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FOUR OAKS ACORN FESTIVAL

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- Business profile: Black Creek Arsenal
- Community calendar

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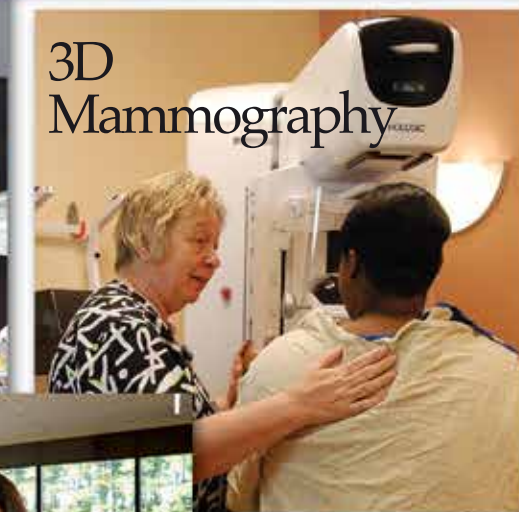
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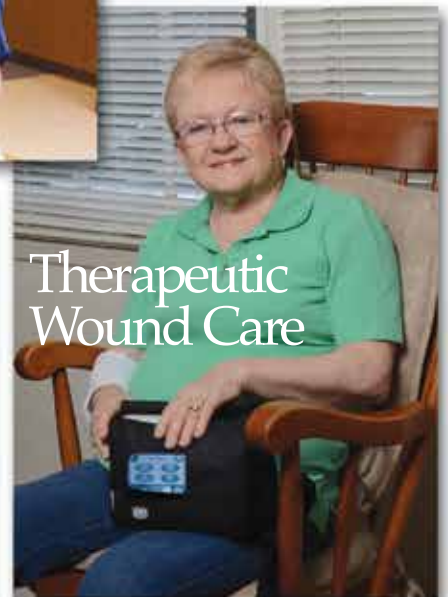
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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Festival-going rivals football-watching

Despite their tendency to clash with my Saturday college football watching desires, I enjoy festivals.

The Acorn Festival, held last month in and around Barbour's Grove Park, was a good time. Most of our editorial staff went together, and we had a chance to visit with plenty of folks as we strolled through the booths.

The weather was fall-like, making the change from a May date to a September one look rather smart.

It reminded me of my favorite festival from my days growing up in Marion County, S.C., the Golden Leaf Festival.

As the name suggests, it was (and still is) a celebration of the primary cash crop for the county. Mr. Cox's fine book, which you can read about on Page 6, touches on tobacco's roots in the Pee Dee region.

The crop's importance to my childhood home can hardly be overstated.

Anyway, I remember being 11 or 12, and walking the three or four blocks from my house in Mullins to the rides, booths and food sprinkled throughout the center of town.

It's where I met Tom Wopat, of "Dukes of Hazzard" fame. He tried to drive the General Lee in the annual parade, but the Dodge Charger stopped running about half-way through. He smiled and explained that sort of thing happened all the time during the show.

He spoke on the stage later in the day, somewhere between the husband hollering contest and the crowning of Miss Golden Leaf. He wasn't my favorite Duke boy, but it was still cool to meet a guy I grew up watching on TV.

Saturday nights always featured the street dance, which as the name implies, was a concert in a shopping center or on Main Street itself (it moved around a little).

It's where I learned that I liked beach music, which I think is a requirement where I'm from, and didn't like country music, which is not illegal but severely frowned upon.

They're happy memories for me, which is a small price to pay for missing a little football.



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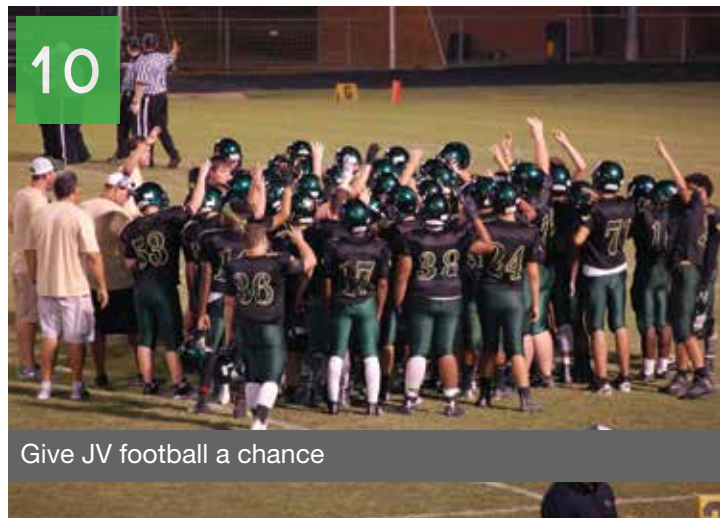
COVER STORY

Celebrating at the Acorn Festival. For more photos, turn to Page 8.

Photo by Carly Fogleman



FEATURES



Give JV football a chance

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Volume 2, Number 6

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Superintendent visits every county school on opening day



West Clayton Elementary principal Kristina Benson (left) meets with JCS Superintendent Dr. Ross Renfrow on the first day of school.

Submitted by Johnston County Schools

Johnston County Schools Superintendent Dr. Ross Renfrow celebrated the start of the school year by visiting every school in the district on their first day.

“We need to demonstrate to not only our students and teachers, but to our community as well, that we’re about supporting what goes on at each of our schools,” he said. “What better way to demonstrate that support than being physically present at each school on the first day.”

In a county of roughly 800-square miles with more than 40 schools opening their doors to students, the trip to visit all of them in a day came with challenges. In fact, to help prepare for the expedition JCS Transportation Services mapped out Dr. Renfrow’s 175-mile journey to make the route as efficient as possible.

“The folks in transportation do such a tremendous job in routing our buses and

being so efficient each and every day, so I asked them to give me a one-day route to start at home, visit every school and end up back at the office,” he said.

Dr. Renfrow started his journey at 6:30 a.m., then strategically made his way throughout the county, even dropping his own son off for the first day of middle school.

As the first day of school is an emotional day for many, Dr. Renfrow said he shared the same excitement as students, parents and teachers in part because this is his first full year serving as superintendent.

“I want to see a lot of smiles this year. I think when students are happy at school it makes for a better school day,” he said. “We want everybody to enjoy their public school experience. Most importantly we want everyone to learn, grow, and become more proficient as they grow.”

During his visits Dr. Renfrow met with community members, students, parents,

teachers, and administrators.

“I believe this sets the expectation for our students and staff. It lets them know that he has a vested interest in what’s going on throughout the district,” said Cleveland High Principal Kendrick Byrd.

Byrd, like all principals in the district, had the opportunity to meet one-on-one with Dr. Renfrow and share with him the day’s progress.

“Having a superintendent that comes out to the building and talks with staff and students is something you can’t put a price on,” Byrd said. “It’s great to have that support and to know that he’s willing and able to come talk to us about our needs and desires.”

As a former teacher and principal, Dr. Renfrow said he knows the importance of making the first day of school visit.

“I can go out on the first day and within two or three minutes do a snapshot of what the first day is like,” he said.



Christopher Britt, an 8th-grader at Four Oaks Middle, and his sister, Gracelyn Britt, a 1st-grader at Four Oaks Elementary, pose for a picture on the first day of school.

Jennifer Britt photo



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Growing up on Tobacco Road

Everyone has heard the nickname “Tobacco Road.” It tends to crop up quite a bit during basketball season.

While it’s most often associated with Duke, North Carolina, North Carolina State and Wake Forest, the spirit of “Tobacco Road” is alive in Johnston County.



Randy Capps
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The crop is intertwined with the county’s history and growth, and a Bentonville native recently shared his story of growing up in a farming family.

Cornell Cox’s “Promise of Better Days: A Farm Boy’s Odyssey Through North Carolina’s ‘Farming Way of Life’” was published in June and serves as part biography, part history lesson.

“My whole life has been in tobacco,” Cox said. “Cropping Eastern North Carolina during the early part of the 20th century.

“It’s something I’ve kinda had in the back of my mind for several years now. I retired at the end of 2000, and I remembered what Doris Cannon said when she spoke at our Rotary Club. She said, ‘everybody has a story to tell.’ And I said, ‘maybe I have one, also.’”

Cox, a 1955 Four Oaks High School graduate, does in fact have a tale to tell, and it’s laid out in the pages of his book.

“In 19 chapters, it’s my whole life,” he said. “It’s probably really boring to some people who didn’t have a similar experience. ... But even if people didn’t have the same experience in tobacco, I think they can connect in a lot of ways with the progress that we’ve made since the turn of the 20th century. The last two decades of the 19th century are when tobacco really started getting a foothold in North Carolina.”

Running and working on a tobacco farm is rather different now than it was when Cox was a boy.

“I visited a large tobacco farmer, down in the Brogdon community, and I’m guessing it’s the largest farmer in Johnston County,” he said. “The Frank Kornegay farm. When I walked around with Mr. Frank, he’d been a customer of mine for many



The new brick school on the left opened on North Main Street in Four Oaks in 1923. The teacher’s residence in the center was completed in 1927, and the class building on the right opened in 1934. In the mid-1930s, when consolidation of the small rural schools increased enrollment to over 1,900, Four Oaks claimed the title of “Largest Rural Consolidated School in the World.” (Photo taken in 1938) N.C. Shuford moved from Sandhill School as principal the first year, and J. T. Hatcher served in that post from 1924 to 1954. On December 25, 1987, an arsonist set fire to the oldest building, and it burned to the ground. Courtesy of Todd Johnson

years, I got to see his 63 tobacco barns and about 600 acres of tobacco at that time.

“I got to thinking about how much different that was from the

time I grew up on the farm, when we had the horse and the tobacco slides. Tying tobacco on sticks and putting it in the barns.”

While still an important part of the state’s farming economy, tobacco farming has suffered a bit as the health risks associated with it have become better known.

“We knew, in the back of our minds, that tobacco’s not good for you,” he said.

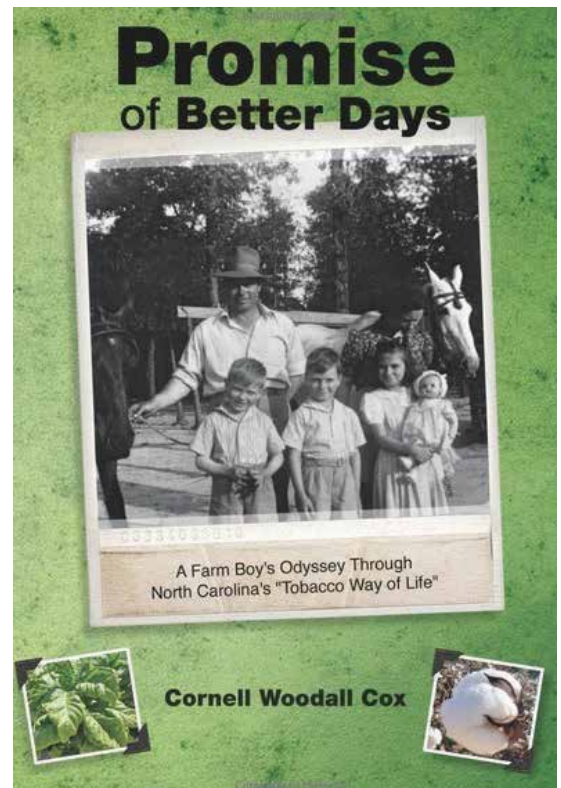
“And that is a part of the story. Churches supported and defended the farmer. My pastor told me a story. When he first started in the ministry, he was in Scotland Neck. He got to that church, and a tobacco farmer there was really worried about getting his last harvest out of the field before the bad weather came in.

“So, the next day, he found himself riding on the back of a tobacco harvester, cropping tobacco. So, the Lord works in mysterious ways.”

“Promise of Better Days: A Farm Boy’s Odyssey Through North Carolina’s ‘Farming Way of Life’” is available on Amazon for \$19.95. Copies can also be found at the Heritage Center, Tobacco Farm Life Museum and Johnston County libraries.

“It’s strictly a charitable project,” he said. “I’m making nothing on it. All of the copies that are bought through Amazon.com, the royalty is about \$7. All of that goes to the North Carolina Agricultural Foundation, designated for FFA (Future Farmers of America).”

Giving back is important to Cox, and this book is a way he can make sure future farmers still have an on ramp to “Tobacco Road.”



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Acorn Festival fits season

I'll admit it. I was skeptical when I heard the Chamber wanted to move the 27th annual Acorn Festival from April to September. Turns out I was

I spent a couple of hours walking around the festival, taking in the sights. We met a few folks, learned a lot of education, and even picked up a couple of booths we visited.

We aged out of the children's parade. Looking at Carly's pictures, it looks like it was a

Photos by Carly Fogleman





hlessly into September

ard that the Four Oaks Area
dition of the Acorn Festival from
eing silly.

ound with Shanna and Ethan,
ks running for the county board
couple of Christmas gifts from the

e a few years ago, but judging by
hit as usual.



Give JV football a chance

I remember taking a phone call from a parent years ago in Shelby, who not-so-politely wondered why we weren't covering her son's JV football team.

I tried to explain that, with four high schools and a college to consider, a two-man newspaper sports staff didn't really have time to get to JV games.

"We'll worry about them when they start playing on Fridays," I thought.

And that's the way I've always dealt with the junior varsity. So, despite having covered hundreds of varsity contests, I had never witnessed a single snap of a JV football game.

That changed on an unreasonably warm September evening when I ventured over to watch a little of Southern Nash's visit to South Johnston.

I wasn't alone.

The home stands were more than half full, and even the Firebirds

brought a fair number of fans down I-95 for the game.

Southern Nash won the game, 42-30, but that isn't really the point. Sure, players and coaches want to win every time they walk out on the field. But, at this level, it's all about building the future.

This year's JV standout is next year's new starter at running back, guard or linebacker. A school can't have a good varsity football program without a JV program grooming replacement players for the seniors that move on every season.

As a guy who intentionally picks the worst team on FIFA (a soccer video game) and builds them up through the youth academy, that's the kind of thing I can appreciate.



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Photo by Layna Barefoot



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A friendly, neighborhood gun shop

There's a new business in downtown Four Oaks, one that has been years in the making.

Black Creek Arsenal opened in September, and its owners, Brian Fogleman and his father, Eric, are looking forward to serving the town and the surrounding area.

If the name sounds familiar, there's a good reason.

"I've always lived on Black Creek, so I figured I'd name it after where I grew up," Brian said.

As the name suggests, Black Creek Arsenal is a one-stop shop for all your firearm needs.

"We sell used and new guns," Brian said. "(We) buy, sell, trade. And I'm a full-time gunsmith, so we do repair work, cleaning, customization — whatever they need done."

The early response has been positive.

"I don't know how many guns we've sold, but we've sold more than expected," Eric said. "We've had a lot of traffic, especially with the Sip and Shop, coming in for ammo for hunting season and all. And a whole lot of people bringing in guns for Brian to clean, fix or repair."

It's something the Foglemans have been planning for a while.

"We've been looking for a place for a few years now, but when



we'd find one, the people renting the space would hear gun shop or pawn shop and jump to some kind of conclusion," Eric said.

Eric retired from Caterpillar in December, right about the same time Brian was laid off from his job teaching welding. So, the two put their dreams in motion.

After finding the space, the pair spent about four months converting it into the modern, customer-friendly venue it is today.

"We wanted to be open, to invite people in," Eric said. "So we made sure we had a lot of glass on the front. That leads also to safety. It makes it safer for everybody in here."

Safety is important to the Foglemans, and they're doing their part to help aspiring hunters in that area.

"We are doing a hunting safety class here on October 4th and 5th," Brian said. "You have to have it to get a permit. It's two three-hour classes, so we'll close a little early those days."

"Hopefully 15 or 20 people will come in, get trained up, get their license and go hunting," Eric said.

For more information, call 919-628-1155, visit the shop at 101 E. Wellons Street or find them on Facebook.



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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 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.

Saturday, Oct. 1

Selma Railroad Days Festival
Railroad Days includes a 5K run, parade, crafts, food, children's area and a variety of entertainment. Admission is FREE. For more information, visit www.visitselma.org.

Saturday, Oct. 1, 11 a.m.

Fireman's Day Celebration
Four Oaks Volunteer Fire Department, Keen Street. The department will hold its annual lunch and dinner, as well as the sixth-annual Fireman's Day Giveaway. Please see the announcement below.

Oct. 6-8

Heritage Quilt Show
Johnston County Ag Expo. The JoCo Quilters present this quilting show. The hours are 1-6:30 p.m. on Thursday, 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Friday and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday. For more information, call Flora Grantham 919-934-0791.

Friday, Oct. 7, 7:30 p.m.

High School Football
South Johnston at Western Harnett

Saturday, Oct. 8

Shindig Music Festival, Clayton
The festival features 10 Americana and Bluegrass genre bands on two stages. You can read the band line-up and get tickets by visiting www.theshindig.net.



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drawings from 5-7 p.m.

For more, email

fouroaksfiredept@yahoo.com
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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Saturday, Oct. 8, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**Wilson's Mills Pumpkin Festival**

This family friendly event has vendors, children's activities, a dunking booth, music, food, and much more! A day of fun for everyone and admission is free. For more, visit www.visitnc.com/event/wilson-s-mills-pumpkin-festival.

Saturday, Oct. 8, 10 a.m.**2016 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 <http://bit.ly/2cf4t0F>.

Or, for more information, call Bethany Day at (919) 803-8285.

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, Oct. 28, 11 a.m.

Food pantry, Lighthouse Christian Fellowship, Hwy. 210

For details, call John Jernigan at 919-320-7387.

Saturday, Oct. 29, 4-7 p.m.**Howell-O-Ween****Howell Woods, Four Oaks**

Join Howell Woods for an afternoon of Fall fun! Carve/paint pumpkins, learn about the amazing bats in the state and end the evening by roasting hot dogs and marshmallows over a camp fire.

Monday, Oct. 31, 6-8 p.m.**Halloween****Four Oaks**

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