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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Blessed with great educators in Four Oaks

It was the summer of 2008, and Shanna, Ethan and I were settling in to our new life in Four Oaks.

As such, it was time to call the school.

Not to throw rocks at Vance County public schools, but let's just say that – as the parents of a special needs child – our school experience up to that point had been less than stellar.

Our first phone call to Four Oaks Elementary didn't go all that well, either.

Shanna had a rather frustrating conversation with a staffer about what Ethan could expect as a rising first-grader.

We had come to expect battles with schools for accommodations for Ethan, who, at that point, was a far different child than the one a lot of you know now.

So, as we started gathering documents, we reached out to the principal.

David Pearce was immediately kind and warm, and took the time to learn everything he could about Ethan and his diagnosis.

He had the perfect teacher in mind, I remember him saying, and boy, was she ever.

He spent the first year with Allison Tucker, then had her again in second grade, when he started going out for mainstream classes a bit each day.

At every meeting we had about Ethan's education, Pearce was there. He always had ideas about how to build Ethan's daily schedule to maximize his success.

That energy and dedication funneled down to Ethan's teachers, all of whom deserve credit for Ethan's educational development into an honor roll student.

Of course, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention how great Four Oaks Middle has been for us. Maybe I'll write about it sometime.

Anyway, I was interested when I heard that Pearce was taking the principal's job at South Johnston.

Not only because I know he'll do a great job, but because Ethan will arrive there next year.

I wanted to ask him why, and talk with the other two folks with new jobs in our area schools this year. Everyone involved was very giving with their time, and I hope you enjoy their stories.



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FEATURES



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

PAGE 5
HEAVEN'S GATE MINISTRIES

PAGE 12
IRS-RELATED SCAMS

PAGE 6
GOING UNDER THE HOOD

PAGE 13
COMMUNITY CALENDAR

PAGE 7
SUMMER AT SCHOOL

PAGE 14
BUSINESS PROFILE

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South Johnston names new athletic director

Jenks poses with his wife, Betsy, and his two children, Ava and Claire, and South Johnston principal David Pearce.



South Johnston head football coach Hunter Jenks has been named the new athletic director for South Johnston High School.

"Mr. Jenks brings a devotion to the student-athlete and a passion to build winning athletic programs," South Johnston High School Principal David Pearce said. "I am confident that Mr. Jenks will lead the Trojan athletic program to the next level."

In addition to his current roles as a physical education teacher and his first year as head football coach, he has served as both a head basketball and track coach during his nine-year career. During the 2014 season, his first year as head coach of the Trojans, Jenks led both the junior varsity and varsity teams to the Two-Rivers 3A Conference championship.

"I am very excited to work with all of the student-athletes, parents, boosters, and the entire South Johnston community in this new capacity," Jenks said.

Jenks graduated from Wake Forest High School where he lettered in four sports. As a collegiate athlete he attended Elon University where he played football and obtained a degree in Physical Education and Exercise Sport Science. He and his wife, Betsy, reside in Clayton with their two daughters Ava and Claire.

Submitted by Johnston County Schools

JCS graduates elected as state FFA president and vice president

South Johnston graduate Shelby Bireley (left) and Corinth Holders graduate Katelyn Honeycutt (right) have been elected to serve as the top leaders for the North Carolina Future Farmers of America.



Bireley will serve a one-year term of service as N.C. FFA State President, and Honeycutt will serve a one-year term of service as N.C. FFA State Vice President. They were elected on June 18, during the 87th North Carolina State FFA Convention in Raleigh.

Over the next year, Bireley and Honeycutt will serve as ambassadors for youth, agriculture and education. They will travel for more than 100 days visiting FFA chapters, meeting with agribusiness leaders and representing the North Carolina FFA Association in various state and national meetings.

Bireley, of Four Oaks, is the daughter of Heather and Jamie Bireley. She is a 2013 graduate of South Johnston High School where William Weaver, Kendall Parker, Ashley Long and Cindy Adams were her agricultural education/FFA instructors. She is a student at North Carolina State University majoring in Agricultural Education with a concentration in Horticultural Science.

Honeycutt, of Benson, is the daughter of Barry and JoAnne Honeycutt. She is a 2015 graduate of Corinth Holders High School where Chad Holloman, Michelle Davis, Matthew Barnhill, Mary Olive and her father were her agricultural education/FFA instructors. She is a student at North Carolina State University majoring in Agribusiness.

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Heaven's Gate Ministries Food Pantry meets community need

It's about 11:15 on a hot June morning at the Four Oaks Farmer's Market.

There's a tent in place, covering a few rows of folding chairs, and a couple of tables a few feet away with some boxes lined up on top.

A few minutes earlier, around 20 area families received boxes of food for the week to come before heading back to their homes – and hopefully the comfort of air conditioning.

Despite a rapid drop in people present, pastor John Jernigan (pictured, far right) hasn't slowed down. The pastor for Lighthouse Christian Fellowship and organizer of Heaven's Gate Ministries Food Pantry is greeting and hugging everyone in sight, including a reporter who dropped by to say hello.

For the past 15 years, Jernigan has been involved with distributing food to area families in need, and recently, on the last Friday of each month, the pantry makes a stop at the farmer's market.

It's only been a few minutes since the prayer and devotion ended, emptying out the chairs, and then, the tables. But in that short period of time, Jernigan and his volunteers made sure that hundreds of people wouldn't be hungry.

"(After the prayer and devotional) we call out a number – everybody has a number they go by – and every family gets fed," Jernigan said. "They get free vegetables, a meat box, a canned box, vegetable box and bread box. We're averaging \$50 per box. So they're getting \$200 worth of food every Friday."

Thanks to the generosity of Food Lion and Walmart – in addition to a small army of volunteers – Heaven's Gate provides food to more than 200 people each Friday.

And, according to Jernigan, that's just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to meeting the need for food locally.

"We average around 1,200 people a month coming in (for food)," he said. "We have 300 veterans and their families a month without food coming in. We're feeding 35 kids a day at a daycare summer program, because there's no food coming in for them in the summer, since they're out of school. We have 400 kids in the county with no income coming in, so this ministry continues to bless them. And it grows each and every day."

The continued development of these programs depends upon support from the community, and Jernigan is very much in need of help.



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"We're looking for drivers to (deliver food) to the shut-ins and the elderly who can't come out," he said. "We need canned food, especially. We also need clothing. We give away free clothing, and the American Legion helps sponsor that."

"The main purpose of this is to get Jesus, because he's the only one who can help," Jernigan said. "Number two is to make sure the people in the community have food, so they can take the money they make and pay their own bills."

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GOING UNDER THE HOOD

Meet the driving force behind SJHS' automotive technology program

It's a sweltering summer day at South Johnston High School. The halls are empty on a Monday afternoon, but a visitor to the automotive technology shop could find one man working on a part.

James Cox is standing over a workbench, toiling away.

He's been teaching automotive technology at South Johnston since 2002, and today, he's troubleshooting a problem on his son's pickup.

That visitor asked about his students, and his program, and quickly received his undivided attention.

"There's such a demand for auto technicians now," he said. "There's something like an 18 percent shortage. So, we're trying to fill that void. Students coming out of this program in five years could be making over \$100,000 a year. And that's good money."

Maybe you've heard of mechanics being ASE (Automotive Service Excellence) certified? Students at South Johnston in Cox's program get training that helps them add that to their resumes.

Because of the high level of training, the demand for the course itself has risen at South Johnston. Each year, the school has to pare as many as 170 applicants to the first-year class down to a more manageable 40.

"It's not for everybody," he said. "But I have an elite few that make it and are very gifted at it. I tell them, 'it's kind of born in you.' My job is to help you find out where your talent is. I have a philosophy as a teacher. Every student that comes through this school has a gift. It's our job as teachers to find out what that gift is."

Cox and his students explore those possibilities not through textbooks and lectures, but through hands-on work in the form of projects.

A mini 18-wheeler sits in the shop waiting to be finished while a cherry red Mazda Miata is parked over in the corner – awaiting a future as a convertible powered by a bio-diesel John Deere tractor engine.

One that gets somewhere near 75 miles to the gallon.

There have been plenty of other projects as well.

"How do you teach a student about a car?" Cox said. "The best way to do that is to let them build one. We build cars from scratch. We come up with our own designs and we build a complete car."

One such project recently was a redesign of a 1994 Chevrolet S-10 pickup. It's also a bio-diesel that runs on french fry oil and gets 51 miles a gallon.

Cox liked it so much he bought it, and drives it back and forth to school every day.

"It smells like french fries," Cox said. "One time, I was at a stop light in Garner and this group of guys on motorcycles was behind me. One pulls next to me and motions for me to roll down the window. I get a little nervous, but I roll the window down, and he said, 'man, that smells good. We have to stop and eat now.'"



Success stories like that one earned the program a top-20 ranking from "Tomorrow Tech" magazine last fall.

"It caught me by surprise," Cox said of the honor. "I open up the magazine the one day, and there we were, South Johnston High School, top 20 in the nation. Somehow they got wind of what we're doing here and we made it in the top 20."

Another way Cox applies his hands-on philosophy is in the servicing of teachers' vehicles.

"We put (teachers) on contracts at the beginning of the year," Cox said. "We service their vehicles and keep them looked after. They don't have to do anything but send me an email and put the keys in the box. We pick the car up, service it and put it back in the lot."

"It gives my students training to do this, and it's all supervised. But we don't compete against the garages. It's only for our teachers here on campus. I don't need to compete with the people that are going to hire my students."

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School business doesn't take a summer vacation

For most students, summer is a time to forget about school.

That's true for a fair number of teachers, too.

But the truth is that, no matter the level, not even 100-degree weather can stop school business from humming right along through the summer.

For starters, as anyone with children knows, it's much easier to clean when they aren't around.

"I have to tell you about 'The Fabulous Five,' Four Oaks Elementary principal Kathy Parrish said. "That's our custodial staff. Every room is cleaned in this whole building. Top to bottom. The carpets are cleaned, the floors are stripped – 'The Fabulous Five,' they strip on the hallways' is a little joke around here. The first time I heard that, I thought 'what in the world have I gotten myself into?' But our floors are beautiful. When our parents come in, it's inviting because our custodians spend countless hours cleaning our building."

While a visitor to South Johnston High School would also find a stripped floor or two, there's actually a healthy amount of student activity going on in the halls and athletic fields as well.

"Well, there are always students at high school," South Johnston High School principal David Pearce said. "I've already learned that. We've got summer school going on. I sent some kids off on a trip to

Costa Rica. There were right at 100 ballplayers here this morning doing physical fitness and conditioning. Last week, there was an on-site baseball camp, basketball workouts, kids coming in to look at scholarships and applications. It does not stop."

The same, it seems, is true for the work of school administrators.

"Honestly, it's probably the busiest time of year for the administration team," Johnston County Schools Secondary Area Supervisor Dr. Eddie Price said. "You get enrollees, transfers and you're trying to fix the schedule you already prepared for 1,200 other kids as other kids with the same type of needs come in. So, you're looking at students' schedules and teacher schedules. You're looking at a projected budget, and you're going to have to assume because the Senate and House are going to stretch it through the summer. If it's done correctly, you can only create a draft. Then you take it to the school improvement team, because you want the building to decide exactly how that's done."

"Budget's a big piece in the summer. Hiring's big, too. Some schools have 15 or 20 (vacancies), and if you have 10 people per spot, think about how much time that takes (to talk with them)."

Student handbooks and other forms also have to be produced during the summer months, which keeps school offices running a bit faster than you might think.



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LOCAL BIOLOGIST BRINGS STATE WILDLIFE TO THE CENTER OF TOWN



Part of Four Oaks' charm lies on its quiet, tree-lined streets. After a trip down Main Street, you could hang a right on Sanders, walk for a spell and experience a neighborhood very much like any other south of the Mason-Dixon Line.

That is, until you reach the corner of Sanders and Baker.

There you'll find the home of James and Kristin Sasser, which is anything but what you'd expect to find a couple of blocks away from Town Hall.

Grasses and flowers reach unfettered for the sky in a wavy arch across the front yard while bees buzz and insects scurry about as if they own the place, which as it turns out, they pretty much do.

James Sasser is a Regional Biologist for North Carolina State Parks, and you might say he decided to bring his work home.

"It's native vegetation, primarily benefiting pollinators," he said, describing his unique front yard.

Or, in other words, plenty of flowers and grasses that grow in North Carolina that some animals (think bees, birds and butterflies) like.

"I got interested in it about three or four years ago from a coworker," he said. "With the decline of bees and other native pollinators, that coworker got me interested in the concept. I said, 'oh, that sounds pretty cool.'"

An idea was born. Sasser and his family moved to Sanders Street at the end of 2012, and in the following spring, the idea was put into action.

"We had a clean slate," he said. "It was a good opportunity to start from scratch and put some of these native plants in to benefit pollinators."

While Sasser enjoys doing his part to help pollinators, there's also

something in it for him.

"I hate mowing grass," he said. "So I figured I could reduce the amount of time I'm mowing grass, and also benefit pollinators – and it looks good, too. It was a win-win."

Each year, the wildlife area got a little bigger. And the lawn, a little smaller. Some new plants were added intentionally, marked carefully by little red flags, while others "volunteered" into the space, thanks to the natural spreading of seeds.

"It doesn't want to stay in the borders, it wants to go out," he said. "Every year, I bump it out a little bit more. I didn't this year. I think it's about where I want it to be. ... Every year we add new plants. We're trying to get to about 30 or 40 different species."

In addition, the plants are chosen in such a way that there's always something blooming from Spring until Fall. That way, there's always something new for the bees and birds – and something new to look at as well.

"I like to come home in the evening, walk through there and look at all of the bees," Sasser said. "There's numerous species of bees to look at, and I can kind of relax and unwind while I look at them. Sometimes, I think 'I did this. If I hadn't taken this time and done this, they wouldn't be here.' It's pretty rewarding to see the wildlife respond to the stuff that we've done."

It's not surprising that a biologist enjoys and appreciates the yard, but it seems that his neighbors like it, too.

"We've had nothing but positive comments," Sasser said. "We've had people walk up and down the sidewalk and tell us they love it. I was actually in the yard last year doing some weeding and someone driving by stopped and said, 'hey, we love what you're doing. It looks beautiful.'"

Randy Capps can be reached at randy@fouroaksjournal.com

The following Four Oaks-area students were named to the Spring Dean's List at Johnston Community College:



Rebecca Amerson	Zayra Moreno
Jose Angel	Libby Nixon
Jonathan Barbour	Destiny Norris
Mary Bennett	Victoria Parrish
Courtney Best	Logan Penny
John Bond	Karishma Persuad
Whitney Byrd	Whitney Riggsbee
Lisa Caldera	Robin Scotece
Angela Ellis	Emily Sitter
Cassidy Guignard	Zachary Sitter
Edgar Herrera-Montoya	Sherri Smith
Brittany Holbrook	Tanner Stone
Misty Holleman	Courtney Toppings
Kathrine Irvin	Dulce Ventura
Carly Jackson	Kirsten Wile
Jennifer Jones	Morgan Wilkins
Candace Lee	Taylor Wilkins
Grace Lee	Kelly Williamson
Lauren Locklear	Denay Wright
Lucy Martinez Aldaba	Caitlyn Wynn
James Montgomery	

Four Oaks Parks and Recreation seeking football players, cheerleaders

The Four Oaks Parks and Recreation Department is seeking football players and cheerleaders for the upcoming season. There are teams available for children ages 5-13, and the fee is \$75 for football and \$50 for cheerleading.

Practice will be held on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays before the eight-game season starts in September, and games will be held on Saturdays. All practices and home games will be held at Four Oaks Middle School.

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Changes in leadership –

A look at this summer's administrative changes in our schools

Two of the three schools in the Four Oaks area will have new principals when students return to school later this month.

Of course, they won't exactly be new faces.

David Pearce is moving from Four Oaks Elementary to South Johnston High School to replace Dr. Eddie Price, who is moving into a newly-created position with Johnston County Schools designed to mentor middle school and high school principals. Meanwhile, Kathy Parrish is moving into Pearce's role as principal at Four Oaks Elementary.

You might be wondering: What's going to be different? What's going to stay the same? Why all the moving around?

We thought we'd ask.

For Price, family comes first

For Dr. Eddie Price, late June was a busy and confusing time. He was working everywhere, dabbling a bit in his past role as principal at South Johnston while beginning to form some ideas about his new role as Area Supervisor for Middle and High Schools.

Yet, he was working nowhere. His office at South Johnston was already occupied by his successor, and he didn't have one at the district office yet, either.

When he welcomed a reporter to South Johnston, he had to borrow Bennett Jones' office – which was actually his office when he took the principal job at South five years ago.

"I started July 1, 2010, in this office," he said. "I had just had meniscus (surgery), a cadaver ACL put in and a MCL shaved (in my knee) on June 30. I worked July 1, 2, 3 and 4 in here – my wife had to bring me – with my leg propped up, trying to figure out what was going on."

Much has changed during that time, including the strengthening of the bond between the community and the school.

"When I started here, the community and the school were separate," he said. "We worked really hard to try to get the community back in our school."

In other words, a family-like environment, which, ironically, led to this change of career tack for Dr. Price.

"For me, it's really bittersweet because I love this school," he said. "I can't say that I loved it five years ago, but I love it now. I love the people. I love the kids. It's been a really emotional time for me."

"What it really comes down to is that I believe in work ethic. You have to spend 110 percent of your time to invest. I live about 40 minutes from here. I've got three kids, 12, 10 and 8, who



are growing up and I spend a lot of time here. My middle son asked me, and he plays soccer, 'Dad, why do you go watch everybody else's kids play, but you don't watch me play?' That's an eye-opening, aha moment that you don't get over very quickly.

"This was a couple of years ago, and I've struggled trying to balance how much time to put in to be family-oriented and professional. (The new job) fits where I am professionally. I have six years left (before retirement) and I don't want to miss my kids growing up. If I could move my house here, or move the school there, because I live on a family farm and if I left, I'd probably get kicked out of the family. This is a great place, but I love it just a little bit less than I love my family."

If the measure of success in a job is leaving things in better shape than you found them, then Dr. Price's tenure at South Johnston is worth celebrating.

The graduation rate the year he arrived was around 71 percent. This year, it was 96 percent.

"It's not what did 'I' do, it's what did 'we' do?" he said. "Sometimes, principals get too much credit in these sorts of things. Five years ago, I asked a question: I said, 'how's it working for you?' And nobody was happy."

"So we started rebuilding, rebranding and recreating our image in what we wanted to do. We had to believe in it. It took skits, funny skits, it took us soul searching, gnashing of teeth and crying to create something we could all agree to. What it boils down to is that every kid's educational experience is going to be different. And it's hard to put together a bunch of different educational plans and meet kids' needs where they are."

"But primarily, that required every adult to form a relationship with a kid. If you talk to Mr. Jones or Mrs. (Brandy) Peters right now about 12th graders, they can tell you about every one of them. They can tell you where they work, if they work, who they live with, which community (they're from). Any baggage they might have. It's about knowing kids, and that's what I challenged them to do five years ago."

"And that's all. The teachers began knowing kids and working with kids. It was a lot of work and a lot of effort under the umbrella that we're going to care for kids and love them. If we model grace, and pay it forward, then they'll model grace. I'd want the same for my kids. ... It's not a magic formula. It's just love and grace."

So, what's next for Dr. Price in his new position?

"If we don't grow our leaders, then schools aren't going to get better," Price said of his new duties. "Teachers can be working really hard, but school leaders need a liaison – an accountability partner as well. ... So, we're really coaching principals and working with stakeholders (or parents), so that we can be more stakeholder-driven."

Pearce makes career decision

A day before sitting down with Dr. Price, that same reporter sat in his old office with South Johnston's new principal, David Pearce.

Pearce spent the last decade at Four Oaks Elementary, including serving as its principal for the last seven years. But he felt it was time for a new adventure.

"I felt like it was a good decision for my career," he said. "As an educator, you're always looking for a new challenge and a new opportunity, and most of my career has been spent in the K-8 world. So, I wanted to be engaged in the whole student's life, and I thought this was a great move for me in my career to get where I would like to be one day – which is to serve at a higher level of education."

That doesn't mean it was easy for him to clean out his office at the elementary school.

"It was very, very, very emotional," he said.

But, eager to accept his new challenges head-on, Pearce got started at South Johnston in mid-June, instead of his official July 1 start date.

"Because high school never stops, with athletics, summer school and curriculum, I decided to



(start early), he said. "(I wanted to) go ahead and start learning, help make decisions and to make the transition as smooth as possible. I wanted to make sure I was visible, to help with any anxieties students might have about Dr. Price leaving."

Anyone familiar with Pearce's administrative style knows that he's very involved with students. And it's a style he plans to continue a few miles down

U.S. 301.

"Having a personal touch, paying attention to details and building relationships, I'm solid on those pieces," he said. "Those things are very important to me. 1,300 kids here versus 1,100 at Four Oaks, I look forward to getting to know more of the parents and students from the Meadow and Benson areas."

"I expect to still have that personal touch, and definitely help students gain more knowledge to help set their path for where they're going to be in the world. I look forward to helping mold and shape students, just like I did in the elementary world, but on the high school level."

It's a transition made smoother by the fact that he knows his replacement at Four Oaks Elementary very well.

"Kathy understands the culture of Four Oaks," he said. "She has served many roles at Four Oaks Elementary: teacher, curriculum coach and assistant principal. She focuses on student learning and (the school) has a great group of staff and parents to support her as she transitions to principal."

Parrish fits culture at FOES

The office shuffle was very much underway at Four Oaks Elementary School on a cloudy and muggy Thursday morning.

But there was nothing gloomy about Kathy Parrish's mood as she sat in her new, yet-to-be-decorated work space, chatting with a reporter with a smile big enough to render the overhead light unnecessary.

Her appointment to replace Pearce, both as principal and tenant of the office overlooking the school's front parking lot, is the crowning achievement in her 16-year career at the school – the last four spent as an assistant principal.

"It's a dream come true," she said. "Not many people have that same record in the same school. It's an honor. It's overwhelming. It's a huge responsibility that I don't take lightly. I've got huge shoes to fill. Not just David's – I don't know what size they were, but they were big – but I started out in my tenure here with Dr. (Cathy) Truitt, she was awesome. Kim Wellons left a legacy here, then David. So I'm coming behind three really great leaders."

"I just want to continue that tradition in my tenure here."

Her first official day on the job as principal was July 1, but Parrish was already hard at work in preparation for the new school year well before June was over.



"As soon as I was named principal, the job started," she said. "The first thing I have to do is find another assistant principal, because my spot is now empty. (There's) a list of teacher vacancies that I have. So I'm spending a lot of my time interviewing, looking for the people who are the next Cardinals. I'm trying to get the people finished so we can move on to the next step, the curriculum."

Choosing new staff wisely is important, Parrish believes, when it comes to maintaining the community-driven culture that exists at the school.

"Four Oaks is such a special place that you don't find in many elementary schools," she said. "We're at the end of Main Street. The community still supports us. We are nothing without that community support. Grandparents still walk in, showing their grandkids where their kindergarten class was. I don't want to get rid of that. That's why I've been here 16 years, because it is such a community-immersed culture."

"That's why we're so successful. Because everybody supports the school at the end of Main Street."

While she embraces the community culture, her background as a curriculum coach means that she has a few ideas in that area that she hopes to implement as principal.

"I'm very curriculum-oriented," she said. "Not to say that anyone before me wasn't. But I want to make sure that our teachers have the best information they can to present the curriculum to the kids we have now who are living in a completely different society. Technology, global – it all sounds really good. But it's real. Kids are going to be competing in a market that you and I have never dealt with before. So, my focus is going to be on making sure that my teachers are well prepared with a curriculum to deliver to students so they can grow up and be successful in their society."

Randy Capps can be reached at randy@fouroaksjournal.com



Protect yourself from IRS-related scams

Since October 2013, the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) has received reports of roughly 290,000 calls from IRS impersonators and has become aware of nearly 3,000 victims who have collectively paid over \$14 million as a result of a phone scam in which individuals make unsolicited calls to taxpayers fraudulently claiming to be IRS officials and demanding that they send them cash via prepaid debit cards.

To protect yourself from becoming a victim of an IRS-related phone scam, keep in mind that the IRS will never:

- Call to demand immediate payment, nor will the IRS call about taxes owed without first having mailed you a bill
- Demand that you pay taxes without giving you the opportunity to question or appeal the amount they say you owe
- Require you to use a specific payment method for your taxes, such as a prepaid debit card
- Ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone
- Threaten to bring in local police or other law-enforcement groups to have you arrested for not paying

If you get a phone call from someone claiming to be from the IRS and asking for money, here's what you should do:

- If you know you owe taxes or think you might owe taxes, ask for a call back number and an employee badge number, then call the IRS at 800-829-1040. IRS employees can help you with a payment issue.
- If you know you don't owe taxes or have no reason to believe that you do, report the incident to the TIGTA at 1-800-366-4484 or at www.tigta.gov.

If you've been targeted by this scam, also contact the Federal Trade Commission and use its "FTC Complaint Assistant" at FTC.gov. Please add "IRS Telephone Scam" to the comments of your complaint.

Remember, too, that the IRS does not use email, text messages, or any social media to discuss your personal tax issue involving bills or refunds. If you get a 'phishing' email, the IRS offers this advice:

- Don't reply to the message
- Don't give out your personal or financial information
- Forward the email "as-is" to phishing@irs.gov, then delete the email; and don't open any attachments or click on any links - they may have malicious code that will infect your computer.

For more information on IRS-related tax scams, go to www.irs.gov and type "scam" in the search box.

Information provided by Honeycutt & Grady, CPAs



SAVE THE DATE

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wednesdays, 6:30 to 8 p.m. (through Aug. 19) Boys' Summer Study – "The Real Win"

Beulah Hill Christian Church - Prepare for a paradigm-shifting view of biblical manhood. Every man wants to succeed. But for so many, life seems to get in the way. Everyone has friends - good men, followers of Christ even - who start out well but before long, they're failing at relationships, bending ethical standards, or driving themselves so hard at work they're losing the hearts of their wife and kids. This study is for middle school and high school boys, and includes dinner.

Wednesdays, 6:30 to 8 p.m. (through Aug. 19) Girls' Summer Study – "Faithful One"

Beulah Hill Christian Church - This program will dissect 1 and 2 Thessalonians where we will examine Paul's truths about Christ's character and how he reigns over all the Earth, despite how lost our world is. Students will be challenged to live as faithful followers of Jesus in a world that is desperate and searching for his Gospel. This study is for middle school and high school girls, and includes dinner.

August 1, 3 to 7 p.m. - Cruise In

Main Street, Four Oaks - View classic cars and spend some time on Main Street in Four Oaks. For more information, call the Four Oaks Area Chamber of Commerce at (919) 963-4004 or email info@fouroaksareachamber.com.

August 5, 10:30 a.m. - Summer Reading Program - "Every Hero has a Story"

James Bryan Creech Public Library - This session is "How can I be a superhero?" Call (919) 963-6013 for more information.

August 10, 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Using the Outdoors as a Classroom

Howell Woods - This program is open to educators and will teach you how to safely engage students in outdoor learning. Each participant will receive a goodie bag to take back to class. Cost: \$20. For more information or to register, contact Brittany Brenner at bgbrenner@johnstoncc.edu or (919) 938-0115, ext. 225

August 11, 10 a.m. - Intro to Water Quality

Howell Woods - This program will introduce participants to the importance of our water supply and the need to keep this supply free of pollution. Participants will be asked to use critical thinking and public speaking skills to debate different scenarios dealing with water shortage and water quality. This program is directed towards children in middle school. Cost: \$15. For more information or to register, contact Brittany Brenner at bgbrenner@johnstoncc.edu or (919) 938-0115, ext. 225

August 12, 10:30 a.m. - Summer Reading Program - "Every Hero has a Story"

James Bryan Creech Public Library - This session is "We have the power to change the world!" Call (919) 963-6013 for more information.

August 19, 10:30 a.m. - Summer Reading Program - "Every Hero has a Story"

James Bryan Creech Public Library - The final session is still being determined. Call (919) 963-6013 for more information.

August 21, 7:30 p.m. - High School Football

South Johnston at Franklinton

August 22 - Barbecue Pork and Chicken Benefit

Selah Christian Church - Lunch will be served from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and dinner is set for 4 to 7 p.m. A live auction begins at 7, and all proceeds will benefit Caroline Tart's medical bills. For more information, email jasonkthornton@att.net or carolynjncarter@gmail.com.

August 22, 7 a.m. - Let's Go Fishing

Howell Woods - This program is designed to introduce our youth to the wonderful world of fishing. Participants will start the morning by learning and observing fish found in our area using the 400-gallon freshwater aquarium at Howell Woods. This classroom experience will be followed by hands-on fishing in our stocked pond. Poles and bait will be provided and staff will help you along the way. Cost: \$10. For more information or to register, contact Brittany Brenner at bgbrenner@johnstoncc.edu or (919) 938-0115, ext. 225

August 22, 6 p.m. - Summer Reading Program - "Every Hero has a Story"

James Bryan Creech Public Library - The end of summer bash features the "Superhero Training Camp." Call (919) 963-6013 for more information.

August 22, 10 a.m. - Discovery Room Premier

Howell Woods - The Howell Woods Discovery Room has been in the making since early summer. Join us as we officially open the doors to this children's learning space. In this room, children are encouraged to learn more about the natural world through hands-on activities and reading. Cost: Free. For more information or to register, contact Brittany Brenner at bgbrenner@johnstoncc.edu or (919) 938-0115, ext. 225

August 28, 7:30 p.m. - High School Football

South Johnston at West Johnston

August 28, 11 a.m. - Clothing Closet and Food Pantry

Four Oaks Farmers Market - For details, contact John Jernigan at Lighthouse Christian Fellowship at (919) 320-7387.

August 29, 10 to 4 p.m. - Summer Artillery Program

Bentonville Battlefield - Hear the roar of cannon fire! Interpreters will demonstrate firing techniques and discuss equipment that would have been used during battle. Infantry and artillery demonstrations will be held throughout the day.

September 1, 6 to 8 p.m. - Preserve the Produce, Vegetable and Fruit Canning

Howell Woods - Growing too much food in the garden? Learn canning techniques for preserving your vegetables and fruit. Cost: \$10. To register, contact Howell Woods Environmental Learning Center at (919) 938-0115 or jtastoske@johnstoncc.edu.

September 1, 6 to 7:30 p.m. - Introduction to the Low Ropes Challenge Course

Howell Woods recently installed a Low Ropes Challenge Course and is offering this introduction program free of charge to those that may be interested in signing up their youth group, scout group, or office group. Allow us to introduce you to the different elements on the course and team building exercises off the course. The group will work together as a team to tackle initiatives such as the spider web, nitro crossing and the initiative wall. For more information or to register, contact Brittany Brenner at bgbrenner@johnstoncc.edu or (919) 938-0115, ext. 225

September 4, 7:30 p.m. - High School Football

Clayton at South Johnston

September 11, 7:30 p.m. - High School Football

Southern Nash at South Johnston

September 11, 8 p.m. - Four Oaks Fire Department Family Movie Night

Barbour's Grove Park, Four Oaks - Come out to this free movie in the park. Popcorn and refreshments will be sold. For more information, call the Four Oaks Area Chamber of Commerce at (919) 963-4004 or email info@fouroaksareachamber.com.

September 12, 9 a.m. - Johnston County Football League

Princeton at Four Oaks (at Four Oaks Middle)

September 12, 9 a.m. - Plan Your Next Adventure

Howell Woods - Learn to navigate through the wilderness using a handheld GPS unit and maps. Participants will learn how to plan a wilderness adventure using aerial photographs, mark points on a map, and navigate a predetermined route through the wilderness. Participants should come dressed for outdoor adventure. Cost: \$15. For more information or to register, contact Brittany Brenner at bgbrenner@johnstoncc.edu or (919) 938-0115, ext. 225

September 17, 6:30 p.m. - White Swan Concert Series

Barbour's Grove Park, Four Oaks - Come out and listen to Jonathan Parker and the Bel Aires and Carolina Tradition Bluegrass in the park. White Swan Bar-B-Q and Fried Chicken will have trays on sale for \$6. For more information, call the Four Oaks Area Chamber of Commerce at (919) 963-4004 or email info@fouroaksareachamber.com

To add your organization's events to the calendar, email us at hello@fouroaksjournal.com.

A florist and gift shop with divine intervention

These days, The Vine and Branch Florist is nestled on Main Street across from Town Hall. Five years ago, however, the business was on the other side of town and had a different name.

On August 15, 2010, Shane and Amanda Smith bought Par's Florist, and The Vine and Branch was born.

In April of 2012, the business moved from the shopping center on 301 – where Ming Moon is now – to its current home.

"It all started with an ad posted online," Vine and Branch owner Shane Smith said. "A couple of weeks later, bang, here we were. It was Par's Florist (when) we bought the shop, then divine intervention just kind of showed up."

There's a bit of divine influence in the name as well.

"Vine and Branch comes from John 15:5," Smith said. "I am the vine, you are the branches."

The rest of that verse reads, "if you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

That might explain why, despite a college education in funeral services, Smith has always found himself drawn to flowers.

"I've always kind of come back to the flower shop," he said. "I've worked at a flower shop in Newton Grove, Clinton, Benson and Four Oaks. And did some freelance work for one in Raleigh. ... Anytime a temporary job would run out, or I would just change jobs, it always led back to the flower shop."

"I started working at a florist in Newton Grove after school washing buckets and delivering flowers. ... I would just watch her design. One day, her daughter was out sick and we had this big funeral. She stuck a funeral spray in front of me and said, 'you've got to help me.' She knew I had some God-given talent, and that's what it is. Straight from God."

In a community that values stability, Smith was fortunate to inherit Elizabeth Carr (pictured, top right) when he bought the business.

"She was like a fixture when I bought the place," he said. "She's been here 16 years, and she worked with Mrs. Pat, the original owner. ... She has a lot of time invested in Four Oaks. She's been doing flowers since she was a young girl. Her mother's owned a shop for pretty close to 50 years in Clinton, so she grew up in it."

As The Vine and Branch nears its five-year anniversary on August 15, Smith credits a willingness to try new things for his business' success.

"It's always evolved," Smith said. "We've added a lot more gifts, and our business has really taken off. We've added lots of interior things and the painted furniture. Kind of modernized it a bit. We offer more than just flowers."

While there may be a wide variety of things available at the shop,



flowers are still the heart of the operation.

"We do fresh flowers the best," he said. "We have probably the freshest flowers in Johnston County. We get more compliments on our fresh flowers and longevity than we do anything else."



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