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## FROM THE PUBLISHER

# Late summer observations

With any luck, by the time this column reaches your mailbox, it will be much, much cooler than it is right now.

My deepest apologies to people (like my lovely bride) who enjoy 95 degree days, but I'd rather have a year's worth of crisp October afternoons.

It's the same observation I have every year about this time, when I've had just about enough of summer.



Randy Capps randy@fouroaksjournal.com

I have a few other things on my mind, too:

Our creative consultant recently spent a little over four hours at South Johnston for freshman orientation. In the 15 minutes after I picked him up, all I was able to learn is that he had ice cream, and school officials are cool with him listening to music on his phone in the hall, as long as he has an ear free to listen for teachers and students.

The boy loves spy movies, and I think he becomes one when on school grounds. I can't get him to tell me anything that happens there. He likes it there, so I guess it could be worse.

We took a family vacation last month, and spent a few days on the Carnival Ecstasy, where on the last day, we ran into some folks from Newton Grove and Four Oaks. If it hadn't been so early, and so before having any caffeine, I might have been clever enough to write down their names.

I enjoy cruises, but being on one for the better part of five days helps me better appreciate the little things. Like internet on my phone, and a shower in which I can safely turn around.

We brought home plenty of good memories — our young spy says it was "the best trip ever" — and two Carnival trophies. Apparently, the Capps family is pretty good at Trivial Pursuit and sports trivia.

It's amazing to think about the crew working on those boats. They got about three hours off in between us leaving the boat, and the next set of passengers getting on.

I can confirm that someone will come to your cabin with fresh bedding at 3 a.m. (don't ask), so there's never much down time for them.

It's a great way to see the world, but the hours leave much to be desired. I guess when you look at it that way, getting through a Johnston County summer isn't so tough...

### **COVER STORY**

We spent some time with Ed Martin and his toy collection recently. For more, turn to Page 8.

Photo by Randy Capps



#### **FEATURES**



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#### Volume 2, Number 5

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# AFROTC - Trojan Cadet Corps has good showing at Summer Leadership Camp

Submitted by Eric Brewington, Lt Col, USAF (Ret.)

Recently, 21 South Johnston Air Force JROTC Trojan Cadets completed and competed at the Fort A.P. Hill Summer Leadership Camp in Virginia.

The Trojan Cadets were very strong and were among 453 total cadets who successfully completed this course. Of these cadet graduates, only 32 were Air Force JROTC cadets with the 21 coming from South Johnston.

The Trojan Cadets brought home a total of five of 30 possible awards. Two of these awards were "Top 9% of the Company" awards, one "Best in Platoon" award and two "Superior Cadet" coin awards. The award recipients were Tessa Hardison, Tyler Graves and Cierra Dupree. More than 75 percent of the Trojan Cadets were promoted to leadership positions or honorably mentioned by their cadre leaders.

For Air Force cadets to achieve recognition at Army training — winning these awards — was no small feat.

There are many local contributors who assisted this program in making our cadets more competitive. From our local recruiters to the American Legion members, local support makes a difference. For Army specific training, N.C. Army National Guard recruiter, Staff Sergeant Joshua Autry is a outstanding supporter.

The cadets who stood out and were recognized had to know their cadet creed, the Air Force and Army ranks, drill and ceremony, self-discipline, be within grooming standards, be physically fit, and most importantly, be able to lead at a moment's notice.

The cadets have performed well beyond my expectations and continue to strive to improve our cadet corps. They will now bring that experience home to South Johnston and continue to make our cadet corps better.

Leadership camp graduates will be selected for leadership and staff positions for the Trojan Cadet Corps in the upcoming school year.

The cadets are developing the goals for the

next school year this summer. One of our next challenges is in preparing for our Air Force Headquarters inspection this coming school year. We are also working hard to find ways to make things happen with the continuing shrinking budget that we are forced to work with.

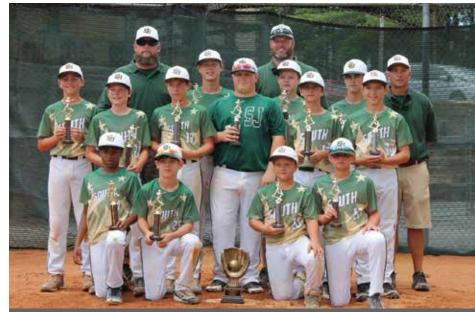
To create success, we are looking for local business supporters to will help us gain funds and approval to start a Cadet Marksmanship Team at South Johnston High School and funds to get equipment to compete and win at state and a national level.

South Johnston provides a positive environment for all students for learning and succeeding and our program is an outstanding avenue to support this. The end result is this is an investment to making our community a better place and it's your sons and daughters who are making it happen.

If you have any questions or concerns about our program, or you'd like to contribute or support or Trojan Cadet Corps, please contact me at South Johnston High School.

### South Johnston won the 2016 Tar Heel Little League State Championship in Boone on July 28-31.

The South Johnston squad rolled through its first three games, defeating the hosts, Watauga, 13-1, in three innings, knocking off Southern Pitt Blue, 14-4, in five innings and taking down Hickory, 8-2. Hickory forced a winner-take-all game with a 3-0 win in the first game of the championship series, but South Johnston won the decisive game, 13-9, to claim the title.



First row, left to right, Jaydn McNeill, Cole Howard, Lucas Carpenter and Nicholas Jackson. Second row: Parker Wood, Ayden Wood, Dwayne Schneider, Ryan Denning, A.J. Byrd and Jimmy Hines. Third row: Chase Carroll, M.J. Jacobs, Braxton Ennis and coach Raylon Wood, Jr. Fourth row: Coach Chris Carroll and coach Mike Jacobs.



# KS Bank, local churches team up to fight child hunger

According to the most recent statistics available, more than half of the students at Four Oaks Middle and Four Oaks Elementary are receiving free or reduced lunch.

So, it's not hard to imagine that some of those students aren't getting the food they need when school isn't in session.

That's where BackPack Buddies, a program that helps children who are at risk for hunger receive healthy weekend meals during the school year, comes in.

"Backpack Buddies has been in the school system here for several years," Anita Stephenson, the program's organizer for Four Oaks United Methodist Church, said. "It started out with about 20 children on the list, and now we're providing food for 95 children each week."

Through the help of the Methodist church, First Baptist Church of Four Oaks and several other local churches, those students receive a bag of food each Friday. Each bag contains oatmeal, grits, mac and cheese and other items.

In partnership with the local churches, KS Bank is also doing its part to fight hunger.

All of the bank's branches in Johnston, Wayne, Wake and Wilson counties will host a tailgate party and food drive on September 16, and the Four Oaks branch will donate its proceeds to benefit the BackPack Buddies program.

The event is scheduled from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and free hot dogs will be provided for those who make a donation of money or food.

"Years ago, we started out doing a food drive at Thanksgiving," KS Bank marketing director Michele Grady said. "And they coined it 'Kindness Shines Brightly,' off of the KS (in KS Bank). It was always successful, but we decided to turn it into a day that allowed us to have more



KS Bank employees John Parker, Matt Keen and Gail McLamb pose for a photo at last year's Tailgate Party while customer Dwain Weaver enjoys a hot dog. This year's event is scheduled for Sept. 16 at the Four Oaks branch.

engagement with our customers.

"The event evolved into 'tailgate party' in September. For a donation of canned foods or a monetary donation to the chosen charity, we provide hot dogs at lunch for our customers. Our corporate personnel help out in the branches that day and participation has really increased."

Each branch gets to choose which organization the food is donated to, and for Gail McLamb, a financial counselor in the Four Oaks branch, the choice was an easy one.

"I didn't realize how many children were hungry on the weekends," she said. "It really touched me, because I've never been hungry. I'm glad to be a part of this.

"The Four Oaks Fire Department is also a big supporter for us. I just call them, and they bring a truck load (of food). I have a lot of customers who turn out. They

don't come for the hot dog, they come to support these children. It's a very good cause, and I'm proud of KS Bank for what they do."

The bank takes its civic responsibilities seriously. Since the start of 2015, it has donated more than \$30,000 to charitable organizations. In addition, 11 bank employees serve as directors on boards for local charities and 41 percent of bank employees volunteer for charities in their community. In total, 68 organizations have been impacted by KS Bank's donations or volunteer efforts.

Support like that helps programs like BackPack Buddies make a difference.

"When you start hearing about these children going home on the weekends not having food, it just breaks your heart," Stephenson said. "This bag of food is nothing compared to what you and I eat at home, and it really makes you think about

wasting food at home, too. It's made me think more about my food and being more efficient."

Aside from coming to the tailgate party with a donation of food or money, BackPack Buddies is always in need of food for the bags. Every little bit really does help.

"I always say an 18-ounce jar of peanut butter, because that's the most expensive thing we put in the bags," Stephenson said, when asked about the program's week-to-week needs. "And it's easy for somebody to pick up one extra jar at the grocery store.

"Our church is very mission minded. We're always looking for outreach projects. We saw this as a need. We have a lot of people who either work in the school system or are very closely connected, and we saw that there are a lot of children who do not have food. And it's very sad."

A list of the items needed for the bags can be found on the Methodist church's website (bit.ly/2aKDNRK), and anyone interested in helping BackPack Buddies can reach Stephenson at 919-963-6337.







Outdoor activities on a mid-July Carolina morning are not for the faint of heart. But some ventures away from the comfort of climate-controlled places are worth the trouble.

Spending a day surrounded by the magic of toys certainly qualifies.

There's a building behind Ed Martin's house just outside of Four Oaks that looks like any other from 20 steps away.

I took a few steps closer, however, and the truth came into focus.

The garage door is open and a shop fan roars as I walk past it. Instead of an old car or a dusty toolbox, I find the toys.

And I'm not talking about a few bookshelves, either. Lines of shelves carve up the available space, and from floor to ceiling, there are rows upon rows of toys — sometimes stacked two and three deep.

No one knows how many, including Ed. He's Ed, because he told me that "Mr. Martin was my dad."

"I kind of did inventory one time, space to space," he said. "But it got too deep."

Let's just say it's thousands, and leave it at that.

It doesn't really matter. They aren't for sale, anyway. No one even asks anymore.

"They know they're not for sale," he said.

The idea, it seems, came from seeing another toy collection.

"We went down to Gurley Milling Company, and old man Gurley had a collection of toys," he said. "And I said 'if he can do that, I can too.' He was dealing them all over the country. As fast as he got a Studebaker toy, he had a buyer for it.

"I didn't get them to sell. Becky and I would go to different towns and cities, spend the weekend and go to the flea market. Sometimes, we'd do well. Sometimes, we wouldn't."

Becky, his wife, sat nearby as Ed told me about his toys. He lit up when describing a particularly good find in Jacksonville.

"The biggest hit we had," he said. "We went to the flea market and there were about 20 booths. At the last booth, there was a John Deere tractor sitting there and I picked it up. A guy whispered over my shoulder, 'do you collect toys?' I said yeah and he said 'I've got something for you to see.'



Randy Capps randy@fouroaksjournal.com

"He was the guy that decorated the Pizza Inns (with old toys and other classic items). To do that, he had to buy estates and he started collecting toys —inadvertently. We went to his house. He had two buildings bigger than mine full of estate stuff. And he had two big boxes full of toys, enough to fill a half-ton pickup."

The two talked about a price and settled on \$500, which Ed already knew was a good deal.

"I could see \$500 worth at the top of the box," he said.

He's added a few items to his collection thanks to an appearance on WRAL's "Tar Heel Traveler" in 2007, with people eager to show him the toys they've found.

And his toy collecting makes him pretty easy to shop for, too.

"At Christmas, he gets more toys than the grandchildren," Becky said.

It's not surprising a man with so many toys has trouble picking his favorite.

"I don't know," he said. "There are more feelings in some of them. ... A friend of mine up in Pennsylvania brought me a horse and a







wagon, and he died the next day.

"The joy of collecting is the main push. We can't go now like we used to. I have to do internet most of the time. Just got one this morning."

He showed me the newest addition to the collection, a white Structo tow truck that was made in the 60's. It was heavy and had enough rough edges and moving parts to make sure it would never pass safety inspections for modern toys.

Of course, those toys won't look as good as this truck does at 50-something years old, either.

He's got a few valuable toys in the collection as well.

"Smith-Miller was the high dollar toy," he said. "A new one sold for (about) \$2,500. We've got a few of them, but they're used. They were heavy toys."

He has every truck in the Texaco collection, which includes one truck per year since 1984, and a wall of 18-wheelers featuring companies like Kirby, Jimmy Dean and Alpo.

Along the back wall is a group of presidential motorcade cars, including a replica of the Lincoln X-100 that carried John F. Kennedy on that fateful day in Dallas.

There's a NASCAR section and an impressive display of firetrucks, tractors and just about any other toy that an energetic five year old might push around a living room floor.

The newest part of the collection is the horses, which adorn the front wall of the building and seem to have taken over one the near shelves as well.

Roy Rogers' Trigger, Gene Autry's Champion and Buffalo Bill's Isham are just three of the famous horses occupying space in Ed's rapidly filling building.

It's a 30-by-70 building, with a 20-by-40 extension added on to one side. And, aside from the back of corner of the main building and most of the addition, there's not much room for add-ons.

That isn't deterring Ed, who has no plans to stop adding to his collection.

"No," he said when I asked that question. "It's slowed down a lot, though."

He seemed to get the impression that I was wondering why he still kept collecting, so he decided to tell me.

"Geoffrey's got cerebral palsy," he said, of one of his grandchildren. "He was about five years old before he walked. We got in here one day and I held a toy up in front of him, and he walked from (Becky) to me to get that toy.

"(His mother) came home that afternoon, we were looking after him, and we told her to stand at the door. We wanted to show her something. And he walked for that toy again. There wasn't a dry eye in the house. That was worth it all right there."





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# Johnston County 12U softball team wins Tar Heel League state title

By Stevie Edwards

The Johnston County 12U softball allstar team participated in the Tar Heel League State Championship held in North Wilkesboro on July 21-24, winning the state title.

The team advanced to the state tournament by winning the District 5 tournament in Clayton in late June.

After arriving in Wilkes County, the team started off with an unexpected win via forfeit against the host team from Wilkes County, moving them to the second round.

The team then fell into the loser's bracket on Friday morning after losing, 9-2, to Roanoke Valley. After that loss, the team started the approach of "staying alive," knowing that the next loss would eliminate them from the tournament.

On Friday afternoon, Johnston County beat Morganton, 8-1, with some timely hitting and excellent defense. This win advanced the team to Saturday, where they first defeated Angier, 9-1, in a game that started at noon in very hot and humid conditions.

After that win, Johnston County played again at 2 against Shelby, knowing that the winner would have a chance to play on Sunday for the championship. In a tight and very hard fought game with outstanding defense from both teams, the Johnston County all-stars were able to pull out a 3-2 win in their last at bat after trailing most of the game by a 2-1 score.

After coming through the loser's bracket, the team had to beat an undefeated team twice to win the championship. It just so happened that the team that knocked Johnston County into the loser's bracket was the undefeated team from Roanoke Valley.

In the first game on Sunday morning, Johnston County set the tone early by recording three straight outs against Roanoke Valley in the top of the first and then scoring four runs in the bottom of the first to take a quick lead.



Photo by Cindy Edwards

Front row, left to right: Ke

Front row, left to right: Katon Blackmon, Mattie Wheeless, Jaylen Stanley (No. 1 Fan), Gracie Whittemore and Morgan Wells. Second row: Allie Stewart, Tori James, Lainey Edwards, Kylie Lee, Erica Stanley, Mindy Davis and coach Marie Blackmon. Back row: Coaches Neil Wheeless, Stevie Edwards and Will Blackmon.

Johnston County continued to add to their lead and, after withstanding a rally late in the game, eventually held on for a 9-7 win. This forced a final and deciding game between the two teams to see who would be the state champion.

For anybody that was not in attendance at the last game, words cannot fully describe the emotions and momentum swings that happened.

Both teams had multiple scoring opportunities throughout the game, but great defense — especially on the Johnston County side — prevented any runners from crossing the plate.

The teams played to a scoreless tie through seven full innings (a regulation game is six innings) and then finally, in the top of the 8th inning, Johnston County was able to push across four runs to take the lead.

In the bottom of the 8th inning, Roanoke Valley scored a run with two outs and, after

a pop fly to the pitcher, the game finally came to an end with Johnston County pulling out the win to become the 2016 Tar Heel League 12U state softball champs.

After losing on Friday morning, Johnston County fought back with five straight wins led by absolutely outstanding defense. Every single player on this team played a huge role in this championship run and it can most definitely be described as a total team effort.

The team was made up from players representing the communities of Four Oaks, Glendale and Princeton.

Katon Blackmon, Lainey Edwards, Tori James, Kylie Lee, Erica Stanley and Allie Stewart represented Four Oaks. Morgan Wells and Mindy Davis are from Glendale and Gracie Whittemore is from Princeton. The coaches for the team were Will Blackmon, Marie Blackmon, Stevie Edwards and Neil Wheeless, all of Four Oaks.

# Devotional — Are you empty, or are you full?

#### By Jeanie Benson

John 4:13-14 (NIV) 13 says," Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again,' ... 'but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'

I came from a good Christian home; my life should be great?

I married a good man; my life should be great?

I have a great child; my life should be great?

Just because I'm not able to work, my life should be great?

So why do I feel so depressed, discouraged and empty at times?

This question has been running through my mind a lot lately. I know I should be happy but I'm not sure what is wrong. What are we supposed to do when our feelings are taking over?

Today, I decided to do something about my feelings. Instead of staying in the house, I wanted a change of scenery.

I decided to do something a friend of mine wrote about — have a "staycation!" Since I did not want to do something that costs money, I decided to visit my local library.

On the way there, I was listening to the local Christian radio station and they were interviewing a man and woman. The woman said something that I had heard thousands of time, but this time it about caused me to jump out of my car.

In an round-about-way, they said when we look to things and people to

fill us we will stay on empty. The only thing or person that can fill us is God.

True that!

There have been days I have tried to let so many other things fill me up.

Social Media

Reading

» Online Bible Studies

» Games

» TV

» Family

» Music

» Friends

» My Home

» School

I do turn to Him for prayer. I do read my Bible almost every day. I do listen to Christian music.

But do I really sit down and just spend time with Him?

Do I really let Him fill me up? Do I let him put the fuel I need in me, or do I decide what type of fuel I need? Do I have a "staycation" with God?

Things of the world can make our tanks spring a leak and lose our fuel. The only true way my tank can be filled is God!

As I close, I ask that we each take time out of our crazy schedule to sit down with God and be filled. Instead of reading Facebook or looking at pictures on Instagram or tweeting, take a moment to get face to face with God.

Take time to Snapchat with God and let Him fill you up. Take time to drink of His Water to be filled. Spend time with Him in the mornings and see if your tank stays full all day!



# Your Four Oaks Volunteer Fire Department

Pictured are: Front row, left to right -Edward Twigg, Jeremy Johnson, Willis Johnson, Barry Stanley, Tim Purvis, Anthony Lee and Phil Roger. Second row: Danny Massengill, Rodney Hall, Danny Byrd, Andy Hardy, Don McMath, Chris Keon, Will Boswell, Andy Jackson, Michael Bradley, Brandon Thomas and Mike Stewart. Third row: Roy Massengill, Brad Baker, JR Stanley, Chris Byrd, Tyler Barefoot, Jason Allen, Drew Wagner, Steven Montague, Dwane Allen, Jerry Lynch and Norman Barrow. Top of truck: Coty Lewis, Matt Carithers, Andrew Byrd, Chris Heres, Hope Johnson, Cameron Kirsch, Tanna Twigg, Damien Keene and Chandler Parrott. The dog is Gadget.









### SAVE THE DATE

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

#### Every Wednesday, 5:30 p.m. N.C. Pesticide License Certification Preparation

Johnston Community College Arboretum

This series of classes is intended for landscaping professionals seeking pesticide licensing in North Carolina. Upon completion of this series, participants will be prepared to register for the N.C. Pesticide License Exam. Instruction will focus on the Core Exam and Ornamental and Turf classifications. To register, call Brenda Harris at (919) 209-2522 or email bkharris1@johnstoncc.edu. The cost is \$70.

#### Every Wednesday, 10 a.m to noon Smithfield Tadpoles

Smithfield Recreation and Aquatics Center

Bring your little "tadpoles" to SRAC Splash Park. The cost is \$3 for adult Smithfield residents, and \$2 for residents ages 3-12. The non-resident fee is \$5.50 for adults, and \$4 per child. Each additional child is \$3. For more information, call 919-934-1408.

# Every Tuesday, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Every Thursday, 6-8:30 p.m.

**Pottery Classes** 

Smithfield Recreation and Aquatics Center

Enjoy pottery classes at the SRAC. The fees are \$100 for Smithfield residents and \$137.50 for everyone else. There is also a \$20 fee for the clay. For more information, call 919-934-1408.

# Every Friday, 9:30-10:15 a.m. Doodlebugs Art Class

Smithfield Recreation and Aquatics Center

Kids aged three and under can take part in art classes at the SRAC. The fees are \$5 per class for Smithfield residents and \$8 for everyone else. For more information, call 919-934-1408.

# Every Friday, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Pickleball

Smithfield Recreation and Aquatics Center

Come learn how to play pickleball, a mixture of tennis, table tennis and raquetball. The Johnston County Senior Games has added the sport to its events, but anyone can enjoy the fun. The cost is \$3 per session, and everyone is welcome. For more information, call 919-934-1408.

# Thursday, Sept. 1, 7 p.m. High School Football

South Johnston at Clayton

Friday, Sept. 9, 7:30 p.m. High School Football

South Johnston at Southern Nash

### Saturday, Sept. 10, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Kids Night

Smithfield Recreation and Aquatics Center

Kids ages five through 12 are invited to enjoy an evening of fun at the SRAC. The fees are \$8 for Smithfield residents that preregister, \$13.50 for non-residents and \$5 for each additional child. The fees are more for those who register the day of the event. For more information, call 919-934-1408.

#### Saturday, Sept. 10 27th annual Acorn Festival

Downtown Four Oaks

10 a.m. — Parade of children

10:30 a.m. — Acorn Festival: Rides, food, vendors, entertainment by Wade Hill, Land O' Glory, Riversong Trio, Martin Davis Band feat. Jackie Gore and Carlie Barbour. For more information see the ad on Page 13, call 919-963-4004 or email fouroaksareachamber@gmail.com.

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

#### Saturday, Sept. 16, noon to 5 p.m. Hopes N Dreams Car Show

Four Oaks Bank, Four Oaks

The event has a \$20 entry fee with prizes awarded for the top three in show, as well as other make and model awards. Proceeds benefit Hopes N Dreams, an organization that helps adults and children with special needs, For more information, call Dale Bender at 919-618-3537 or Jennifer Grimm at 919-618-3470.

#### Friday, Sept. 16, 7 p.m. High School Football

South Johnston at Cape Fear

# Saturday, Sept. 17, 8 a.m. Celebrating Recovery 5K

Smithfield Community Park, Booker Dairy Road

This is a run/walk event so feel free to bring the family. Early bird registration is \$25 by Saturday, Sept. 3. All proceeds go to help Celebrate Recovery, a 12-step program bringing hope and healing to hundreds of people in the area. For more information, visit http://bit.ly/2bpxxml.

# Thursday, Sept. 22, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Justin West Band concert

Benson Singing Grove

The Justin West Band will be in concert as part of Benson's 2016 Sundown in Downtown Concerts at the Benson Singing Grove.

## Thursday, Sept. 22, 7:30 p.m. High School Football

North Johnston at South Johnston

#### Friday, Oct. 7, 7:30 p.m. High School Football

South Johnston at Western Harnett

#### Friday, Oct. 14, 7:30 p.m. High School Football

Cleveland at South Johnston (Homecoming)

#### Friday, Oct. 21, 7:30 p.m. High School Football

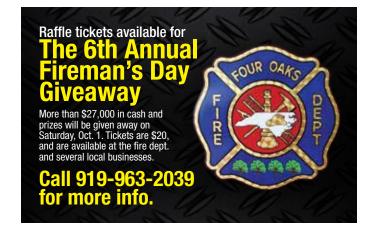
South Johnston at Triton

#### Friday, Oct. 28, 7:30 p.m. High School Football

South Johnston at Corinth Holders

#### Friday, Nov. 4, 7:30 p.m. High School Football

Smithfield-Selma at South Johnston







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