 in Lumberton, and his mother, Shanna Lowery.

Staff report

LUMBERTON — A jury found a Lumberton man guilty Monday in the 2023 murder of Lumberton rapper Tazarie Butler.

The jury took less than an hour of deliberations to reach a guilty verdict for Chamberlain Oxendine, 27, who was convicted of second-degree murder.

Oxendine was sentenced by a judge to serve 200 to 252 months in prison, which ranges from less than 17 years to 21 years.

Sheriff's deputies responded to the 100 block of Beam Road just outside of Lumberton the evening of June 27, 2023 in reference to a shooting. When they arrived, Butler, 20, was found dead.

Butler and Oxendine were friends before the shooting took place, according to both the defense and the prosecution.

While Oxendine's counsel, Johnson Britt III, argued self-defense, the



Oxendine

prosecution, led by Robeson County Assistant District Attorney Graham Gurney, said that Butler's DNA was not found on the weapon used in the shooting.

"Very simple formula. No DNA equals no self-defense equals guilty," Gurney said. "That's what this whole case boils down to."

He added that the physical evidence is an objective fact with no motive or bias and could not lie to the jury.

Britt argued that Butler pointed a gun and Oxendine and his younger brother, who was present, and that Oxendine acted in self-defense. Britt also claimed that Oxendine tried to save Butler's life after he had been shot, including chest compressions.

A disagreement over a piece of jewelry is said to have occurred to start the incident which led to Butler's death.

After the verdict was read, Oxendine apologized to the courtroom.

The trial lasted only

one week, with jury selection taking place last Monday before testimony began on Tuesday.

"Today's guilty verdict brings a measure of justice in a case that has deeply impacted our community," Sheriff Burnis Wilkins said in a media statement. "I commend our investigators for their relentless work, professionalism, and commitment to seeing this case through from start to finish. While no verdict can undo the pain caused by this senseless act,

See BUTLER | 8A

## Dial formally sworn in at Pembroke board meeting

Victoria Sanderson  
The Robesonian

PEMBROKE — A public swearing-in for Mayor Allen Dial was held Monday during the Pembroke Town Council's monthly meeting.

Dial was officially sworn in on March 30 after winning the legal battle against former mayor Gregory Cummings that had kept him from taking office since winning the election in 2023. Monday's meeting allowed the public to witness the swearing-in before the meeting began.

After the swearing-in, the board received an update on the upcoming street-widening project and on when the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) expects the road to reopen. District Engineer Brice Bell said he expects the project to be completed this summer, without interfering with Lumbee Homecoming.

Additionally, the board



Victoria Sanderson | The Robesonian

Pembroke Mayor Allen Dial stands at his place on the dais after being formally sworn in during Monday's Town Council meeting.

voted to approve the new planning board members, including Ed Brooks as Chairman, alongside Reginald Oxendine, Jr., Leavira Chavis, Trent Locklear and Vee Oxendine. County appointees Ruby Smith and Corey Hammonds will be referred to Robeson County for confirmation.

Additionally, the board voted to extend the contract with All-Pro-Waste for another two years and approved a request to apply for an asset inventory and assessment grant.

Contact Victoria Sanderson at [vsanderson@robsonian.com](mailto:vsanderson@robsonian.com).



The Robesonian file photo

A crowd gathers on the Dick Taylor Plaza in downtown Lumberton in 2024 as the Band of Oz takes the stage at Alive After Five. The group is part of this year's lineup, set to perform on May 28.

## Alive After Five set for return

Concerts to have earlier dates in 2026

Victoria Sanderson  
The Robesonian

LUMBERTON — The annual Alive After Five concert series, hosted by

Friends of Main Street, will begin with the Sand Band on May 14, and will run through June 11.

"Excitement is definitely building

and sponsorship opportunities are still available," said Sarah Beth Ward, downtown development coordinator for the City of Lumberton. "Alive After 5 is more than a concert

series — it's a fundraiser that fuels downtown revitalization. It's a chance for businesses and community members to be part of something that's actively shaping

See ALIVE | 8A

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High 69, Low 41 - Sunny to partly cloudy

**A NEWS**  
Obituaries: 2  
Editorial: 4  
Comics: 5  
Classifieds: 6, 7

**B SPORTS**

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## Full month of Juneteenth celebrations planned in Red Springs

Staff report

RED SPRINGS — A full month of events will be held in Red Springs this June to celebrate Juneteenth.

Events include:  
— Gathering of Prayer and Supper, 6 p.m. on Monday, June 1 at 517 West Fourth Avenue in Red Springs. This will include ancestral affirmations and prayers from local clergy. Bring your

lawn chairs and umbrellas for food, music and fellowship. Hosted by Bernard and Carrie Murry.

— Miracle Mile and Breakfast, 8 a.m. on Saturday, June 6 at Willie Goodyear Park on Eighth Avenue in Red Springs. This is an early-morning refreshing mile walk in conversation with the Father, family and friends. In conjunction with Elder James Tew

and First Freewill Baptist Church.

— Scholarship Golf Tournament, 1 p.m. on Saturday, June 6 at Pinecrest Country Club, 110 Nigel Road in Lumberton. It is a shotgun start. Early registration is \$70 per person, on site is \$75. Contact Glenn Patterson Sr. at 910-740-4974 or Tim Heath at 910-904-3764 for more information.

— An Afternoon of Dance, 4 p.m. on Sunday, June 7 at Red Springs Middle School Auditorium. Free admission and refreshments, donations are accepted. Contact Yolanda Ross at 910-384-4974 or Eva Patterson Heath at 910-904-3764 for more information.

— Jeans & T-Shirts Edition Youth Revival, 7 p.m. on Tuesday, June

See JUNETEENTH | 8A

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## OBITUARIES

## LOIS ROGERS JOHNSON

Lois Rogers Johnson, age 94, of Lumberton, passed away peacefully, surrounded by her family, on March 30, 2026. Lois was born in Rocky Mount in 1931. After growing up in Fair Bluff, she attended Mars Hill College, where she met her future husband, James. After graduating from Mars Hill, she moved to Raleigh, holding her first job with Wachovia Bank.

Family was the primary focus for Lois, serving her entire life as a dedicated wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. She enjoyed lifelong hobbies of baking and playing bridge with friends and family.

Lois was an active member of Rowland First Baptist Church, serving as a church deacon and a proud member of the Women's Philathea school class and the Women's Missionary Union (WMU) for over 30 years. After relocating to Lumberton, she served as a member of the First Baptist Church of Lumberton.

Lois is survived by her two sons, Ted (Dianne) and Jerry (Von); her four grandchildren: Rebecca (Patrick), Kelsie, Victoria, and Trevor (Emily); two great-grandchildren, William and Charlie; nephew, Jim (Luli); niece, Susan (Paul); and a number of great-nieces and great-nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Oliver and Lois; her husband, James; her sister, Mary; her daughter-in-law, Robin; and countless other members of her extended family.

Her family would like to extend special recognition and thanks to her caregivers, Mary Benjamin and Thelma Jones, for their unwavering support of Lois during her final months.

For any memorials, her family asks that donations be given to the First Baptist Church of Rowland.

The family will receive friends and loved ones prior to the service on Saturday, April 11, 2026, from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. at First Baptist Church of Rowland, 401 West Main Street in Rowland. Following the visitation, a memorial service will be held at 2 p.m.

Online condolences can be made by visiting: [www.FloydMortuary.net](http://www.FloydMortuary.net).

# Food Truck Rodeo set for April 30

Staff report

LUMBERTON — The Food Truck Rodeo event will be held on Thursday, April 30 in downtown Lumberton.

The event will run from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 118 West Fifth Street.

Proceeds from the event will support the Robeson County Reentry Program, which helps individuals successfully transition back into the community after incarceration.

For more information, contact David Powell at 910-674-9054.

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## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

EDITOR'S NOTE: Send your Community Calendar items to Editor Chris Stiles at [cstiles@robersonian.com](mailto:cstiles@robersonian.com).

**Spring Fling, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., April 11:** It's Spring at His & Hers Greenhouse! Shop with vendors, ride the Barrel Train, win a prize and buy plants and garden supplies for the new growing season. The festival is an annual event, so enjoy a day outside with family and friends.

**Southern Touch Craft Show, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., April 11:** Southeastern NC Agricultural Events Center is hosting a Southern Touch Craft Show. Join all and shop from all the handcrafted artisans. Tickets in advance are \$5, and kids under 12 are admitted free.

**My Time to Shine, 7 p.m., April 11:** The very popular and competitive competition, held at the Carolina Civic Center in downtown Lumberton, will feature approximately 20 contestants competing in all categories of talent, from singing and dancing to instrumental and more. The winner of this year's competition will receive a \$1,000 cash prize, with second place receiving \$500 and third place \$250. Additionally, a People's Choice Award will be chosen based on ticket sales for each contestant and donations made during purchase checkout.

**Bunco Bash, 6 p.m., April 17:** The Lumberton Woman's Club is sponsoring a Bunco Bash, a fundraiser for the Rape Crisis Center of Robeson County. Purchase advance tickets only by emailing your request to [LumbertonWC@gmail.com](mailto:LumbertonWC@gmail.com). No experience needed to play, as instructions will be provided. Fantastic prizes provided for the winners! Drinks & Snacks are available for purchase. Tickets are \$10 each. The event is in the church's fellowship hall.

**Glow Run, 7 p.m., April 17:** The Robeson Road Runners invite you to a free event. The Glow Run is a 5K and a 1-mile fun run. Assemble at the pavilion by the Silo at Raymond B. Pennington Park @ 7:00 p.m. Enjoy!

**Cowboy Mounted Shooting, 9 a.m., April 17:** Details to be announced! The Cowboys and Cowgirls are compet-

ing at the Southeastern NC Agricultural Events Center.

**Cruise In, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., April 18:** Jack Pait Strawberry Farm is hosting its First Annual Cruise In. Antique cars, maybe a tractor or two and free food. Check out this inaugural event. Enjoy the friendly and welcoming atmosphere at the farm.

**Rob Cole - Carter's Restaurant, 7 p.m., April 18:** Enjoy an evening of live music with Rob Cole. Munch some delicious food, relax and enjoy the evening. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. and the concert starts at 8:15 p.m. Carter's Restaurant is located at Pinecrest Country Club.

**Soul Serenade, 7 p.m., April 18:** Take a choral journey through the 70's and 80's with Damion Murrill & Friends. Wear your best 70's and 80's outfit to the event. Space is limited, and pre-sale tickets are required as tickets will not be available at the door. For more information, call 910-317-0372. Tickets are \$30 each.

**Spring Fling, 2 p.m. to 7 p.m., April 18:** Spring is here at the Oasis, a Spring Fling event with vendors, food and lots of fun. Entry is \$10. The petting zoo is available during the Spring Fling, so book it in advance.

**DIY & Unwind, 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., April 22:** The Robeson County Public Library is hosting an adult crafting event. Be creative and make a stamped tea towel. All supplies are provided; just show up and enjoy making the project. Call 910-738-4859 for more details.

**Always A Bridesmaid, 7 p.m., April 24:** SAVE THE DATES! April 24, 25, 26 and May 1, 2 and 3. Times of performances to be released soon! Purple Door Productions is presenting this hilarious comedic romp, in which four friends have sworn to keep the promise they made on the night of their Senior Prom: to be in each other's weddings ... no matter what. More than thirty years later, these Southern friends-for-life are still making "the long walk" for each other, determined to honor that vow. This is a laugh-out-loud comedy that will definitely enter-

tain.

**Forever Motown, 7:30 p.m., April 24:** Forever Motown is a celebration of Motown's influence and impact on popular music, with a focus on the beloved songs and performances of artists like The Four Tops, The Temptations, The Supremes, Smokey Robinson, Marvin Gaye, and more.

**Fall Family Fun Fly-in, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., April 25:** Remote control airplane hobbyists are invited to the Mt. Elim Remote Control Airplane and Boat Club, located at 13799 N.C. Hwy. 72 East in Lumberton, for their semi-annual Fall Family Fun Fly-in fundraiser. The event will feature local area pilots showcasing their flying skills, food and a raffle. For more information, contact Don Valentine at 910-887-5056 or [donpaul.val@gmail.com](mailto:donpaul.val@gmail.com).

**16th Annual Shortest Parade, 10 a.m., April 25:** Welcome once again to the shortest parade! We will have our traditional, always exciting parade, unexpected surprises, BBQ plate fundraiser for the Patrick Pait Memorial Scholarship, local vendors, and farm animals to pet. Bring your family, bring your friends, and come out for a great way to make a memory! It's a unique and fun experience!

**Friends of Main Street Presents Tonya Holy Elk, 3 p.m., May 3:** Tonya Holy Elk and her son, Lakoda John will share poetry and music on Sunday, May 3, at 3 p.m. at The Kinship NC, 304 North Elm Street, Lumberton. This is an event of Stories and Sounds Downtown, funded through the NC Arts Council Grassroots funds coming to the Robeson County Arts Council.

## ONGOING

**Children's Storytime - Lumberton, 10:30-11:00 a.m.** on Tuesdays and Fridays, Robeson County Public Library, 101 N. Chestnut St., Lumberton.

**Children's Storytime - Pembroke, 10:30-11:30 a.m.** on the third Wednesday of the month at the Pembroke Library, 413 Blaine St, Pembroke.

**Music, Rhymes, and Storytime, 10:30-11:30 a.m.** on the third Thursday of each month,

Robeson County Public Library, 101 N. Chestnut St., Lumberton.

**Children's Storytime - Red Springs, 10:30-11:30 a.m.** on the third Friday of each month at McMillan Memorial Library, Red Springs.

**Children's Storytime - Fairmont, 4:30-5:30 p.m.**, on the fourth Tuesday of each month, at the Hector MacLean Library, 106 S. Main St., Fairmont.

**Children's Storytime - St. Pauls, 10:30-11:30 a.m.**, on the fourth Wednesday at the Annie H McEachern Library, 223 W. Broad St, St Pauls.

**Farmers Market: Wednesdays, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.:** On Wednesdays, the Robeson County Farmers Market features vegetables grown in Robeson County and neighboring counties. Local craft vendors are welcome additions to the market, and we encourage you to take the time to get to know them. The market is open every Wednesday from 7 a.m. to noon and on Saturdays through November, or until vendors sell out.

**Music Jam Session:** Bring instruments and songs to The Barn at Risen Farms from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. on the first Friday of each month to jam the night away. There might be a dance or two.

**Music, Rhymes and Storytime:** 10:30-11:30 a.m. on the first Thursday of each month at the Robeson County Public Library, 101 N. Chestnut St., Lumberton.

**Thursday Music Night at Your Pie:** Your Pie Pizza hosts live music every Thursday night.

**Flock Swap - Robeson Co. Farmers Market:** The Farmers Market will host a Flock Swap from a.m. to 5 p.m. every third Saturday of the month. The Swap will be held in the adjacent lot, next to Market Street and Water Street. For more information, don't hesitate to contact Marie at [robesoncofarmersmkt@gmail.com](mailto:robesoncofarmersmkt@gmail.com).

**Lumberton Horse and Tack Auction:** The Horse and Tack Auction is held on the first Monday night of each month. Mark your calendars for this recurring event. All events are held at the Southeastern NC Agricultural Events Center in Robeson County.

# Death investigation ongoing after man found dead in Lumberton apartment

Staff report

LUMBERTON — A

death investigation is underway after a man was found dead in an

apparent shooting at a Lumberton apartment early Saturday morning.

The deceased individual was found after officers responded to the 200 block of South Seneca Street around 2:30 a.m. after reports of a disturbance. The man had an apparent gunshot wound. Lumberton Police say

that a person of interest was taken into custody. The investigation is ongoing. Authorities say there is no further danger to the public relating to this case.

Anyone with information on the case should call Lumberton Police at 910-671-3845.

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The Robesonian file photo  
Relay for Life attendees walking around the Lumberton High School track at the 2025 event.

# Relay for Life scheduled for May 1

Staff report

LUMBERTON — The Robeson County Relay for Life will be held Friday, May 1 at Lumberton High School.

The annual event is to raise cancer awareness and to raise funds for the American Cancer Society.

The event is to “walk, honor, remember, fight back!” a flyer says. The event runs from noon to

midnight at Alton G. Brooks Stadium. The opening ceremony will be held at 6 p.m. with a luminaria ceremony at 9 p.m. Fun, games and activities will continue throughout the event. A survivor’s lap around the track will also be held.

For more information, including about sponsorship, contact Cheryl Revels at 910-225-3377 or cherylrevels@yahoo.com, or visit relayforlife.org/robessonnc.

# Artemis II breaks Apollo 13’s distance record with daring moon flyby that included a solar eclipse

Marcia Dunn  
AP Aerospace Writer

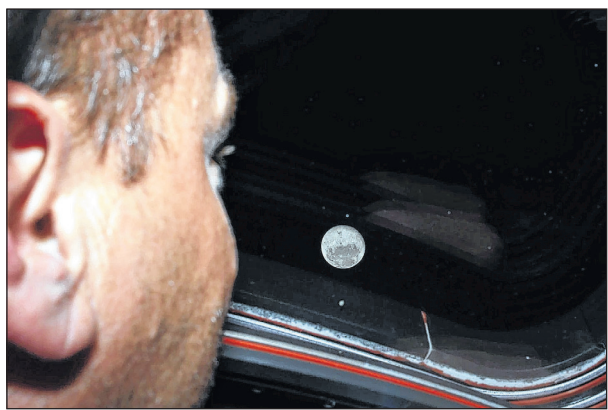
HOUSTON — After traveling deeper into space than any other humans, the Artemis II astronauts pointed their moonship toward home Monday night, wrapping up a lunar cruise that revealed views of the far side never beheld by eyes until now.

Their flyby of the moon — NASA’s first return since the Apollo era — even included some celestial sightseeing besides yielding rich science. It was a significant step toward landing boot prints near the moon’s south pole in just two years.

A total solar eclipse greeted the three Americans and one Canadian as the moon temporarily blocked the sun from their perspective. Mercury, Venus, Mars and Saturn nodded at them from the black void. The landing sites of Apollo 12 and 14 also were visible, poignant reminders of NASA’s first age of exploration more than half a century ago.

In an especially riveting retro throwback, Artemis II shattered the distance record set by Apollo 13 in 1970. NASA’s Orion capsule reached a maximum distance of 252,756 miles (406,771 kilometers) from Earth before hanging a U-turn behind the moon, 4,101 miles (6,600 kilometers) farther than Apollo 13.

“It is blowing my mind what you can see with the naked eye from the moon right now. It is just unbelievable,” Canadian



NASA via AP  
In this photo provided by NASA, Artemis II commander and NASA astronaut Reid Wiseman looks out one of the Orion spacecraft’s main cabin windows at the Moon ahead of the crew’s lunar flyby on Monday.

astronaut Jeremy Hansen radioed. He challenged “this generation and the next to make sure this record is not long-lived.”

## Artemis II astronauts get an Apollo wake-up message

Apollo 13 commander Jim Lovell wished the crew well in a recording made two months before his death last August. Mission Control beamed up his message to commander Reid Wiseman, pilot Victor Glover, Christina Koch and Hansen, before their fly-around began.

“Welcome to my old neighborhood,” said Lovell, who also flew on Apollo 8, humanity’s first lunar visit. “It’s a historic day and I know how busy you’ll be, but don’t forget to enjoy the view.”

The Artemis II astronauts carried up with them the Apollo 8 silk patch that accompanied Lovell to the moon. “It’s just a real honor to have that on board with us,” Wiseman said.

Artemis II is using the same maneuver that Apollo 13 did after its

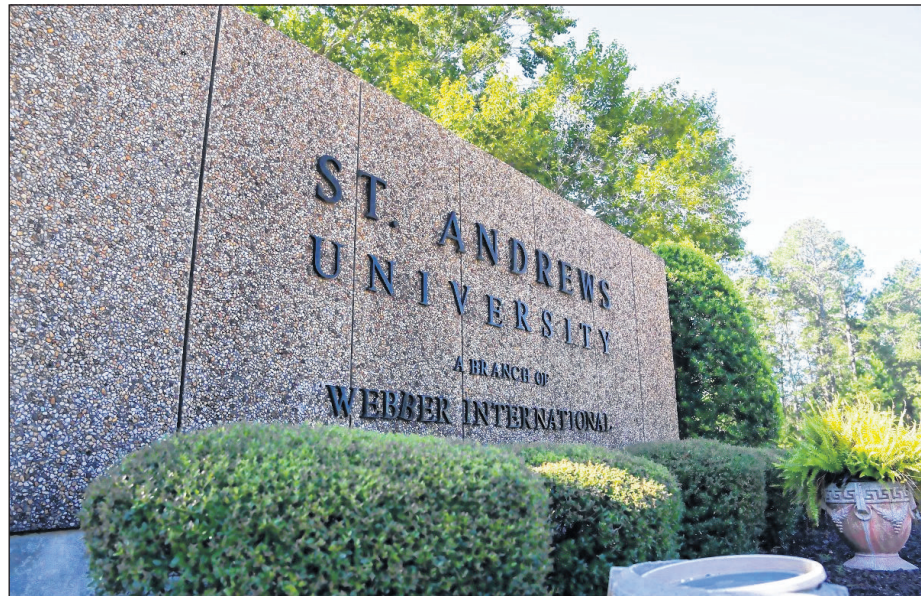
“Houston, we’ve had a problem” oxygen tank explosion wiped out any hope of a moon landing.

Known as a free-return lunar trajectory, this no-stopping-to-land route takes advantage of Earth and the moon’s gravity, reducing the need for fuel. It’s a celestial figure-eight that put the astronauts on course for home once they emerged from behind the moon Monday evening.

## Astronauts lock in on lunar observations

Artemis II’s lunar fly-around and intense observation period lasted seven hours, by far the highlight of the nearly 10-day test flight that will end with a splash-down in the Pacific on Friday.

Venturing as close as 4,067 miles (6,545 kilometers) to the gray dusty surface, the astronauts zipped through a list of more than two dozen targets, using powerful Nikon cameras as well as their iPhones to zoom in on impact craters and other intriguing lunar features.



Julia Wall for The Assembly via BBI  
St. Andrews was acquired by Webber International University in 2011.

# St. Andrews University rape case ends with settlement

Heidi Perez-Moreno  
Border Belt Independent

Laurinburg — Webber International University, a partner of the now-shuttered St. Andrews University in North Carolina, said it reached a settlement with a former student who accused the schools of mishandling a rape investigation.

The student, identified in court documents as Jane Doe and a member of St. Andrews’ women’s soccer team, sued the universities in 2022. The lawsuit, filed in Scotland County Superior Court, alleged negligence after Doe reported that she was sexually assaulted by a member of the school’s men’s soccer team.

Doe dismissed the lawsuit with prejudice in July, meaning she could not refile the claim. Such dismissals are common when a case is settled out of court.

Joe Strickler, chairman of Webber International’s Board of Trustees, said the school agreed to a settlement earlier this year. He declined to discuss details of the agreement, including how much the school paid.

“I can’t tell you exactly when we did this, but I just know a document came to my table settling the case, and I signed it,” he said.

It’s unclear if Webber was the only defendant that settled. The lawsuit also named former St. Andrews president Ellen Bernhardt and three other St. Andrews employees: Mary Cross, director of housing and residence life; Elizabeth Hernandez, dean of students and Title IV coordinator; and Ash Walker, assistant professor of sport performance, health and fitness. It also named Everglades College, which employed Bernhardt and served as a consultant to St. Andrews.

St. Andrews, which opened in Laurinburg in 1961, abruptly closed last May amid financial struggles. Enrollment was stagnant with fewer than 1,000 students, and the school faced significant debt. St. Andrews merged with Florida-based Webber International in 2011, but the partnership wasn’t enough to save the school.

Scotland Development Corporation, which owns most of the St. Andrews campus, filed for Chapter

11 bankruptcy in February.

## The investigation

Doe reported that she was raped in a dorm room by Paulo Manzoni, a student and soccer player from Italy, on September 25, 2021. In the days that followed, the lawsuit says, St. Andrews staff caused Doe additional trauma by questioning her credibility and failing to provide adequate support.

Doe reported the alleged rape to an assistant women’s soccer coach, who took her to speak with Hernandez, who was married to the head coach of the men’s soccer team.

Days later, Bernhardt reportedly told an assembly of students and staff that she wanted to explain “the difference between fact, fiction, and rumor.” A Laurinburg police officer then spoke about the dangers of making false accusations, according to the lawsuit.

Police charged Manzoni with second-degree forcible sexual offense the day after Doe reported the incident; he returned to Italy before the case was adjudicated. But the university allowed Manzoni to remain on campus during its investigation on the condition that he maintained a mutual no-contact order with Doe.

Emilia Beskind, a Durham-based attorney for Doe, argued before a judge in April 2025 that St. Andrews should have suspended Manzoni during the investigation, a common practice under Title IX, the federal law that protects against discrimination and sexual harassment.

“Instead of focusing on how to protect students from the person charged with violent sexual felonies,” Beskind said, “Defendant Bernhardt concluded that supposed rumors on the small campus had become the real threat to student safety, and to St. Andrews’ reputation.”

When another member of the women’s soccer team posted to social media a photo of Manzoni with the words “say his name,” St. Andrews’ faculty told Doe that she had violated the no-contact order, the lawsuit says, but was never told how

and why the action defied the agreement. The head coach of the women’s soccer team suspended several members of the team after the post, including the teammate who made the post.

Two days after the reported rape, Manzoni said he was assaulted by male students who broke his cellphone. Hours later, at 2 a.m., a faculty member banged on Doe’s dorm room and escorted her to meet with a Laurinburg police detective who “interrogated” her, according to the lawsuit.

Beskind said recently that the case reached a conclusion, but she declined to elaborate. “All I’m able to say is that the matter has been resolved to the mutual satisfaction of the parties,” she said.

## Separate sexual assault cases

Less than a year and a half after Doe reported that she was raped, three other St. Andrews students accused another student-athlete at the school of sexually assaulting them between October 2022 and January 2023.

Mison Mickle, a member of the wrestling team, pleaded guilty in 2024 to two counts of second-degree forcible rape, one count of second-degree forcible sex offense, and one count of attempted second-degree forcible sex offense. He was sentenced to serve up to nearly 12 years in prison.

The case brought additional scrutiny to St. Andrews, which had ramped up its sports programs in an effort to boost enrollment.

Mickle was a registered sex offender in his home state of South Carolina, but he failed to register when he moved to North Carolina. While serving in the Army, he was convicted by a military judge at Fort Lee, Virginia, in 2020 of three counts of attempted abusive sexual contact and three counts of assault consummated by a battery, records show. He was ordered to serve 12 months behind bars and was dishonorably discharged.

Heidi Perez-Moreno covers education and more at the Border Belt Independent. She is a graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill and previously worked at The Washington Post.

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## OPINION SHAPER

# Iran's other enemies

It's not just Israel. One of the least convincing arguments of opponents of the Iran war is that it is a conflict initiated by the Jewish state for its own benefit — the U.S. is just along for the ride.

This view not only discounts the U.S. interest in defanging Iran but also neglects that there are other countries in the region besides Israel and Iran and that they, too, have a stake in the outcome of this war.

If there's anything that Iran has succeeded in doing over the first month of battle, it is further demonstrating the intolerable threat that it represents to the region.

The so-called Gulf Cooperation Council states — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — have the misfortune of being located just across the Persian Gulf from Iran, putting them on the front line of the war.

A key element of Iran's strategy has been to impose economic pain on these states to force them to press the United States into staying its hand. While the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz is indirectly harming the United States by driving up the global price of crude and other materials, it is a direct blow to the Gulf states, since the Saudis, Kuwaitis and Emiratis send the majority of their oil through the waterway.

The Iraqis have struck the Gulf states with missiles and drones by the thousands. The ongoing blitz is damaging energy infrastructure and destroying the reputation of the Gulf states as an oasis of calm and economic development in an otherwise turbulent region.

There's no insurance policy against having a fanatic millenarian state as a neighbor, while nothing quite concentrates the mind like an unprovoked drone attack on one of your luxury hotels — or your airports, oil fields and data centers.

Iran likes to pretend that it is only striking at military infrastructure, but that's absurd.

As long as Iran is run on its current basis, it is a grave danger to these countries, which, prior to the war, tried to keep their heads down or even get closer to Iran as a way to mitigate the threat.

This is the approach that the Saudis tried after an Iran-backed attack hampered the country's oil production in 2019.

That experiment is now done. According to published reports, the crown prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman, privately urged Trump to launch the war even as the Saudis talked up diplomacy in public, and now MBS has been telling Trump to go all the way and topple the Iranian government.

The New York Times relates that the Saudi leader "is concerned that if Mr. Trump pulls back now, Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Middle East will be left to confront an emboldened and furious Iran on their own."

The UAE has been a particular Iranian target. Its ambassador to the U.S. wrote in *The Wall Street Journal* recently, "We need a conclusive outcome that addresses Iran's full range of threats: nuclear capabilities, missiles, drones, terror proxies and blockades of international sea lanes."

One is tempted to conclude that the Gulf states are "all neocons now." That would be overstating it, though. Despite getting hit by Iran, Oman is maintaining its traditional posture as a mediator and Qatar is always a bad actor.

Much depends on how the war ultimately turns out, but it is easy to see the Gulf states looking to the United States for greater security guarantees and warming up further to Israel, which is demonstrating the military might to confront an Iran that has no compunction about lashing out at states that are doing it no harm.

It may be easy for hostile U.S. observers to portray the Iran war as about Israel and only Israel, but the Gulf states unfortunately know better — and have the battle damage to prove it.

Rich Lowry is editor of the *National Review*.

## LETTERS POLICY

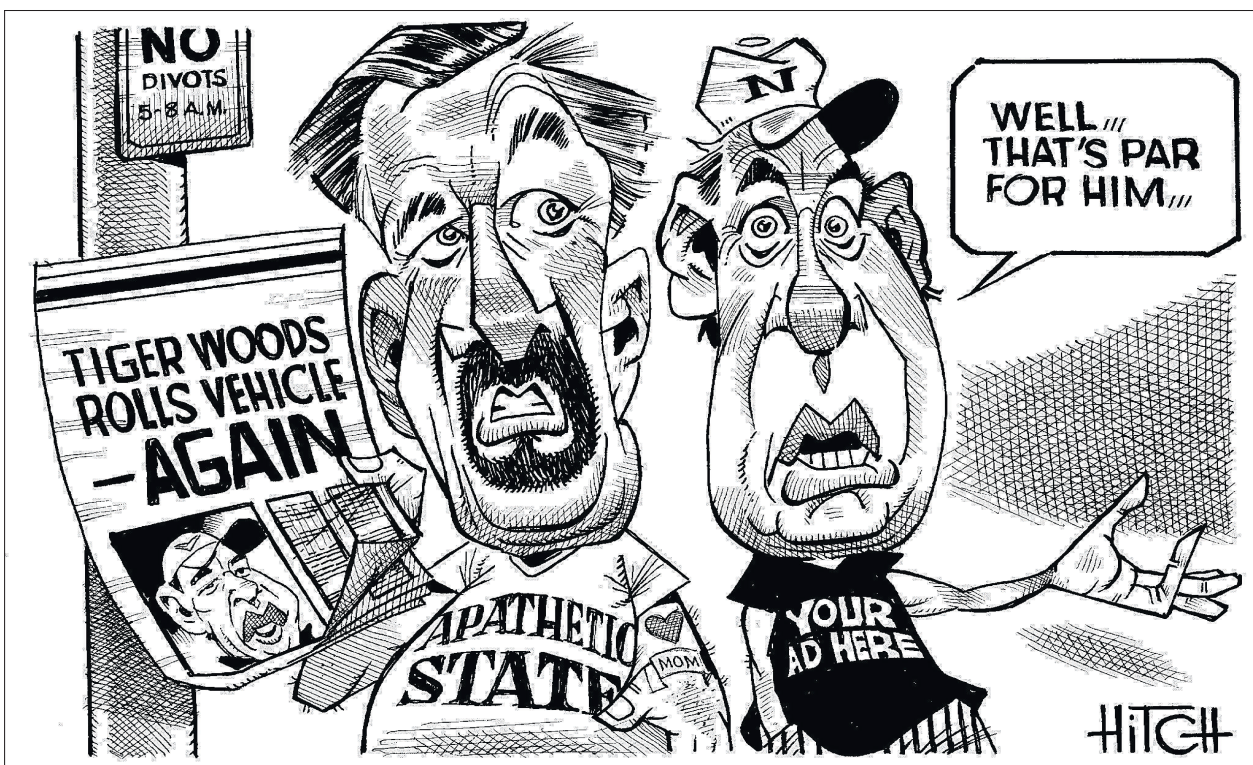
The Robesonian welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should be about issues of general interest, brief and to the point. We reserve the right to refuse letters longer than 400 words; poetry; letters that are in bad taste or libelous; and letters from outside our readership. Letters may be edited, but content will not be altered.

Letters should be original. They must be signed. Please include your address and daytime phone number. Street addresses and phone numbers will not be published. A photograph of the writer will be used if provided.

Send letters to: The Robesonian, P.O. Box 1028, Lumberton, NC 28359, or fax them to (910) 739-6553. Letters can be sent via email to [cstiles@robesonian.com](mailto:cstiles@robesonian.com).

## BE A ROBESONIAN OPINION SHAPER

If you can express an opinion in 800 words or fewer — once every three months — you probably have what it takes to be a Robesonian Opinion Shaper. Contact Editor Chris Stiles at [cstiles@robesonian.com](mailto:cstiles@robesonian.com).



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U.S. Capitol Switchboard, [202-224-3121](tel). White House Switchboard, [202-456-1414](tel).

## HIS VIEW

# Why the Halifax Resolves matter

RALEIGH — On April 12, a large crowd of North Carolinians will gather in the town of Halifax to commemorate the 250th anniversary of a pivotal historical event.

It was on April 12, 1776, that 83 delegates representing all 35 (at the time) counties plus nine municipalities affirmed what became known as the Halifax Resolves. They instructed North Carolina's representatives to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia to "concur with the delegates of other Colonies in declaring Independency."

The wording may sound tentative — to "concur with" rather than "initiate" — but everyone understood their import as well as the potential consequences. Over the first few months of the Revolutionary War, an increasing share of the emerging nation's leaders had concluded that a clean break with Britain, not just a renegotiation of colonial relations, was necessary. Still, none had yet attempted to make it an explicit aim of the war.

Some feared getting too far ahead of public opinion. Others feared that, if Britain managed to prevail, individuals most closely associated with the cause of independence would at least be ostracized and financially ruined if not prosecuted for treason.

Among the delegates arriving in Halifax in early April for the Fourth Provincial Congress were several Carolina firebrands no longer willing to countenance a rapprochement with Parliament or King George III. One was John McKnitt Alexander. One of the two dozen signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence the previous May, Alexander had just returned from captaining a company of Mecklenburg men at the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge, where the Patriots blocked and decisively defeated a column of Carolina Tories on their way to Wilmington to join up with a British invasion force.

Another delegate, Cornelius Harnett, had challenged the Crown even earlier than Alexander and the Mecklenburgers did. The main organizer of Wilmington's Committee of Safety in 1774, Harnett was one of the leaders of the Patriots who the following year burned Fort Johnson to keep it out of the hands of pro-British forces. He was then elected president of the statewide Council of Safety, essentially North

Carolina's first governing body after the start of the war, and became vice president of the Fourth Provincial Congress.

Other delegates traveling to Halifax included five militia colonels present at Moores Creek Bridge — Thomas Robeson of Bladen County, Griffith Rutherford of Rowan, Allen Jones of Northampton, John Ashe of New Hanover, and Richard Caswell of what is now Lenoir County, who'd been in overall command — along with other veterans of the battle such as Joseph

Winston of Surry County. If those surnames sound familiar, that's because either they or their relatives subsequently became the namesakes of new counties or municipalities.

These men weren't just flush with recent victory. They were angered by even-more-recent events. That British invasion fleet had, indeed, reached the North Carolina coast in early March. Finding no Tory reinforcements to meet them, General Henry Clinton landed a few foraging parties, rescued a few Loyalists, captured a few Patriots, and then announced that any North Carolina rebel who came forward, renounced his prior misdeeds, and pledged allegiance to the Crown would be pardoned.

Any rebel, that is, except two. One was Robert Howe of Brunswick County. A former British officer, Howe had once commanded the very Fort Johnston that he later helped set ablaze. The other man General Clinton refused to pardon was Cornelius Harnett, vice president of the provincial congress that convened in Halifax.

See the problem? General Clinton apparently didn't. He thought singling out a couple of ring leaders for potential punishment would induce the other Patriots to seize the opportunity for a pardon. What his proclamation actually did was harden many hearts that might otherwise have yielded to fear.

On April 12, then, the delegates in Halifax were the first provincial leaders in North America to formally embrace independence. Three months later, the Continental Congress did the same. A rebellion became a war for independence. The world would never be the same.

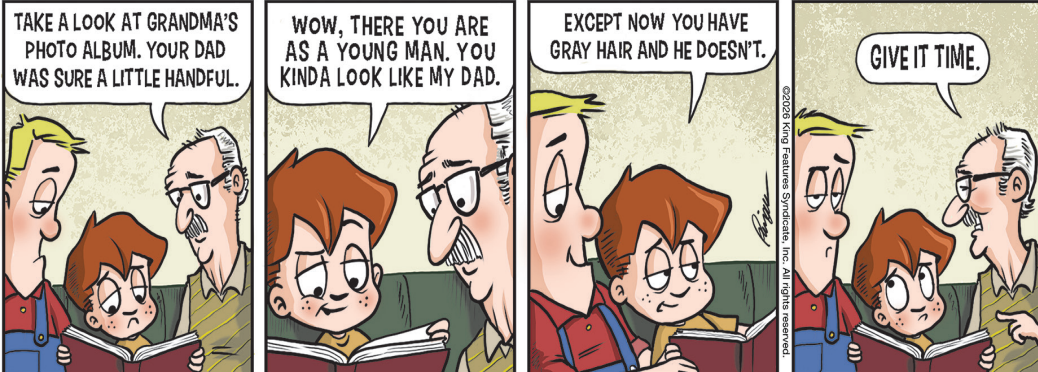
John Hood is a John Locke Foundation board member. His latest books, *Mountain Folk* and *Forest Folk*, combine epic fantasy with early American history ([FolkloreCycle.com](http://FolkloreCycle.com)).



**John Hood**  
Contributing columnist

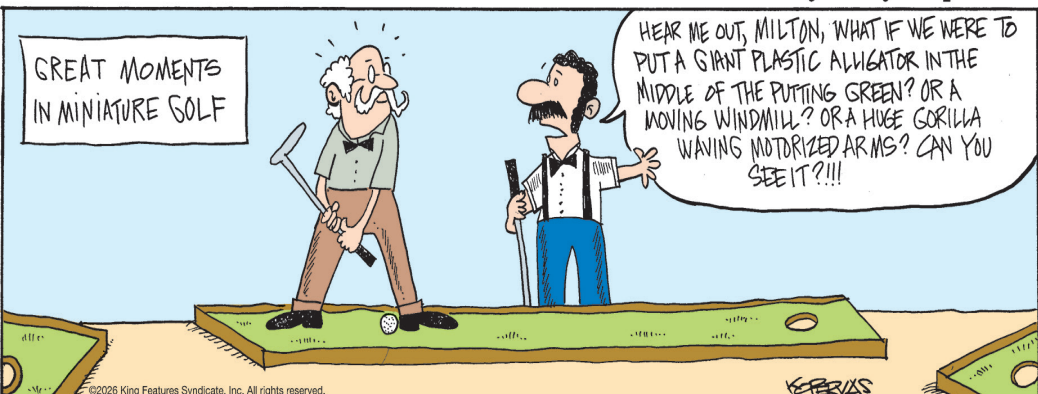
# Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



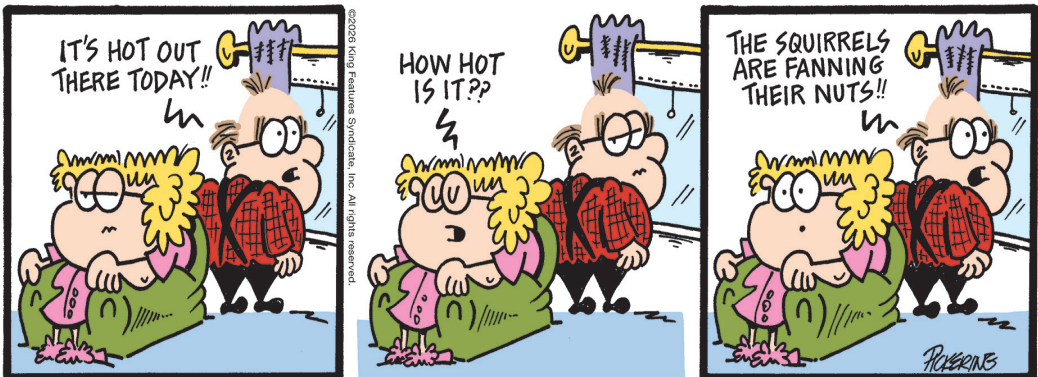
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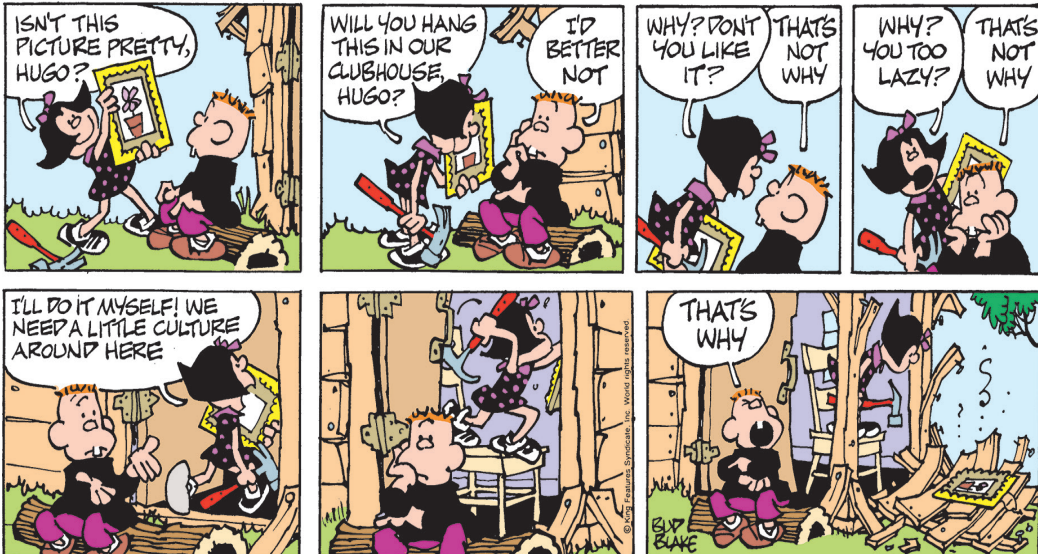
The Spats

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# TIGER

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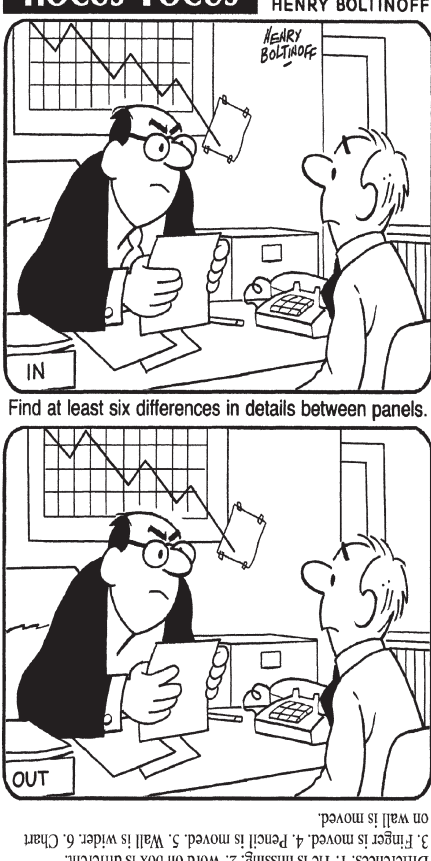
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by Dave T. Phipps



## CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: T equals P

TUT ZVM WUSR WSTPKWFZK  
 EDU ZMUKPW NOWD WSAD ZW  
 GRSPNOV, JPRRUENOV ZVM  
 ZRGZAUKP: FSVZ FSKVPK.

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# SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

Amuse

LICKET

Forever

WASLAY

Guide

TERSE

Shade

RUMBA

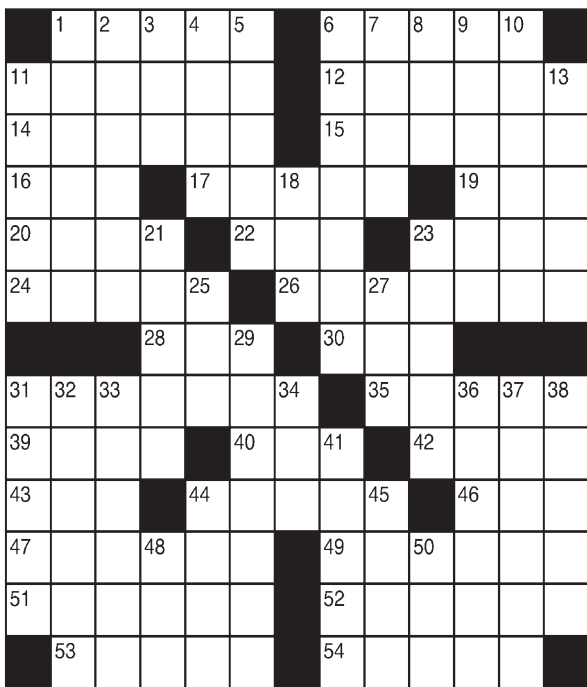
TODAY'S WORD



# King Crossword

## ACROSS

- 1 — Ark
- 6 Con games
- 11 French novelist
- 12 Heckler's weapon
- 14 "Delta Wedding" author Welty
- 15 Defeated in a footrace
- 16 Govt. stipend
- 17 Roly-poly
- 19 Roast VIPs
- 20 Golf pegs
- 22 Docs' org.
- 23 Lap dog, for short
- 24 Former First Daughter
- 26 Most sore
- 28 401(k) alternative
- 30 Med. plan
- 31 Popeye's veggie
- 35 Muslim legal expert
- 39 Centers
- 40 Possesses
- 42 Uttered
- 43 Before
- 44 "Graceland" singer Paul
- 46 The Browns, on scoreboards
- 47 Chew out
- 49 Tex-Mex treat



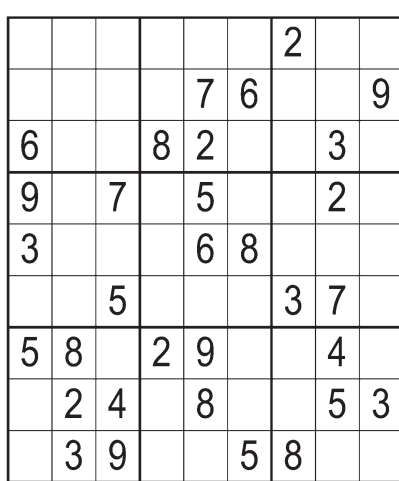
- 51 "I, Robot" author
- 52 Leg joints
- 53 Hosiery shade
- 54 Repaired shoes
- 8 Invoice fig.
- 9 "Little Women" matriarch
- 10 Pancake towers
- 11 Defeats
- 13 Start
- 18 Hollywood's Thurman
- 21 Tibia settings
- 23 Reverent
- 25 Altar in the sky
- 27 "Let me think ..."
- 29 Reach
- 31 Biblical realm
- 32 Least spoiled
- 33 Portugal's place
- 34 Sandwich meat
- 36 Glib
- 37 Inclined
- 38 Concepts
- 41 Remote locations?
- 44 Halt
- 45 iPod model
- 48 Asia's — Darya river
- 50 Keypad trio

## DOWN

- 1 Mal de mer
- 2 "Golden" tunes
- 3 Dye type
- 4 Angelic instrument
- 5 Milan's La —
- 6 Tolerate
- 7 Brilliant stroke

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# Weekly SUDOKU



Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

## DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆◆

- ◆ Moderate
- ◆◆ Challenging
- ◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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# Trivia test

by Fifi Rodriguez

- GEOGRAPHY:** The famous Hanging Gardens of Babylon, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, are believed to have been in what modern-day country?
- GENERAL KNOWLEDGE:** What is the name of the six-point blue star on emergency medical vehicles?
- MOVIES:** What is the nickname of the "vicious" dog in "The Sandlot"?
- HISTORY:** What was the name of the United States' first space shuttle?
- LITERATURE:** In what language was "The Odyssey" originally written?
- TELEVISION:** Where is the 1990s sitcom "Northern Exposure" set?
- ANIMAL KINGDOM:** What is a group of kangaroos called?
- SCIENCE:** What is the process called when a lizard loses and regenerates a tail?
- U.S. STATES:** Which state borders two oceans?
- MUSIC:** What was Taylor Swift's first song to make Billboard's Hot 100?

# WALLET

Today's Word  
 3. Steer; 4. Umbra  
 solution

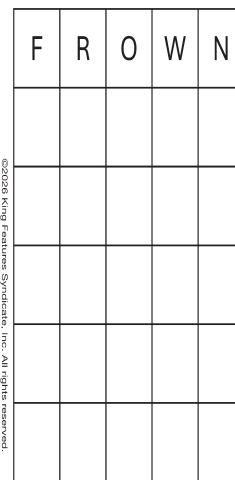
# SCRAMBLERS



Solution

# FiveSpot™

Upside down?

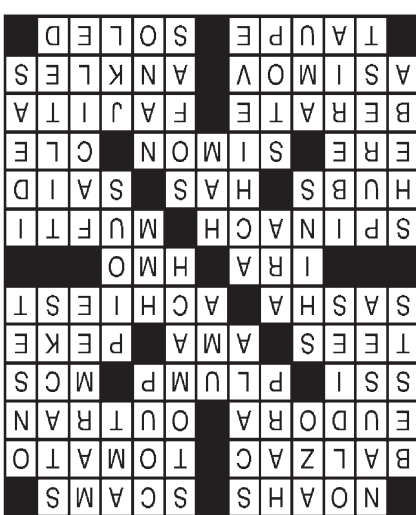


- Common emoji
- Person who pays at the veterinarian
- Took an oath
- Last one across the finish line
- Infiltrators
- Another common emoji

Solve each row by replacing one letter from the answer above or below and scrambling to make a new word. When complete, the top and bottom words will have no letters in common.

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 See more at [www.sproutsuzzle.com](http://www.sproutsuzzle.com)

02634



# Solution time: 21 mins.

## Answers

# King Crossword

1. Iraq  
 2. The Star of Life  
 3. "The Beast" to the kids and Hercules to his owner  
 4. Columbia  
 5. Homeric Greek.  
 6. Cicely; Alaska  
 7. A mob  
 8. Autotomy  
 9. Alaska; Pacific and Arctic Oceans  
 10. "Tim McGraw"

Pop and soul superstar who adores fish such as bluefin, yellowfin and albacore: Tuna Turner

answer

CryptoQuip

Answer

Weekly SUDOKU

# CLASSIFIEDS

## LEGALS

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF ROBESON NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND DEBTORS OF SYBLE EDWARDS BUNNELL DECEASED  
File Number 26E000097-770

The undersigned having qualified as Executor, of the estate of Syble Edwards Bunnell, deceased, late of Robeson County, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 21st day of June, 2026, or be barred from their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate are asked to please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 18th day of March, 2026.

Matthew Nathaniel Inman  
23939 NC 71 Highway North  
Parkton, NC 28371

Attorney  
Thorp, Clarke & Regan, PA -  
George D. Regan, Jr.  
PO Box 478  
St. Pauls, NC 28384  
910-865-4059

3/18 3/25 4/1 4/8 2026

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Robeson County Board of Commissioners will hold a public hearing at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, April 20, 2026 in the County Administration Center, 550 North Chestnut Street, in the City of Lumberton, North Carolina. The purpose of this hearing is to consider the following requests:

Case # 2026 – 963369 – Elliot's Auto Sales, Orrum Twp. District 7. Consideration of a Special Use Permit to allow for the establishment of a Used Car Lot in a Residential Agricultural District (R-A) on 2.65 +/- acre tract more or less, located on 223 Byrd Road; Submitted by Elliott's Auto Sales (Applicant); Ashley McCumbee & Hsb. Michael McCumbee (Owner); Tax Parcel # 1208-01-01302.

Case # 2026 – 963087 – Autry Grading Inc, Parkton Twp. District 8. Consideration of an Amendment to an existing Special Use Permit, Deed BK: 2187 PG: 561, to allow for the expansion of an existing mining pit in a Residential Agricultural District (R-A) on a combined 58.62 +/- acre tract more or less, located on 1830 Davis Bridge Rd; Submitted by Autry Grading Inc (Applicant/Owner); Tax Parcel # 1301-01-003, 1302-01-00214.

A copy of this request is available for review at the office of the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners, at 550 North Chestnut Street, City of Lumberton, North Carolina.

THIS the 1st day of April, 2026.

TAMMY S. FREEMAN, CLERK  
ROBESON COUNTY BOARD  
OF COMMISSIONERS

4/8 4/15 2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF ROBESON IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE DISTRICT COURT DIVISION COUNTY OF ROBESON, a political Subdivision of the State of North Carolina; Plaintiff, VS.

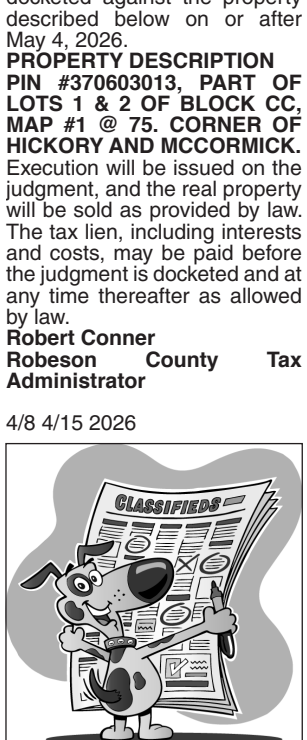
HEIRS OF FRED ROBERTS (DECEASED 05.09.1976) AND LUCILLE ROBERTS, AND HEIRS OF FRED ROBERTS, JR. (DECEASED 06.08.2019), HEIRS OF CLARA ROBERTS CULMER (DECEASED 12.29.2013), HAYWOOD ROBERTS, PATRICIA A. ROBERTS, MARIA GANTT, FRED ROBERTS, III AND SPOUSES, IF ANY, AND IF they be deceased then their legal representatives, heirs and assigns; and any and all other interested persons, whether sane or insane, adult or minor, in esse or en ventral sa mere, known or unknown, resident or non-resident, live corporations or dissolved corporations, who might have or claim any right or title to the property which is the subject of this action; Defendants.

NOTICE Pursuant to the requirements of G.S. 105-375(c)(4)b, notice is hereby given to: HEIRS OF FRED AND LUCILLE ROBERTS; that a judgment of foreclosure will be docketed against the property described below on or after May 4, 2026.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION PIN #370603013, PART OF LOTS 1 & 2 OF BLOCK CC, MAP #1 @ 75. CORNER OF HICKORY AND MCCORMICK. Execution will be issued on the judgment, and the real property will be sold as provided by law. The tax lien, including interests and costs, may be paid before the judgment is docketed and at any time thereafter as allowed by law.

Robert Conner  
Robeson County Tax Administrator

4/8 4/15 2026



## LEGALS

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF ROBESON IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE DISTRICT COURT DIVISION

IN RE: JA'MERE THOMPSON, JUVENILE

TO: UNKNOWN FATHER

TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above entitled action. The nature of the relief sought is as follows:

For the Court to determine if the juvenile is a neglected as defined by N.C.G.S. 7B-101 (15).

You will further take notice that the undersigned will appear before the Juvenile Court of Robeson County forty (40) days or more after this first date to such pleadings by said time, upon your failure to do so, the undersigned will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

If you are indigent, you are entitled to court appoint counsel. You may contact the Robeson County Clerk of District Court, Juvenile Division and request counsel.

This the 17th day of March, 2026

Jose A. Coker  
N.C. Bar No. 28478  
The Charleston Group  
Attorneys for Robeson County  
Department of Social Services  
Post Office Box 1762  
Fayetteville, NC 28302-1762  
Telephone No.: (910) 485-2500  
Telecopier No.: (910) 485-2599

3/25 4/1 4/8 2026

Busy law office seeking Full Time Legal Assistant. Must be dependable, friendly, team-player, and well-organized. Desired applicant will multi-task, answer multi-line phone system and direct calls. Must be able to type 60+ words per minute. Excellent writing and analytical skills are a must. Must have your own transportation, as occasional errands are necessary. Must be able to keep work confidential. Desired applicant must be professional in appearance and manner. Bilingual (English/Spanish) applicants highly preferred. Proficiency in QuickBooks and Microsoft Office is a plus! Benefits and Vacation pay are available. Email resume with references to: andrea@johnsonlawyers.net

4/8 4/15 4/22 4/29 2026

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF ROBESON IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE DISTRICT COURT DIVISION

IN RE: KHAIZA CUMMINGS, JUVENILE

TO: UNKNOWN FATHER

TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above entitled action. The nature of the relief sought is as follows:

For the Court to determine if the juvenile is neglected as defined by N.C.G.S. 7B-101 (15).

You will further take notice that the undersigned will appear before the Juvenile Court of Robeson County forty (40) days or more after this first date to such pleadings by said time, upon your failure to do so, the undersigned will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

If you are indigent, you are entitled to court appoint counsel. You may contact the Robeson County Clerk of District Court, Juvenile Division and request counsel.

This the 23rd day of March, 2026

Jose A. Coker  
N.C. Bar No. 28478  
The Charleston Group  
Attorneys for Robeson County  
Department of Social Services  
Post Office Box 1762  
Fayetteville, NC 28302-1762  
Telephone No.: (910) 485-2500  
Telecopier No.: (910) 485-2599

4/1 4/8 4/15 2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF ROBESON NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND DEBTORS OF JACQUELYN SIMMS THOMPSON DECEASED FILE NUMBER 26 E 000023-770

The undersigned having qualified as Administrators, of the Estate of JACQUELYN SIMMS THOMPSON, deceased, late of ROBESON COUNTY, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 29th day of JUNE 2026 or be barred from their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate are asked to please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This is the 25th day of MARCH 2026.

ANGUS BOAZ  
THOMPSON JR  
2130 KENTUCKY CIR  
LUMBERTON NC 28358

3/25 4/1 4/8 4/15 2026

## LEGALS

IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE DISTRICT COURT DIVISION ROBESON COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

GARY ALLEN SCHWARZMAN II vs. WHITNEY NICOLE SCHWARZMAN

FILE NO. 26 CV 000256-770

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION

TO: WHITNEY NICOLE SCHWARZMAN

TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action in Lumberton, Robeson County, North Carolina. The nature of relief being sought is as follows: Complaint for Absolute Divorce.

You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than the 4th day of May, 2026, said date being forty (40) days from the first publication of this Notice, or from the date Complaint is required to be filed, whichever is later; and upon your failure to do so, the party seeking service against you will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

This 25th day of March 2026.

KEOSHA C. HUNT  
Attorney for Plaintiff  
THE LAW OFFICE OF  
KEOSHA HUNT, P.L.L.C.  
319 North Elm Street  
Lumberton, NC 28358  
(910) 225-5242 Telephone

3/25 4/1 4/8 2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF ROBESON COUNTY OF ROBESON, a political Subdivision of the State of North Carolina; Plaintiff, VS.

IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE DISTRICT COURT DIVISION

NOTICE

HEIRS OF JOYCE DIANE EDWARDS MCRAE (DECEASED: 04.09.2020), AND

If they be deceased then their legal representatives,) heirs and assigns; and any and all other interested persons, whether sane or insane, adult or minor, in esse or en ventral sa mere, known or unknown,) resident or non-resident, live corporations or dissolved corporations, who might have or claim any right or title to the property which is the subject of this action;

Defendants. Pursuant to the requirements of G.S. 105-375(c)(4)b, notice is hereby given to:

HEIRS OF JOYCE DIANE EDWARDS MCRAE (DECEASED: 04.09.2020) AND

If they be deceased then their legal representatives, heirs and assigns; and any and all other interested persons, whether sane or insane, adult or minor, in esse or en ventral sa mere, known or unknown, resident or non-resident, live corporations or dissolved corporations, who might have or claim any right or title to the property which is the subject of this action;

That a judgment of foreclosure will be docketed against the property described below on or after May 15,

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION PARCEL #112001006 Maxton Township, Both Sides of NC HWY 83, 1.65 acres +/- Ranch dwelling listed on property in average condition 2921 NC HWY 83, Maxton PARCEL #112001008 Maxton Township, East Side of NC HWY 83 Vacant Land 0.69 acres +/- Execution will be issued on the judgment, and the real property will be sold as provided by law. The tax lien, including interests and costs, may be paid before the judgment is docketed and at any time thereafter as allowed by law.

4/8 4/15 2026

In The General Court of Justice Superior Court Division Before the Clerk Estate File # 26E000233-770 STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA ROBESON COUNTY

EXECUTOR'S NOTICE

The undersigned having qualified as Executor of the Estate of LAWRENCE REECE BULLOCK, deceased, late of Robeson County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons having claims against said estate to present them to the undersigned on or before the 18th day of June, 2026, (which date is three months after the day of the first publication of this notice) or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned. This the 18th day of March, 2026.

Roy Lee Bullock  
Executor of the Estate of  
Lawrence Reece Bullock  
c/o Sharon A. Keyes  
Attorney at Law  
2936 Breezewood Avenue,  
Suite 101  
Fayetteville, North Carolina  
28303

3/18 3/25 4/1 4/8 2026

## LEGALS

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF ROBESON COUNTY OF ROBESON, a political Subdivision of the State of North Carolina;

VS. Plaintiff,

HEIRS OF LUKE MCCROWRE (DECEASED 12/16/2019) AND WIFE, JOSEPHINE MCCROWRE (DECEASED) 01/21/2003), HEIRS OF RONALD MCCROWRE, SR. (DECEASED 08/03/2022) AND WIFE, DIANE MCCROWRE (DECEASED 2018), HEIRS OF JERRY ODELL MCCROWRE (DECEASED 12/29/2004) AND THE TOWN OF SAINT PAULS, NORTH CAROLINA, LIENHOLDER;

IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE DISTRICT COURT DIVISION

FILE NO.: 25M001198-770 AMENDED

NOTICE OF SALE OF LAND UNDER EXECUTION

AND If they be deceased then their legal representatives,) heirs and assigns; and any and all other interested persons, whether sane or insane, adult or minor, in esse or en ventral sa mere, known or unknown,) resident or non-resident, live corporations or dissolved corporations, who might have or claim any right or title to the property which is the subject of this action;

Defendants.

To the Clerk of the Superior Court of Robeson County: By virtue of a certain execution directed to the undersigned from the Superior Court of Robeson County in the action entitled County of Robeson v. Heirs of Ronald McCrowre and wife, Diane McCrowre, this office will hold an execution sale pursuant to Article 29B of Chapter 1 of the NC General Statutes. Said sale will take place on April 21, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at the Robeson County Courthouse door, in the city of Lumberton, State of North Carolina. Said sale shall be to the highest bidder FOR CASH to satisfy the execution on the parcel of real property described following the name of the judgment debtor hereinafter set out.

The execution was issued pursuant to judgment duly recorded in the office of the Clerk of the Superior Court for Robeson County, and the execution is in the amount specified in this case and the description of the real estate, plus costs of sale, follows:

The following described property is located within the Town of St. Pauls, Robeson County, North Carolina and owned by the Heirs of Ronald McCrowre and wife, Diane McCrowre:

DESCRIPTION PARCEL #381102040 LOT #4 FR. KEITH PROPERTY - TOWN OF SAINT PAULS

312 KEITH STREET, SAINT PAULS, NC

OLD STYLE DWELLING ON PROPERTY LISTED IN POOR CONDITION - GRADE E

The above tracts or parcels of land are subject to all right-of-way and easements of record.

The highest bidder at public sale shall be required to pay IN FULL the amount of the successful bid at the conclusion of the execution sale (subject to the confirmation of the sale as by law provided).

The successful bid amount shall be paid in cash or certified funds (payable to Robeson County Tax Administration), in its discretion, determine and allow a reasonable time within which to deliver the successful bid amount to that office.

Amount due under judgment, including costs: \$3,234.47.

The sale will be made subject to 2026 ad valorem taxes, any and all existing liens, and all outstanding taxes and all local improvement assessments against the above-described property not included in the judgment in the above-entitled cause.

In accordance with NCGS 105-375(i) this Notice of Sale has been sent to the taxpayer and any lienholder(s) of record by first class and Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested; and will be posted on the property. The Notice of Sale will be published as required by NCGS 1-339.52.

This 20th day of March, 2026.

Deidre Howel  
Deidre Howel, Deputy Sheriff  
Robeson County  
Badge No.: 501

4/8 4/15 2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF ROBESON NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND DEBTORS OF JERREL ANN RICHARDSON LENNON DECEASED FILE NUMBER: 26 E 000286-770

The undersigned having qualified as Administrators, of the Estate of JERREL ANN RICHARDSON LENNON, deceased, late of ROBESON COUNTY, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 13th day of JULY 2026 or be barred from their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate are asked to please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This is the 8th day of APRIL 2026.

RHONDA L BRUCE  
EXECUTOR  
65 VOLLIE DR  
LUMBERTON NC 28360

GLORA L HUNT HARDIN  
CO-EXECUTOR  
P.O. BOX 1143  
LUMBERTON NC 28359

4/8 4/15 4/22 4/29 2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF ROBESON NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND DEBTORS OF DENISE MICHELLE BRITT ALLEN DECEASED FILE NUMBER 26 E 000304-770

The undersigned having qualified as Administrators, of the Estate of DENISE MICHELLE BRITT ALLEN deceased, late of ROBESON COUNTY, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 29th day of JUNE 2026 or be barred from their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate are asked to please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 25th day of MARCH 2026.

LESTER MITCHELL ALLEN  
239 CEMETERY STREET  
PARKTON NC 28371

3/25 4/1 4/8 4/15 2026

## LEGALS

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF ROBESON COUNTY OF ROBESON, a political Subdivision of the State of North Carolina; Plaintiff, VS.

HEIRS OF ORIE MCGEE (DECEASED) 06/15/2005) AND WIFE, ELLA L. MCGEE

AND If they be deceased then their legal representatives, heirs and assigns; and any and all other interested persons, whether sane or insane, adult or minor, in esse or en ventral sa mere, known or unknown, resident or non-resident, live corporations or dissolved corporations, who might have or claim any right or title to the property which is the subject of this action;

Defendants.

To the Clerk of the Superior Court of Robeson County: By virtue of a certain execution directed to the undersigned from the Superior Court of Robeson County in the action entitled County of Robeson v. Heirs of Timothy Michael Vernon, this office will hold an execution sale pursuant to Article 29B of Chapter 1 of the NC General Statutes. Said sale will take place on April 21, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at the Robeson County Courthouse door, in the city of Lumberton, State of North Carolina. Said sale shall be to the highest bidder FOR CASH to satisfy the execution on the parcel of real property described following the name of the judgment debtor hereinafter set out.

The execution was issued pursuant to judgment duly recorded in the office of the Clerk of the Superior Court for Robeson County, and the execution is in the amount specified in this case and the description of the real estate, plus costs of sale, follows:

The following described property is located within East Howellsville Township, Robeson County, North Carolina and owned by the Heirs of Orie McGee:

DESCRIPTION PARCEL #070502020 East of SR #1955 and North of SR #1959 - Regan Church Road/Grant Street Vacant Woodland -3.0 acres +/- Grant Street, Lumberton

The above tracts or parcels of land are subject to all right-of-way and easements of record.

The highest bidder at public sale shall be required to pay IN FULL the amount of the successful bid at the conclusion of the execution sale (subject to the confirmation of the sale as by law provided).

The successful bid amount shall be paid in cash or certified funds (payable to Robeson County Tax Administration), in its discretion, determine and allow a reasonable time within which to deliver the successful bid amount to that office.

Amount due under judgment, including costs: \$1,438.10.

The sale will be made subject to 2026 ad valorem taxes, any and all existing liens, and all outstanding taxes and all local improvement assessments against the above-described property not included in the judgment in the above-entitled cause.

In accordance with NCGS 105-375(i) this Notice of Sale has been sent to the taxpayer and any lienholder(s) of record by first class and Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested; and will be posted on the property. The Notice of Sale will be published as required by NCGS 1-339.52.

This 20th day of March, 2026.

Deidre Howel  
Deidre Howel, Deputy Sheriff  
Robeson County  
Badge No.: 501

4/8 4/15 2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF ROBESON NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND DEBTORS OF JERREL ANN RICHARDSON LENNON DECEASED FILE NUMBER: 26 E 000182-770

The undersigned having qualified as Administrators, of the Estate of JERREL ANN RICHARDSON LENNON, deceased, late of ROBESON COUNTY, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 13th day of JULY 2026 or be barred from their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate are asked to please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This is the 8th day of APRIL 2026.

RHONDA L BRUCE  
EXECUTOR  
65 VOLLIE DR  
LUMBERTON NC 28360

GLORA L HUNT HARDIN  
CO-EXECUTOR  
P.O. BOX 1143  
LUMBERTON NC 28359

4/8 4/15 4/22 4/29 2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF ROBESON COUNTY OF ROBESON, a political Subdivision of the State of North Carolina; Plaintiff, VS.

HEIRS OF TIMOTHY MICHAEL VERNON (DECEASED) 12/13/2016); AMENDED

NOTICE OF SALE OF LAND UNDER EXECUTION

AND If they be deceased then their legal representatives,) heirs and assigns; and any and all other interested persons, whether sane or insane, adult or minor, in esse or en ventral sa mere, known or unknown,) resident or non-resident, live corporations or dissolved corporations, who might have or claim any right or title to the property which is the subject of this action;

Defendants.

To the Clerk of the Superior Court of Robeson County: By virtue of a certain execution directed to the undersigned from the Superior Court of Robeson County in the action entitled County of Robeson v. Heirs of Timothy Michael Vernon, this office will hold an execution sale pursuant to Article 29B of Chapter 1 of the NC General Statutes. Said sale will take place on April 21, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at the Robeson County Courthouse door, in the city of Lumberton, State of North Carolina. Said sale shall be to the highest bidder FOR CASH to satisfy the execution on the parcel of real property described following the name of the judgment debtor hereinafter set out.

The execution was issued pursuant to judgment duly recorded in the office of the Clerk of the Superior Court for Robeson County, and the execution is in the amount specified in this case and the description of the real estate, plus costs of sale, follows:

The following described property is located within East Howellsville Township, Robeson County, North Carolina and owned by the Heirs of Timothy Michael Vernon:

DESCRIPTION PARCEL #240103002021 SOUTH OF AND ADJACENT TO SR #2208, SMYRNA TOWNSHIP

282 WIRE GRASS ROAD, LUMBERTON - 1.57 acres +/- SINGLEWIDE MOBILE HOME W/ADDITION - GRADE C-

The above tracts or parcels of land are subject to all right-of-way and easements of record.

The highest bidder at public sale shall be required to pay IN FULL the amount of the successful bid at the conclusion of the execution sale (subject to the confirmation of the sale as by law provided).

The successful bid amount shall be paid in cash or certified funds (payable to Robeson County Tax Administration), in its discretion, determine and allow a reasonable time within which to deliver the successful bid amount to that office.

Amount due under judgment, including costs: \$3,360.39.

The sale will be made subject to 2026 ad valorem taxes, any and all existing liens, and all outstanding taxes and all local improvement assessments against the above-described property not included in the judgment in the above-entitled cause.

In accordance with NCGS 105-375(i) this Notice of Sale has been sent to the taxpayer and any lienholder(s) of record by first class and Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested; and will be posted on the property. The Notice of Sale will be published as required by NCGS 1-339.52.

This 20th day of March, 2026.

Deidre Howel  
Deidre Howel, Deputy Sheriff  
Robeson County  
Badge No.: 501

4/8 4/15 2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF ROBESON IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION BEFORE THE CLERK FILE NUMBER: 26 E 000182-770

EXECUTOR'S NOTICE

In the Matter of the Estate of HEAVERD DOBBER OXENDINE, JR.

Deceased.



## Butler

From page 1A

it is our hope that this outcome provides a sense of closure and peace to the family of the victim. Our thoughts and prayers remain with them.”

Butler was a rising star in the rap music industry, using the stage name Lil Jbo. He recorded a song with renowned rapper Boosie, appeared on the “This is 50” podcast of famed rapper 50 Cent and was performing concerts before his death.

Butler was also a standout athlete at Lumberton High School before injuries resulted in him focusing on a potential music career. He was the father of two children at the time of his death, with a third born later.

## Juneteenth

From page 1A

9 at Jones Chapel Missionary Baptist Church at 305 Phillips Avenue in Red Springs. Rev. Rodney McCrowrie will be the guest speaker and Rev. C.L. Edmonds is the church pastor.

— Brunch & Book Discussion: “Their Eyes Were Watching God” by Zora Neale Hurston, 10 a.m. on Saturday, June 13. The discussion will be led by Lynn Marshall-Linnemeier. Registration is required by Wednesday, June 10 by contacting Frances Patterson at 910-904-3000 or Denelle Gordon at 252-310-0023. The location will be given at registration.

— Adult R&B Event with Uptown Swagga Band, 7 p.m. on Saturday, June 13 at the Access Pointe Event

Venue, 117 South Main Street in Red Springs. Food, live music, BYOB. Black and white attire. Tickets are \$25 for ages 25 and up.

— Elder’s Luncheon, 2 p.m. on Sunday, June 14 at the Red Springs Community Center at 122 Cross Street in Red Springs. For ages 65 and over. Registration is required, deadline is Wednesday, June 10. Food, music, fellowship and more. Contact Denelle Gordon at 252-310-0023 or Frances Patterson at 910-904-3000.

— Neighborhood Cleanup, Monday, June 15 through Saturday, June 20. Pick a street ore more to clean to enhance community pride. Bags may be picked up from Level Up Barber Shop.

— Fifth annual American Red Cross Blood Drive benefiting the sickle cell anemia population, from 1 p.m.

to 6 p.m. on Monday, June 15 at St. Joseph Miracle Revival Center at 4657 Daniel McLeod Road in Red Springs.

— Community Worship Service and Breakfast, 8 a.m. on Sunday, June 21 at Panthersford Presbyterian Church at 10010 NC-211 in Red Springs. Rev. Anna Maynor is the pastor. — Thankful Heritage Museum Exhibition, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday, June 21 at the Access Pointe Event Venue at 117 South Main Street in Red Springs. This event is free.

Participants are encouraged to wear their favorite Juneteenth t-shirt to all events.

Juneteenth, on June 19, is a federal holiday which marks the end of slavery in the United States in 1865. It became a federal holiday in 2021.

# Aid groups warn Iran war is hindering food and medicine from reaching millions

Sam Mednick and Samy Magdy

Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel — Aid groups are warning that the war in the Middle East has upended their ability to get food and medicine to millions of people around the world in need, and that the suffering will deepen if the violence continues.

Not only has the conflict cut off vital shipping routes, creating a global energy crisis, it’s also disrupting supply chains for aid groups, forcing them to use costlier, more time-consuming routes.

Key pathways such as the Strait of Hormuz have been effectively shuttered and routes from strategic hubs such as Dubai, Doha and Abu Dhabi have also been impacted. Transport costs have spiked with higher fuel and insurance rates, meaning less supplies can be delivered with the same amount of money.

The World Food Program says it has tens of thousands of metric tons of food heavily delayed in transit. The International Rescue Committee has \$130,000 worth of pharmaceuticals intended for war-torn Sudan stranded in Dubai and nearly 670 boxes of therapeutic food meant for severely malnourished children in Somalia stuck in India. The U.N. Population Fund says it’s delayed sending equipment to 16 countries.

Steep U.S. cuts to foreign aid already had hobbled many aid groups, who say the war is exacerbating the problem.

The United Nations says this is the most significant supply chain disruption since COVID, with up to a 20% cost increase on shipments and delays as goods are rerouted. And the war is creating new emergencies, such as in Iran, and also in Lebanon where at least one million people have been displaced.

“The war on Iran and disruption to the Strait of Hormuz risk pushing humanitarian operations beyond their limits,” said Madiha Raza, associate director for public affairs and communications for Africa for the International Rescue Committee.

Even when the fighting stops, the shock to global supply chains could continue to delay lifesaving aid for months, she said.

### Longer and more costly routes

The war has forced organizations to find new ways to transport goods, with some bypassing the Strait of Hormuz and the Suez Canal and rerouting vessels around Africa, adding weeks to the delivery.

Others are using a hybrid of methods, including land, sea and air, increasing costs.

Jean-Cedric Meeus, chief of global transport and logistics for UNICEF, said his agency is using a mix of land and air routes to send vaccines to Nigeria and Iran in order to get them there in time for the vaccination campaigns, but the costs have soared.

Before the war, UNICEF sent vaccines to Iran by plane directly from vendors around the world. Now it’s flying the vaccines to Turkey and driving them into Iran, which has increased costs by 20% and has added 10 days to the delivery time, he said.

Save the Children International, which would normally send supplies by ocean freight from Dubai to Port Sudan, will now have to truck the goods from Dubai through Saudi Arabia and then by barge across the Red Sea, it said. The route adds 10 days and increases costs by about 25%, at a time when over 19 million Sudanese face acute food insecurity. The delay puts more than 90 primary health care facilities across Sudan at risk of running out of essential medicines, it said.

The spike in prices also means organizations have to choose what to prioritize.

“In the end, you sacrifice either the number of children that you serve ... or you sacrifice the number of items that you can afford to buy,” said Janti Soeripto, president of Save the Children for the United States. The group said it has stockpiles in countries where it works but some of those could run out within weeks.

Rising costs are also impacting people’s ability to seek help within their countries.

Doctors Without Borders said rising fuel prices across Somalia — where some 6.5 million people are experiencing acute food insecurity — have driven up transport and food costs, making it harder for people to get care. In Nigeria, the IRC says fuel prices have surged by 50% and clinics are struggling to power equipment, such as generators and mobile health teams have scaled back operations.

### Hunger crisis could deepen

One of the biggest concerns is the impact the war will have on global hunger.

WFP warns that if the conflict continues through June, 45 million more people will be acutely hungry, adding to nearly 320 million people facing hunger around the world.

Some 30% of the world’s fertilizer comes through the Strait of Hormuz and with planting season ahead in areas like East Africa and South Asia, small farmers in poor countries will be hard hit. Sudan imports more than half its fertilizer from the Gulf and Kenya approximately 40% from there, aid groups say.

The U.N. secretary-general has established a task force to facilitate fertilizer trade — modeled on the Black Sea Grain Initiative. But aid groups say that won’t be enough. If there’s no ceasefire, governments need to provide more funding for organizations to respond to the rising costs, they say.

## Alive

From page 1A

the future of downtown Lumberton.”

This year’s concerts will begin earlier in the month than in previous years, in the hopes of having fewer concerts happen in the rain.

“By the end of June, it’s extremely hot,” said Dencie Lambdin, chair of the Main Street Advisory Board, “and we have thunderstorms to contend with, which shut down the concerts.”

“Last year, we experienced several thunderstorms and rain during many of our concerts, which impacted attendance and the overall experience,” Ward said. “Moving the schedule earlier helps us avoid peak summer storms and heat, allowing families, visitors and downtown businesses to fully enjoy the event. It’s a strategic

shift to make Alive After 5 more comfortable, reliable and well-attended.”

The first three concerts will run on back-to-back Thursdays, with The Tams and The Band of Oz performing on May 21 and 28, respectively, after the Sand Band’s opening performance the week prior. The final two performances will be the Blackwater Band on June 4 and J&C on June 11.

Concerts will run from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on each date. A pre-show DJ will begin playing music at 5:30 p.m.

Each concert will feature a variety of food trucks for attendees to peruse, along with a Kidz Corner, sponsored by local nonprofits, where children can participate in activities and games throughout the evening.

“Alive After 5 has really evolved into a full family-friendly experience,” Ward said. “While live music is still the centerpiece, we’ve intentionally



The Robesonian file photo  
The Hope Mills Line Dancers, consisting of Peggy McLamb, Tammy Konen, Jennie Gibson and Libby Sivadon, dancing at an Alive After Five concert in 2025.

expanded the event to include food trucks, a dedicated kids zone and activities that appeal to all ages. It’s not just a concert — it’s a community gathering where families can spend quality time together and enjoy everything downtown has to offer.”

“Although this concert series isn’t specifically targeted to children,” Lambdin said, “there are parents who have to bring their children if

they want to come and enjoy the evening. We want to have something for those children to do, and a lot of times the activities are related to music.”

Some of the organizations contributing to the Kidz Corner this year include the Robeson County Art Guild, the Robeson County Arts Council, the PSRC, the Robeson County Library and the Partnership for Children.

The Friends of Main Street and the Main Street Advisory Board continue to accept sponsorships to help offset the cost of the concerts. Any net profit from the event, though there is no fee to attend, will go toward beautifying the downtown areas of Lumberton, including plans to replace and upgrade the town’s winter holiday decorations this year.

Editor Chris Stiles contributed to this report.

Contact Victoria Sanderson at vsanderson@robsonian.com.

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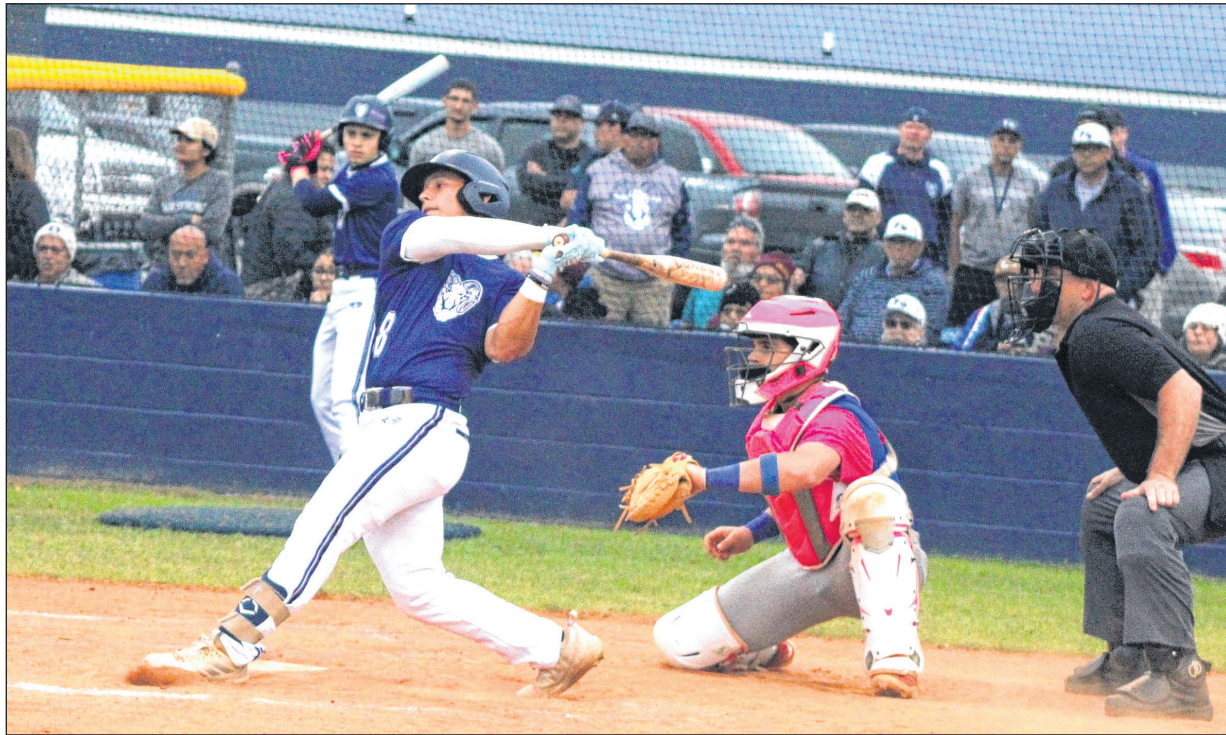
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# Sports

The Robesonian

Wednesday, April 8, 2026 • Section B

## 32ND ROBESON COUNTY SLUGFEST



Photos by Chris Stiles | The Robesonian  
Purnell Swett's Mason Brewer (8) swings at a pitch during Monday's Robeson County Slugfest semifinal against St. Pauls in Pembroke.



Mark Moses | Special to The Robesonian  
Earl Lowery throws out the ceremonial first pitch to begin the Robeson County Slugfest before the tournament opener between Fairmont and Scotland on Saturday in Pembroke.

## Purnell Swett superfan 'Mr. Earl' throws out first pitch to start Slugfest

PEMBROKE — Earl Lowery, known by many simply as "Mr. Earl," is a mainstay in the press boxes and scorers tables at Purnell Swett, where he's been involved in Rams athletics for over four decades. Saturday, before the Robeson County Slugfest softball opener between Fairmont and Scotland, he got to step on the field.

"They just wanted me to throw out the first pitch," Lowery said. "I made it to the catcher — I couldn't hardly believe it."

Lowery, who turns 89 next month, currently runs the scoreboard for Purnell Swett softball,

and is working the Slugfest in that capacity this week; he's missed just two Robeson County Slugfests in the tournament's 32-year history, he said. He also keeps statistics for the Rams football and basketball teams.

"Mr. Earl is at almost every game that we have," Purnell Swett athletic director Robert McLean said. "It doesn't matter if it's football, if it's baseball, softball, basketball — he's just here and he supports Purnell Swett. He's a lifelong fan with a wealth of knowledge, and I enjoy having him around."

See EARL | 3B

## Rams win walk-off thriller

Purnell Swett reaches championship against Scotland

PEMBROKE — Both Seth Brooks and Mason Brewer felt like they'd struggled all night long for Purnell Swett as the Rams' game with St. Pauls headed into the bottom of the eighth with a tied score.

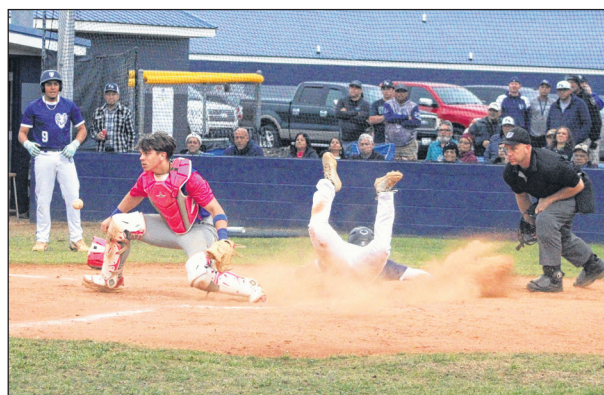
Moments later, Brooks was crossing the plate with a consequential run and Brewer was being chased by his teammates all the way into center field.

Purnell Swett won a 6-5 extra-inning thriller after a Brooks triple and a Brewer sacrifice fly,

Tuesday's Robeson County Slugfest results were unavailable at press time. For the full story, visit [robesonian.com](http://robesonian.com) or see Saturday's print edition.

beating St. Pauls in the Robeson County Slugfest semifinals to advance to Tuesday's championship game.

"I came and got (Seth Brooks) in the seventh, and I said, 'man, you're going to be big for me. Just keep your head up and put a good swing on it,'" Purnell Swett coach

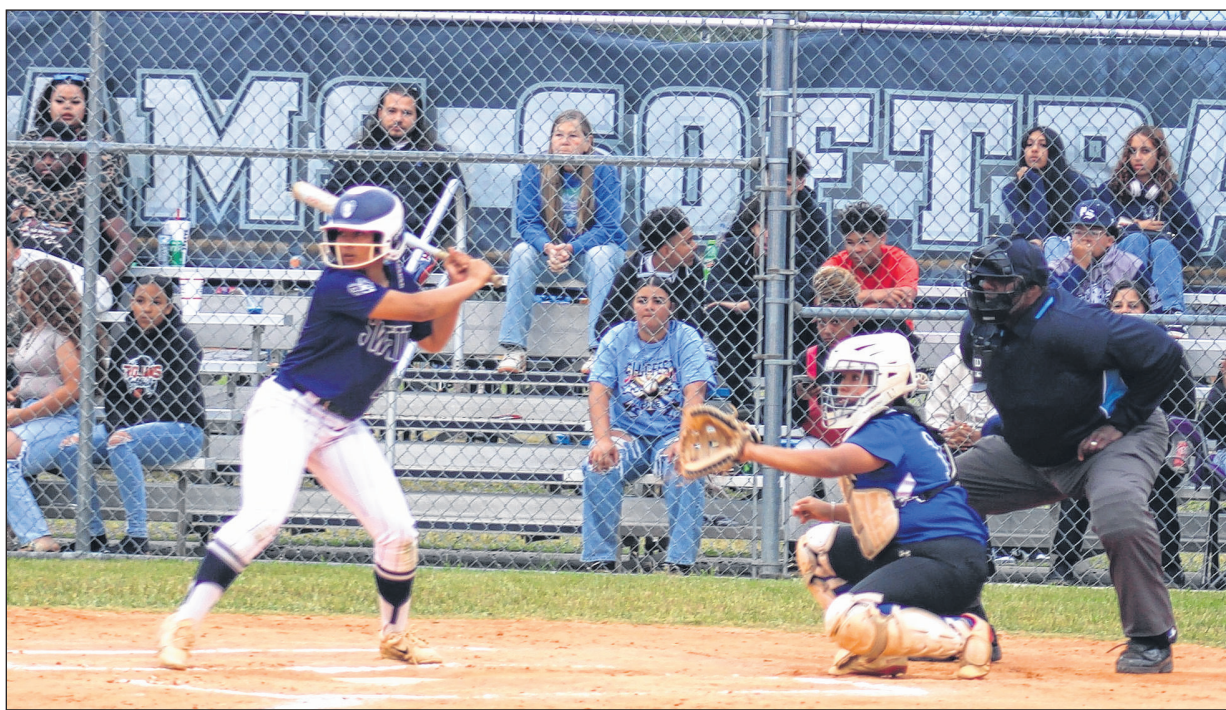


Purnell Swett's Mason Brewer, center, slides into home plate past St. Pauls' Josh Brooks, left, during Monday's Robeson County Slugfest semifinal in Pembroke.

Edmund Locklear said. "He gets a triple, they walk the bases loaded for Mason, and in the last three weeks, Mason's our best hitter. He put the bat on the ball and drove in the winning run."

Purnell Swett (8-9), the tournament host, will face Scotland at 7 p.m. Tuesday for the Slugfest title. St. Pauls (8-6) will play Lumberton at 4 p.m. in the third-place game.

See BASEBALL | 2B



Photos by Jacob Husson | The Robesonian  
Purnell Swett's Kamryn Locklear waits for a pitch during Monday's Robeson County Slugfest semifinal against St. Pauls in Pembroke.

## Lady Rams dominate St. Pauls, reach softball final

Jacob Husson  
The Robesonian

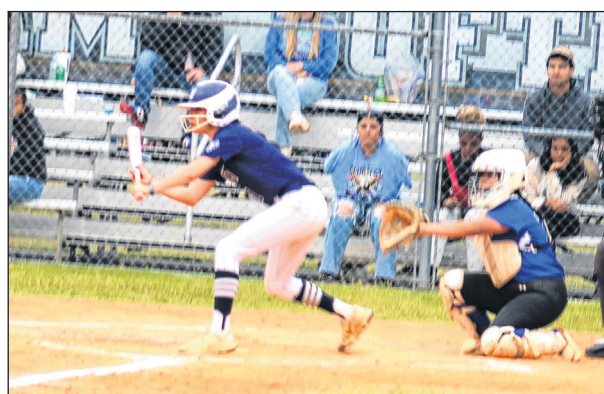
PEMBROKE — The St. Pauls Bulldogs had no bite Monday, losing 15-0 in their Robeson County Slugfest semifinal game against the Purnell Swett Rams in a three-inning contest. This was Purnell Swett's third win in the last four games, while St. Pauls saw its four game winning streak come to an end.

"I'm very proud of the girls," Purnell Swett coach Amy Lancaster said. "It's hard to beat a team three times no matter who it is so they

came out with their bats on fire and the defense was great so I'm proud of them and I hope they take the same intensity tomorrow."

Purnell Swett (10-4) will face East Columbus in the Robeson County Slugfest softball championship at 7 p.m. Tuesday. St. Pauls (6-9) will play Scotland in the third-place game at 4 p.m.

Zaylee Hunt led the Rams with four RBIs on one hit and also had two runs. Angel Chavis and Jayla Graham both had two hits and two RBIs in the victory. Finally, Kamryn Locklear had two hits, three runs scored



Purnell Swett's Nylah Johnson shows bunt during Monday's Robeson County Slugfest semifinal against St. Pauls in Pembroke.

and an RBI. Braci Woods got the win in the circle for Purnell Swett, pitching three shutout innings.

The game began with a scoreless top half of the

first for St. Pauls.

Kamryn Locklear opened Purnell Swett's night at the plate with a double and eventually

See SOFTBALL | 3B



David Zalubowski | AP File Photo  
Then-Denver Nuggets head coach Michael Malone stands on the sideline during an NBA game on April 1, 2025 in Denver.

## UNC finalizing deal to hire Malone as basketball coach

Aaron Beard  
AP Basketball Writer

CHAPEL HILL — North Carolina is working toward finalizing a deal with NBA championship-winning coach Michael Malone to lead the Tar Heels' basketball program, a person with knowledge of the situation said Monday.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the school hasn't publicly discussed its search. Malone would replace Hubert Davis, who was fired March 24 after five seasons as the successor to retired Hall of Famer Roy Williams.

ESPN was the first to report UNC moving toward hiring Malone.

The 54-year-old Malone spent 12 seasons as a head coach in the NBA, including a 10-year run in Denver. He led the Nuggets to the 2023 championship behind three-time league MVP Nikola Jokic.

The Nuggets fired

Malone last spring with less than a week left in that regular season. Almost a year to the day, in another surprise move, Malone is on the verge of taking over a blue-blood program with six national titles, a record 21 appearances in the Final Four and alums including Michael Jordan, James Worthy Vince Carter and Atlantic Coast Conference career scoring leader Tyler Hansbrough.

UNC now has big-name former pro coaches leading its two highest-profile programs. The Tar Heels hired six-time Super Bowl champion Bill Belichick as their football coach in December 2024. Belichick struggled to a 4-8 record in his debut season.

Davis' firing opened one of the top jobs in college basketball for only the fourth time since the late Hall of Famer Dean Smith's retirement after 36 seasons in October 1997.

See MALONE | 2B

# Malone

From page 1B

The job had stayed in the “Carolina Family” ever since. Longtime assistant Bill Guthridge replaced Smith, followed by former UNC player Matt Doherty, former Smith assistant Williams and then Davis, who played under Smith and worked on Williams’ staff.

Names like Arizona’s Tommy Lloyd, Michigan’s Dusty May and Chicago Bulls coach Billy Donovan — who led Florida to the 2006 and 2007 NCAA titles — had been linked to the job since Davis’ firing. Lloyd announced Friday at the Final Four that he would return to the Wildcats while praising UNC for “the way they’ve handled this.”

Three days later, the search had turned in an unexpected direction with Malone, who has never been a college head coach and has spent most of his career in the NBA. His primary connection to UNC athletics is the presence of daughter Bridget on the Tar Heels’ volleyball team.

During an October appearance on the UNC athletic department’s “Carolina Insider” podcast, Malone recalled hearing his late father, NBA coach Brendan Malone, talk often about Smith and UNC basketball. He also mentioned attending multiple recent practices and Davis asking him to speak to the team at least once.

“I’ve always been a Carolina fan,” Malone said. “And when (Bridget) decided to come here that made it even that much more special, because now I’m ‘Go Heels’ for everything. I root for all the teams, have fallen in love with Chapel Hill.”

Malone’s time in the NBA included a brief stint in Sacramento, where he was fired in December 2014, just 24 games into his second season. He also worked as an assistant with the New York Knicks, Cleveland Cavaliers, New Orleans Hornets and Golden State Warriors.

Malone had stints in college as an assistant at Oakland, Providence and Manhattan. He spent only one season in the Atlantic Coast Conference, working as director of men’s basketball administration at Virginia under Pete Gillen in 1998-99.

David Adelman, Malone’s successor in Denver, said he was happy for his friend, adding that Malone would be comfortable with players earning big money through name, image and likeness deals.

“It’s more of a professional environment now, especially at schools like that, where you have to look at it like these guys are under contract now,” Adelman said. “And I think a lot of NBA coaches understand what it means to coach somebody that’s making money.”

# Baseball

From page 1B

The Rams were down to their last out in the seventh before tying the game to force extra innings. After St. Pauls left a runner at second base in the top of the eighth, Brooks tripled to center field with one out in the bottom half to bring the winning run 90 feet away.

“I was struggling all night,” Seth Brooks said. “I got in there and was thinking, just do a job, your job. I got my pitch and I did my job.”

After Greyson Brooks and Kade Oxendine were each intentionally walked, Brewer came to the plate and flied out to left field, plenty deep enough to allow Seth Brooks to tag up from third and score the winning run.

“The first two pitches were pretty bad, but I found the way to put a bat on the ball and it worked out,” Brewer said. “I’ve been in that situation many times and didn’t execute, so this time it feels pretty good.”

St. Pauls led 5-4 in the bottom of the seventh inning; Greyson Brooks led off the frame for the Rams with a single, advanced on a groundout, then scored on a fielding error in the infield off the bat of Jordan Locklear. The Rams stranded the bases loaded, but the game went to extra innings.

“I think in the beginning, we killed ourselves with three errors we made on the infield,” St. Pauls coach Timothy Carter said. “Throughout the game it got better. We still hit the baseball like I thought we would, we just hit it at people. But I think just mental errors, that’s what killed us. It was a good game overall; Purnell (Swett) threw their best, we threw our best, so that was a good game overall.”

“It’s high school baseball,” Edmund Locklear said. “I tell our kids all the time, put pressure on the other team. Don’t strike out; you get two strikes, battle, put the ball in play and anything can happen. Jordan battled, he put a good swing on it, he hit the ball hard, and fortunately he got on base.”

The Rams got within a run in the sixth after an RBI single by Christian Locklear, which plated pinch-runner Ayden Hammond to make it 5-4. Rams pitcher Dakota Locklear then left runners at second and third to keep the score at 5-4 in the middle of the seventh.

Dakota Locklear earned the win for Purnell Swett after throwing 5 1/3 nnings of scoreless relief, allowing just two hits with four strikeouts and no walks in just his third varsity appearance.

“He came in tonight and he competed,” Edmund Locklear said. “We put him in there, and I was like, we’ll get two or



Chris Stiles | The Robesonian  
St. Pauls' Tyler Lavoie throws a pitch during Monday's Robeson County Slugfest semifinal against Purnell Swett in Pembroke.

three innings and we’ll have to piece it together and hold them, but he came in there and he did a great job. I couldn’t be more proud of him.”

Tyler Lavoie was just as strong on the mound for St. Pauls; he allowed two earned runs in six innings with three hits allowed and seven strikeouts.

“Tyler has been one of my go-to guys, my No. 2 starter,” Carter said. “He’s been struggling a little bit, but tonight he proved himself, showed himself where he’s supposed to be, throwing a well-thrown game against Purnell (Swett). He handled both his pitches, fastball, curveball, very well, and I think he did a great job going in there and doing what he was supposed to.”

Getting Lavoie out of the game, Edmund Locklear said, was key to the Rams being able to make a comeback.

“I just knew in the sixth, when I looked at his pitch count, I was like, if we can get in the bullpen we’ll have a chance,” Locklear said. “That’s what we did. Great game all the way around, great atmosphere, and that’s what I tell people, the Slugfest games, when you’ve got all these people here, it brings out the best in everybody.”

Purnell Swett scored three runs in the first, with RBI singles by Brewer and Joseden Oxendine and an additional run on Bulldogs error.

St. Pauls answered with a five-run third inning. After Tyler Lavoie singled and Cailen McNeill walked, Josh Brooks hit a three-run home run to left field to tie the game at 3-3. An Austin Lavoie two-RBI single later in the frame gave St. Pauls a 5-3 lead.

“As a freshman coming in there in that situation, you’re usually hero or zero,” Carter said of Josh Brooks’ homer. “He came through and hit a home run and tied the ballgame up, just doing what he’s supposed to do, big at-bat. Hopefully that continues throughout the season, and tomorrow when we play Lumberton.”

Greyson Brooks had a hit and two runs for Purnell Swett, while Brewer had two RBIs for



Mark Moses | Special to The Robesonian  
A Lumberton player slides into first base during Monday's Robeson County Slugfest semifinal against Scotland in Pembroke.



Mark Moses | Special to The Robesonian  
A Scotland player slides past Lumberton's Brody Stueck during Monday's Robeson County Slugfest semifinal in Pembroke.

the Rams.

The Bulldogs’ Josh Brooks was the only player on either team to record multiple hits, with a seventh-inning single in addition to the three-run homer.

Purnell Swett will seek its first Slugfest championship since 2019 in Tuesday’s championship; the Rams lost the title game in 2024 to North Brunswick. Purnell Swett previously defeated Scotland 13-4 on March 24 and 7-1 on March 27.

“There’s going to be a lot of people here,” Edmund Locklear said. “Just because we beat them two weeks ago, it doesn’t matter, you can’t take anybody for granted and they’re playing their best ball. They put it on Lumberton today, I didn’t see that happening, and they hit the ball and play good baseball. In this tournament, with this atmosphere and these kids, anything can happen, so it should be a good game tomorrow night.”

### Scotland shuts out Pirates

The Scotland Fighting Scots jumped on the Lumberton Pirates quickly Monday afternoon in the Robeson County Baseball Slugfest semifinals. The Fighting Scots built a big lead and never looked back, coming away with a 10-0 win.

“I thought we hit the ball fairly well, especially at the bottom of our lineup, but it just went right to somebody. Unlike yesterday, we just had people on base. Just not a timely hit to score runs,” Pirates head coach

Jonathan Benson said.

Scotland will advance to the tomorrow’s championship game at 7 p.m. against Purnell Swett. Lumberton will face St. Pauls in the third-place game at 4 p.m.

It was all Scotland in the top half of the first inning when they hung seven runs on the Pirates that included three bases-loaded walks; Ayden Odom followed up with RBI single to left field, Leo Garcia brought around two with a single of his own and Dawson Williams recorded a RBI groundout.

“From the first inning, we got in our own head, and they played with too much emotion right there in the first,” Benson said.

Down 7-0 heading into the bottom of the inning, the Pirates got to work and looked to do some damage with the bases loaded but Garcia pitched his way out of the jam to end the inning and keep the Pirates scoreless.

Scotland got right back to work in the top half of the third. Williams delivered once again for the Fighting Scots with an RBI double to make it 9-0. Collin Hill scored from third on a passed ball to make it an even 10-0 for Scotland.

Scotland then proceeded to hold the Pirates scoreless over the next two innings and close things out in the fifth for the run-rule victory.

Garcia went the full distance for Scotland pitching all five innings, allowing three hits on zero runs, striking out three and walking zero.

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# ROBESON COUNTY ATHLETIC SPOTLIGHT

## ST. PAULS HIGH SCHOOL



**JABRYAN CALHOUN**  
Baseball

As part of St. Pauls’ offensive onslaught in the Robeson County Slugfest first round against Red Springs, Jabryan Calhoun had four hits, including a double and a triple, with three runs and five RBIs. The Bulldogs’ shortstop entered Monday’s play hitting .333 on the season with 10 RBIs and 13 runs scored.

## PURNELL SWETT HIGH SCHOOL



**CHLOE CHAVIS**  
Softball, Basketball, Volleyball

Purnell Swett senior Chloe Chavis had two hits and two RBIs to help lead the tournament hosts to a 12-1 victory over Heide Trask in the first round of the Robeson County Slugfest. Entering Monday’s play, the Rams’ second baseman/outfielder is hitting .357 with nine RBIs, 13 runs and seven doubles this season.

SLUGFEST MONDAY ROUNDUP

# East Columbus' Simmons no-hits Fairmont in consolation round

**Chris Stiles & Jacob Husson**  
The Robesonian

PEMBROKE — East Columbus pitcher Gauge Simmons threw a no-hitter Monday as the Gators defeated Fairmont 4-0 in the consolation round of the Robeson County Slugfest.

East Columbus (9-5) will take on Heide Trask in the fifth-place game at 1 p.m. on Tuesday. Fairmont (5-10) was eliminated from further tournament play.

Simmons struck out 11 and walked just one. Khari Bowen had two hits with one run for East Columbus and Mack Freeman had one run, one hit and one RBI.

The Gators scored two runs in the fourth and two more in the sixth.

Parker Chavis allowed four runs, but only one earned, over six innings with seven strikeouts for the Golden Tornadoes.

Fairmont hosts Whiteville on April 14.

**Heide Trask nips Red Springs**

The Red Springs baseball team closed from a six-run deficit to within a run against Heide Trask on Monday, but the Titans ultimately held on for a 6-5 victory in the Robeson County Slugfest consolation round.

Heide Trask (6-6) will face East Columbus in the fifth-place game at 1 p.m. Tuesday. Red Springs (6-8) was eliminated from further tournament play.

Heide Trask scored one run in the first, three in the fourth and two more in the fifth, taking a 6-0 lead. Red Springs scored four in the fifth and one in the sixth.

Terry Locklear had three hits and a run for the Red Devils. Jacoby Lowery had two hits, two RBIs and one run, Alfredo Martinez-Lowery had two hits and one RBI and Chris Poe had a hit and scored two runs.

Xzavier Sinclair pitched six innings for the Red Devils.



Mark Moses | Special to The Robesonian  
A Red Springs player slides into first base as a Heide Trask player tries to tag him on a pickoff play during Monday's Robeson County Slugfest consolation-round game in Pembroke.

Brian Green had two hits, two RBIs and one run for Heide Trask, while Cooper Uhland also had two hits with one RBI. Tristan Brewington and Gabe Vanvliet-Strickland each had one hit, one run and one RBI for the Titans.

Brantley Lunsford pitched 4 1/3 innings for Heide Trask, allowing three earned runs with five strikeouts.

Red Springs resumes conference play on April 14 at West Bladen.

**Lumberton softball tops Fairmont**

The Lumberton Pirates avenged their opening-round loss in the Robeson County Slugfest by winning Monday in the consolation round against the Fairmont Golden Tornadoes, 7-2. Norah Johnson was electric on the mound, pitching all seven innings without allowing an earned run with 10 strikeouts.

Lumberton (8-8) will face Heide Trask in the fifth-place game at 1 p.m.

Tuesday. Fairmont (4-10) is eliminated from additional tournament play.

Kinsley Martin had two hits and three RBIs for the Pirates. Ava Hanna had three hits, an RBI and a run and Charleigh Talton and Leea Wilkins both had one hit, an RBI and a run.

The Pirates scored four runs in the first, followed by two in the second. Fairmont was shut out again in the third and fourth innings, while Lumberton added a run in the bottom of the fourth.

Fairmont scored two runs in the sixth, but it was too little, too late.

Fairmont hosts Whiteville on April 14.

**Heide Trask dominates Lady Red Devils**

The Red Springs Red Devils were taken to the inferno against the Heide Trask Titans in their consolation-round matchup, losing 16-2.

Heide Trask (6-3) will meet Lumberton in the

fifth-place game at 1 p.m. Tuesday. Red Springs (5-8) is eliminated from further tournament play.

Junior catcher Taylor Sparkman had three hits, four runs scored and two RBIs in the contest to lead them. Dava Bullard was also strong at the plate with two hits, two runs and an RBI.

Bullard allowed two runs over four innings pitched. For the Red Devils, H. Locklear took the loss, pitching 1/3 of an inning. Bailey Locklear pitched 1 2/3 innings, allowing two runs.

Telinda Pate was the Red Devils' final pitcher, going two innings, allowing eight runs; five were unearned.

After spring break, Red Springs resumes play on April 14 at West Bladen.

Editor Chris Stiles can be reached at 910-416-5847 or by email at cstyles@robesonian.com.

Jacob Husson can be reached at 910-816-1977 or by email at jhusson@robesonian.com.

## Softball

From page 1B

scored on a passed ball. Jayla Graham was walked and advanced to second base, and scored on an RBI double from Angel Chavis. The Rams took a 2-0 lead to the second.

After another scoreless inning for the Bulldogs, Sonata Oxendine was hit by a pitch and Kamryn Locklear reached first base on an error. Graham then hit an RBI single to make it 3-0. After a wild pitch advanced the runners, Chavis drove in an RBI on a sacrifice fly, making it 4-0 Rams.

Nylah Johnson hit a single to load the bases, eventually leading to an RBI after Zaylee Hunt was hit by a pitch. Shaniya Lewis then drove in two RBIs with a single. Sonata Oxendine brought a runner home with an RBI single. The Rams

took a 9-0 lead into the third inning.

St. Pauls couldn't score again in the top of the third inning, as the score remained 9-0 Purnell Swett.

With the bases loaded in the bottom of the third, Hunt drove in all three runners with a double, making it 12-0. After a groundout advanced her and Oxendine was walked, eventually reaching third base, Kamryn Locklear hit a two-RBI single, eventually reaching third base.

Graham hit an RBI single to end the game with the Rams taking a 15-0 win.

"It feels amazing," Cadance Locklear said. "God is good!"

**East Columbus chomps on Scotland**

The East Columbus Gators thoroughly controlled their Robeson County semifinal game against the Scotland

Fighting Scots, winning 20-5 in four innings.

"It was a great team win," East Columbus coach Jason Nance said. "We've been struggling a little bit coming in with some injuries. Scotland's not what they were last year, but they're still a 6A/7A school. I know they have the athletes, but we'll take it and hopefully come through tomorrow for a championship."

East Columbus will face host Purnell Swett in the championship game at 7 p.m. Tuesday. Scotland, the 2025 Slugfest champion, will meet St. Pauls in the third-place game at 4 p.m.

Scotland scored two runs in the first inning off a single from Kaleigh Leviner. The Gators' Aleigh Godwin scored off a passed ball in the bottom of the first. Skylah Collins followed that by hitting an RBI single and then stealing a base.

After Kamora Bryant got on with a double, before Amber Ochoa knocked two runners home on a single. After one inning, it was 6-2 East Columbus.

After Scotland was held scoreless in the second, Jenna King was walked, stole two bases and scored on a wild pitch to make it 7-2 Gators.

In the following inning, Scotland loaded the bases and all three runners scored on an error off the bat of Leviner. It was 7-5 Gators heading into the bottom of the third.

A runner scored in the following inning after an error on a bunt from Millie Bracey. After King bunted herself on, Godwin came up and saw King score while she was at the plate.

Eventually, after a two-RBI triple from Collins, the Gators took a 12-5 lead. Bryant reached on a dropped fly ball that scored two runners, making it 14-5. Serenity Johnson scored two



Jacob Husson | The Robesonian  
St. Pauls' Baylea Hall waits for a pitch during Monday's Robeson County Slugfest semifinal against Purnell Swett in Pembroke.

runners with a single to make it 16-5. Bracey and Serenity Johnson each scored RBI's on hits. Three straight walks led to an RBI for Sara Coleman before Leigh Reaves ended the game with a two-RBI single, making it 20-5.

"I think it was a good team win and we came

together as a win," East Columbus' Mackenzi Clemmons said.

East Columbus advanced to the championship game for the third straight Slugfest, but seeks their first tournament title.

Jacob Husson can be reached at 910-816-1977 or by email at jhusson@robesonian.com.

## Earl

From page 1B

Lowery was previously an assistant coach for football, basketball and softball for the Rams, beginning in that role in 1985. At that time, he worked a full-time job making patio furniture and would leave work at 4 p.m. each day to head to practice for whichever sport was in-season.

"I've loved it," Lowery

said. "I've always tried to help and do everything I could to help them; I've never tried to hurt them, I just wanted to help them, and whatever they wanted me to do I was ready to do it. It's been a lot of fun."

It was Rams softball coach Amy Lancaster who had the idea to have Mr. Earl throw out the first pitch to start the Slugfest, McLean said.

"He's just touched so many generations of fans, of athletes, staff,"

McLean said. "There's very few that have walked on this campus that don't know Mr. Earl, and he's just a joy to have around. He always has something encouraging to say about Purnell Swett's athletics, and I just love having him around."

Lumbee Tribal Chairman John Lowery threw out the ceremonial first pitch to start the Slugfest baseball tournament before the Fairmont-Scotland opener on Coach Ronnie Chavis Field.

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# UNCP wrestling sends 5 to NWCA Scholar All-America honors

Staff report

PEMBROKE — The UNC Pembroke wrestling team continued a long-standing tradition for itself when five of its student-athletes were lauded with Scholar All-America accolades by the National Wrestling Coaches Association (NWCA).

It is the 16th-straight year that the Black & Gold has been represented on the distinguished squad, and the 13th time that the program has sent multiple student-athletes to the listing. The announcement also marks the 10th-consecutive year the Braves have had multiple representatives

earn the honor.

Jose Zambrano Canuto earned the honor for the second-consecutive year, while Gus Elliott, Nick Williams, Jackson Buck and Cristian Hercules-Pleitez each brought home the honor for the first time.

In order for a student-athlete to be selected to the Division II Scholar All-American Team, he must have a minimum 3.5 cumulative grade point average on a 4.0 scale, with that benchmark at 3.25 for those who qualified for the 2026 NCAA Division II Wrestling Championships, or 3.00 for those who reached All-American status at the championships.

# Braves baseball splits doubleheader, drops series at FMU

Staff report

FLORENCE, S.C. — Kasen McCawley turned in his second-straight complete-game win to lead UNC Pembroke to a 4-1 win in the first game of the doubleheader, but the Braves couldn't hold off No. 11 Francis Marion in the rubber match as the Patriots clinched the series with an 8-4 win Saturday afternoon at Sparrow Stadium.

McCawley moved to 9-1 on the season after going all seven innings and allowing just one run with six strikeouts. J.D. Scarbrough's two-run double in the second inning would be enough for McCawley to nail down the win.

Scarbrough finished the game 2-for-2 with a walk, double and two RBIs, while Landon Lucas turned in a 3-for-4 line with a solo homer.

The Braves (25-11, 16-8 CC) fell to 51-79-1 all-time against the Patriots (30-8, 19-5 CC).

**Game one**

The Braves struck first in the second inning of

the doubleheader opener as Scarbrough drove in two with a double, and came home on a dirtball read coupled with a Francis Marion error to make it 3-0.

Lucas tacked on an insurance run in the seventh with a two-out solo homer to make it 4-1.

Logan Davis led FMU with two hits and Aydin Palmer (7-2) took the loss for the Patriots.

**Game two**

In the nightcap, FMU jumped out to a first-inning lead on a Riley Orr RBI double.

The Braves answered in the second as Lucas doubled and later scored on Branton Jernigan's RBI groundout. Boone Herman followed with a triple before Morgan Padgett brought Herman home with an RBI groundout to give UNCP a 2-1 lead.

Francis Marion tied the score at 3-3 on a wild pitch in the third inning, and took the lead for good on Jimmy Koza's two-run single.

Morgan Padgett and

Branton Jernigan each had two hits for UNCP, with Padgett driving in two runs and Jernigan one. Cam Revels (1-2) was the losing pitcher.

Orr had three hits, including two doubles, with three RBIs for FMU and Daniel Hussey had two hits with a double and an RBI. Eze Rojas (4-2) earned the win, pitching six innings with four earned runs allowed and six strikeouts.

The Black & Gold was back in action Tuesday as the Braves made the short trip to take on Wingate. The result was unavailable at press time.

## Braves track and field finishes off weekend at Colonial Relays

Sofia Skidmore brought home another personal best and a fifth-place finish to highlight final-day action Saturday at the Colonial Relays.

Skidmore crossed in 2:14.14 to take fifth in the women's 800-meters. The men's 6000-meters relay team of Charlie Miller, Ed Carney, Conrad Rob-

ertson and Payden Lewis took sixth with a time of 16:48.84, while the men's 4000-meters DMR team of Kelvin Kibet, Jacob Jones, Sean Todd and Antony Kigen finished seventh at 10:42.27.

The two squads combined to post ten new personal-best times at the event.

The Braves also competed at the VertKlasse Meeting on Friday in High Point, where Kyleigh Pollock brought a home a new school record in the women's triple jump to highlight the action.

Pollock posted a mark of 12.00 meters to establish the new school record and take fifth in the event. Eli Pineda ran a personal-best 14.55 in the men's 110 meter hurdles to take second to round out Friday's top finishers.

Both squads combined to post 16 new personal bests at the event.

The Braves will be back in action Friday as they make the short trek to Florence, S.C. for the Francis Marion Invite.

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