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Storm damage

Thunderstorms cause damage in Lumberton, heavy rain in western Robeson. **News 2A**



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THE ROBESONIAN

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Wednesday, July 15, 2026 • Issue 56, Volume 157

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A Fresh Perspective

Local
NEWS

\$2.00

Grand opening set for Robeson CTEC



Photo courtesy of PSRC
The exterior of the Robeson Career and Technical Education Center.

Jessica Sealey
For The Robesonian

PEMBROKE — The Public Schools of Robeson County on Monday announced dates for the anticipated Grand Opening Ceremony of the Robeson Career and Technical Education Center and Robeson Planetarium and Science Center, marking a significant investment in workforce development, career readiness and STEM education for students across Robeson County.

The district is inviting community members, elected officials, business and industry partners, educators and alumni to save the

date for two special events celebrating the opening of the new facility.

A Grand Opening Ceremony will be held at 8 a.m. on Friday, Aug. 21 at the facility, located at 569 Livermore Drive just east of Pembroke. The ceremony will celebrate the completion of the state-of-the-art campus and recognize the many local, state and community partners whose support made the project possible.

An open house and facility tours will be held on Saturday, Aug. 22 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. The community will have the opportunity to tour the new facility, explore instructional

spaces, learn about career pathways and experience firsthand how the center will prepare students for success in college, careers, military service and beyond.

The Robeson Career & Technical Education Center will expand opportunities for students through modern learning environments, industry-aligned career pathways, and hands-on experiences designed to meet the evolving workforce needs of Robeson County and North Carolina.

The Center will serve as a hub

See CTEC | 3A



Les High | Border Belt Independent
Head Start teacher's assistant Veronica Alexander instructs students on colors and shapes on Nov. 13, 2025.

Childcare deserts increasing in Border Belt

Ben Rappaort
Border Belt Independent

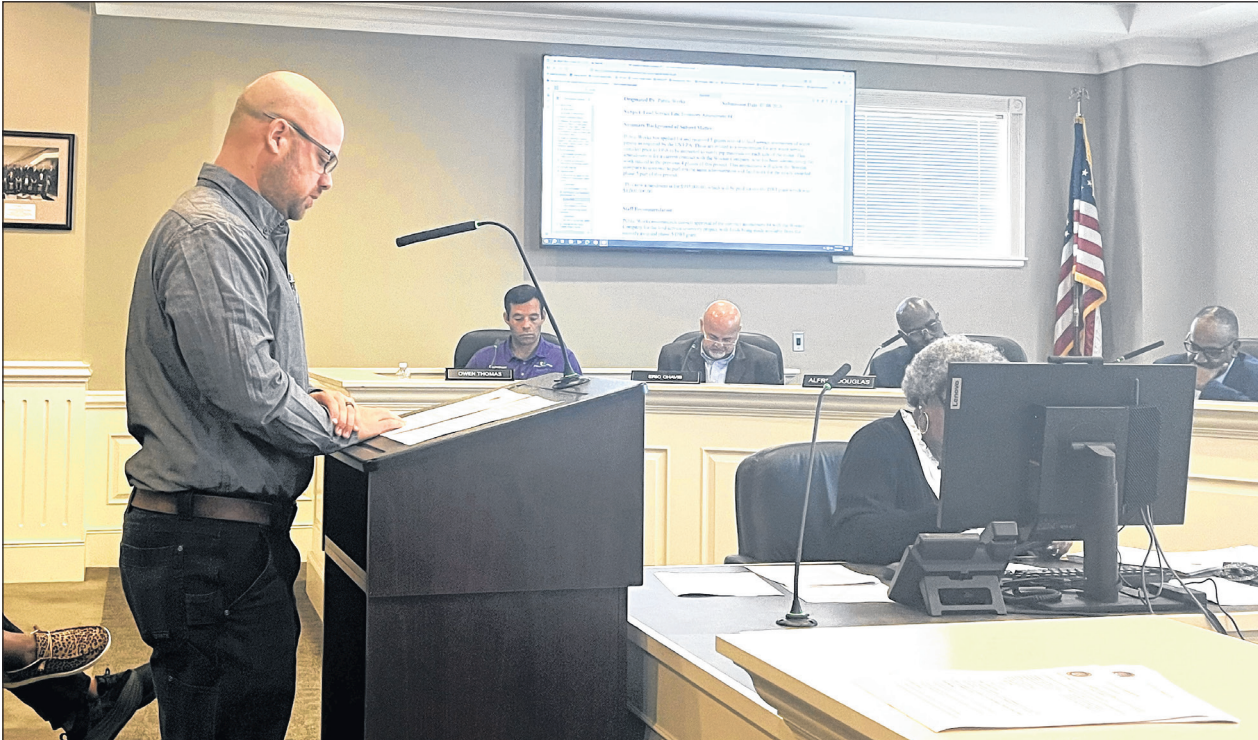
ROBESON COUNTY — Finding licensed childcare has gotten harder for parents across rural southeastern North Carolina, a new report shows.

The largest gaps in childcare in Bladen, Columbus, Robeson,

and Scotland counties are in unincorporated areas outside of towns and cities, according to a map that accompanies the report.

The report, which focuses on so-called childcare deserts, was published in April by the Center for American

See CHILDCARE | 3A



Chris Stiles | The Robesonian
Lumberton interim Public Works Director Corey Walters, left, speaks to Lumberton City Council during Monday's meeting at City Hall.

City receives clean FY25 financial audit

Chris Stiles
The Robesonian

LUMBERTON — The City of Lumberton's finances were given a clean report in an audit presentation given to City Council by Wade Greene during the board's monthly meeting on Monday.

“(The Local Govern-

ment Commission) is finally happy, they love to check into this, they're happy,” Greene said.

The audit presentation is for the 2025 fiscal year, which ended June 30, 2025, meaning that the figures presented are approximately one year old. An audit for the 2026 fiscal year, which ended

on June 30, will be performed at a later time.

The city had \$103,669,334 in assets, Greene said, at the end of the 2025 fiscal year, and its net position increased by \$8,942,047. The general fund's expenditures of \$34,694,311 exceeded its revenues of \$30,096,515 by \$4,597,796, but the

city still has \$7,566,640 in fund balance available. As a percentage of expenditures — a key figure evaluated by LGC — that number is 21.81%; this is down from 28.10% the previous year, but is still within the desired range. About 20- to 40% is “on

See COUNCIL | 8A



TODAY'S FORECAST
93/72 – Partly sunny

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B SPORTS

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GPAC announces 2026-2027 season



Promotional photo | Courtesy of GPAC
Marty Stuart and his band, the Fabulous Superlatives, will perform at the Givens Performing Arts Center on Friday, Sept. 18.

James Bass
For The Robesonian

PEMBROKE — The Givens Performing Arts Center at UNC Pembroke will welcome legendary artists and world-class productions to the stage for its 2026-27 season, promising music, dance, culture and family entertainment.

The season opens Sept. 18 with five-time Grammy winner and Country Music Hall of Fame

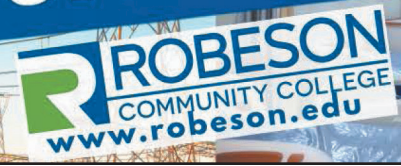
inductee Marty Stuart. Backed by his band, The Fabulous Superlatives, he brings an unforgettable evening of musicianship, storytelling and timeless country classics to the stage.

On Sept. 26, GPAC welcomes three of London's most celebrated leading ladies from the West End production of Wicked. Their roles as Elphaba brought them together,

See GPAC | 3A



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Storm causes wind damage in Lumberton

Several inches fall in western Robeson

Chris Stiles
The Robesonian

LUMBERTON — A thunderstorm on Friday evening resulted in some damage just north of downtown Lumberton. The National Weather Service had multiple reports of trees down, including one on North Elm Street between East 19th and 20th streets, and of siding blown off of buildings. One structure, behind a business between North Pine and Cedar streets at East 21st Street, was blown to the ground. Straight-line winds during the thunderstorm caused the damage, NWS meteorologist Mark Bacon said. “During that heat wave, when those thunderstorms have so much fuel to work with — because thunderstorms need three

main ingredients: moisture, instability and lift,” Bacon said. “When it’s that hot and humid like it was last week, we were still carrying a heat advisory, the moisture and the instability are just locked in. You just lift those with things like small upper-level disturbances or very weak surface boundaries, and the storms grow pretty intense pretty quickly.” The storm also blew the paneling off one side of the Belk store at Biggs Park Mall. The current weather pattern has seen frequent thunderstorms in the late afternoon and early evening; these have not hit everywhere in the county on all of those days, but there has been hit-and-miss thunderstorm activity in the region for each of the last several days. Monday, some western parts of Robeson County



A structure at the corner of North Cedar and East 21st streets in Lumberton was damaged by straight-line winds during a thunderstorm on Friday.

saw five to six inches of rain fall in a very short time frame. A flash flood warning was issued by NWS for that area, which included Red Springs, Pembroke and Maxton and stretched southward and eastward into Marlboro County, South Carolina. The Lumberton Regional Airport, which is where the NWS measures data for Robeson County weather, has seen

3.89 inches of rain in the month of July as of Tuesday morning, Bacon said. That is two inches more than the normal rate of 1.89 inches for the first 14 days of July. Other areas, such as those affected by Monday’s storm, have seen more rain; Bacon said that most of the county is between three and seven inches for July to date, but with these summer thunderstorms this



Winds tore the siding off of the Belk store at Biggs Park Mall in Lumberton during a thunderstorm on Friday.

“varies wildly location to location.” While the above-average rainfall has slightly lessened the ongoing drought, the area is still far below normal rainfall for the year and remains in a serious drought. “We’re so far down the drought rabbit hole right now that we’re starting to think we might need a tropical remnant system or something like that (to end the drought)” ... which

would probably lead to so much rain so fast it would lead to some flooding,” Bacon said. Rain chances will drop for the rest of the week, with high temperatures in Robeson County forecasted in the mid- to high-90s and lows in the mid-70s. The next moderate rain chance is Sunday, with a 40% chance.

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

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

EDITOR'S NOTE: Send your Community Calendar items to Editor Chris Stiles at cstiles@robesonian.com
Strike At The Wind, July 17 and 18, 7 p.m.: “Strike at the Wind” is an outdoor drama held in the amphitheater of the Lumbee Tribe Cultural Center. The play chronicles the life of Henry Berry Lowrie, who led a band of men in a seven-year conflict against the Confederate Home Guard after the unjust killings of his father and brother. It highlights vigilante justice resistance, and the active fight for the Lumbee people’s rights during the post-Civil War era in North Carolina. Tickets are available through the ticket office of Given’s Performing Arts Center (<https://www.uncp.edu/community-and-culture/givens-performing-arts-center/index.html>) and at the entrance of

the Lumbee Tribe Cultural Center, the night of the performance. The venue opens at 5:45 p.m. Pre-show entertainment begins at 6:15 p.m. and the drama begins at 7 p.m.
Robeson County Farmers Market, July 18, 21, & 25, Lumberton: The Robeson County Farmers Market opens each week on Tuesdays, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., and Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., at the Dick Taylor Plaza in the heart of historic downtown Lumberton. Parking is available around the plaza, intersecting streets and across from Adelio’s Italian Restaurant one block from the plaza on West Third Street.
Sean Mills, Your Pie Pizza, July 16, 7 p.m.: Join Sean Mills, live, at Your Pie Pizza! Order a just-right pizza for your taste, beverage and dessert, sit back and enjoy

the evening with Sean. It’s always a good time!
“1776,” Purple Door Productions, July 17-26: Purple Door Productions presents the musical, “1776”. Cake and ice cream, served in celebration of the 250th birthday of our great nation, ignites an evening of music, history, and humor.
Flock Swap, July 18, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.: The Flock Swap is featured at the Robeson County Farmers Market on the third Saturday of each month. Gather for swapping or purchasing small farm animals, such as chickens, ducks, rabbits and goats as examples. It is free to sell but must register a waiver with the Robeson County Farmers Market.
Love and Heartbreak Concert - Carolina Civic Center, July 18, 5 p.m.: The Carolina Civic Center is hosting “Love & Heartbreak” featuring music from the 90’s. This is an evening of live music, food, drinks and unforgettable vibes. Doors open at 5:00pm, purchase tickets early, dress up and be ready for an exciting evening. Ticket information is available on the Carolina Civic Center website.
4-H Congress, July 20-24: The ultimate teen leadership opportunity. We will spend five days in Raleigh with youth taking part in workshops, cultural opportunities and social events. Youth will have an opportunity to

take on leadership roles, complete community service projects, and have fun making new friends. For ages 14-18. Cost:\$450. Deadline to register is July 1.
Fragile Planet, Robeson Planetarium & Science Center, July 21 & 22, 12 p.m. and 2 p.m.: The Robeson Planetarium and Science Center is offering several opportunities at the planetarium during the summer months. Refer to the information on the flyer for specific times to visit.
Summer Living Exhibition, Robeson Arts Guild, July 23, 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.: The Robeson Art Guild is hosting “Summer Living”, an exhibition illustrating times of leisure, rainbows, children swimming or playing in a park, fireflies shining in the night, celebration of Independence Day, what will the exhibition contain? Attend the welcoming open house reception for a delightful evening at the Guild House.
NC United Women in Faith, July 25, 9 a.m., Piney Grove, Maxton: Join us in person for the A Deep Knowing: Experiencing Emmanuel Through Every Part of Our Lives by Linda L. Furtado. A study happening on various July throughout 2026. This is a great chance to dive deep, connect with others, and grow your faith in a welcoming environment. Whether you’re new or

seasoned in your journey, everyone is welcome.
Kaftans, Stogies, and Musik, July 25, 5:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.: Designed to bring the community together in a refined yet relaxed setting, the event serves as the premiere scholarship fundraiser. Proceeds go directly to support the educational advancement of deserving students in the Lumberton community.
VMG Barber Battle, VMG Barber Studio Lumberton, July 26, 1 p.m. to 7 p.m.: Experience a full day of live barber battles, elite education, industry vendors, giveaways, networking and nonstop energy. Watch top barbers compete for cash prizes, trophies and bragging rights in categories like Fast Fade, Best Taper, Freestyle Design and the ultimate Tag-Team Battle.
Jeep Jamboree & Community Fundraiser for Larinda Watts, July 26, 4 p.m. to 9 p.m., Parkton: Jeep Jamboree for the Watts Family. Jeeps, Food vendors, pony rides. All proceeds go directly to the Watts family
Galileo, Robeson Planetarium & Science Center, Lumberton, July 28 and 29, 12 p.m. and 2 p.m.: The Robeson Planetarium and Science Center is offering several opportunities at the planetarium during the summer months. Refer to the information on the flyer for specific times to visit.
Backpack and School Supply Giveaway, Aug. 1, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.: The Robeson County Farmers Market is hosting a Backpack and School Supply

Giveaway. The backpacks, limited to two backpacks per adult and one backpack per child will be available while supplies last only. Suds of Love, a mobile shower and laundry truck will be available for un-housed community members.
Summer Sizzler Horse Show, Aug. 1, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.: An All Breed Summer Sizzler Horse Show is hosted by the Southeastern NC Agricultural Events Center.
ONGOING
Children’s Storytime — Lumberton, 10:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Tuesdays and Fridays, Robeson County Public Library, 101 N. Chestnut St., Lumberton.
Children’s Storytime — Pembroke, 10:30 a.m. to 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 a.m. to 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 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on the third Friday of each month at McMillan Memorial Library, Red Springs.
Children’s Storytime — Fairmont, 4:30 p.m. to 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 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., on the fourth Wednesday at the Annie H McEachern Library, 223 W. Broad St, St Pauls.

EDITOR'S NOTE

No obituaries were received for this edition of The Robesonian. Find the latest obituaries as they are received at robesonian.com. Obituaries can be submitted to robobits@cmpapers.com.



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Champion Media
(USPS 467-40)

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Publishes every Wednesday and Saturday
eEdition and in print.
If you have a newspaper delivery concern please call weekdays 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Prices are subject to charge at any time.

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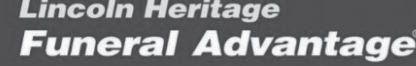
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FROM THE LEGISLATURE

NC receives NSF Engines Award to develop model for grid modernization

WASHINGTON — U.S. Sen. Ted Budd (R-NC), chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Science, Manufacturing, and Competitiveness, released the following statement after the National Science Foundation (NSF) announced awards to 12 U.S. teams for Regional Innovation Engines (NSF Engines). As chairman of the subcommittee with jurisdiction over NSF, Senator Budd successfully advocated for the Carolinas Engine for Grid Modernization proposal, led by the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, to accelerate technology development and ensure a secure, resilient American energy grid. “North Carolina has earned a national reputation as a leader in technological innovation, and I am proud that the University of North Carolina at Charlotte is among the newest recipients of the NSF Engines award,” Budd said. “The NSF Grid Modernization Engine in the Carolinas builds on our state’s strengths by leveraging a highly skilled workforce and world-class research

institutions to accelerate innovation, strengthen our energy infrastructure, and support long-term economic growth. The future of the United States depends on a reliable, secure, and resilient electric grid, and North Carolina is leading the way by developing a replicable national model for grid modernization,” said Senator Budd. The newest NSF Engines awards span critical technologies and applications ranging from enhancing energy grid security to maximizing the yield of critical mineral mining extraction to advancing quantum computing. Each team, led by a coalition of regional organizations, including universities, nonprofits, and private industry, will initially receive an award of \$15 million over two years. Teams that demonstrate progress on well-defined milestones will have the potential to eventually receive up to \$160 million



Budd



Harris

each from NSF over the next decade as they seek to build an internationally competitive technology and innovation cluster in their region. No single region can solve America’s technology challenges alone. NSF Engines are designed as a connected national network, linking complementary regional strengths. Together, they build domestic supply chains, fill capability gaps and accelerate technology advancement across key sectors and regions.

Harris reflects on Graham’s passing
Sunday, U.S. Rep. Mark Harris (R-NC8) released the following statement on the passing of Sen. Lindsey Graham: “For decades, Senator Lindsey Graham devoted his life to serving the people of South Carolina and our nation. He earned a reputation as one of the

most influential voices in the United States Senate, particularly on issues of national security, support for our military, and the confirmation of federal judges,” Harris said. “While not everyone agreed with him on every issue, there was never any doubt about his commitment to public service or his willingness to stand firmly for what he believed. His impact on our country’s political landscape will be felt for generations. I am especially thankful for his steadfast defense of the sanctity of life and his efforts to protect the unborn. “Please join me in praying for Sen. Graham’s family, friends, and loved ones during this difficult time. May God grant them His comfort and peace, and may we always remember the value of faithful public service, principled leadership, and a deep love for our nation.”

Items for the “From The Legislature” column come from press material submitted by local, state and federal elected officials.

Graham’s sister picked to finish Senate term

Meg Kinnard and Jeffrey Collins
Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. — Lindsey Graham’s sister, Darline Graham Nordone, has been named as her late brother’s temporary replacement in the U.S. Senate after his unexpected death over the weekend. South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster announced at a news conference at the Statehouse on Monday that Nordone would serve the remaining months on Graham’s current term, which expires in January. Senate Majority Leader John Thune said afterward that she will be sworn in Tuesday afternoon. Nordone will be the first woman to represent the state in the Senate. “It is such an honor,” she said, as dozens of Graham staffers and campaign advisers stood behind her, some with eyes glassy from welling tears. “Lindsey has always been there for me. And now, I will be there for him.”

Graham died on Saturday night at age 71. He never married or had a family of his own, but Nordone was often by her brother’s side for the political touch points of his career, speaking at events and appearing in some of his campaign ads. After their parents died at a young age, Graham was left to raise his sister, for whom he later became legal guardian. They were very close, and she was there as he filed reelection paperwork earlier this year, along with her children and grandchildren. “To Lindsey, I miss you more than I can even put into words,” Nordone said, emotion rising in her voice. “But I’m going to do this. I got it.” Introducing Nordone, McMaster said the two had spoken in “in the wee hours of Sunday morning” after Graham’s death, and he asked her to serve. “I had wondered what you would say, and I was humbled by your quickness to see the



Sean Rayford | AP Photo
Newly appointed U.S. Sen. Darline Graham Nordone, with South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster, right, speaks to members of the press after being appointed to fill the vacancy created by the passing of her brother, U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, at the statehouse Monday in Columbia, S.C.

duty that you had to serve,” McMaster said. He added that President Donald Trump “thought it was a great idea” when he later told him of his pick. Trump announced his support for Nordone to fill the seat earlier Monday. Nordone has worked as an optician and at various state agencies, including the South Carolina Commission for the Blind and the Department of Employment and Workforce. She lives in Lexington,

is a graduate of the College of Charleston and has a master’s degree in rehabilitation counseling. **How will a special primary work?** A special election will be held next month to pick a new Republican nominee in the general election for Graham’s seat. He had been seeking a fifth term this year. The rare open Senate seat has ignited a scramble among South Carolina’s most ambi-

tious conservatives, who have been eager to climb the political ladder. Republicans just finished a sprawling and bruising contest to figure out their nominee for succeeding McMaster, who is wrapping up his second term. State Attorney General Alan Wilson won the nomination, overcoming a field that included Lt. Gov. Pamela Evette, Rep. Nancy Mace and Ralph Norman — all of whom are now eyeing Graham’s seat following his death over the weekend. According to South Carolina law, a one-week filing period for a special primary election begins on the second Tuesday after the candidate’s death, or July 21. The special primary election would be held on the second Tuesday after that filing period closes, or Aug. 11. Any necessary runoff would follow two weeks after that, or Aug. 25. From that point, the new nominee would have just over two months to campaign for the general

election on Nov. 3. All of this is problematic according to federal law, which requires military and overseas ballots to go out 45 days before any federal election. For the special election primary, that would have been June 27. Federal Election Commission officials didn’t immediately return a message seeking clarity about the process. **Who could replace Graham?** Graham died on Saturday night, and a preliminary medical examiner report said he suffered a tear in his aorta, known as an aortic dissection. In the hours after Graham’s death was announced, South Carolina’s Republican circles were already swirling with rumors about possible replacements. Evette, who has served nearly eight years alongside McMaster and received his endorsement in the governor’s race, is one possibility. She lost the June 23 runoff to Wilson.

GPAC

From page 1A

and now they unite for a concert experience celebrating Wicked, The Greatest Showman and other beloved musical favorites. With more than six

decades of Motown history, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductees The Spinners take the GPAC stage Oct. 16, delivering the timeless hits and legendary harmonies that have captivated audiences for generations. The holiday season comes to life as The Nutcracker ballet graces the GPAC stage on Nov. 22

at 6 p.m., followed by the annual UNCP Holiday Extravaganza on Dec. 3. The new year kicks off with the acclaimed operatic musical The Pirates of Penzance on Jan. 25, 2027, featuring a cast of 23 performers and a 16-piece orchestra. On Feb. 2, Cirque Kala-banté brings the vibrant dance styles and musical

rhythms of West Africa to UNC Pembroke in an extraordinary performance featuring breathtaking acrobatics and gravity-defying stunts. Everyone’s favorite Dr. Seuss character, the Cat in the Hat, comes to GPAC at 7 p.m. on March 1, with Sally, Fish and Thing One and Thing Two for an unforgettable

family evening filled with fun and imagination. The season concludes April 30 with The Commodores performing hits from their extraordinary career, including “Three Times A Lady,” “Brick House” and “Easy.” All shows begin at 7:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted. Visit GPAC online at uncp.edu/gpac for more

information and follow GPAC on Facebook and Instagram for updates. Season subscriptions are available now through the GPAC Ticket Office. For subscription information, call 910-521-6361. James Bass is the director of the Givens Performing Arts Center. Reach him at james.bass@uncp.edu.

Childcare

From page 1A

Progress, a progressive think tank based in Washington, D.C. Childcare deserts are most common in rural areas and regions of high poverty, according to the report. “The real underlying issue is a broken childcare market,” Hailey Gibbs, an associate director at the Center for American Progress and a co-author of the report, told the Border Belt Independent in an interview. “Despite high demand for care, there aren’t enough early educators and consequently not enough slots or programs to meet that demand.” While the report does not have specific data for the Border Belt, 2026 data from the North

Carolina Child Care Resource and Referral Council shows 14 of the region’s 52 Census tracts are defined as childcare deserts: two in Bladen, one in Columbus, seven in Robeson, and four in Scotland. The region is home to 179 childcare centers: 23 in Bladen, 33 in Columbus, 95 in Robeson, and 25 in Scotland. All four counties have more than three childcare centers for every 1,000 children, which is above the statewide average of 2.3. But Gibbs said the number of facilities in the region could fall amid increases in operating costs and cuts to federal funding. Southeastern Community Action Partnership closed three Head Start sites in Robeson County, which served 116 children, late last year, the BBI previously reported.

The Border Belt now has six Head Start centers, according to the state’s database of childcare centers. None are in Scotland County. Meanwhile, childcare costs have gotten more expensive. The average cost of childcare for children 5 and younger is \$12,370 a year, according to a study by the First Five Years Fund, an early childcare policy organization. Less than half of all North Carolina families with young children (43.8%), and less than a third of families of color can afford basic necessities, a new report from Brookings Institute shows. In the Border Belt, a majority of children live in poverty, according to the North Carolina Child Care Resource and Referral Council. Families without access

to licensed childcare centers often have to rely on family, friends, or neighbors, according to Gibbs. When that network fails, parents — often mothers — are pushed out of the workforce, she said. Some 70% of young children in rural areas nationwide live in a childcare desert, despite an increase in the number of childcare providers nationwide. “I think it’s really important for people to appreciate that it’s not an abstract problem,” Gibbs said. “A family sitting on a waitlist might have to forgo a job or a promotion or additional hours because they don’t have reliable care for their child.” Ben Rappaport is a reporter at the Border Belt Independent. He is a graduate of the Hussman School of Journalism and Media at UNC-Chapel Hill.

CTEC

From page 1A

for innovation, skill-building and career readiness, aligning educational opportunities with the evolving demands of the workforce in Robeson County and beyond. Robeson CTEC will replace the current Robeson County Career Center and house Career and Technical Education Programs along with the newly constructed Robeson Planetarium and Science Center. The \$87.2 million Robeson CTEC project is being made possible through a combination of state, county and local funding sources. Funding includes

\$62 million from the Needs-Based Public School Capital Fund, \$2.5 million from the Robeson County Board of Commissioners, \$2.5 million from Public Schools of Robeson County, and \$5 million allocated by state legislators, including Sen. Danny Britt, to replace the planetarium and science center destroyed during the Hurricane Matthew. The remaining \$15.2 million will be jointly funded by the county and the school district, each covering half. Event dates and times are tentative and subject to change pending final project completion. Jessica Sealey is the PSRC chief communications officer. Reach her by email at jessica.sealey@robeson.k12.nc.us.

OPINION SHAPER

Trump’s three retreats

President Trump has been musing about whether he’s the most powerful man in world history, and judging by the results lately, the answer is definitely “no.”

It’s certainly true that Trump has technical tools at his disposal that would have astounded famous pre-20th-century contenders for the title of most powerful man, whether Caesar, Alexander the Great, Charlemagne or Napoleon.

Trump’s power, though, isn’t defined by, say, the precision and explosive punch of the Tomahawk missile. As the leader of a constitutional republic that disperses power and depends ultimately on democratic consent, Trump is operating under constraints that routinely blunt his ambitions.

If the theme of the first year of his second term was aggression on all fronts, his second year has so far been defined by significant retreats.

Late last year, Trump surged DHS forces into Minneapolis, seeking to make an example of the Twin Cities after Somali immigrants were implicated in welfare fraud schemes. When the operation was met by fierce opposition from city and state leaders and resistance in the streets, the Trump administration steeled itself for a gargantuan test of wills — before Trump, realizing he was losing the battle of political optics, sent Tom Homan to Minneapolis to unwind the operation.

Last month, the Department of Justice settled Donald Trump’s \$10 billion suit against the IRS over the leak of his tax returns. The department agreed to create a \$1.8 billion fund for the compensation of victims of Democratic lawfare, a slush fund for his allies, presumably including Jan. 6 rioters. Faced with adverse legal rulings and opposition in the Senate, the administration abandoned the scheme that it had initially touted as a means to “right the wrongs that were previously done while ensuring this never happens again.”

Then, of course, Trump signed a ceasefire with Iran that wasn’t close to the “unconditional surrender” that he had once demanded. The 14-point agreement included more U.S. than Iranian concessions, and Trump admitted that the Iranian closure of the Strait of Hormuz had forced his hand.

None of these were incidental initiatives. They all involved core commitments of this president — to mass deportation, to turning on its head the lawfare campaign against him and to denying the Iranian regime a nuclear weapon.

They were also overreaches that displayed a heedlessness born of hubris. Trump had already driven down overall migration when he surged into Minneapolis; already pardoned the Jan. 6 rioters when his DOJ created the weaponization fund; and already struck a punishing blow against the Iranian nuclear program via Midnight Hammer when he launched Operation Epic Fury.

Trump isn’t one for incremental progress toward an objective. He prefers the grand gesture and big gamble. He’s drawn to the bridge too far when a drive a couple of blocks down the street would do just fine.

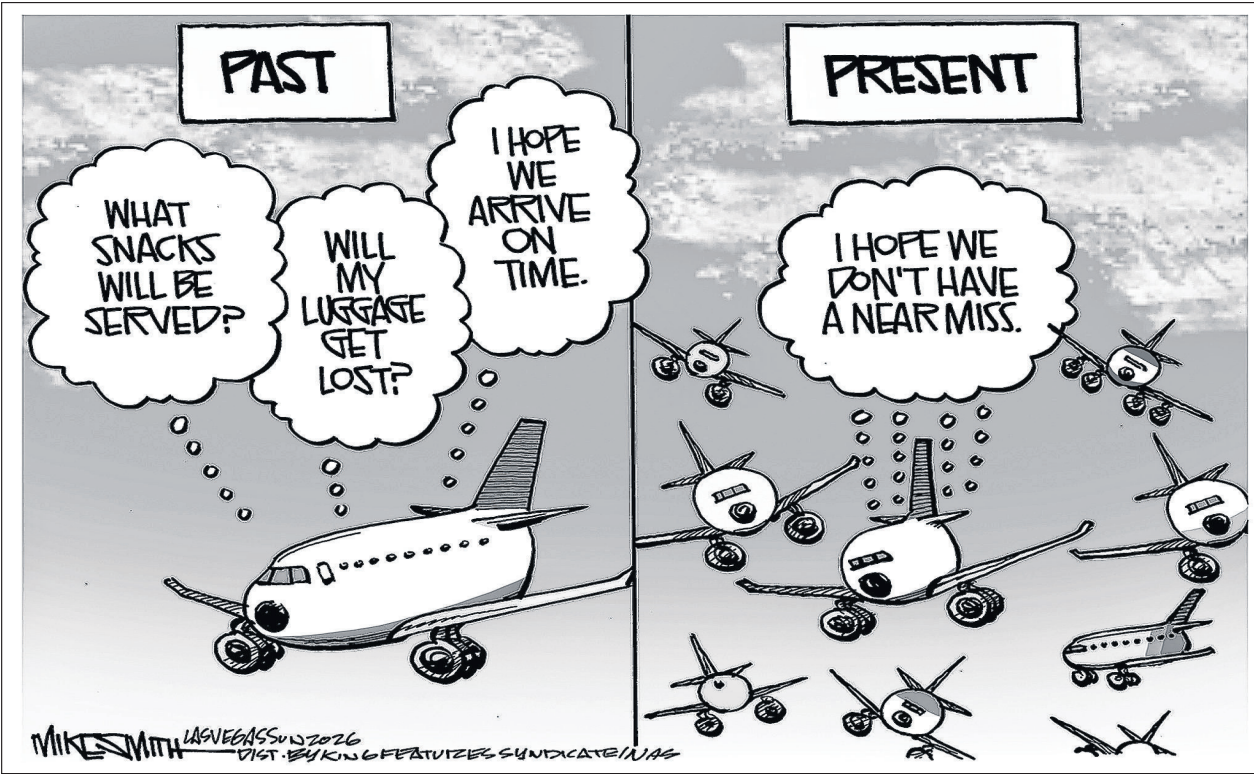
The worry about Trump was that he’d be unconstrained in his second term, and indeed, he’s fashioned a team that is loath to tell him “no.” But he’s subject to checks from the other branches of government and, even more, from routine political pressures.

There was nothing that formally compelled him to remove DHS forces from Minneapolis or to relieve the military pressure on Iran, both of which were within his legitimate powers. It was the poor polling and the potential damage to Republican prospects in the midterms that obliged Trump to declare victory and go home.

The president may enjoy thinking of how he can do things that a Roman emperor never would have imagined, yet Marcus Aurelius wasn’t hypersensitive to how stories were playing in the mass media, or to the latest public-opinion surveys.

As the creature of a democratic republic, Trump inherently is mindful of those considerations, which is one reason that it’s been a year of retreats. Trump, surely, doesn’t think of it that way. As Gen. Oliver Smith put it during the Korean War, he’s merely attacking in a different direction — although not the one he’d intended.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.



CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS

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 - Rep. John Lowery, R-Dist. 47 (Robeson), 300 N. Salisbury Street, 306B2, Raleigh, NC 27603-

- 5925, 919-715-0875, John.Low-ery@ncleg.gov
 - Rep. Brenden H. Jones, R-Dist. 46 (Robeson, Columbus), 16 W. Jones St., Room 1227, Raleigh, NC 27601-1096, 919-733-5821 or 919-733-5821
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- U.S. Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., 310 New Bern Ave. Suite 122, Raleigh, NC 27601, 919-856-4630, or 113 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510, 202-224-6342
 - U.S. Sen. Ted Budd, R-N.C., B85 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-3154
 - U.S. Rep. Mark Harris. R-N.C., 8th Dist., 126 Cannon House Office Building, 202-225-1976
 - U.S. Rep. David Rouzer, R-N.C., 7th Dist., 2333 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515, 202-225-2731
 - U.S. Pres. Donald Trump, Com-ments: 202-456-1111, Switchboard: 202-456-1414; Leave a written message: https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/. Mailing address: The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20500
 - U.S. Capitol Switchboard, 202-224-3121
 - White House Switchboard, 202-456-1414

HIS VIEW

Freer Carolinas means more Carolinians

RALEIGH — Progressives are frustrated by North Carolina’s just-enacted state budget, hostile to recent deregulatory initiatives and tax cuts and outraged at recent welfare reforms and school-choice expansions. They think our state is careening dangerously in the wrong direction. If their preferred candidates win state and local offices in November, they hope to reverse course.

I anticipate the left will win quite a few electoral victories this fall — but not because North Carolinians are unhappy with how their state is governed. The party of incumbent presidents tend to take it on the chin in midterms, especially during a second term. And the Trump admin-istration has turned off many independents and GOP-leaning voters with both unwise policies and indefensible conduct.

Progressives believe their opposition to North Carolina’s conservative turn since 2010 has failed because they haven’t raised enough money, spoken the right magic words, or been robbed of power by unfair gerrymandering. They are mistaken. Republicans won the General Assembly and a spate of other races in 2010 despite being outspent, employing standard conservative rhetoric and running in unfavorably drawn districts. Democrats face barriers, sure, but hardly insurmountable ones.

The core problem with the progressive argument against conservative governance is that, to be blunt, most people prefer conservative governance most of the time.

They believe government exists to deliver core public services at a reasonable cost and should otherwise leave them alone. They put more stock in unity, equality and individual excellence than separatism, racial preferences and collective guilt. They think crime is caused by criminals, not impersonal social forces, so its reduction is best accomplished by deterring or incarcerating criminals, not expanding welfare or “defunding the police.” They believe parents, not bureaucrats, should decide where and how children will be educated and that customers, not bureaucrats, should decide where and how they will secure food, clothing, shelter, healthcare and the other necessities of life.

Years of careful surveys by my Carolina Journal colleagues and other pollsters confirm these prefer-ences. But I admit that survey questions can be artfully worded to produce a range of responses, some seem-

ingly contradictory. So, let’s consider another signal: mobility patterns.

The United States of America is a common market with no internal borders. If you want to leave your current home to explore opportunities in another commu-nity or state, you are free to do so. Since 1994, when conservatives won unprecedented victories in state and local races in North Carolina and across the country, “red” and “blue” states have increas-ingly diverged in their policy choices on taxes, spending, regulation, education, healthcare, transportation and other key issues.

Presented with such alternatives, Americans could have gravitated toward states with big-ger governments offering more-generous public assistance and advancing left-wing values. But they didn’t. Conservatively governed places such as Texas, Florida and the Carolinas have tended to attract new residents. Progressively governed places have tended to repel them.

Jack Salmon, a research fellow at George Mason University’s Mercatus Center, has just documented these flows in a new policy brief. From 2018 to 2023, South Carolina ranked second and North Carolina ninth on a measure called the in-migration rate (new residents divided by population). You’ll find the likes of California, New York and Illinois at the bot-tom of the list.

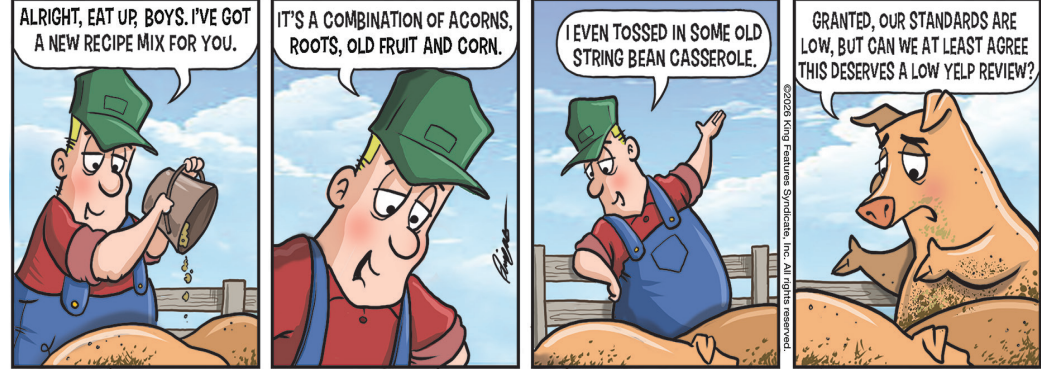
Policy variables are, of course, hardly the only ones that influence where people move, form families or start new businesses. After adjusting for climate and other factors, Salmon found strong statistical relation-ships between in-migration on the one hand and tax burdens, size of government, and other measures of economic freedom on the other.

The results suggest that “attracting and retaining residents depends less on geographic advantages than on policy choices,” Salmon concluded. “States that prioritize competitive tax structures and allow housing supply to respond to demand are more likely to experi-ence sustained population growth.”

I know these migration patterns probably won’t convince many progressives to abandon their longtime beliefs about taxes, regulation, school choice and other issues. Still, hope springs eternal.

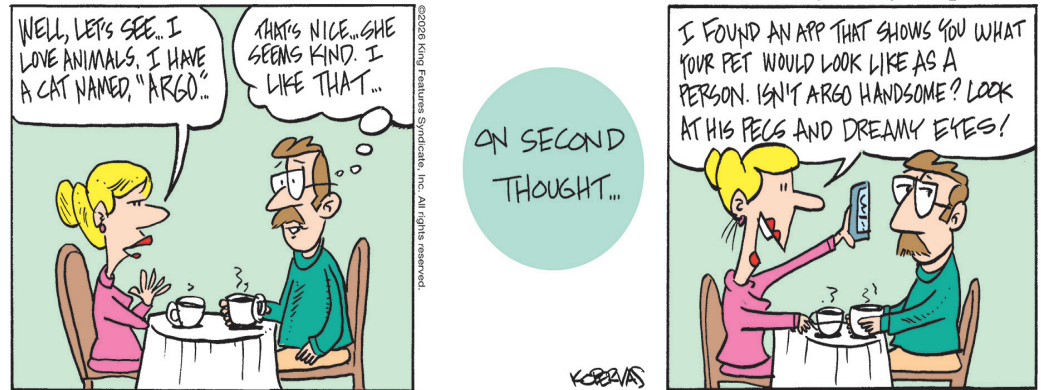
John Hood is a John Locke Foundation board member. His latest books, Mountain Folk and Forest Folk, combine epic fantasy with early American history (FolkloreCycle.com).

Amber Waves



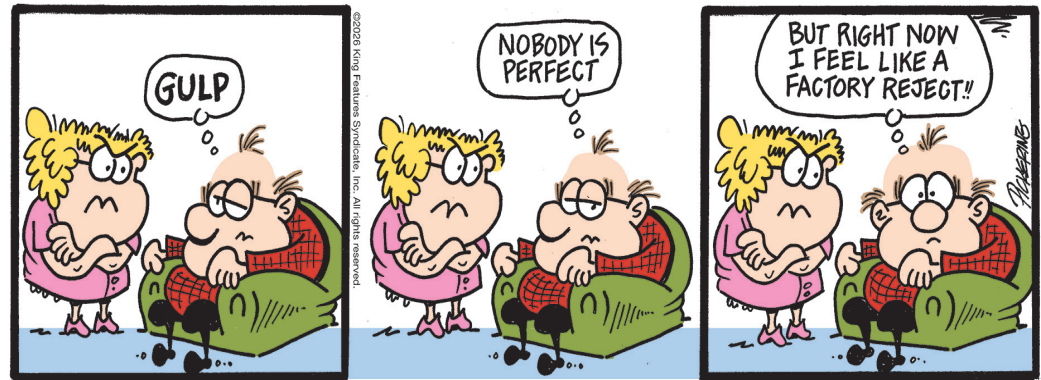
by Dave T. Phipps

Out on a Limb



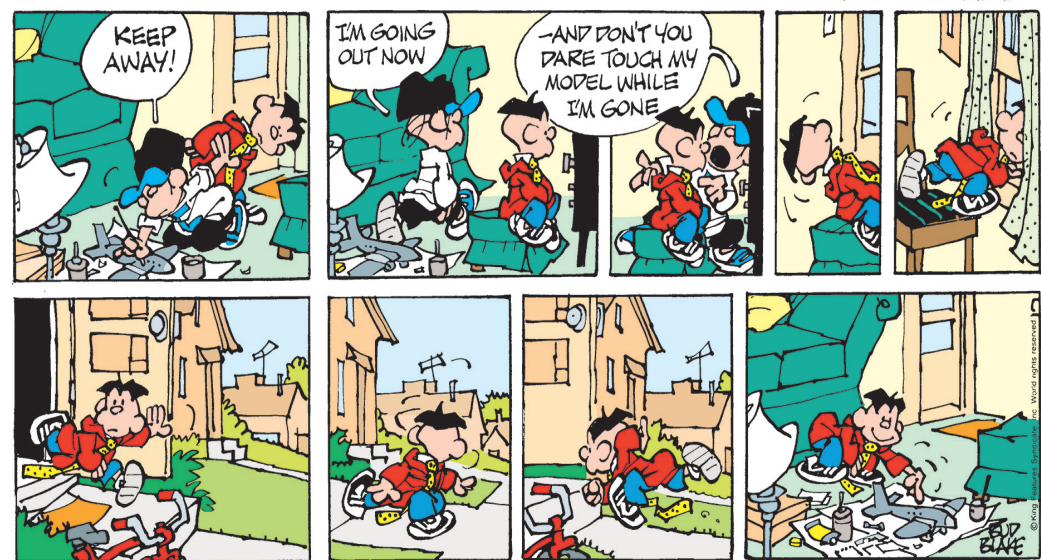
by Gary Kopervas

The Spats



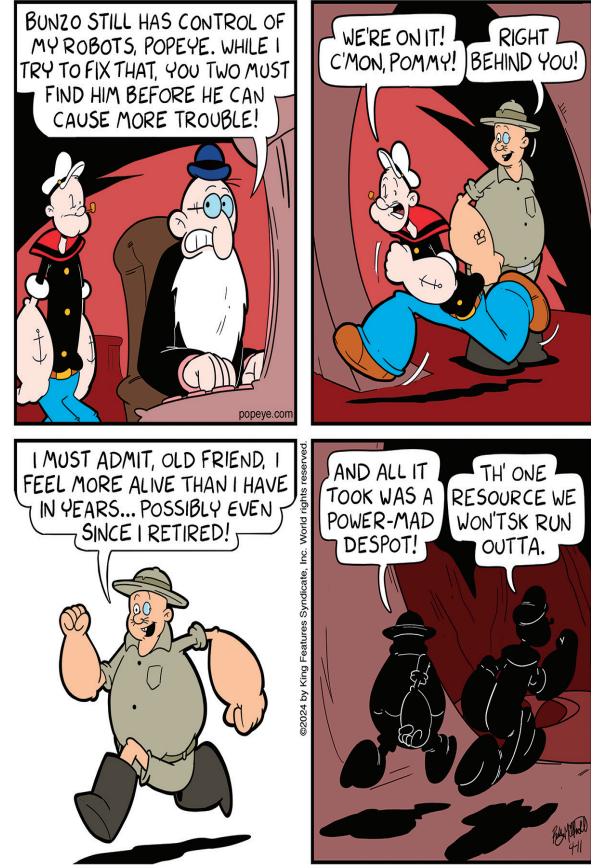
by Jeff Pickering

TIGER



by BUD BLAKE

OLIVE & POPEYE



By Randy Milholland

HOCUS-FOCUS



BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Just Like Cats & Dogs

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: E equals T

VSE WV L OPUSDL REF W GDL

PRDM OH V MJWEJL XCDT CD

UVGDR CJPRD WVQQR:

"CDVQEC FR JT ECD XVH!"

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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!

Exempt UNMIME

Bitter CARDI

Accept TOPAD

Grove SOFTER

TODAY'S WORD

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Valley
5 Unruly crowds
9 Dean's list stat
12 Pinnacle
13 Each
14 Science room
15 Show loyalty to
17 Mentalist Geller
18 Green land
19 Critic Roger
21 Finished
24 Love god
25 Parliamentarian
26 Raised children, say
30 Lucy of "Kill Bill"
31 Desert haven
32 Call — day
33 Native of Yerevan
35 Read quickly
36 Mast
37 Bracelet site
38 Pocket breads
40 Japanese soup
42 Hindu honorific
43 Street game
48 Pouch
49 Actress Fisher

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12					13					14		
15				16						17		
			18					19	20			
21	22	23					24					
25					26	27				28	29	
30					31					32		
33			34						35			
			36					37				
38	39					40	41					
42					43	44				45	46	47
48					49					50		
51					52					53		

- 50 Party cheese
51 "For shame!"
52 Penn or Astin
53 Harvard rival
55 Read quickly
56 Mast
57 Bracelet site
58 Pocket breads
60 Japanese soup
62 Hindu honorific
63 Street game
68 Pouch
69 Actress Fisher
60 Party cheese
61 "For shame!"
62 Penn or Astin
63 Harvard rival
65 Read quickly
66 Mast
67 Bracelet site
68 Pocket breads
70 Japanese soup
72 Hindu honorific
73 Street game
78 Pouch
79 Actress Fisher
70 Henry VIII's Catherine
71 Slightly
76 Josh
77 "— voyage!"
78 First lady of scat
79 Dark film genre
83 Chicken choice
84 Actress Moran
86 Twosome
87 Botanist Gray
88 List-ending abbr.
89 "Great" dog
81 Jackie's Ari
82 Ecol. watch-dog
85 Stuck-up
87 Request
88 "Hey!"
89 Nest egg choices
90 "— 18" (Uris novel)
91 Optimist's credo
94 Mao — -tung
95 Celestial altar
96 Like Abner
97 Country music's Greenwood

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Weekly SUDOKU

			5	8	2		6	3	
								8	
	8		6				4	9	5
	4		5						3
			3	2		4		6	
				1	8	3	9	2	
	7	6				2	1		
5			9			6		7	
1	2		7	5	8	3			

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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FiveSpot™

Current Events

F	L	U	I	D	

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.

FiveSpot is a trademark of Michael McLinden
See more at www.sproutspuzzle.com

02648

A	P	E	X	A	P	O	P	L	A	B		S	T	I	C	K	W	I	T	H	U	R	I	
D	A	L	E	M	O	B	S	G	P	A		S	E	A	N		S		K		S		T	
S	A	C	I	S	L	A	B	R	I	E		S		I	S	L	A	B	R	I	E		S	
S	R	I	S	T	I	C	K	B	A	L	L	P	I	T	A	S	M	I	S	O				
L	I	U	O	A	S	I	S	I	T	A		A	R	M	E	N	I	A	N		S	C	A	N
L	O	R	D	P	A	R	E	N	T	E	D													
E	N	D	E	D																				
E	I	R	E																					
S	T	I	C	K	W	I	T	H	U	R	I													
A	P	E	X	A	P	O	P	L	A	B														
D	A	L	E	M	O	B	S	G	P	A														

Solution time: 23 mins.

Answers

King Crossword

Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez

- MOVIES: Which 1997 film features a villain named Dr. Evil?
- HISTORY: When was the Declaration of Independence officially signed?
- GEOGRAPHY: The country of Eritrea is located on which continent?
- TELEVISION: Which 1980s-90s sitcom includes a neighbor named Winnie Cooper?
- U.S. CITIES: Which city is home to the Mall of America, the largest mall in the United States?
- ANATOMY: What is the largest muscle in the human body?
- SCIENCE: How much of Earth's water is saltwater?
- MEASUREMENTS: How many ounces is 3/4 of a cup?
- ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is a baby goose called?
- MUSIC: When was Taylor Swift's first album released?

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REMOTE

Today's Word

- Immune
- Acrid
- Adopt
- Forest

SCRAMBLERS

N	A	N	A	L	D	C	L	F
C	E	A	L	E	U	C	I	U
O	C	L	A	D	I	D	I	I

Solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
6	4	7	2	8	3	9	1	5	10	11	12
5	3	4	9	1	6	7	8	2	10	11	12
8	7	6	3	4	2	1	5	10	11	12	13
6	5	7	1	8	3	9	2	4	10	11	12
9	1	3	2	7	4	5	6	8	10	11	12
2	4	8	5	6	9	7	1	3	10	11	12
7	8	2	6	3	1	4	9	5	10	11	12
3	6	1	4	9	5	2	8	7	10	11	12
4	9	5	8	2	7	6	3	1	10	11	12

Answer

Weekly SUDOKU

"Health is on the way!"

used by a doctor when he makes house calls:

Apt car bumper sticker

ANSWER

CryptoQuip

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ANSWER

CryptoQuip

LEGALS	LEGALS	LEGALS	LEGALS	LEGALS	LEGALS
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF ROBESON NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND DEBTORS OF MARY HANNAH HOLLINGSWORTH DECEASED FILE NUMBER: 26 E 000563-770	NOTICE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF ROBESON 26 E 000662-770	STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF ROBESON NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND DEBTORS OF TWILA ANITA WILLIFORD DECEASED FILE NUMBER 26 E 000691-770	STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF ROBESON NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND DEBTORS OF ROBERT LEE HAMMONDS JR DECEASED FILE NUMBER: 26 E 000584-770	NORTH CAROLINA ROBESON COUNTY 26 E 446	NORTH CAROLINA ROBESON COUNTY 26 E 724
				NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND DEBTORS	NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND DEBTORS

The undersigned having qualified as Administrators, of the Estate of MARY HANNAH HOLLINGSWORTH, 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 28th day of SEPTEMBER 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 24th day of JUNE 2026.

THOMAS MILTON WHITE
300 JOHN BALLENTINE RD
IRMO SC 29063

6/24 7/1 7/8 7/15 2026

STATE OF
NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF ROBESON
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
AND DEBTORS OF
RONALD LEE SCOTT
DECEASED
FILE NUMBER
26 E 000699-770

The undersigned having qualified as Administrators, of the Estate of RONALD LEE SCOTT, 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 12th day of OCTOBER 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 JULY 2026

SHEILA M PEREZ
2409 COLLINS DR
LUMBERTON NC 28358

7/8 7/15 7/22 7/29 2026

The undersigned, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of James B. Prevatte, deceased of Lumberton, North Carolina, do hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 8th day of October 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This 8th day of July, 2026.

Eric Prevatte, Executor
of the Estate of
James B. Prevatte
444 Watts Road
Lumberton, N.C 28360

MURCHISON,
TAYLOR & GIBSON, PLLC
1979 EASTWOOD ROAD
SUITE 101
WILMINGTON, NC 28403

7/8 7/15 7/22 7/29 2026

All signs
lead to you
finding or
selling what
you want...

SERVICES

EMPLOYMENT

REAL ESTATE

MERCHANDISE

AUTO

by using
Classifieds

The undersigned having qualified as Administrators, of the Estate of TWILA ANITA WILLIFORD, 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 19th day of OCTOBER 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 15th day of JULY 2026

LINDA PARKER WELLS
1627 MONTCLAIR DR
SURFSIDE BEACH SC 29575

7/15 7/22 7/29 8/5 2026

STATE OF
NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF ROBESON
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
AND DEBTORS OF
WILLIAM JUNIOR REVELS
DECEASED
FILE NUMBER
26 E 000694-770

The undersigned having qualified as Executor, of the Estate of WILLIAM JUNIOR REVELS, 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 19th day of OCTOBER 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 15th day of JULY 2026

JIMMY DEAN REVELS
649 JR RD
MAXTON NC 28364

7/15 7/22 7/29 8/5 2026

The undersigned having qualified as Executors, of the Estate of ROBERT LEE HAMMONDS JR, 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 28th day of SEPTEMBER 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 24th day of JUNE 2026.

JUDY ANN JACOBS
CO-EXECUTOR
1696 ELIJAH RD
ORRUM NC 28369

JAYLA MAKIA GADDY
CO-EXECUTOR
1696 ELIJAH RD
ORRUM NC 28369

6/24 7/1 7/8 7/15 2026



All persons, firms or corporations having claims against William Byron Sanborn, deceased, late of Robeson County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before October 15, 2026, or be barred from any recovery.

All persons indebted to said estate are asked to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 15th day of July, 2026.

Heidi Mae Sanborn,
Administrator CTA of the Estate
of William Byron Sanborn,
Deceased,
c/o Jonathan L. Morton
Attorney for the Estate
Huggins, Davis & Associates,
LLP
P.O. Box 1571
Lumberton, NC 28359

7/15 7/22 7/29 8/5 2026

All persons, firms or corporations having claims against John E. Wishart, Jr., deceased, late of Robeson County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before October 15, 2026, or be barred from any recovery.

All persons indebted to said estate are asked to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 15th day of July, 2026.

John Brent Wishart,
Administrator CTA of the
Estate of John E. Wishart, Jr.,
Deceased,
c/o Katherine H. Davis
Attorney for the Estate
Huggins, Davis & Associates,
LLP
P.O. Box 1571
Lumberton, NC 28359

7/15 7/22 7/29 8/5 2026



LEGALS

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA, COUNTY OF ROBESON, IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE, DISTRICT COURT DIVISION, FILE NO.: 26CV000554-770
COUNTY OF ROBESON, a political Subdivision of the State of North Carolina;

Plaintiff,

VS.

ANY AND ALL ASSIGNEES, HEIRS AT LAW AND DEVISEES OF DALLAS OXENDINE, and spouse, if any, Owners, KEVIN OXENDINE and spouse, if any, Heir at Law, TELISHA LYNN OXENDINE and spouse, if any, Heir at Law, BRANDON DWIGHT OXENDINE and spouse, if any, Heir at Law, and CRYSTAL GRAHAM, GUARDIAN AD LITEM OF ANY AND ALL ASSIGNEES, HEIRS AT LAW AND DEVISEES OF DALLAS OXENDINE, and spouse, if any, KEVIN OXENDINE and spouse, if any, Heir at Law, TELISHA LYNN OXENDINE and spouse, if any, Heir at Law, and BRANDON DWIGHT OXENDINE and spouse, if any, Heir at Law;

Defendants.

NOTICE OF SERVICE BY PUBLICATION

TO: ANY AND ALL ASSIGNEES, HEIRS AT LAW AND DEVISEES OF DALLAS OXENDINE, and spouse, if any, Owners, KEVIN OXENDINE and spouse, if any, Heir at Law, TELISHA LYNN OXENDINE and spouse, if any, Heir at Law, BRANDON DWIGHT OXENDINE and spouse, if any, Heir at Law, and CRYSTAL GRAHAM, GUARDIAN AD LITEM OF ANY AND ALL ASSIGNEES, HEIRS AT LAW AND DEVISEES OF DALLAS OXENDINE, and spouse, if any, KEVIN OXENDINE and spouse, if any, Heir at Law, and BRANDON DWIGHT OXENDINE and spouse, if any, Heir at Law; Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action, and notice of service by Publication will begin the 1st day of July, 2026.

The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: foreclosure sale to satisfy unpaid property taxes on your interest in the property described as:

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY:

Owner of Record: Heirs of Dallas Oxendine and spouse, if any, Title Reference: DB 1682 @ PG 344, PIN No: 04030202012, Tax Account No: 1095152, Property Location: Burnt Swamp Twp. Tr 26 Hannah O Wood et al Map 44 @ 85, 1.95 AC +/-.

TRACT 26

Burnt Swamp Township, Robeson County, North Carolina
All that certain tract or parcel of land lying about 3.2 miles east of the center of Pembroke, NC, about ½ mile northeast of NC Highway 72 West, about 0.25 miles northwest of SR 1516, Genes Road, adjacent to and on the northeast side of a 45 foot private easement #3, adjacent to and south of the southeast end of easement #2 and adjoining Tract 25 of this Division on the southwest, Tract 23 on the northwest, Tract 27 on the northeast, Harry Locklear (1073/164) and Mary Chavis (19-B/331) on the southeast and being more particularly described as follows:

BEGINNING at an iron rod set in the northwest line of Mary Chavis (19-B/331), the corner of Tracts 25 and 26 of this Division, this iron rod being located North 51 degrees 45 minutes 40 seconds East 51.56 feet from a pump pipe found in a ditch, the northwest corner of Sue Ellen Brooks (1130/701), this pump pipe being located North 24 degrees 46 minutes 37 seconds West 1128.13 feet from a mag nail found in the centerline intersection of SR 1516, Genes Road with Jimmy's Farm Road and runs thence from said beginning iron rod with the line of Tracts 25 and 26, North 45 degrees 50 minutes 57 seconds West 300.86 feet to an iron rod set in the center of a 45 foot private easement #3, the corners of Tracts 25 and 26; thence with the center of said 45 foot private easement #3 North 40 degrees 49 minutes 44 seconds East 184.78 feet to an iron rod set in the intersection of said 45 foot private easement #3 with the 45 foot private easement #2, the corner of Tracts 23, 26, 27 and 28; thence with the center of said 45 foot private easement #2, South 69 degrees 27 minutes 30 seconds East 89.69 feet to an iron rod set in the center of a cul-de-sac, having a 50 foot radius a the southeast end of said easement #2; thence with the line of Tracts 26 and 27, South 69 degrees 27 minutes 30 seconds East 300.0 feet to an iron rod set in the northwest line of Harry Locklear (1073/164), the corner of Tracts 26 and 27; thence with the northwest line of said Harry Locklear and Mary Chavis (19-B/331), South 51 degrees 45 minutes 40 seconds West 343.56 feet to the beginning containing 1.95 acres more or less.

Granted and Reserved, a 45 foot Private Easement for Jimmy's Farm Road

BEGINNING at an iron rod found in the bend of a ditch, a corner of Tract 12 of this Division and Carolyn O. Carter (452/44), said iron rod being located South 83 degrees 26 minutes 39 seconds West 127.05 feet from an iron rod found at a bend in said ditch, this iron rod being located South 34 degrees 47 minutes 22 seconds West 128.33 feet from an axle found in said ditch, the northeast corner of Tracy Carter (1063/203) and runs thence from said beginning iron rod and runs with said ditch and the southwest line of Jimmy's Farm Road (45 ft. private road) North 51 degrees 24 minutes 52 seconds West 359.20 feet to an iron rod set in said ditch; thence with the center of Jimmy's Farm Road (45 ft. private easement) North 38 degrees 01 minutes 38 seconds East 301.93 feet to an iron rod set at a bend in said easement; thence with the center of said Jimmy's Farm Road (45 ft. private easement) North 40 degrees 09 minutes 45 seconds West 272.56 feet to an iron rod set at a bend in said easement; thence with the center of Jimmy's Farm Road, (45 foot private easement), North 34 degrees 52 minutes 53 seconds East 97.67 feet to an iron rod set at a bend in said easement; thence with the center of said 45 foot private easement for Jimmy's Farm Road North 24 degrees 33 minutes 57 seconds West 545.70 feet to an iron rod set in the center of said easement and the center of a cul-de-sac, having a radius of 50 feet, the easement granted and reserved herein is 45 feet at right angles to and northeast of the 1st line described above and 22.5 feet at right angles to and on both sides of the center of all other lines with a 50 foot radius at the end of the last call for the purpose of ingress, egress and utilities, also granted and reserved is any and all rights to Jimmy's Farm Road that leads from Genes Road, SR 1516, to the above tracts, also a 20 foot private road easement shown in Deed Book 1063, page 203.

45 Foot Private Easement #1, Granted and Reserved

BEGINNING at an iron rod set in the center of Jimmy's Farm Road, a 45 foot private easement, at its intersection with the center of a 45 foot private easement #1, the corner of Tracts 16, 21 and 22, this iron rod being located North 38 degrees 01 minutes 38 seconds East 301.93 feet from an iron rod set in a ditch, the corner of Tracts 15 and 16, this iron rod being located South 51 degrees 24 minutes 52 seconds East 224.49 feet from an iron rod found, a corner with Addie R. Oxendine (471/168) and Audrey Oxendine (452/42) and runs thence from said beginning iron rod with the center of this 45 foot private easement #1, North 73 degrees 04 minutes 27 seconds East 149.11 feet to an iron rod set at a bend in said easement at a ditch; thence continuing with the center of this 45 foot private easement #1, North 39 degrees 07 minutes 56 seconds East 281.44 feet to a iron rod set; thence continuing with the center of this 45 foot private easement #1, North 34 degrees 49 minutes 30 seconds East 159.37 feet to a iron rod set in the center of a cul-de-sac, having a 50 foot radius at the northeast end of this 45 foot private easement #1, the easement granted and reserved herein is 22.50 feet at right angles to and northwest and southeast of the above-described centerline for the purpose of ingress, egress and utilities.

45 Foot Private Easement #2, Granted and Reserved

BEGINNING at an iron rod set in the center of a 45 foot private easement #1, at its intersection with this 45 foot private easement #2, the corner of Tracts 22 and 29 of this Division, this iron rod being located North 34 degrees 49 minutes 30 seconds East 23.94 feet from an iron rod set, the corner of Tracts 21 and 30 of this Division, this iron rod being located South 50 degrees 52 minutes 04 seconds East 297.64 feet from an iron rod set in the south line of Lee Alford Oxendine (603/877), this iron rod being located North 41 degrees 01 minutes 32 seconds East 79.40 feet from an iron rod set in a ditch, the south corner of said Oxendine and runs thence from said beginning iron rod with the center of this 45 foot private easement #2, South 55 degrees 10 minutes 30 seconds East 595.96 feet to an iron rod set, the corner of Tracts 23, 26, 27 and 28 of this Division; thence with the center of this 45 foot private easement #2, South 69 degrees 27 minutes 30 seconds East 89.69 feet to an iron rod set in the center of a cul-de-sac, having a 50 foot radius at the southeast end of said 45 foot private easement #2, the easement granted and reserved herein is 22.50 feet at right angles to and northeast and southwest of the above described centerline for the purpose of ingress, egress and utilities.

45 Foot Private Easement #3, Granted and Reserved

BEGINNING at a iron rod set in the center of 45 foot easement #2 at its intersection with this 45 foot private easement #3, the corner of Tracts 23,26,27 and 28, this iron rod being located North 69 degrees 27 minutes 30 seconds West 389.69 feet from an iron rod set in the northwest line of Harry Locklear (1073/164), the corner of Tracts 26 and 27 of this Division, this iron rod being located South 51 degrees 45 minutes 40 seconds West 82.49 feet from an iron rod found, the south corner of Walter David Oxendine (943/807), and runs thence from said beginning iron rod with the center of this 45 foot private easement #3, South 40 degrees 49 minutes 44 seconds West 369.55 feet to an iron rod set in the center of a cul-de-sac having a 50 foot radius at the southwest end of this 45 foot private easement #3, the easement granted and reserved herein is 22.50 feet at right angles to and northwest and southeast of the above described centerline for the purpose of ingress, egress and utilities.

And being a part of those certain lands as shown in Special Proceedings File 06 SP 0471 in the office of the Clerk of Court of Robeson County.

Bearings referenced to Deed Book1063, page 203.

Exempt from Robeson County Subdivision Ordinance under Article V, Section 501, Item f.

The above-described tract is subject to all right-of-ways and easements of record.
Plaintiff seeks to extinguish any and all claim or interest that you may have in the property. You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than forty days after the date of the first publication date, being forty days after July 1, 2026 or by August 11, 2026, and upon your failure to do so, the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought.

This the 22nd day of June, 2026.

By: K. Robert Davis
Attorney for the Plaintiff
State Bar No. 22911
550 N. Chestnut Street
Lumberton, NC 28358
Tel: 910-671-3060 x 7353

7/1 7/8 7/15 2026

Help Wanted General

The Lumber River Council of Governments, a regional planning and service agency serving Bladen, Hoke, Richmond, Robeson and Scotland counties, is seeking a Work-force Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Career Advisor to serve the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs. The career advisor will perform general intake and eligibility tasks, provide assessments and career guidance in coordinating, referring and conducting project activities under WIOA for the Workforce Development Division in Bladen County.

The position is full time time-limited and will end no later than June 30, 2027. The position requires a Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university in Social Work, Human Resources, or closely related field; or Associate's degree in Human Services Technology, Business Administration and two years successful experience in youth programs, case management or employment and training programs. Must be able to pass a background check, possess a valid driver's license and reliable transportation. Cover letter, employment application (www.lrcog.org), and resume should be submitted to: Career Advisor Position, Lumber River Council of Governments, 30 CJ Walker Road, Pembroke, NC 28372 or yci@lrcog.org. For full consideration apply by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, July 20, 2026. Initial review of applications will begin July 23, 2026. Open until filled. No faxed resumes and/or employment applications will be accepted. LRCOG is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

LEGALS

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE
NORTH CAROLINA, ROBESON COUNTY
25CV003086-770

Pursuant to Default Order and Consent Judgment entered on June 2, 2026 in Robeson County by the presiding Superior Court Judge, default having been made in the payment of the Note secured by the Deed of Trust recorded on recorded on August 21st, 2009 in Book D 1732, Page 505, and subsequently modified by Loan Modification recorded on February 16th, 2024 in Book D2445 at Page 827, Robeson County Registry, and the undersigned, Anchor Trustee Services, LLC having been appointed as Commissioner in this case, the undersigned Commissioner will offer for sale at the courthouse door or other usual place of sale in Robeson County, North Carolina, at **10:00 AM on July 23rd, 2026**, and will sell to the highest bidder for cash the following described property, to wit:

Lying and being in Lumberton Township, Robeson County, North Carolina, about four (4) miles North of the City of Lumberton, East of and adjoining Wisteria Drive and bounded by lands of Harold Phillips on North.

BEGINNING at an iron pipe most Easterly corner of original tract and runs as Southeastern line original tract South 30 degrees 07 minutes West 213.2 feet to an iron pipe; thence North 62 degrees 54 minutes West 287.85 feet to an iron pipe on the right of way of Wisteria Drive; thence as said right of way North 25 degrees 48 minutes East 31.68 feet; North 21 degrees 00 minutes East 52.66 feet to an iron pipe; thence South 76 degrees 39 minutes East 325.0 feet to the beginning, containing 1.20 acres, more or less.

This conveyance is made subject to those Restrictive Covenants of record in Book 14-Q, at Page 9, Robeson County Registry.

Together with improvements located hereon; said property being located at 302 Wisteria Drive, Lumberton, NC 28360

Tax ID: 100204017

Third party purchasers must pay the recording costs of the trustee's deed, any land transfer taxes, the excise tax, pursuant North Carolina General Statutes §105-228.30, in the amount of One Dollar (\$1.00) per each Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) or fractional part thereof, and the Clerk of Courts fee, pursuant to North Carolina General Statutes §7A-308, in the amount of Forty-five Cents (0.45) per each One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) or fractional part thereof with a maximum amount of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00). A deposit of five percent (5%) of the bid or Seven Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$750.00), whichever is greater, will be required at the time of the sale and must be tendered in the form of certified funds. Following the expiration of the statutory upset bid period, all the remaining amounts will be immediately due and owing.

Said property to be offered pursuant to this Notice of Sale is being offered for sale, transfer and conveyance AS IS WHERE IS. There are no representations of warranty relating to the title or any physical, environmental, health or safety conditions existing in, on, at, or relating to the property being offered for sale. This sale is made subject to all prior liens, unpaid taxes, special assessments, land transfer taxes, if any, and encumbrances of record. **To the best of the knowledge and belief of the undersigned, the current owner(s) of the property is/are The Heirs of Kenneth A. Wood and Cynthia V. Wood.**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE: An order for possession of the property may be issued pursuant to North Carolina General Statutes §1-339.29 in favor of the purchaser and against the party or parties in possession by the Clerk of Superior Court of the county in which the property is sold.

Any person who occupies the property pursuant to a rental agreement entered into or renewed on or after October 1, 2007, may, after receiving the notice of sale, terminate the rental agreement by providing written notice of termination to the landlord, to be effective on a date stated in the notice that is at least 10 days, but no more than 90 days, after the sale date contained in the notice of sale, provided that the mortgagor has not cured the default at the time the tenant provides the notice of termination. Upon termination of a rental agreement, the tenant is liable for rent due under the rental agreement prorated to the effective date of termination. If the Commissioner is unable to convey title to this property for any reason, the sole remedy of the purchaser is the return of the deposit. Reasons of such inability to convey include, but are not limited to, the filing of a bankruptcy petition prior to the confirmation of the sale and reinstatement of the loan without the knowledge of the Commissioner. If the validity of the sale is challenged by any party, the Commissioner, in their sole discretion, if they believe the challenge to have merit, may request the court to declare the sale to be void and return the deposit. The purchaser will have no further remedy.

Anchor Trustee Services, LLC,
Commissioner

By:/s/ Cameron D. Scott
Cameron D. Scott, Esq.,
Attorney for Commissioner
Pinyan Law Firm, PLLC
1320 Matthews Mint Hill Road
Matthews, NC 28105
Phone: 704-743-6387
Fax: 866-535-8589
25-000295-01/ NC2025-00071

7/15 7/22 2026

Super Sunday? England dreams of World Cup, Open double

Steve Douglas
AP Sports Writer

SOUTHPORT, England — How’s this for a dreamy scenario for English sports fans on Sunday.

An Englishman becomes “the champion golfer of the year” by winning the British Open at Royal Birkdale.

Then, a few hours later, England’s soccer team wins the World Cup.

“It would be mega,” said Matt Wallace, one of 21 English golfers in the field for the final major of 2026 taking place on the north-west coast of England from Thursday.

So, is this joyous sporting double a possibility? Sure.

A probability? That would be pushing it.

It might be the most well-known fact in all of sports in these parts that England — where soccer is king — hasn’t won the World Cup since 1966. This year, the men’s team is into the semifinals and will face Lionel Messi and Argentina on Wednesday.

Less known is that no Englishman has won the Open Championship in England since Tony Jacklin in 1969.

Soccer fans call it six decades of hurt, and the wait is getting excruciating for the golfers, too. Indeed, since Jacklin, only one Englishman has won the Open and that was Nick Faldo — three times (1987, ’90 and ’92) and all of them in Scotland.

Fleetwood is a local lad and a fan favorite

Tommy Fleetwood might be England’s best bet this year and, boy, how the locals would celebrate a win.

As a kid, Fleetwood lived just round the corner from Royal Birkdale, which he’d sneak on when accompanying his father, Peter, on evening dog walks.

He’s the poster boy for this championship but is aware he’s sharing the limelight with the country’s more globally recognized soccer players this week.

“For those guys, they definitely carry a nation on their shoulders a lot more than we do,” the No. 9-ranked Fleetwood said. “They’ve been doing a great job.”

And yes, the soccer will be intruding on the golf.

On Monday, Matt Fitzpatrick — the highest-ranked English golfer at No. 3 — pleaded to be given a later tee time for the first round on Thursday. The England-Argentina game kicks off at 8 p.m. local time on Wednesday night and wouldn’t finish until close to 11 p.m. if it goes to extra time and penalties.

“If anyone’s listening, ... it would be nice if all the English lads were late/early,” Fitzpatrick said of the Thursday/Friday tee times. “That would be great.”

They weren’t so lucky. Each of the first eight groups to go out in the first round on Thursday will contain an Englishman.

Matthew Baldwin, who

RCGC set for weekend



Jeff Slabe, left, congratulates Scott Benton, right after Benton won the 2025 Robeson County Golf Championship title at Pinecrest Country Club in Lumberton.

Photos by Chris Stiles | The Robesonian

Benton looks to defend at ‘pretty’ Pinecrest

Chris Stiles
The Robesonian

LUMBERTON — The golf course at Pinecrest Country Club always seems to peak just in time for the Robeson County Golf Championship. But, to hear Pinecrest head professional Dwight Gane talk about the course, that seems to be especially true this year.

“We’ve had extremely timely rainfall this year, and considering we just got four inches in the last two days; we’d like for that to be cut off, but the golf course can handle what we just got, no problem, and I am fired up for this,” Gane said. “This is as pretty as our golf course has ever been for any event.”

The result will be a solid test for the county’s best golfers as the 46th annual tournament, sponsored by Dial Insurance, is played Friday through Sunday.

“The fairways are good, the greens are good. It should be a fun weekend,” said Scott Benton, the tournament’s defending champion. “I think the rough’s going to be up a little bit. The course is playing pretty tough, so it should be a good challenge for us.”

Sunny weather is forecasted for Friday and Saturday, with a 40% chance of rain on Sunday.

Seventy players were registered for the tournament as of Tuesday morning, Gane said, with the hope that the field can reach about 90.

The 54-hole Championship Division will play Friday, Saturday and Sunday rounds. The other divisions are each 36 holes; the Super Senior Division (age 65 and up) will play on Friday and Saturday, with the Regular, Senior (age 55 and up) and Ladies divisions each playing Saturday and Sunday. More participation is needed in the Senior and Super Senior divisions in particular, Gane said.

Entries are \$110 for the Championship Division and \$75 for the other divisions. The tournament is open to amateur golfers age 13 and up who are a Robeson County resident or a member at a Robeson County course. To register, visit the Pinecrest Country Club pro shop.

Food and beverages will be available daily. All divisions receive trophies and gift certificates. Divisions with the most participants will include a new Callaway driver as first-place prize; second most will receive a new Scotty Cameron putter. Fields will be flighted



Ryan Bass watches after hitting his approach from under a tree on the 14th hole during the 2025 Robeson County Golf Championship at Pinecrest Country Club in Lumberton.

for all divisions after Saturday’s round.

Benton won the Championship Division in 2025, claiming the title for the fifth time, becoming the tournament’s oldest champion.

“It’s been a long time I’ve been playing in it and I always look forward to it,” said Benton, who won his first title in 1987. “It’s always good to get out and get some competition and play some golf.”

Ryan Tyson won the Regular Division title in 2025, Hannah Luckett won the Ladies Division and Larry Lynn Locklear

won the Super Senior title for the third time in the last four years.

While playing as the defending champion is not a new experience for Benton, his previous RCGC title came in 1992; he hopes that returning this weekend as the reigning winner allows him to play more relaxed golf in this year’s tournament.

“I feel like I kind of got the monkey off my back again last year,” Benton said. “It’s a little different this year I guess. I’ll

Ball trade to Wolves made with long-term success in mind, Hornets GM says

Steve Reed
AP Sports Writer

CHARLOTTE — The Charlotte Hornets won 44 games last season, a 25-win improvement over the previous year.

So the question begs to be asked: Why would Hornets general manager and executive vice president basketball operations Jeff Peterson break up a team that seemed on the rise by trading its most dynamic offensive player in LaMelo Ball?

Peterson addressed the question on Saturday in Las Vegas where the Hornets are playing Summer League games, saying it was all about the long-term success of the organization.

“These decisions are chal-

lenging at times, but when you look at the totality of the season and everything of where we were, it’s important to take an honest look in the mirror of where you guys are as a team,” Peterson said. “And that’s what I had to do at the end of the season. And I just feel like again, the goal is never to compete for a play-in spot. The goal isn’t to get to the play-in or even the playoffs for one year.”

Charlotte reached the play-in tournament and beat Miami at home before getting blown out on the road at Orlando.

Ball, who had struggled with injuries in the past, had one of his best seasons and averaged 20.1 points, 7.1 assists and 4.8 rebounds per game while finishing second in the league to



Charlotte Hornets guard LaMelo Ball brings the ball up the court against the Miami Heat during an NBA play-in tournament game April 14 in Charlotte. Ball was traded to the Minnesota Timberwolves following the season.

Nell Redmond | AP Photo

rookie teammate Kon Knueppel in 3-pointers made with 272.

However, the Hornets failed to make the playoffs in the six

seasons since Ball came to them as the No. 3 overall pick

Former Fairmont football coach Floyd dies

Staff report

FAIRMONT — James Floyd, who was head coach of the Fairmont High School football team more than six decades ago, died Saturday at his home in Mullins, South Carolina. He was 96.

Floyd coached the Golden Tornadoes in 1961-62, winning 10 games across two seasons. This included a 6-4 record in 1961, with a 6-1 start. Five of his 10 wins came against in-county competition, with additional wins including Aberdeen and Southern Pines.

Floyd also coached basketball at Aynor High School and taught at Fair Bluff and Lake View. He later became a doctor of pharmacy and worked for more than 50 years as a pharmacist in Mullins. He is survived by two children and a stepdaughter, four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. The family will receive friends from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday at First Baptist Church in Mullins before his funeral at the church at 3 p.m. and interment following at Cedardale Cemetery.



Floyd

England

From page 1B

was born a stone’s throw away in Southport, is a member at Royal Birkdale and came through qualifying to take his place in his home major. He will have the honor of hitting the first shot of the championship at 6:35 a.m. on Thursday. That might mean him having to wake up at 4 a.m. Will he watch the soccer?

England soccer fans dotted around Royal Birkdale

The World Cup effect is certainly evident around Royal Birkdale, which is a short drive from the soccer hotbed of Liverpool. Watching players on the practice putting green on Sunday was a young girl wearing an England jersey

with “Bellingham” and “10” on the back — a nod to England star Jude Bellingham — and with a tattoo of the England flag on each cheek. R&A chief executive Mark Darbon has said the final round of the Open could be brought forward to avoid a clash with the World Cup final, which begins at 8 p.m. local time. The last round might not finish until around 6:30 p.m. — and that’s if there’s no need for a playoff. Just imagine if it’s Fleetwood making that late-evening walk down the 18th ahead of collecting the claret jug and watching England in the soccer final. “It would be outrageous,” said Roger Shutt, a 70-year-old Englishman who was one of the thousands of fans to attend Monday’s practice round. “If they coincide, it’ll be a holiday for everyone.”

2026 ROBESON COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL SCHEDULES

Fairmont Aug. 21 — at Lumberton Aug. 28 — Forest Hills Sept. 4 — Lake View Sept. 11 — at Lakewood Sept. 18 — at St. Pauls Sept. 25 — BYE Oct. 2 — at South Columbus* Oct. 9 — West Bladen* Oct. 16 — at Whiteville* Oct. 23 — South Brunswick* Oct. 30 — Red Springs*	Oct. 16 — Terry Sanford* Oct. 23 — Scotland* Oct. 30 — at Purnell Swett*	Sept. 11 — at Purnell Swett Sept. 18 — Douglas Byrd Sept. 25 — BYE Oct. 2 — South Brunswick* Oct. 9 — at South Columbus* Oct. 16 — at West Bladen* Oct. 23 — Whiteville* Oct. 30 — at Fairmont*
Lumberton Aug. 21 — Fairmont Aug. 28 — St. Pauls Sept. 4 — at Westover Sept. 11 — BYE Sept. 18 — at Heide Trask Sept. 25 — at Monroe Oct. 2 — Cape Fear* Oct. 9 — at Gray’s Creek*	Sept. 11 — Red Springs Sept. 18 — South Brunswick Sept. 25 — BYE Oct. 2 — Terry Sanford* Oct. 9 — at Cape Fear* Oct. 16 — at Scotland* Oct. 23 — at Gray’s Creek* Oct. 30 — Lumberton*	St. Pauls Aug. 21 — Purnell Swett Aug. 28 — at Lumberton Sept. 4 — at Red Springs Sept. 11 — North Brunswick Sept. 18 — Fairmont Sept. 25 — BYE Oct. 2 — at E.E. Smith* Oct. 9 — Seventy-First* Oct. 16 — at Westover* Oct. 23 — South View* Oct. 30 — at Douglas Byrd* * — denotes conference game
Red Springs Aug. 21 — at Anson Aug. 28 — Pender Sept. 4 — St. Pauls		

Hornets

From page 1B

in 2020. “There’s no doubt in my mind that we had a successful season last year by a lot of people’s standards, and of course LaMelo was a huge part of that,” Peterson said. “But again, sometimes these decisions, they can be challenging. But ultimately I do feel a responsibility to the organization and to the fans really across the world of the Hornets to do what’s best for the long term of the franchise.” Peterson believes that acquiring Naz Reid and draft picks from Minnesota for Ball will give the Hornets more flexibility moving forward as they continue to build.

As part of a four-team trade with Brooklyn, Chicago and Minnesota, Charlotte sent Ball and Josh Green to the Timberwolves in exchange for Reid, a 2033 unprotected first-round pick, first-round pick swaps in 2028, 2029 and 2030, and second-round picks in 2029, 2032 and 2033. Along with draft capital, the Hornets also received a \$40.7 million trade exception — the largest in NBA history — as part of the deal, positioning themselves to add other top talent. Still, the move did not sat well with many fans in Charlotte, where Ball is extremely popular and has been a huge draw. The anger is not on the same level as Mavs fans when Luka Doncic was traded to Los Angeles, but some felt the move was ill-timed given the Hornets appeared

headed in the right direction with Ball as their leader. Peterson said he knows Ball will do great things in Minnesota. “I do empathize with the fans and I understand just where they’re coming from,” Peterson said. “If I’m honest, I love LaMelo. He’s a tremendous human being. Of course, he’s an enormous talent. He and I have a great relationship. “But I would hope that they understand that I have the best interest of the Hornets organization. I truly do. And it’s not about one year or two years. It’s about sustained success and just being objective of where we truly are in our life cycle. I have no doubt that this team we roll out next year and the years to come is going to continue to compete and eventually we’ll get there.”

Golf

From page 1B

maybe enjoy it a little bit more this year. ... The short game’s been pretty decent. You never know until you get under the gun; I don’t play enough tournaments to know that much, but we’re going to go out and give it a good try and hope-

fully play well.” In addition to Benton, many of the “same characters” who contend in the Championship Division are among those Gane expects to possibly contend this weekend. This includes players like Jeff Wishart, Ian Locklear, Landon Lowry, Jamie Locklear and Steve Pippin, while Ryan Bass has won the tournament six times including five of

the last seven years. Wishart finished second last year, three strokes behind Benton, with Jeff Slabe in third and Bass and Lowry rounding out the top five. The winning score has been between 4 under par and even in each of the last five years, including Benton’s 4-under total last year. Gane expects that the winner could be right around the same

point this weekend, with many players capable of doing so. “It seems like even par is a better score than it was at one time in this golf tournament,” Gane said. “There are a bunch of people capable of winning this golf tournament.” Editor Chris Stiles can be reached at 910-416-5847 or by email at cstiles@robesonian.com.

ROBESON COUNTY GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP

Championship Division Winners

1981 — Hal Herring
1982 — Franklin Smith
1983 — Nick McKeithan
1984 — Franklin Smith
1985 — Hal Herring
1986 — Hal Herring
1987 — Scott Benton
1988 — Dyrck Fanning
1989 — James “Boo” Marks
1990 — Scott Benton
1991 — Scott Benton
1992 — Scott Benton

1993 — Mark Kinlaw
1994 — Dyrck Fanning
1995 — Mark Kinlaw
1996 — Dyrck Fanning
1997 — Dyrck Fanning
1998 — Patrick Smith
1999 — Patrick Smith
2000 — James Locklear
2001 — Mark Kinlaw
2002 — William McGirt
2003 — Kyle Covington
2004 — Kyle Covington
2005 — Dyrck Fanning
2006 — Kyle Covington
2007 — Kyle Covington
2008 — Kyle Covington
2009 — Kyle Covington

2010 — Kyle Covington
2011 — Ian Locklear
2012 — Brad Locklear
2013 — Ryan Bass
2014 — Kyle Covington
2015 — Kyle Covington
2016 — Steve Pippin
2017 — Brad Locklear
2018 — Greg Powell
2019 — Ryan Bass
2020 — Ryan Bass
2021 — Steve Pippin
2022 — Ryan Bass
2023 — Ryan Bass
2024 — Ryan Bass
2025 — Scott Benton



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ROBESON COUNTY ATHLETIC SPOTLIGHT

PURNELL SWETT HIGH SCHOOL



ELIJAH CUMMINGS
Soccer, Tennis

Purnell Swett’s Elijah Cummings is enlisting in the U.S. Army after graduating from the school last month. Cummings was a two-sport athlete with the Rams, participating in soccer and tennis. On the pitch, the midfielder had one assist in his senior season, and had two goals with two assists in his varsity career.

LUMBERTON HIGH SCHOOL



AVA HANNAH
Volleyball, Softball

Lumberton’s Ava Hanna starred on both the volleyball court and softball field as a senior in the 2025-26 school year. As an outside hitter in volleyball, she totaled over 300 kills and was Robeson County Co-Player of the Year. On the diamond, she hit .535 with 35 RBIs and 34 runs, broke her sister’s school single-season record with 18 doubles, and earned six pitching wins with a 2.87 ERA.

Spieth returns to Royal Birkdale looking for magic that made him an Open champion

Doug Ferguson
AP Golf Writer

SOUTHPORT, England — Jordan Spieth was four days shy of turning 24 when he delivered pure magic in the final hour at Royal Birkdale to win the British Open for the third leg of the Grand Slam. It was among the most astonishing finishes in a major championship.

Perhaps even more astonishing? He has only two PGA Tour victories since. He has played in the final group at a major only once.

What hasn't changed is his optimism that he can get back to his best golf, now matter how far away that looks for a player who is No. 51 in the world, who has not been to the Tour Championship the past two years, who has not been in the conversation at a major in five years.

"If you give up on reaching your ceiling, then I don't see a point in playing anymore," Spieth said Monday. "So for me it's always about I'll do everything I can to be trying to be at the very best in the world, because I know that I can be. I have been. It's nice to have the blueprint."

The blueprint was nearly a decade ago — the pursuit of the calendar Grand Slam that ended with a bogey on the 17th hole at St. Andrews in 2015, his British Open title two years later, and playing in the final group at Carnoustie in 2018 as he tried to keep possession of the claret jug.

He feels he is on the right track and keeps getting a bad hand. The analogy he used earlier this year was having a bad shoe at the blackjack table, staying put because as soon as he walks away, fortunes surely will turn.

He's still at the table. "I'm quite frustrated with the results considering I know where my game is at," Spieth said. "It's better than it was four or five years ago when I got



Jordan Spieth holds the trophy after winning the British Open on July 23, 2017 at Royal Birkdale in Southport, England.

Dave Thompson | AP File Photo

back to top 10 in the world. It's without a doubt better than it was then. It's just not quite showing up in results.

"At the same time, it's a stay-the-course mentality," he said. "Sometimes you get rewarded right away, like I did back then maybe in a bit of a lucky fashion, and I understand that sometimes it's delayed. And that's how it feels like it is right now. ... So I'm just waiting for that opportunity."

The return to Royal Birkdale at least allows him to remember how it felt to walk up to the 18th green with victory secure, sitting on the edge of a pot bunker with the claret jug as dozens of photographers captured the image of a 23-year-old often referred to then as "Golden Child."

What he can't relive is the finish. He lost the lead on the 13th hole even though his bogey felt like stealing a shot

— he took a penalty drop from a dune covered in high grass, hit a blind shot from the driving range and limited the damage with a chip-and-putt for bogey, just like always.

Then came the 6-iron he nearly holed on the par-3 14th and the 50-foot eagle putt on the par-5 15th hole — "Go get that," he famously said to caddie Michael Greller — and two more birdies.

"Maybe the best shot and best putt I've ever hit don't exist anymore," Spieth said with a smile.

The par-3 14th is gone now. The R&A instead wanted the 15th hole to play as No. 14, and it built a new par-3 15th that measures 241 yards and has yet to get many positive reviews. "Undecided," Rory

McIlroy said last week. "As is always the case in par 3s, you have to wait until a tournament plays to see how the par 3 plays," Tommy Fleetwood said on Monday.

Perhaps the biggest change for Spieth are the conditions. It was wet and green and lush in 2017, the wind coming out of the opposite direction. Now it is mostly yellow, brittle and firm, and much of England is coping with a heat wave.

Players were in shorts for the Monday practice

round, which followed a "Last Chance Qualifier" that Joe Dean of England won with a 68 to secure his spot in the field.

"It's going to play quite different than the last time we were here," Spieth said. "We've had an opposite wind, too, the last couple days. ... Holes that are close to being drivable become mid- to long irons, and just with the wind switch, the difference into and down are so dramatic over here that picking a strategy is going to be key."

A change of scenery

might not be the worse thing for Spieth. He arrived over the weekend and relived some of those shots in the closing stretch, at least on the holes still there. But at this stage in his career, it's more about looking forward.

"I'm always comparing myself a bit to myself at my best, but not to try to be the exact player, just more so that I know that I can do it," Spieth said. "I know my ceiling is where that level was, and so I'm going to strive for it with the type of player that I am now."

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Baseball’s all-Stars don’t like MLB’s salary cap proposal, but say there’s time to find a deal

Ronald Blum
AP Baseball Writer

PHILADELPHIA — Paul Skenes, Juan Soto and Bryce Harper are among baseball’s All-Stars who say players will never agree to a salary cap but maintain there’s plenty of time to avoid a conflict that could shorten the 2027 season.

“Both sides kind of have their line that they’re not going to cross,” Skenes, the Pittsburgh Pirates ace who is also a member of the union’s eight-man negotiating committee, said Monday. “Whether that results in missing games or missing a season, we’ll see.”

Baseball’s five-year labor contract expires Dec. 1 and MLB is expected to immediately lock out players. The more consequential deadline is in late February or early March, when Major League Baseball would announce whether it was postponing opening day.

Owners proposed a salary cap for the first time since the union fought off MLB’s cap plan with a 7 1/2-month strike in 1994-95 that caused the first cancellation of the World Series since 1904. Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred says a cap is needed to lessen payroll disparity.

Soto, who signed a record \$765 million, 15-year-old contract with the New York Mets as a free agent after the 2024 season, would be limited to a \$265 million, six-year deal under MLB’s proposal.

“Yeah, that sucks,” Soto said. “It shouldn’t be there.”

MLB’s proposal would cap spending in 2027 at \$245.3 million, using figures for luxury tax



Pittsburgh Pirates’ Braxton Ashcraft, left, and Paul Skenes arrive to speak with the media during MLB All-Star Week Monday in Philadelphia.

Matt Slocum | AP Photo

payrolls that include \$20.1 million for benefits and the pre-arbitration bonus pool. It also would establish a payroll floor of \$171.2 million, forcing some teams to spend more.

The Los Angeles Dodgers, baseball’s biggest spenders, had a \$415.2 million payroll on opening day this year. MLB has not made a proposal on how to phase in a cap, a process that would be key for high-spending clubs such as the Dodgers.

Los Angeles Angels outfielder Mike Trout, at 34 in the eighth season of a \$426.5 million, 12-year contract, said players are aware of the proposal’s intent.

“It’s trying to minimize the years and obviously the totals. For sure, we see that,” he said. “I think baseball’s in a good spot right now and we can’t mess this up.”

Harper, in the eighth season of a \$330 million, 13-year contract with Philadelphia, said he couldn’t conceive of any scenario in which the players’ association would agree to a cap.

“The opportunity for players to get paid is what this is all about,” Harper said, citing the union’s legacy of fighting MLB since Curt Flood helped unite players in the 1970s. “We owe it to the guys that have come before us to do the same thing.”

Harper, who signed his first major league contract at age 17, also vowed to fight MLB’s proposal to ban a player from signing until he was at least 20 years old by the Sept. 1 of his signing year and two years removed from the graduating year of his high school class. MLB says college baseball provides a better development path.

“If you’re in the top three rounds as a high school kid, I think you should be able to do whatever you want,” Harper said. “It would really be tough for a guy like Jackson Holliday to not be the number one pick and not get the chance to go to the big leagues at 19 or 18 if he’s able to.”

Bargaining began in May and is expected to resume after the All-Star break. The union has asked for expanded free agency and salary arbitration rights along with almost doubling the major league minimum.

Pirates pitcher Braxton Ashcraft viewed the early negotiations as “back-and-forth proposals that may or may not be unrealistic.”

Skenes, a 24-year-old right-hander in his second full big league season, could see a sharp decrease in potential contract offers under MLB’s system. He currently is on track to become a free agent after the 2029 season and has a \$1,085,000 salary in his last season

before arbitration eligibility. He also has earned nearly \$5.6 million from the pre-arbitration bonus pool that started in 2022.

“MLB is kind of presenting their perfect-world offers and we’re kind of presenting our perfect-world offers,” Skenes said. “So there’s a lot of time before there’s any real movement, I think.”

San Diego’s Mason Miller, baseball’s top closer, also could become a free agent following the 2029 season. A 27-year-old right-hander, he is earning \$4 million this season.

“I still have some optimism,” he said. “The place that the game’s at right now, I think killing that momentum is kind of fruitless for everybody.”

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