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GETTY IMAGES

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services has declared the coronavirus outbreak is no longer a major concern in the state.

Crisis over: Coronavirus outbreak downgraded

State agency changes COVID-19 dashboard, closed community testing sites

By Aaliyah Bowden
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The novel coronavirus outbreak is no longer a major concern in North Carolina, according to the state health department.

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services announced changes to the COVID-19 dashboard and state-funded testing sites as the federal coronavirus emergency comes to an end on May 11. COVID will become a routine part of public health and health care activities. NCDHHS closed its remaining

community testing sites on March 31.

Home test kits are widely available and can be found at community access points and through Project ACT and the federal program distributing at-home test kits through the United States Postal Service.

"While we continue to see illness and deaths from COVID-19, it is no longer the threat it once was thanks to testing, vaccines and treatment," said Susan Kansagra, Director of NCDHHS Division of Public Health. "As we evolve our response to the more routine nature of

COVID-19 going forward, these indicators will help us monitor our health care capacity from respiratory illness including COVID-19 and adjust our response if needed."

NCDHHS will continue to monitor COVID-19 cases and will now combine the data with other respiratory illness data.

COVID vaccine data will move to monthly updates, with numbers not changing as much and will retire May 31. Vaccine data will continue to be available

Please see **CORONAVIRUS** | 2A

NC House budgets for voter ID eventually

By Kelan Lyons
NC NEWSLINE

The North Carolina Supreme Court hasn't yet ruled on whether a voter ID law was intended to discriminate against prospective voters of color, but that didn't stop House Republicans from funding it.

Legislators released a budget proposal last week that would give \$3.5 million to the State Board of Elections to implement voter ID requirements. The board also would be required to report to the legislature how they used the money on Feb. 1 and May 1, 2024.

The status of the Voter ID law, passed by the state legislature in 2018, is uncertain. The state Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional last year, with the court's Democratic justices finding the statute "was enacted with discriminatory intent to disproportionately disenfranchise and burden African-American voters in North Carolina."

But then the Democrats lost control of the Supreme Court in last year's elections, giving Republicans a 5-2 majority. The new majority then agreed to re-consider the case.

The justices heard oral arguments last month. Pete Patterson, an attorney for Republican lawmakers, said the previous court had erred in its ruling, that the

Please see **STATE HOUSE** | 2A

Cannabis sales have buyers, sellers on a high

By Collin Tadlock
UNC MEDIA HUB

CHAPEL HILL - Running through the heart of downtown Chapel Hill, Franklin Street has recently seen an influx of cannabis-related businesses and organizations.

From vaporizers and hemp stores to mobile cannabis carts, Delta-8 THC is more widespread than ever, with many potential users unfamiliar with the product and its effects.

While headlines in the state tend to focus on recent votes toward medical marijuana legalization, there is a growing industry in hemp-derived Delta-8. Since these products are not classified as cannabis, which remains illegal in North Carolina, they can give users a strong, yet legal high.

As the nation turns a new leaf with cannabis legalization, the state of North Carolina has already had an explosion of alternatives to the substance, and these products are protected under state legislation. Delta-8?

Located at vape shops, convenience stores and even gas stations, Delta-8 is well-accessible to consumers. Products are available in different forms, including gummies, chocolate, vaping cartridges, infused drinks and even breakfast cereal.

So, what is it? Delta-8 THC is described as a psychoactive substance found in small traces in both hemp and cannabis plants.

Often referred to as the little brother of Delta-9 THC, Delta-8 is a less potent cannabis compound that produces a less psychoactive high. The 2018 Farm Bill federally legalized "hemp derivatives" containing less than 0.3% Delta-9 THC - with any amount past that threshold still being considered illegal.

Please see **LEGAL** | 2A

Healing place for city's homeless faces a crisis

By Herbert L. White
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A nonprofit house of healing for Charlotte's homeless has three months to stay alive.

Samaritan House officials revealed Monday the facility is shutting down for 90 days and needs \$200,000 by July 1 if it's to continue serving clients. A fundraising initiative, "Save Our Home," is taking donations at thesamartanhouse.org/donations.

"Samaritan House cannot go away," executive director Rodney Tucker said. "If it did, these folks would lose their advocates, their voices. We are serving these folks in such a special and unique way and it breaks my heart to think about abandoning them because of money. It's time to build back better and we need everyone's help."

Black people in Mecklenburg County are homeless at higher rates than whites, according to the Dec. 31, 2021, Point in Time headcount, which found 2,884 housing insecure individuals. As a proportion, Blacks made up 76% of the county's homeless, compared to 4% of whites.

On Oct. 31, 2022, 3,260 people were homeless, according to the Mecklenburg County Community Support Services Housing Innovation and Stabilization Services Division.

Blacks account for 31% of the county's population, while whites make up 47%.

Samaritan House, which opened in 2005 and is located in east Charlotte, helps housing insecure people with medical support when they leave hospital care to reduce recidivism and improve positive health outcomes. Clients receive clean clothes, daily meals, and safe space to stay and support to finish their medical services and appointments. The nonprofit also arranges transportation and connection to a case worker to help them find long term housing. Samaritan House, which is funded primarily by donations from individuals and the faith community, doesn't charge clients for services.

"I have seen firsthand the miracle that Samaritan House provides our clients. If you can imagine how low a client could feel exiting the hospital with med-

Please see **A HEALING PLACE** | 2A



TROY HULL | THE CHARLOTTE POST

The April 6 NC BREATHE conference in Charlotte will bring together climate activists and health professionals to discuss how environmental factors impact North Carolina communities.

Climate change and NC's health at forefront of Charlotte conference

By Herbert L. White
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Environmental justice advocates will gather in Charlotte to discuss climate change and health impacts across North Carolina.

The April 6 NC BREATHE conference at 658 Center will bring together health professionals, researchers, students, community leaders, and policymakers to craft strategies that address climate-related health issues.

"The number one source of greenhouse gas emissions in North Carolina is through the transportation sector," said Kirsten Minor, health manager of Charlotte-based Clean-AIRE NC and coordinator of the conference. "So in the case of Charlotte, there are major highways interstate systems that intersect the Charlotte community and the community most impacted disproportionately is the

Historic West End. In addition to exposures to traffic pollution from the major highways and interstate system, there's also landfills or various industrial sites.

"All of those various sources can obviously have a disproportionate impact on communities members who live in those respective areas."

Keynote speakers include Atrium Health pediatrician Dr. Aaron Levy and Mustafa Santiago Ali, founder of Revitalization Strategies and executive vice president of the National Wildlife Federation.

The forum aims to determine climate change solutions using evidence-based science that can be shared with decision-makers at the local, state, and federal level.

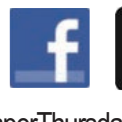
Please see **CLIMATE** | 4A



Minor

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Hunter Bolesky (left) and Brandon Srinath (middle) are making a name for themselves in the local cannabis market with their mobile botanical shop, Botana-Cart. They operate the cart with fellow hemp tender Christopher Brooks Letters (right).

Legal cannabis sales have buyers and sellers on a high

Continued from page 1A

Delta-8 products seen in stores and dispensaries across the country are hemp-derived, according to the National Law Review. Thus, courts nationwide have agreed that these substances are removed from criminal penalties associated with other cannabis products.

The only chemical difference between Delta-8 and Delta-9 THC is where a particular double bond is located on the chain of carbon atoms, causing Delta-9 to be higher in potency.

Legality "If it's made from hemp, it is not marijuana and there is otherwise no real regulation on it," said Phil Dixon Jr., a teaching assistant professor at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Government.

Dixon said regulation has ceased concerning the permit process for selling hemp and hemp products, including Delta-8. This allows the substance to fly under the radar, with interest in the product growing exponentially over the past five years.

"Delta-8 is extremely popular, but we don't have permitting requirements; we don't have licensing requirements to sell it; we don't have state regulators testing the stuff before it hits the shelf," Dixon said. "That is a risk to consumers."

Dixon also noted that there is no age limit on these intoxicating hemp products, explaining that his 15-year-old son can legally possess a bag of intoxicating Delta-8 gummies.

In June 2022, the state passed a law making hemp products legal forever, along with House Bill 252 which passed in July of the same year and no longer qualifies hemp and hemp products as controlled substances.

These laws cause confusion as to whether products like Delta-8 THC could potentially be treated as illegal THC, even when sourced from hemp. "We have a boatload of legal - apparently legal - and available, intoxicating hemp products sourced from legal cannabis, while also maintaining a prohibition on regular marijuana as illegal cannabis," Dixon said. "That creates a confusing situation on the ground for both consumers, distributors and law enforcement."

Dixon said that the state formerly had the North Carolina Industrial Hemp Pilot Program which was established in 2015, but that program has since expired.

"It's the Wild West," said Mikhail Lukacs, hemp tender and head of sales at The Hemp Store in Chapel Hill.

Lukacs explained that anyone passionate about the industry understands that cannabis regulation in North Carolina "is something that needs to be done."

Benefits "Cannabis has a lot of potential to help a lot of people," Lukacs said. The Hemp Store where Lukacs works commonly interacts with customers using hemp products for the first time, and the Franklin Street storefront is focused on educating them.

"When people come in, especially if they're new users, we don't let them go to the wall and grab something that's really high-dose," Lukacs said. "We encourage them to certainly start at the lowest [dosage] possible." Lukacs explained that customers coming into the store aren't looking for the effects of Delta-8 THC anymore, but rather Delta-9 THC, which is more potent milligram-per-milligram - and legal under certain thresholds. For people who regularly use cannabis, the Delta-9 THC experience, Lukacs said, is more of the "classic THC experience" that many are searching for.

Older customers that Lukacs encounters aren't looking for the cerebral buzz that Delta-8 provides, but rather its sedative effects and pain relief. It is also commonly used for anti-inflammatory support. "Someone could use Delta-8 recreationally, but many people choose to use it specifically for medicinal results," Lukacs said.

Hunter Bolesky and Brandon Srinath are the owners of Botana-Cart, a mobile cart vendor based out of Carrboro, N.C. The 600-pound bicycle cart serves as a mobile shop for dozens of different plant-based alternatives, including Delta-8 and Delta-9 products.

If you've recently driven down Franklin Street on a lively Saturday night, you probably have seen the hard-to-miss cart. According to their website, the cart "sports a magic carpet on its canopy as it floats effortlessly through the streets of Carrboro and Chapel Hill."

"The cart itself is a conversational piece," Bolesky said. "You see that riding around town, you're going to be like 'What is that? Where did they come from? What do they offer?'"

Working with local botanical shops in North Carolina, the cart sells edibles and disposable vaporizers but also has wellness products such as their antibacterial roll-on made from hemp-derived CBD.

The owners have heard product feedback from every end of the spectrum, with the most positive feedback being from customers with chronic pain. Botana-Cart, according to the owners, is focused on not only providing plant-based alternatives to alcohol and opioids but also educating the public on products that are safe to consume.

"We've been using hemp and cannabis for hundreds and hundreds of years, whether people like to admit it or not," Bolesky said.

The two owners hope to eventually open a "fantasy factory," where customers can come and experiment with legal cannabis and other various alternatives.

"It's about creating a space where anybody can come, where that peer pressure element is eliminated," said Bolesky. "Where people can have an alternative; where people can learn something; where people can get outside of their shell a little bit."

Effects Delta-8 has differing impacts on people based on their usage and

THC tolerance. THC, like many other psychoactives, has the effects of euphoria and relaxation on the body. Lukacs said Delta-8 has about half the potency of Delta-9 and described how the body reacts to THC.

"When we get high on cannabis, when we feel cannabis, we are actually perceiving it," Lukacs said. "We have these receptors that can feel Delta-8 THC as well as Delta-9 THC and other tetrahydrocannabinols." A Delta-8 high, according to Botany Farms, is described as "dreamy, less intense, and offering more physical stimulation as opposed to mental effects."

"It's important to note that Delta-8 will create an uplifting sensation, and a very nice body high sensation so it will make you feel a little giddy kind of like how THC would," Bolesky said.

A senior at UNC-Chapel Hill who regularly uses Delta-8 agreed to speak on background and said they use Delta-8 vaporizers and will occasionally consume edibles.

Compared to a cannabis high, they described a Delta-8 high as "concentrated, almost like a stimulated high."

As a regular user of the stimulant, they discussed their bodies' natural reaction to THC and how their experience with the substance has been overwhelmingly positive.

"I've never had any bad experiences," they said. "I don't think I've ever been close to a bad experience with it."

However, their main advice for first-time users is to start small and gradually increase your dosage, allowing your body to naturally find its THC tolerance.

Health Risks With the benefits of ingesting Delta-8 THC, the substance can sometimes cause adverse effects.

According to an FDA press release, Delta-8 THC products have not been evaluated or approved, and the marketing of these products may put public health at risk.

While derived from the hemp plant, Delta-8 THC naturally occurs in small quantities, meaning that products often involve the use of potentially harmful chemicals to create the concentrations of Delta-8 THC claimed in the marketplace.

"The final delta-8 THC product may have potentially harmful by-products (contaminants) due to the chemicals used in the production," said Lukacs.

Please see DELTA-8 | 4A

Coronavirus outbreak downgraded in NC

Continued from page 1A

through the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Monthly reports on outbreaks in congregate living settings, patients presumed to have been recovered, hospitalizations and deaths by vaccination status will be retired.

All this information will be available on the CDC's COVID Data Tracker site.

Although the number of cases are low, North Carolina residents are encouraged to keep tests on hand. Vaccinations still offer the best protection against serious illnesses and death from the virus.

Data shows the new booster shot is effective and vaccines are available for people six months or older.

Find out more at myspot.nc.gov.

State House budgets for voter ID before court can decide case

Continued from page 1A

opinion had been decided "hastily," since the case skipped the Court of Appeals and oral arguments before the state Supreme Court were expedited.

Patterson said legislators hadn't meant to discriminate against African American voters because everyone could cast a ballot under the law — as long as they presented a photo

ID. He also noted there were provisions in the law allowing for free IDs at early voting locations, and that even those who don't vote with an ID have 10 days to go to a county board of elections, get their photograph taken and have their ballot counted.

In short, Patterson argued lawmakers had enacted the "narrowest possible racial disparity in

terms of a voter ID law."

The Supreme Court has yet to issue its ruling on the law's constitutionality.

The House budget bill says that if the money is "unused or unencumbered" on June 30, 2024, the cash reverts to the General Fund.

NC Newsline investigative reporter Lynn Bonner contributed to this story.

A healing place for Charlotte's homeless faces threat to survival

Continued from page 1A

ical instructions, follow up appointments, needing prescriptions refilled and your only option is the street or the shelter," said David Tipple, the board's chair. "People can't heal in these situations."

In the last year, Samaritan House has invested resources to recover from the pandemic, is struggling to keep pace with an influx

of clients. Since 2019, the number of homeless people seeking service has grown by 52%. In 2022, 81 clients sought services, an increase of 170% over the previous year and takes care of at least 15 people monthly so far this year — which puts it on pace for 180 clients. Its 2023 goal is housing 120 people.

"Our organization suffers from a lack of public

awareness of our purpose and mission," Tipple said. "Now that we have reached this critical point, we need help. Like everyone, post-pandemic we saw a loss of volunteer support, financial decline, unexpected capital repairs to the house, and inflation coupled with an increase in clients, we need community support to continue."



STOCK PHOTO

With the end of SNAP food benefits added during the pandemic, food security advocates predict more Americans will go hungry.

Food insecurity expected to soar with end of SNAP benefits

By Barrington M. Salmon
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

Food security advocates, policymakers, and others had been warning of the dire consequences to those most in need if Congress chose to halt the extra allotments of SNAP benefits. Still, the Republican-led House let the COVID-era supplemental payments wind down at the end of February.

Those closest to the problem say the consequences are already evident in the days since the extra allotments ended. The issues of hunger and food insecurity are being pushed to the forefront of the nation's myriad challenges. The abrupt benefit cuts are estimated to affect more than 30 million people in 35 states.

On the frontlines, activists fighting the twin scourges of hunger and homelessness, like Anne Miskey, Kymone T. Freeman, and Daniel de Pielago, contend that this and other crises were avoidable. Still, Congress, other elected officials, and so-

ciety at large lack the political will or the compassion to eliminate what is essentially a man-made problem.

"Yet, although the SNAP extra allotments, stimulus funds, and other assistance from the federal government helped stave off hunger and homelessness during the COVID crisis, Kymone T. Freeman said, the politicians have inexplicably allowed a critical lifeline to expire.

Freeman said politicians are more concerned about staying in office and catering to the donor class and the wealthy instead of focusing on and delivering programs, projects, and policies to working- and middle-class Americans, particularly African Americans.

"This sounds like more austerity to me. The fact that they are cutting anything now is obscene and immoral. All it means is more hardship for the poor," said Freeman, a social justice activist, playwright,

Please see SNAP | 4A

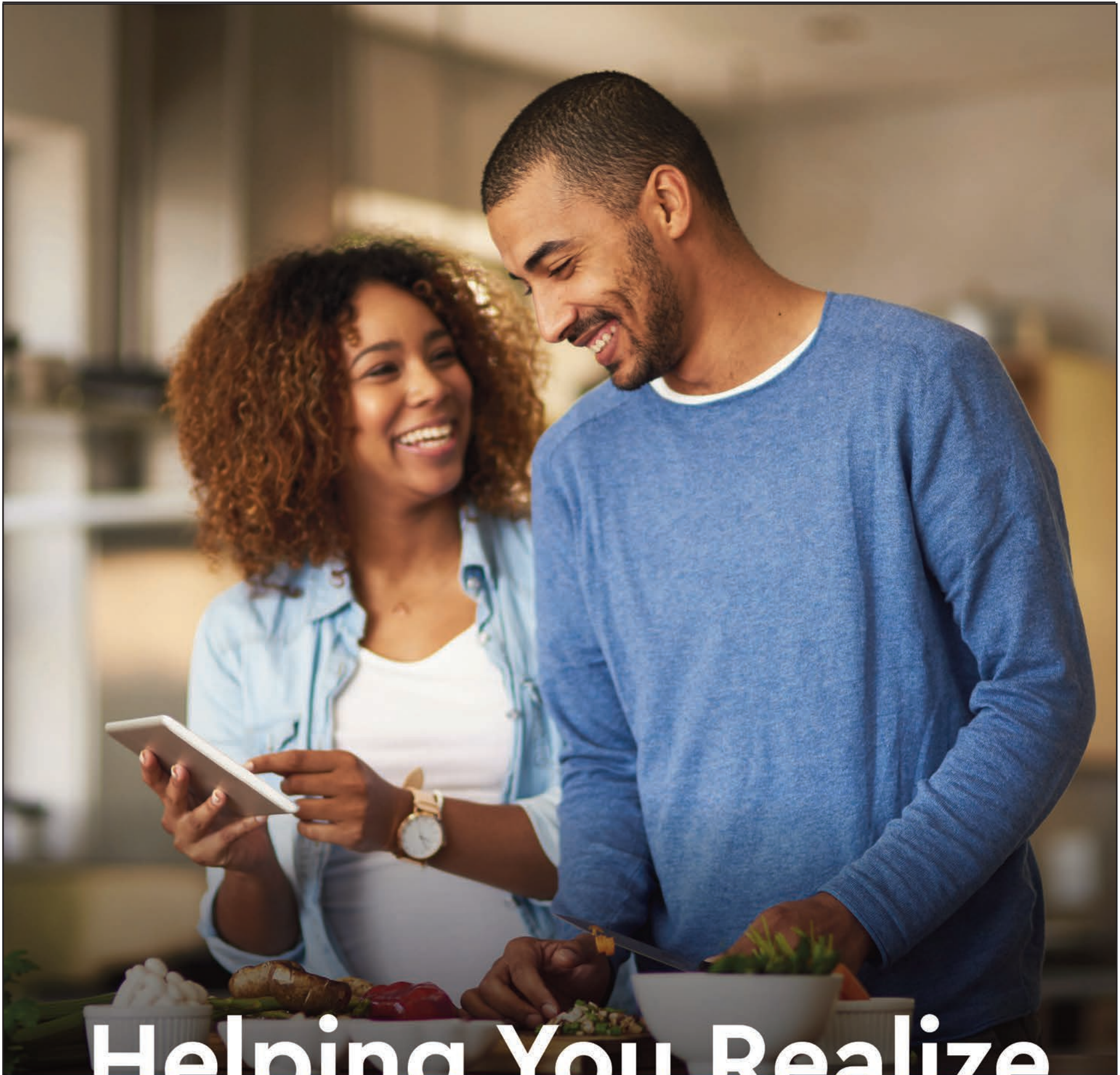


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North Carolina's world of art

Is North Carolina an important state for the arts?

Of course, I assert resoundingly! There are lots of reasons. One is that the state has great art museums including the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh brought to life by its former director Larry Wheeler. The wonderful museums at



D.G. MARTIN

Duke (Nasher), UNC Greensboro (Weather- spoon), the Mint and Bechtler in Charlotte, and other places have museums that are great blessings.

What really seals the deal for North Carolina, as the new book "Art of the State" points out, is the plethora of artists all over the state who use their talents in many different ways.

The new book by Liza Roberts, published by UNC Press, introduces us to about 60 extraordinary artists who live throughout our state. Most of them are not wedded to the oil and canvas of the traditional art world. I have gotten to know some of these 60 who sometimes work in the open where the public can observe them in ac-

tion.

For instance, the potter Ben Owen, who works with clay. He and his colleagues in and around Seagrove have shared their ways of working and persuaded me that their work rates as a high art form. Their pottery then are art treasures.

Many Tar Heels have been privileged to work alongside Patrick Dougherty as he assembles large structures made of sticks, "woven, spun, braided and twirled, his massive, cocoon-like works of art look like nests shot out of a hurricane."

Dougherty lives in Chapel Hill and works all over the state and Roberts writes "in places that dot the globe—from Belgrade to Sewanee, Charleston to Dublin. In his work he uses the help of ordinary people to create the wooden sculptures that always draw visitors. Over time, the wood rots and the structures fade away and disappear forever, except in the memories of those who worked and those who visited the project.

Thomas Sayre, who lives in Raleigh, casts components of earth and concrete into gigantic constructions. It requires heavy machinery in the process to cast and place the work. One of

his studios, Roberts writes, is a field "where he uses heavy machinery to dig sculptural forms in the earth, where he fills them with rebar and cement and earth, where he later digs up hardened shapes, lifts them, with a crew and a crane, and situates and embeds them where they belong."

Herb Jackson's dramatic configurations of shape and color on canvas is work that I have been privileged to follow in my hometown of Davidson where Jackson taught and still lives and works.

Elizabeth Bradford, who lives near Davidson on land her family has owned for hundreds of years, declares she is on a mission "to take things that aren't obviously beautiful and to render them beautiful" in her large canvases. Every year she picks something "I didn't think I could do, and I would spend the next year trying to do it." One year she decided to paint a new painting every single day for a year.

These artists are celebrated in the book along with more than 50 other exciting North Carolina artists. In addition to their different modes of art, they are diverse in gender, race, ethnic background, and

where they live.

"Art of the State" calls us to savor these differences and shows how the artists' diversity helps us see and better appreciate the different art forms these artists use.

The new book demonstrates that our state is blessed with a variety of artists, age-wise, generation-wise, and racial-wise. It is a godsend that they work with a variety of different styles, mediums, and sizes.

Using extraordinarily beautiful photographs of the artists and their work, Roberts shows their diversity and their charm. The photos and the book's description of the artists' different approaches gives its readers and viewers a spectacular introduction to the importance of North Carolina and all that it offers artists and art fans.

In conclusion, "Art of the State," so carefully organized and illustrated, is itself a piece of art that will be enjoyed by its owners for many years.

D.G. Martin, a retired lawyer, served as UNC system's vice president for public affairs and hosted PBS-NC's "North Carolina Bookwatch."

SNAP benefits

Continued from page 2A

and co-founder of WEACT Radio in Washington, D.C. "This will increase crime, poverty, distress, and misery. The cuts are contributing to hunger. Thirty percent of the children in Washington, D.C., live in poverty. A budget is a moral document, and this is where their morality lies."

Miskey, executive director of Union Station Homeless Services in Los Angeles, agreed.

"Much of the inflation and high prices we're seeing is because of corporate greed. We're expecting homelessness to skyrocket," Miskey said. "During COVID, we rented all these hotels and shelters. We managed pretty well during COVID as local, state, and federal money poured in. But with the funding money gone, we're trying to figure things out. The cost of living, rent, and evictions are going up. The cost of living is driving people into homelessness. Things are going to get pretty bad because of the cost of living."

Miskey contends that separating food insecurity from gentrification, low wages, displacement, and homelessness is impossible. COVID-19 has laid bare the structural, institutional, economic, and racial inequities that separate African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans from their white counterparts," she said. Marginalized communities have been hit particularly hard by many challenges, many not naturally occurring.

"Healthcare workers, people of color, and immigrants are making horrible wages," Miskey said. "They cannot afford afterschool care for kids, don't have money for affordable housing, and struggle to make ends meet. This is a war against the poor. They tell people that they did this to themselves. Millions of people have no opportunity or are intentionally excluded from opportunities. Racism is the #1 factor for excluding people."

The SNAP emergency allotments were designed to alleviate food insecurity and stimulate the US economy throughout the COVID pandemic public health emergency. According to DC Hunger Solutions, the cuts to SNAP benefits will affect more than 90,000 people in the District of Columbia. On average, when this "hunger cliff" hits, each SNAP participant will lose over \$90 a month, DC Hunger Solutions officials explained on the website. "As a result, average SNAP benefits will fall to a meager \$6 a person a day. The "hunger cliff" will hit all age groups and all parts of the District of Columbia. The steepest cliff will be for many older adults who only qualify for the minimum SNAP benefit — dropping from \$281 a month to \$30," staff said.

The "hunger cliff" — a perfect storm of a striking reduction of benefits in the face of high inflation and climbing grocery costs — will exacerbate food insecurity and hardship in the District of Columbia and elsewhere. The District will lose more than \$14 million in benefits monthly. Emergency food providers can't fill this gap. Even before the cuts, food banks, pantries, and soup kitchens have reported high demand for assistance, DC Hunger Solutions said.

All over America, Miskey said, people are vulnerable, have health problems and, are aging, have been homeless for a long time, including seniors.

"It doesn't take much: a single income, losing a spouse, an increase in the cost of housing. People are precariously housed. People have to put themselves in danger sometimes," said Miskey. "People are stealing to survive. People need help, but needing help is seen as something weak or bad. Of course, the Republican Party sells the lottery mentality. People figure they're going to be up there one day and dream that they're going to get there."

Daniel del Pielago agrees with Miskey that Republicans and others who support their ideas and agenda are committed to former President Donald Trump's promise to dismantle the administrative state.

Del Pielago, organizing director of Empower DC, said these cuts and Republican plans to dismember the social safety net — including Medicare and social security — is a deliberate policy choice aimed directly at the working class, low-income households, and the poor in this country.

"It's part of this onslaught of safety net services being cut. I just heard from the city that they're cutting the Emergency Rental Program 67 months earlier than expected. And rents in May will go up 8.9 percent here in the District," del Pielago said. "DC is super expensive, there are no livable wages for a certain population segment and there's a sustained attack on low-income people. What we're seeing in terms of the onslaught is the Trump effect coming into play. We have a bunch of people making these decisions which don't benefit low-income residents and Black people. They were attempting, and now they're having success."

Miskey said as she views the challenges and devastation food insecurity has wrought on poor, near-poor, low-income, and middle-class Americans, she feels anger and frustration because most of this is and was avoidable.

"... I think our systems have massively failed people," she said. "I shouldn't say that. I don't think our system has failed. I think our system was set up to fail. They are set up to keep up the status quo, ensuring that those people of privilege and wealth maintain their privilege and wealth."

Meanwhile, everyone else is blamed for their supposed character defects or failures because supposedly all the opportunities are out there if you grab them, Miskey explained.

"The fact is, our system creates massive barriers for opportunity and doesn't allow huge chunks of our communities to actually access those things. That's the shame of our system, the shame of our government. As I said before, we're a system where we have a war on the poor, not a war on poverty."

The movement M.L. King gave his life for

This week in 1968, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated leading a



BEN JEALOUS

bold effort to teach America an urgent lesson: Racism is not just the boot on the neck of people of color, it is also the great wedge that divides Americans.

And everyone who gets divided loses.

On Dec. 4, 1967, King announced a multiracial "Poor People's Campaign" that would march on Washington, D.C., that summer.

The idea gained traction as groups of poor whites, Asian Americans, Latinos, and Indigenous People joined the campaign being organized by King and Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

In promoting it, King would decry the "idle industries of Appalachia" in the same breath as the "empty stomachs of Mississippi." The reality, King made clear, is the economic value of poor Whites' labor had been de-

pressed since the days of slavery by the forced labor and continuing oppression of Black people.

The divided get conquered.

That idea that working people of all races had common interests to fight for threatened — as it still does today — the old colonial system of divide and conquer that allowed King George and every would-be American oligarch since to extract massive wealth by enforcing massive poverty.

Four months to the day after he announced his Poor People's Campaign—55 years ago this week — King was assassinated on a balcony at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, where he had traveled to stand with striking sanitation workers fighting for decent working conditions.

It's telling that after all he had been through fighting Jim Crow and segregation — the bus boycott, the first March on Washington, passage of the Civil Rights Act — King was murdered fighting to unite working people across racial lines.

He wasn't alone. Robert F. Kennedy was gunned down not long after as he

ran for President on a similar platform.

Even before King and Kennedy, Harry Moore and his wife were blown up in their home on Christmas 1951 by the Klan. The Florida NAACP leader was organizing the Progressive Voters League seeking to unite Floridians across racial lines and had just led an effort that registered 1 million new voters.

Even Malcolm X was assassinated after he returned from Mecca and said unity across racial lines was possible.

Killing those who would unite us is an American tradition older than our nation itself. The first revolt by American colonists was in Gloucester, Virginia, more than 100 years before the Declaration of Independence.

Indentured Europeans and enslaved Africans organized to rise up against cruel Virginia plantation owners. The organizers were hanged.

Two years to the day after King announced the Poor People's Campaign, Black Panther Fred Hampton was leading a "Rainbow

Coalition" of Blacks, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and poor Whites in Chicago when he was murdered — premeditated and carried out with military precision — by local police.

As in 1968, it's true today that there are almost twice as many Whites trapped in poverty as Blacks. The fact that the nation's news media render the White poor invisible doesn't change the facts.

That so many of us still tolerate millions of Americans of every color being trapped in poverty is a factor in the toxic tensions that threaten our domestic tranquility.

It is also proof we never actually learned the lesson Dr. King gave his life trying to teach us.

If you ever forget the logic of King's final strategy, just pull out a \$1 bill and turn it over. It's right there in the Great Seal of the United States, albeit in Latin. E Pluribus Unum. Out of many, one.

Ben Jealous is executive director of the Sierra Club, the nation's largest grassroots environmental organization.

Cannabis buyers and sellers on a different high

Continued from page 2A

cess," the FDA release said.

The FDA notified the public on Delta-8 after an uptick in adverse event reports and marketing that became appealing to children.

Dixon's "Summer 2022 Cannabis Update" outlines the status of hemp legalization, and explained that the FDA recently issued warning letters to several hemp companies for violating its existing federal legislation on branding and health claims.

"There are no regulations on where the products can be used (including while driving), how much of the products can be purchased, or the point at which a person can be considered intoxicated," wrote Dixon.

NC Rep. Cotham's party switch roils Democrats

By Gary D. Robertson

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH — Speculation is rising in the North Carolina legislature that a Democrat is about to switch parties and give Republicans a complete veto-proof majority in the



Cotham

General Assembly, a move that could affect legislation on immigration, abortion and voting.

The GOP scheduled a Wednesday news conference at party headquarters with Rep. Tricia Cotham of Charlotte. House Speaker Tim Moore said Tuesday that Cotham and chamber leaders will "make a major announcement."

If the Democrat does switch parties, it would be a major political setback for Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper and allies in their attempts to block conservative initiatives during the

governor's final two years in office.

It could make it easier for Republicans to enact bills that would force sheriffs to cooperate with federal immigration agents and prevent counting absentee ballots received after Election Day. The GOP is also debating if and how to place further restrictions on abortion.

While Republicans already hold the 30 Senate seats needed to override vetoes, they have been one seat shy of a similar advantage in the House since the November elections. Cooper made preventing supermajorities his top campaign priority last fall.

Cotham, a former teacher and assistant principal, served in the House for nearly 10 years through 2016 before returning in January.

She sat at a new desk surrounded by Republicans on the House floor for the late Tuesday afternoon session. Staff members earlier took

her belongings from her previous desk, which had adjoined those of other veteran House Democrats.

Cotham left after the floor session ended without taking reporters' questions and didn't respond to a text message. Her Twitter account "liked" a post that welcomed her to the House GOP caucus.

"Rep. Cotham is pulling a bait and switch on her constituents — who voted overwhelmingly for a Democrat to represent them in the House," House Minority Leader Robert Reives said in a statement. "Handing Republicans the ability to override Governor Cooper's veto will endanger abortion access, voting rights, and other fundamental freedoms in the state. Voters in North Carolina did not elect a GOP House supermajority and Rep. Cotham is placing politics over their interests."

Moore declined comment Tuesday when asked

whether Cotham was switching parties. Cotham's voter registration information on the State Board of Elections website late Tuesday listed her as a Democrat.

Republicans have been advancing legislation this year that in previous years Cooper successfully vetoed. Until now, the governor has had enough Democratic votes to uphold vetoes if the party members showed up and voted together.

Last week, the Legislature successfully overrode one of Cooper's vetoes for the first time since 2018 and approved a bill that in part eliminated the state's pistol permit purchase system. Cooper has stopped short of vetoing three other bills this year on topics that he vetoed in 2021. He didn't sign this year's measures, but rather allowed them to become law without his signature.

Herbert L. White of The Post contributed.

Climate change forum

Continued from page 2A

Climate advocates contend environmental challenges differ between urban and rural areas, which is why the forum leans toward frontline-based strategies.

One constant, Minor said, is the connection between pollution and communities that historically lack public investment. In essence, low-income neighborhoods — especially those where Black people live — are more likely to be exposed to pollutants that cause poor health outcomes.

"It goes back to ... policies and decisions that were made in the [19]30s," she said. "I use redlining as an example because there's been more research around how redlining is connected to committed sources of pollution exposure."

Sports

THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 2023



TROY HULL | THE CHARLOTTE POST

Johnson C. Smith football coach Maurice Flowers is in the middle of a remake of the Golden Bulls program by combining youth and transfers to increase depth and competition.

Identity football, JC Smith style

Golden Bulls aim for growth during spring drills with a combination of experience, youth and depth

By Herbert L. White

herb.l.white@thecharlottepost.com

Johnson C. Smith football knows what's expected for 2023 - and what isn't.

The Golden Bulls, who opened spring drills on March 30, are older and more experienced than the squad that took its lumps in coach Maurice Flowers' 2-7 debut campaign. The goal this year is to build a mindset that will translate into success on Saturdays. Excuses

aren't part of the equation.

"The message this spring is to know our identity," Flowers said. "Our identity is we're going to play hard and we're going to be physical and we're going to fight all the time. Now we're looking to cut down on the mental mistakes, the lack of knowing and the lack of communication. We want to make sure we're communicating that we're just better - we're bigger, we're stronger, we're faster. We're better, and

our football IQ should be higher."

For starters, the Golden Bulls are no longer in transition. Last year's roster turnover - 56 freshmen were among the 110 players on campus - meant a gaping hole in experience. Those freshmen are a year older and more familiar with the program and Flowers' philosophy.

"It's night and day, the difference between ... being hired in January and going through offseason and spring

practices and the spring game" from a year ago, he said. "These gentlemen know the system. It's not a lot of teaching now - it's re-teaching and we have film of our guys doing it last year. Whether it was right or wrong, we have film we can study, and you can tell we're older."

They're also more physically mature. Flowers extended the offseason program to get last year's freshman class

Please see **GOLDEN BULLS** | 6A

Our identity is we're going to play hard and we're going to be physical and we're going to fight all the time.

Johnson C. Smith football coach MAURICE FLOWERS

«CHARLOTTE FC

Point earned in Toronto lifts Crown's confidence

By Steve Goldberg

FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Toronto FC's 2-0 halftime lead was gone with the wind as Charlotte FC came back - with the wind at their back - to earn a draw.

Goals by Ben Bender and Kamil Jozwiak allowed the Crown take home a point as a souvenir from their trek across the northern border. In a marked improvement over last season, that is two consecutive road results for the Crown with the win at Orlando two weeks ago. It's also the third straight game with points with last week's draw at home against New York Red Bulls.

"It gives us confidence, but we've wanted to establish (that) from day one," Charlotte FC coach Christian Lattanzio said after the match, "even when the results were not coming. We are establishing an identity here where we want to play football in a certain way; we want to create chances; we want to stay, as much as possible, in the opposition's half, home and away."

Last Saturday against New York Red Bulls' superb and effective high press, New York seemed to enjoy the intentional foul to disrupt Charlotte. In Toronto, it was the

Please see **CHARLOTTE** | 6A



TROY HULL | THE CHARLOTTE POST

After starting the season with three losses, Charlotte FC has earned points in three straight matches, including Saturday's 2-2 draw at Toronto.

Baseball initiative reaches out to mentor Black youngsters



KEN KOONTZ

Coaches with Atlanta-based Minority Prospect coaches and mentors Black youth to develop a baseball talent pool across all levels of play. The initiative and the Gastonia Honey Hunters hosted a clinic in Gastonia.

By Ken Koontz

SPECIAL TO THE POST

Baseball season is here.

And a new venture that targets increasing numbers and improving the play and participation of Black youth is in full swing. Minority Prospect is an Atlanta-based company stepping up to the plate with a goal of getting more black players into baseball all the way up to the majors.

"We are having great success in our relatively short time of operation," said Reggie Hollins, the president and CEO.

While specific numbers and percentages were not readily available, sports media and industry observers agree that baseball lags behind basketball and football in recruiting and maintaining growth and participation of African American youth at virtually every level of the sport. Observers say that many of the Black players in the sport are not African American but whose ethnic origins are Hispanic-Latino or other origins of color. Hollins says more than 12,000 youth across the country are Minority Prospect participants. The organization is set to expand in-

Please see **INITIATIVE** | 6A

Mallard Creek and Independence meet in kickoff showcase

By Herbert L. White

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The first local high school football game of 2023 is a rematch of last year's 4A second round clash.

Weddington and Cox Mill will square off in the 10th annual Charlotte Kickoff Night Aug. 17 at Memorial Stadium. Kickoff is scheduled for 5:15 p.m. Weddington won last year's playoff game 30-14, but Cox Mill

will open the season under a new head coach in Breon Holmes, who joins the Chargers after three years at Ardrey Kell.

Weddington, which went 13-2 and advanced to the West Region title game last year, return one of the area's top players in senior quarterback Tyler Budge, who has received multiple Division I scholarship offers.

The second game, scheduled for an 8 p.m.

kickoff, is Mallard Creek against Independence, a pair of teams that advanced to playoff berths last year. Mallard Creek went 8-4 in 2022 and Independence returned to prominence under third-year coach D.J. McFadden. One of the Patriots' top returning players from last year's 11-2 squad is defensive back Quentin Reddish, who has 20 college offers, including several from Power

Please see **MAVERICKS** | 6A

Feggins has a hard road ahead with St. Aug's

Football writer Kris Ferguson had the perfect tweet after learning that Howard Feggins was St. Augustine's new football coach.

"The only constants of life: Death, Taxes and Fayetteville State having a new Offensive Coordinator."

The Falcons hired away a second straight coordinator from the Broncos to lead their football program. Obviously, they are not superstitious.

David Bowser was a stellar defensive coordinator for the Broncos but couldn't parlay that magic as a head coach. At least not at SAU. Bowser went 2-16 in two seasons (2020 was canceled), and let's not forget he was named interim athletic director after the firing of legendary track coach/AD George Williams and later made permanent.

People liked and respected Bowser, but winning trumps both of those. And, truth be told, the team didn't improve. A one-win season the first year, OK, coaches need time to recruit, institute their own system, etc. But when you're still getting beat by an average of 30 points the second year, there's a problem. CIAA football is not THAT good.

And neither has Falcons football since the days of Michael Costa, although there are several reasons for that, which have nothing to do with football.

Bowser's hire in 2019 came after an embarrassing public relations debacle from then-head coach Tim Chavous, who was named interim head coach in 2016 and led the Falcons to a respectable 5-5 record the following season. Then the bottom fell out: 2-7 in 2018, and an 0-3 start in 2019 in which SAU was outscored 151-28.

Bye. But Chavous didn't go quietly. He "broke" his firing by going to social media, lambasting Williams, and calling himself an

Please see **FEGGINS** | 6A



BONITTA

BEST



Feggins

Golden Bulls aim to build winning identity

Continued from page 5A

- 56 players - more time for individual workouts. He's pleased with their progress and enthusiasm at the start of drills.

"They've been waiting to get out here," Flowers said. "A big reason why we're practicing so late is because we wanted to spend a lot of time in the off-season in the weight room to feel themselves getting bigger, stronger, and faster, and we accomplished that. I'm pleased with our energy. We're flying around; we know what we're doing, not a lot of blown assignments. I can look and see we're very competitive."

The Golden Bulls will need that competition to improve on their 0-6 record in one-possession games last year, which included a pair of overtime losses. Flowers said offensive and defensive lines, tight end and secondary were the focus of off-season upgrades through the transfer portal.

Among the newcomers on campus are linebacker Gerald Nathan, a Vance (now Chambers) High graduate who played at Missouri as well as defensive tackles Ari Rodriguez (Navy), a Charlotte Catholic alumnus and Jordan Stenhouse (Erskine). On the offensive line, transfers Joshua Beatty from Limestone, and Kyle Estep from McDaniel (Md.) College are in the mix



Nathan

for first-team reps.

"We have guys coming back, but we have a lot of new guys at those positions," Flowers said. "There's competition everywhere with our guys. We have some mid-year recruits that are in and getting in the midst trying to earn a position. I'm pleased with the competition and our talent level. Our talent level is better than it was last year."

There's plenty of territory to cover leading up to the April 22 intrasquad scrimmage at McGirt Field, where a FieldTurf playing surface is being installed. In the interim, the Golden Bulls are taking practices on the road to West Charlotte High and Bank of America Stadium for a session as the program builds relationships across the region.

It's part of a campaign to build program awareness and a winning edge ahead of the season opener on Sept. 2.

"Are the expectations higher? Absolutely," Flowers said. "We think we should've won a lot of games and we're looking to correct those things right now."

"As far as pressure, we don't feel pressure. Our saying is pressure is what you feel when you're not prepared and our job as a coaching staff is to make sure our young men are prepared so they feel confident going into every game."



Rodriguez

Mavericks, Patriots in Kickoff

Continued from page 5A

Five programs. Independence advanced to the third round of the state playoffs, where the Patriots lost to Greensboro Grimsley, which beat Weddington 28-27 in the West title game.

"We are beyond excited to celebrate a landmark 10 consecutive years of conducting this event for the greater Charlotte

football community," said James Companion of Teall Properties Group, the showcase's sponsor. "We take great pride in enhancing the high school experience for the participating kids and their communities."

A portion of proceeds will benefit Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools middle school and girls' athletics.

Charlotte earns point for confidence

Continued from page 5A

weather wreaking havoc. The climate wasn't kind to people on or off the pitch with temperatures just above freezing, and a relentless wind making it all the worse.

"It was a tough night in terms of weather conditions because the wind played a big part every time there was a corner," said Lattanzio, "especially with the ballistic capabilities of Bernardeschi."

He was referring to Federico Bernardeschi, the Italian import who scored 12 times in 183 appearances for Juventus and has enjoyed great success against the Crown with three goals in as many matches, including his third directly off a corner kick in the sixth minute. His left-footed in-swinging missile from the right flag was no doubt magnified by the 25-plus mile-per-hour breeze with reported gusts up to 40 mph, as it sailed over George Marks and into the far post to give Toronto a 1-0 lead.

To be fair, whichever team had the Anemoi, the Greek gods of wind, (or Venti, if you prefer the Roman deities) behind them tonight, had a clear and distinct advantage.

Toronto had eight corners in the first half to none for the Crown. Bernardeschi took most of them from the right, his latter attempts rifled at the near post with velocity necessitating Kevlar vests for the Charlotte defense.

When the ball was on the other side, Toronto was just as dangerous. Charlotte was almost victimized again by Brandon Servania, whose service in the 41st minute from the left curled in, but was nullified by a foul on Marks, who was bowled over by Toronto centerback Sigurd Rosted.

While he seemed helpless on the corner kicks, Marks came up big in the run of play with two saves in the 32nd minute, first from a Bernardeschi blast right at him, and again on the rebound shot by Ayo Akinola, which required getting to the ground quickly as the ball came through traffic from 10 yards out.

Missed opportunities

Still, even with the wind playing 12th man for Toronto, Charlotte had clear opportunities to level and/or go ahead soon after. Nuno Santos was the beneficiary of two dreadful Toronto turnovers in their defensive third created by Charlotte's press.

In the ninth minute, he picked off an errant pass and was alone against Toronto keeper Sean Johnson but missed wide left from 15 yards out. He had Kerwin Vargas on his left but could not be faulted for taking the shot, just for not putting it on frame.

Five minutes later, another Toronto gaffe eventually found its way to Santos' foot for a volley that sailed towards the heavens.

"We had those chances and we need to be more clinical because we created those chances, not that they were gifted to us," Lattanzio said. "Those chances can change completely the complexion of the game."

Just before the half ended, Toronto doubled the lead. Another Servania corner was headed in at the near post on what looked to be a free header by Michael Bradley. A video review showed that the former U.S. National Team captain used two hands on the back of Harrison Afful to nudge the defender away but the goal was upheld by referee Ramy Touchan.

"We were a little bit slack in certain mo-

ments on set pieces," said Lattanzio, ignoring the review but acknowledging that they had discussed Bradley's movements on set pieces with the team.

Second half surge

Six minutes into the second half, Bender, who started his first match of the season, scored off a cross from Jozwiak just right of the penalty spot inside the left post. Jozwiak had taken the ball on a leading pass down the right side from Jaylin Lindsey, who has been quite prescient with his field vision from the right back position. He beat a defender and sharply put the ball across to Bender running down the middle.

Suddenly, Charlotte had the advantage with four corner kicks in the first 11 minutes of the half and seven for the game. Toronto would have two in the half and 10 for the game.

Jozwiak scored his first goal for Charlotte in the 70th minute on a lunging redirection, knocking it in left post on a cross from Kerwin Vargas from the left.

"There is a lot of talk about that," said Lattanzio, referring to criticism about Jozwiak's lack of goals, "but I am more interested in performance, and I thought Kamil did very well on the first goal to do something that we prepared in training and he went to attack the ball the way that we want. I am very happy for Kamil."

Lattanzio credited Bender with an under-appreciated aspect, saying that he helped create the second goal by making a run that took a defender away from Vargas.

Bender benefited from the absence of Brandt Bronico, who was suspended by for one game with a retroactive red card for a foul in the draw against the Red Bulls, which, while called a foul, did not warrant a card from the referee at the time.

Lattanzio conceded this was a point Charlotte may not have achieved last season, acknowledging the growth of the team.

"We had the belief that we could go out and get the game back, at least a point," he said. "We created a lot of chances."

"In the second half, knowing we would have the wind at our back is an extra advantage so that's why the boys felt good and had a lot of resilience to come back from two goals down. At the same time we are disappointed because we knew the game was here for the taking."

The sky is not falling

Charlotte entered the game 14th in the Eastern conference with Toronto 10th. The Reds moved to ninth while Charlotte remains in 14th as 15th place Montreal lost at Vancouver. For anyone who's panicking, relax. The standings are so tight right now that a win would have put Charlotte above the playoff cut line into ninth with seven points. With five, they are only three points behind NYCFC (sixth) and Orlando (seventh).

Jacks lead USL One standings

It was a good night all around for Charlotte teams on the road as the Charlotte Independence remained unbeaten with a 2-1 win over the Richmond Kickers on goals by Clay Dimick and Nick Spielman.

"This was a huge result for us early in the season," Dimick said. "We knew it was going to be a fight and we were up for it. This team showed we can grind out a win in a tough environment and that's always a good sign."



ST. AUGUSTINE'S ATHLETICS

St. Augustine's freshman Terrell Robinson Jr. earned the CIAA Men's Track Athlete of the Year Award in his first collegiate season.

St. Augustine's sprinter Terrell Robinson runs up to the hype

By James Moore

THE TRIANGLE TRIBUNE

RALEIGH - In seventh grade, Terrell Robinson Jr. realized his future aspirations early and found one of his callings after not making his middle school basketball team.

After spending his early years experimenting with soccer, basketball, football, taekwondo, and learning various instruments, Robinson found his love in track and field, and accepted the torch his track family passed to him. The 18-year-old sprinter has surpassed all expectations since taking off in the sport in the eighth grade.

"That first year was a little rocky," Robinson said. "After that, once I got in eighth grade, I got better, broke a few meet records, and won a national championship."

At Mount Tabor High, Robinson was among the most sought-after recruits nationwide. He received offers from Texas, Kentucky,

Iowa, Ohio State, and North Carolina A&T State. He chose St. Augustine's to follow the legacy left by Falcons alumnus and current men's track and field coach Bershawn "Batman" Jackson, who laboriously recruited Robinson.

"The legacy here is rich. Even though I didn't know about (former coach) George Williams until I chose to come to St. Aug's, I learned a lot about him, and it solidified my decision," Robinson said.

As a freshman, Robinson earned the CIAA Men's Track Athlete of the Year award. Jackson is not surprised by Robinson's early success.

"He fits the description well regarding St. Augustine's track and field," Jackson said.

Robinson has the best 60-meter dash time (6.66 seconds) in the CIAA and is second best among Division II athletes.

"He's a great teammate. He works extremely hard in

practice to achieve what he wants," teammate Kailen Perry said. "I'm happy for him and his achievements this year, and I know it's only up for him from here."

Robinson maintains a balanced life off the field, as well, by being family-oriented, playing piano and drums with his friends, and producing music.

"Outside of my child, I've never been more honored to coach another athlete," Jackson said. "What coach wouldn't want to have him? He's very coachable, and that's the most important part. He was my first recruit, so when he told me he was coming to us, I felt the same way when my wife told me we were having our first child."

While Robinson doesn't have specific objectives for his future and is open to all options, he plans on getting a degree in business, going to graduate school, and running professionally.

Feggins faces long road at SAU

Continued from page 5A

"escape goat." Of course, he meant scapegoat. I wrote an entire column on those two words alone.

Don't know why Chavous was surprised. The coach he replaced, Michael Morand, was placed on administrative leave without pay after a year on the job and never returned. Chavous and Jonathan Kelly initially were named interim co-coaches - one of the most ridiculous decisions ever - before Chavous took over the position solo.

Next came Bowser.

But some of the blame lies elsewhere. Under a former "President Girlfriend," football was king; it got what it wanted at the expense of all the other athletic programs, and there wasn't a thing anybody could do about it. One coach talked about going on recruiting trips and having the school's credit card declined when he tried to buy gas - out in the boonies no less.

By the time President Girlfriend was finally shown the door, SAU was almost secretly bankrupt. "It'll be years before we can recover from this. You have no idea the mess she left us in," a campus source said at the time.

Think he was lying? Just look at the Big 3 athletic programs since 2014: football has one .500 season; men's basketball has zero winning seasons; and women's basketball - yep, you guessed it - ZERO!

Athletic programs need dollars to recruit, not pennies. So, you can't be too hard on the coaches; they're paying for other people's sins.

Feggins said one of the first questions people asked when he told them he was taking the St. Aug's job was "Why?"

Now, you know.

Bonitta Best is sports editor at The Triangle Tribune in Durham.

Initiative mentors through baseball

Continued from page 5A

ternationally beginning with clinics in the Bahamas this summer.

Minority Prospect was created three years ago with one of its major intentions to produce more Black American players in the sport. Hollins said company founder Alex Wyche created the venture in 2020 despite setbacks of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Amazing things happened," Hollins said.

Those amazing things have included establishment of specialized baseball clinics across the country as platforms for exposure for aspiring young baseball prospects.

Hollins and Wyche are particularly qualified because each and most of their staff and volunteer associates have professional baseball experience from minor leagues to Major League Baseball.

More than 200 prospects from ages 6 through college participated in one of their

clinics last August hosted by the Gastonia Honey Hunters. Participants came from Maine, California, Illinois, Texas, and the Carolinas. Honey Hunters community liaison Jeff Johnson invited Black retired semi-pro players to attend and interact with the participants and share their baseball stories.

Minority Prospect has a college all-star game set for June 2-3 featuring HBCU baseball and softball teams.

While the game itself is the primary focus of Minority Prospect, participating partner organizations like LEAD engages youth for goals beyond the baseball diamond. LEAD is an acronym for the 16-year-old non-profit organization meaning Launch-Expose-Advise-Direct.

Founder C.J. Stewart, a former professional baseball player, says he uses the sport of baseball to help youth overcome three curve balls that threaten their success in life: crime, poverty, and racism.

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