

SEPTEMBER 2015 | Your Community. Your Neighbors. Your Story.

FOUR OAKS Journal

Baseball in Four Oaks

- Public Servant's Health Challenges
- Thriving Local Artist: Jo Lee
- Community Calendar

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

This issue brought to you by...

YOU!

Now this is more like it.

We've got youth baseball pictures, a devotional and a story about a nine-year-old author – all submitted by readers.

It's exactly what we had in mind when we launched the Four Oaks Journal earlier this year.

I'm good at digging up stories, but it's much more fun when readers chime in with what's going on in their lives.

Nothing makes me happier than a magazine full of things that you've shared with us. I love the idea of this issue winding up in a photo album and becoming part of a family's history.

It's an idea at the heart of this publication. It's no accident that the words, "your community, your neighbors, your story" appear on the cover of each magazine.

So, with that said, keep them coming.

You can email us with story ideas to hello@fouroaksjournal.com, connect with us on our Facebook page, give us a ring at (919) 980-5522 or, if you're more of a traditionalist, you can mail us at P.O. Box 58 in Four Oaks.

Personally, I can't wait to see what memories you'll make next.



Randy Capps
randy@fouroaksjournal.com



FEATURES



Four Oaks Baseball Teams



Thriving Local Artist: Jo Lee

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Volume 1, Number 5

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Four Oaks residents perform in Clayton Youth Theater production

More than 2,100 patrons were taken back to New York City, circa 1922, in Clayton Youth Theater's most recent musical production, "Thoroughly Modern Millie."

Based upon the 1967 film starring Julie Andrews, Mary Tyler Moore and Carol Channing, "Thoroughly Modern Millie" tells the story of a small-town girl, who comes to New York City to marry for money instead of love – a thoroughly modern aim in 1922. The film was adapted to the Broadway stage and went on to earn six Tony Awards in 2002, including Best Musical.

Morgan Abdalla took center stage as the female lead, Millie Dillmount, in the musical. Morgan is a recent South Johnston graduate and this was her fourth show with CYT. She will continue to pursue her dream of singing on Broadway by attending East Carolina University and majoring in Musical Theater. She is the daughter of Jimmy and Latefa Abdalla of Benson.

This was the fifth and final show for Tanner Stone of Four Oaks. Tanner, a fifth-year senior at Johnston County Early College Academy, was also the creative mind behind the set for the show. Tanner has taken more than eight years of art classes, but designing the set pieces for a show was a new endeavor for his artistic talents. Tanner is the son of

Kathy Stone of Four Oaks.

The cast of "Millie" began rehearsals in early June, learning music, choreography and memorizing lines before opening on July 24. The show had five performances on the Clayton Center stage before closing on Aug. 1.

Founded in 2007 by an arts teacher, Nikki Dyke, and adopted by the Clayton Cultural Arts Foundation, the Clayton Youth Theater was established to showcase the talents of area middle school and high school students, while bringing high quality productions to central North Carolina. In recognition for her work with CYT, Nikki was the 2012 recipient of the Frances Finch Hobart Award for Voluntary Community Service.

Since 2007, CYT has impacted hundreds of students and entertained more than 15,000 patrons in and around Johnston County. For more information on upcoming shows or acting classes, please visit www.claytonyouththeater.com.

Photos and story by Kathy Stone



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Longtime public servant facing health challenges

Some people believe in karma – or the idea that if you live your life in a good and positive way, then good and positive things will come back to you somewhere down the line.

If that's true, then Billie Williams is due for a return on a life spent in community service.

From 1982 to his retirement in 2012, he served for a total of 23 years with the Four Oaks Police Department.

He rose from patrolman to chief in his first 15 months, earning the town's top police job in November 1983.

In 1985, Williams left that post to serve with the Johnston County Sheriff's Department, but returned to Four Oaks in 1995 on a part-time basis. He rejoined the force full-time in 2000, and retired as a Lieutenant 12 years later.

"It was pretty good," Williams said of his law enforcement career. "I never had a really threatening situation. Or maybe just one. Outside that, things went pretty smoothly."

That's a bit of an understatement, if you ask around town.

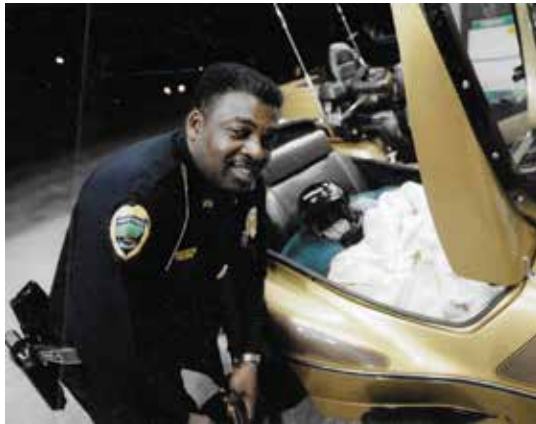
"Billie is just an excellent human being," Four Oaks Mayor Linwood Parker said. "He was perfect in his role with the police department, both as chief and otherwise. He did a good job, and people liked him."

"He wasn't the kind of individual who would get overheated. He'd listen to both sides and then enforce the law. Billie Williams was an integral part of the community of Four Oaks."

Lieutenant Tim Lebow, who served with him on the Four Oaks Police Department, echoed that sentiment.

"Billie was a laid-back, easy-going guy," he said. "He never really lost his temper or anything. He was calm and collected in any situation. Just an all-around fun person to be around."

When asked for a reason for choosing police work, Williams told a story that illustrates



his desire to help people.

"There was an elderly lady. I cut her grass, and kept her trash put out to the road for her," he said. "She couldn't handle it anymore."

Ironically, after spending most of his adult life in public service, Williams isn't getting much of a break in terms of his health.

He's lost most of the sight in his left eye, and the early stages of Parkinson's Disease have slowed his movement a bit.

The Parkinson's Disease Foundation website (pdf.org) defines it as "a chronic and progressive movement disorder, meaning that symptoms continue and worsen over time."

The cause is unknown and, although the symptoms can sometimes be managed, there is no cure.

Symptoms vary from case to case, but PD sufferers can experience tremors (shaking) in the hands, arms, legs and face, slowness of movement, stiffness and impaired balance and coordination.

And, according to his partner, Jean Freeman, adding to Williams' medical concerns is a diagnosis of Dementia – or a gradual erosion of one's mental capacities.

So, in a lot of ways, Billie Williams isn't the same man he was just a few short years ago.

"His health has just deteriorated," Freeman said. "To me, it was almost like it went overnight. And it is progressing very fast. Every day, I'm just looking at it. It's not getting any better."



His health cut short his efforts to serve the community after his retirement from law enforcement. Williams and Freeman opened M.E.D. Community Thrift Store in 2012, and through partnerships with organizations like Serve the Need of Johnston County, Alliance Behavioral Healthcare and the Durham Economic Resource Center, furnished apartments for residents with mental disabilities and other community service work.

"We did a lot of great things in a short period of time," Freeman said. "It broke my heart to have to close because of his condition."

Now the struggle for Freeman is to keep her partner as happy and as comfortable as possible.

"One of the things he's asked me is to keep him in the home as long as I could," Freeman said. "That would be a great thing, but with his progression, I don't know if that's going to be good or bad because I'm going to need quite a bit of help. Because it could take me down right with him."

In keeping with his character, when asked how Parkinson's was affecting him, his thoughts quickly turned to others.

"Not being able to help the people I've helped because I've slowed down," he said. "I can't say how many years (I have left). I just have to take things day by day."

Randy Capps can be reached at randy@fouroaksjournal.com or at 919-980-5522

Johnston County Schools names 2015-16 Assistant Principal of the Year



Tol Avery, left, poses with Bernita Nicolas and his father, Hubert Avery.

Tol Avery, assistant principal at South Johnston High School, has been named the 2015-2016 Assistant Principal of the Year for Johnston County Schools.

He received a check for \$500 from the Johnston County Education Foundation at the Johnston County Principals/Assistant Principals Association breakfast held during the summer, at Cleveland High School.

"I feel honored, privileged, and humbled to be recognized among such outstanding peers," said Avery. "I am very fortunate to work with a staff who are committed to excellence and professionalism."

According to Avery, the honor would not have been possible without South Johnston's hard-working students and a caring community.

He added that he is also thankful for the leadership of the district and his school.

"Mr. Tol Avery is a fair, respectful, and intelligent man," said Dr. Ed Croom, superintendent for Johnston County Schools. "He strives every day to improve his school and is very dedicated to South Johnston and the community."

Dr. Croom added he is very proud of the work that Avery does as an assistant principal on a daily basis and believes he is most deserving of this honor.

Submitted by Johnston County Schools

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Four Oaks young author releases second book

Chloe' Hampton is a rising fifth grader at Four Oaks Elementary. In many ways, she's just like any other nine year old.

But in one way, she most certainly is not.

Hampton, the daughter of LaSa Williams, Robert Williams and Marcus Hampton, has published two books. The first, "The Hushpuppy Girl," was published in 2014 while the latest, "How Does Emily Feel Today," was published in May.

"She enjoys traveling and speaking to young people to encourage them that age has no number to begin making your dreams come true," her mother, LaSa Williams, said. "She loves traveling to different places to read and share her stories."

"The Hushpuppy Girl" is about Chloe's love for White Swan hushpuppies. In writing this book, Chloe' tagged along with Four Oaks Mayor Linwood Parker, owner of the restaurant. He showed her how to make

hushpuppies and introduced her and her book at a Four Oaks town board meeting.

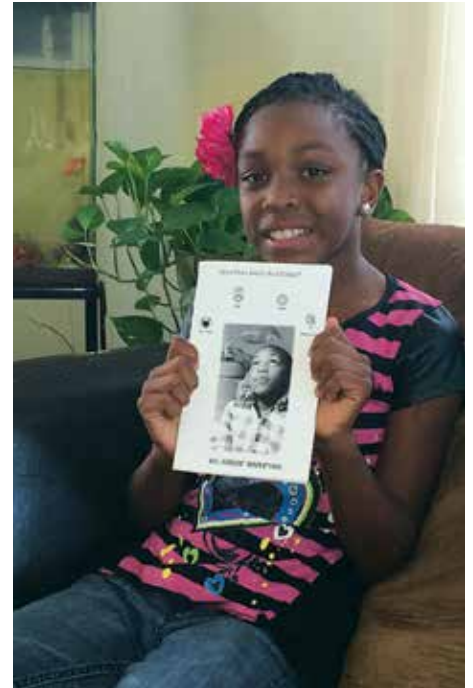
The name "Hushpuppy Girl" came from a lady that worked there named Angie Long who knew that Chloe' was coming in every day for hushpuppies.

The newest book, "How Does Emily Feel Today," is about a little girl named Emily and her feelings.

Each day of the week she is introduced to a different emotion. Her emotions run the gamut throughout the week, but, in the end, Emily prays to God about all she had been through, and finds happiness in knowing that God loves her.

For more, follow "Author Chloe'" on Facebook.

Information provided by LaSa Williams



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Baseball

in Four Oaks



The Southern Johnston Baseball team, representing Four Oaks, Benson, and Southern Johnston, finished second in the Tar Heel League Series.

The team members are: Back row, Blackmon, Chris Carroll, Brian I. Andre Garcia, Cole Winborne, N. and Cameron Massengill. Front row, Peyton Pennica, Parker Wood and

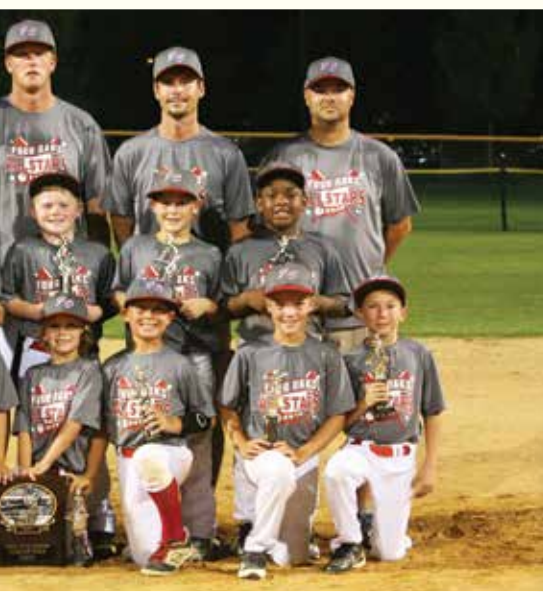
Photo by Sonia Hines



The 12U Four Oaks Force visited the Cooper River in July. The team members are: F. Hunter Bailey, Ayden Wood, D. Row, Assistant coach Thomas Christopher Britt, Kannan Cruikshank, head coach Stevie Edwards.

Back Row, Assistant coaches

Photo by Cindy Edwards



The Four Oaks 8U All Stars won the Tar Heel League District 5 championship before tying for fifth place in the state tournament in Washington in mid-July.

The team is, back row, left to right, coaches Glenn Johnson, Gabe Norris, Jody Johnson and Kevin Smith. Second row, Eli Wood, Jax Barbour, Kellen Smith, Seth Parker, Evan Stutts and Kaleb Williams. Front row, Kevin Favila-Beltran, Cole Norris, Conley Johnson, Will Johnson, Logan Wise and Jackson Norris.

Photo by Marlene Dunn

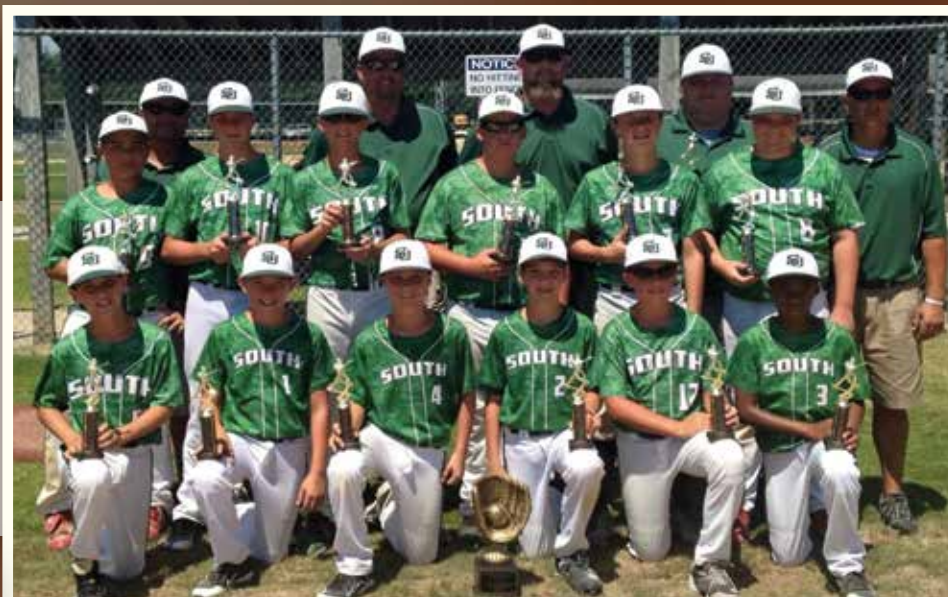


Row 1: Buck Weaver, Will Massengill, Raylon Wood, Jr.
Row 2: Nolan Blackmon, Patrick Allen, Chase Carroll
Row 3: AJ Byrd, Jimmy Hines, Ethan Weaver, Jaydn McNeill.



ed the National Baseball Hall of Fame in
Front row, left to right, Nathan Canaday,
ylan Bates and River Blackmon. Second
Bailey, Holden McLeod, Thomas Dees,
mpler, Ben Edwards, Sam Webster and

Stephen Wood and Jonathan Canaday.



Four Oaks Force pay visit to Cooperstown

The Four Oaks Force is a 12 and under travel baseball team made up of Four Oaks-area boys. The team has enjoyed much success on the field during the past year with the highlight being a championship in the Top Gun Winter World Series.

In July, the Force had the opportunity to travel to New York to compete at the Cooperstown All Star Village. They played seven games against teams from all over the United States, including teams from Texas, Illinois, Maryland, Missouri and California. In addition to the games, they competed in a variety of skills competitions against the other teams, placing third out of 48 teams in the team relay competition.

During their stay in Cooperstown, the team had a chance to take a tour of the National Baseball Hall of Fame where they were able to learn about the history of baseball as well as view the many exhibits and artifacts on display. The tour concluded with a walk through the Hall of Fame Gallery, the home of the 310 plaques representing each member of the Baseball Hall of Fame.

The trip was a once in a lifetime opportunity for these boys. The memories and experiences that they shared on the trip will last for a lifetime. It was truly a great experience for each of the players, coaches and their families.

Submitted by Stevie Edwards



Thriving local artist Jo Lee



It's often said that beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

If that's true, there's a fair amount of beholding to be done in and around Four Oaks.

One contributor to the community's thriving local artist population is Jo Lee (Tucker).

Lee, a retired educator and lifelong Four Oaks resident, has always enjoyed art, but didn't take it up in earnest until her retirement in 2007.

"I like designing things," she said. "I enjoy the shapes and the colors and creating. That's why I like to paint. I've always loved designing. My mother sewed, so I would design things and she would make them.

"I don't think I realized that I had a natural talent. Don't get me wrong –

everybody can paint. Everybody can draw. But I do think that it's kind of like other skills. You might have more of a knack for it."

An oil painting hangs on a wall just a few steps into her home, and a flower from her mother's garden served as both inspiration and as an introduction to serious painting.

"I was trying to figure out all the different kinds of things you do in painting," she said.

Her work has won prizes in Harnett, Johnston, Wake and Sampson counties during the last seven years.

While entering contests is rewarding, Lee has bigger ambitions for her artwork.

"I would like to sell," she said. "I'm from the old school. You're supposed to make money to do something. I wanted to get my work out there and get people to look at it. Not so much to win something, although that's nice. And you better not be really worried about that, because you have to have a pretty thick skin. It's all in the eye of the beholder."

Her journey as an artist has spanned from oil to acrylic, with a little water color and mixed media work mixed in as well.

"I'm a very fast painter, so I decided to get into something that would make me take longer," she said. "So, I got into mixed media. That's using more than one medium."

To illustrate her point, Lee shows off a portrait of a pig.

"That's different pieces of paper, napkins and acrylic," she said. "It's kind of like putting a puzzle together."

That painting is one piece of Lee's own personal puzzle when it comes to the type of art she chooses to create.

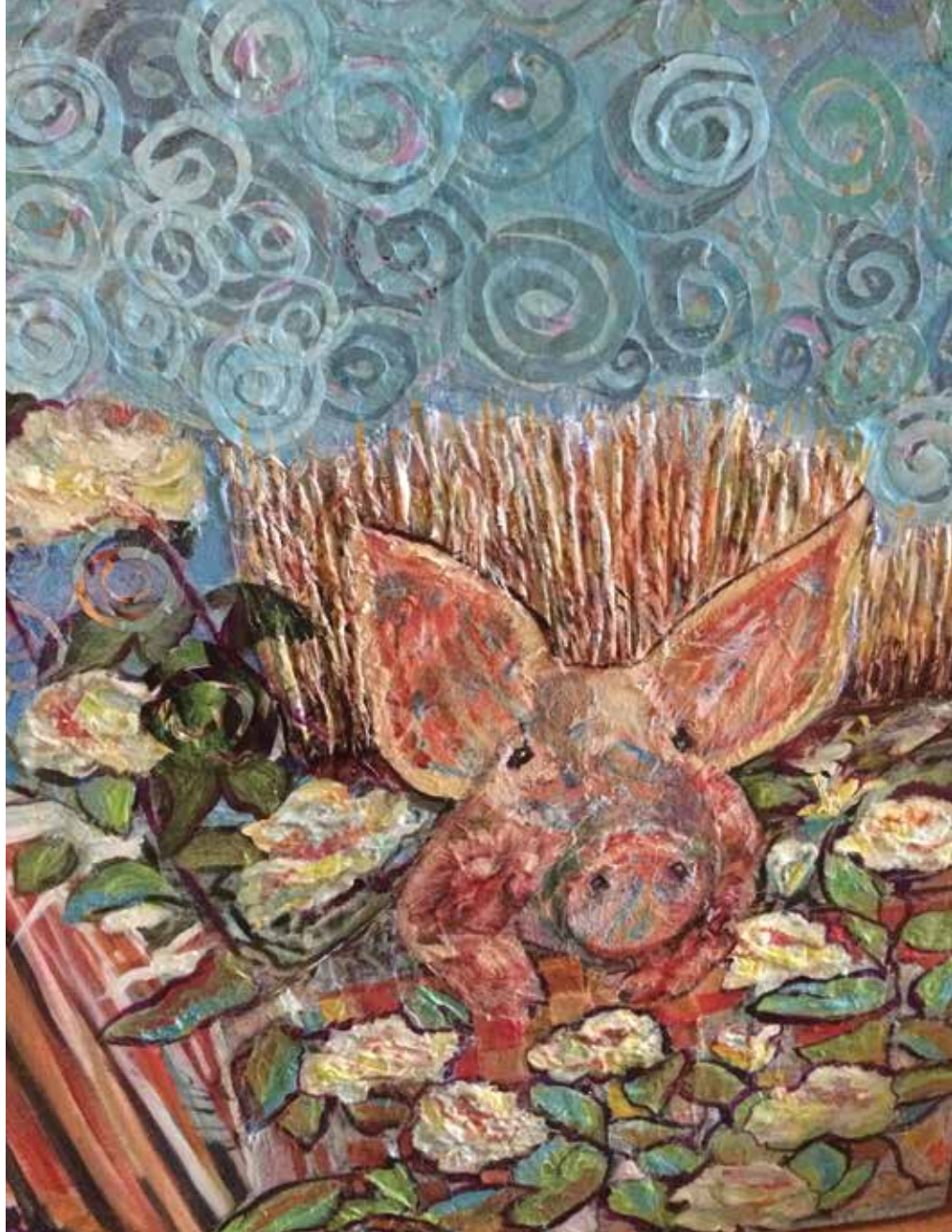
"I love it all. I love flowers, animals, people," she said. "They say that, in the art world, you're supposed to be known for a certain thing. And I haven't gotten there yet."

Maybe the children's book she's planning will end up being her calling card. It features her paintings of various animals, including the pig, and their dreams.

"This pig, for instance, his dream is to get on the other side of the fence where those beautiful roses are," she said.

Who knows? Maybe all those dreams, including the artist's, may come true.

Randy Capps can be reached at randy@fouroaksjournal.com



DEVOTIONAL:

New school year begins – the past is the past

By Jeanie Benson

As we begin a new school year in the county, students, parents, teachers, administrators and families are setting goals for a new year. Excitement is in everyone's heart. The students are ready to begin a new year, to meet new friends, to learn new things and to reach new goals.

Last year is in the past. There is nothing anyone can do to change the past. In the past, if errors were made, goals and expectations were not met, it's OK; everyone can begin a new year. Everyone can restart, refresh, rejuvenate, rekindle and realize the past is over. We are in a new year.

Accepting Jesus as your personal savior and walking hand in hand with Him is just like this. When you accept Jesus Christ as your savior and ask forgiveness for your past sins, the past is the past to God. Now that you have confessed those sins to God, you are free from the past! You can forget the past. You can move on. You can start a new year.

How, you may ask?

God sent His one and only son, Jesus, to die on the cross for you and me, for our sins. (John 3:16) Jesus was born to a virgin woman, lived for 33 years and then was crucified on a cross over 2000 years ago. Jesus died that horrible, gruesome death for your sins from last week, last year, or in the last few minutes. He is the only man to ever walk on this Earth sinless, but He had to come as a human to save all of us sinful humans. (Philippians 2:6-8)

He died so you could be free of your past. The past of Him dying on the cross is the only past that should concern anyone once we turn and accept Him. We should not be concerned with our past; only how we live in the future for Jesus who died for our sins.

Does this mean we will never sin again? Of course not.

But we can know with assurance that if we ask forgiveness He will forgive us. (Ephesians 1:7) We can stop grieving and worrying over our past. Give your past to Jesus!

As we begin a new year, let's teach especially our students, they are not judged by their past. They do not have to worry about their past. They can restart, refresh, rejuvenate, rekindle and realize their past is their past. They can start a new year, accept Jesus Christ as their Savior, ask for forgiveness of sins, and become a new person in Christ. We cannot promise it will be easy, but we can promise who will be with them every step of the way, JESUS CHRIST.

Let's all get on our knees before our Lord. Let's pray for our students, parents, teachers, administrators and families that they accept Christ as their savior.

Pray they forget their past failures and start a new year with Christ as the center of all they do. Pray our students begin each day knowing it is a gift from God. Pray they know He loves them and He is always there for them. Pray our parents, teachers, and administrators know Jesus Christ and that He loves them no matter their mistakes.

Pray they share Christ's love to our students to help in their success today and forget their failures of the past. I pray we are a county shining the light of Jesus for everyone to see. Go out today and make a difference in someone's life by sharing about Jesus Christ for them to remember today, tomorrow and forever.

Ephesians 4:22-24 reads, "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

Yard sale/Flea Market

Smithfield Moose Lodge, 402 JR Road, Selma
Proceeds to benefit the Mooseheart Foundation.
For details, contact Christina Pettis at 608-658-3670.

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.

September 18, 7:30 p.m.

High School Football

Cape Fear at South Johnston

September 19, 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.

September 19, 9 a.m.

Johnston County Football League

Four Oaks at Selma

September 25, 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.

September 25-27

Fifth Annual Johnston County Men's Amateur Golf Championship

The Neuse Golf Club, Clayton
A team event is set for Friday, Sept. 25, while the flighted men's tournament will be held on Saturday and Sunday.
Cost: \$75 for Friday, \$125 for Saturday and Sunday or \$175 for all three days. For more information, call the Four Oaks Area Chamber of Commerce at (919) 963-4004 or email info@fouroaksareachamber.com.

September 25, 7:30 p.m.

High School Football

South Johnston at North Johnston

September 26, 9 a.m.

Johnston County Football League

Smithfield at Four Oaks (at Four Oaks Middle)

September 26, 5 p.m.

Intro to Tent Camping

Howell Woods - Join Howell Woods as we celebrate "Take A Child Outside Week." This is the perfect opportunity to introduce our younger generation to their natural environment while enjoying a recreational experience. Staff will be on site demonstrating how to use camping equipment and set up an efficient camp site. Participants are also welcome to camp for free Saturday night in one of our group camp sites and enjoy a camp fire supper followed with s'mores. Please bring your own camp gear.
Cost: Free. For more information or to register, contact Brittany Brenner at bgbrenner@johnstoncc.edu or (919) 938-0115, ext. 225

October 3, 9 a.m.

Johnston County Football League

Four Oaks at Corinth Holders

October 9, 7:30 p.m.

High School Football

Western Harnett at South Johnston

October 10, 10 a.m.

2015 Walk to End Alzheimer's

Barbour's Grove Park, Four Oaks
Take a stroll through Four Oaks in an effort to fight Alzheimer's Disease. To register, visit bit.ly/1eYl06k. Or, for more information, call Lisa Roberts at (919) 803-8285.

October 10, 9 a.m.

Johnston County Football League

Wake Forest at Four Oaks (at Four Oaks Middle)

October 16, 7:30 p.m.

High School Football

South Johnston at Cleveland

October 17, 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.

October 17, 9 a.m.

Johnston County Football League

Four Oaks at Rolesville

October 23, 7:30 p.m.

High School Football

Triton at South Johnston

October 24, 9 a.m.

Johnston County Football League

North Johnston at Four Oaks (at Four Oaks Middle)

October 30, 7:30 p.m.

High School Football

Corinth Holders at South Johnston

October 31, 9 a.m.

Johnston County Football League

Four Oaks at Princeton



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

A good, honest day's work

In a small community, a person's good name goes a long way.

It inspires trust and, when running a business, it generates new and repeat business.

This idea is the cornerstone of Double A Landscaping and Lawn Care and its owner, Ashley Allen.

"My grandparents were in business for years in town," Allen said. "A lot of the older generation knows them. I'm just trying to carry on the tradition and the name of my grandpa (Tommy Allen) when he was in business.

"I'm trying to carry on his legacy with the name. So, when people hear it, they say, 'that's Ashley. That's Tommy's grandson. He's a good guy.'"

Allen, a Four Oaks native and South Johnston High graduate, has used that vision to establish clients all over Wake and Johnston counties in his three years in business.

"It's growing extremely well," he said. "I've been extremely blessed."

While most people only think about lawn care when it's 100 degrees outside, Allen provides services year-round.

"We do gutter cleaning," he said. "We do mulch, pine straw, trimming and pruning. We get into the little small ponds, hardscapes (stepping stones, fences and such) and small grading.



That kind of stuff."

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Local golfer has strong summer

Patrick Stephenson, a rising senior at South Johnston High School, finished in a three-way tie for second at the Davis Love III Junior Open, a 54-hole stroke-play event conducted by the American Junior Golf Association at Sea Island Golf Club in St. Simons Island, Ga. in late July.

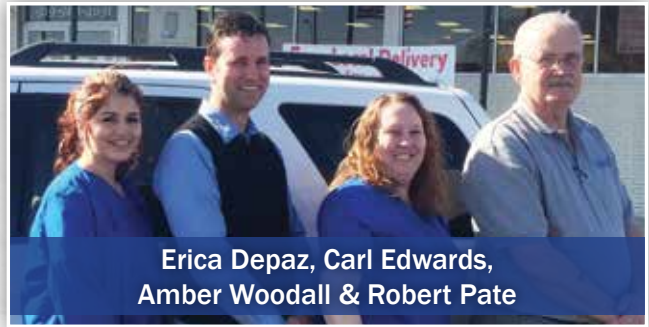
Stephenson carded a 5-under 211 to finish two shots behind the eventual winner, Colin Kober.

In June, Stephenson, already committed to play his college golf at East Carolina, won the 2015 Tarheel Youth Golf Association Bojangles Junior Championship at Cutter Creek in Snow Hill.

Photo by Carolinas Golf Association

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