

# THE COMMUNICATOR

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## Community Colleges' New Leader is Dr. Jeff Cox of Wilkes C.C.

The North Carolina State Board of Community Colleges has selected Dr. Jeff Cox, president of Wilkes Community College, as the 11th president of the North Carolina Community College System.

Cox, a longtime education leader and champion in North Carolina, has led Wilkes Community College since 2014 and formerly led Alleghany County Schools as superintendent from 2005 to 2014. He also has been the head of the North Carolina Community College Presidents' Association since 2022.

The North Carolina Community College System is the third largest system in the U.S. and serves nearly 600,000 community college students each year with 58 colleges providing education to all 100 counties. Burr Sullivan, Chair of the State Board of Community Colleges, said "Dr. Jeff Cox has proven to be among the best education leaders in the country during his time at Wilkes Community College and as a North Carolina K-12 superintendent.... We know our community colleges need strong statewide leadership and dynamic future-forward approaches to business and workforce development and Dr. Cox is that leader."

At Wilkes Community College, Cox was heralded for more than doubling the completion rate at the college from 25 to 55 percent over five years and developing a strategic plan seen as a national model for other institutions. During his tenure as president, Wilkes Community College also raised a record \$20 million in funds for strategic initiatives and launched a fully endowed Wilkes Community College Education Promise to guarantee the opportunity for a tuition-free college education for every graduating senior in the service area.

Cox said, "I'm excited and ready to lead this great system through a time of dynamic change and tremendous opportunity. North Carolina community colleges are the catalyst for workforce development and growth for our state, and now is the time for innovation, collaboration, and partnerships.... I look forward to building strong connections with our state leaders and other key stakeholders to make

sure we have the best prepared workforce in the country to meet the needs of our businesses and industries so we can fully realize our shared vision for the future of North Carolina."

Cox holds a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He also is a graduate of Appalachian State University with both a Master of School Administration degree and a Bachelor of Science in English-Secondary Education. Prior to leading Alleghany County Schools, Cox served as assistant superintendent for Lee County Schools and as principal of Benton Heights Year-Round School in Union County.

## Greening Produce

Surry-Yadkin Electric Membership Corporation and Hollar & Greene Produce will have a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 10 a.m. May 4 to celebrate the start of a new partnership to reduce carbon emissions while improving energy use for refrigerating produce in truck trailers. The celebration will be at Hollar & Greene Produce, 590 Oak Grove Church Road west of Mount Airy.

Surry-Yadkin EMC, Hollar & Greene Produce, and North Carolina Electric Cooperatives have partnered on the new project named eTRU (electric transportation refrigeration unit). The goal is to reduce the amount of diesel fuel Hollar & Greene Produce needs when holding produce in refrigerated trailers between hauls. Using electricity to power refrigeration units will reduce carbon emissions while maintaining the high quality of produce Hollar & Greene is known to provide to end consumers. According to SYEMC, this new and innovative technology is the first of its kind for a North Carolina electric cooperative.

Surry-Yadkin Electric Membership Corporation, founded in 1940, is a not-for-profit, member-owned Touchstone Energy cooperative serving about 28,600 member-accounts in five North Carolina counties: Surry, Yadkin, Stokes, Wilkes, and Forsyth. SYEMC's mission is to provide outstanding service that powers rural communities. For more information about SYEMC, visit [www.syemc.com](http://www.syemc.com).

## Volunteers Needed

Northern Regional Hospital in Mount Airy has an on-going need for volunteers and volunteer chaplains. There are many opportunities for both adult and junior volunteers who have gone through orientation and training to support the hospital's mission through service to patients, visitors, and staff. Volunteers greet patients and visitors, deliver flowers and mail, assist with patient transportation, serve patients meal trays, and accomplish other tasks. Some of the areas of service include:

- Admissions/Discharge
- Clerical
- Clergy
- Day Surgery Center
- Dietary
- Floral Delivery
- General Escort
- Gift Shop
- Hospitality
- Information Desk
- Mail/Newspaper Delivery
- Patient/Family Services

In recognition of their willingness to donate their time and/or present or past service, benefits available to all volunteers who serve Northern Regional Hospital may include:

- Privilege to make cash purchases at the Northern Regional Hospital pharmacy.
- Free flu vaccine annually and free Hepatitis B Vaccine series.
- A 20% discount on merchandise in the Gift Shop (excluding sale merchandise).
- Free meal in the cafeteria on the day one works at least four hours (meal cannot exceed \$7).
- Uniforms furnished at no cost.
- Annual recognition during Volunteer Week.
- Invitation to annual Recognition Banquet.
- Access to Employee Health Clinic, including free blood pressure checks.
- Free gym membership for volunteer and spouse at Northern Wellness & Fitness.

For more information, contact Volunteer Coordinator Tina L. Beasley at Northern Regional Hospital, 830 Rockford St., P.O. Box 1101, Mount Airy, NC. Her phone number is 336-783-8196 and her email address is [tbeasley@wearenorthern.org](mailto:tbeasley@wearenorthern.org).

## Prayer

Our minister at Mount Airy Friends Meeting, Dr. Jon Cawley, delivered a requested sermon on prayer, its impact, and how we develop praying skills. He said we can pray for hope, forgiveness, leadership, redemption, thanksgiving and gratitude, acceptance, and more. Most important, he insisted, is being short. I volunteer because most gatherings need someone to get us started.

## Joe Pyles

Dear friend Joe Pyles of Pilot Mountain was honored recently as the East Surry High School's Public Schools Bus Driver of the Year. The 21-year veteran is also the minister of the Fancy Gap Pentecostal Holiness Church in Cana, Va. He and wife Joanne are most devoted servants of God, and devote their lives to helping others.

Joe's days start at 3:30 a.m. with hot coffee and Bible study. At 5:30 a.m. he conducts a pre-start inspection of Bus 28. His routes include regular scheduled pickups of students for Pilot Mountain Elementary, Pilot Mountain Middle School, and East Surry High School plus daily trips to the Surry Early College in Dobson. His days end shortly after 5 p.m. as he returns to the East Surry High School parking lot and prepares for his next day's duties. Daily he drives 180 miles and serves 65 children.

Joe's life of service to children is rewarding. He learns each child's name and assigns seats. His role as mentor, counsel, and friend is legendary.

Joe's career as a devoted bus driver is a natural complement to his ministry as he can handle the needs of church members in between driving assignments. Joe also serves parttime at the county bus garage where he assists Manager Rodney Hardy with random duties. We celebrate Joe Pyles and his dedication to stewardship and discipleship.

## Why School Buses Are Yellow

Surry County's school buses are painted in a distinctive orangish-yellow color designated officially by the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration as "National School Bus Glossy Yellow." In 1939, after an extensive 10-state study, school officials, transportation specialists, bus manufacturers, and paint producers chose the School Bus Chrome Yellow 409 color for its high visibility and the way it emphasized the bold, black writing on the side of each bus to denote its school district. It's now the nationwide standard.

Surry's school buses normally travel 250,000 miles before being aged out. Most are manufactured at Thomasville Bus Company in Thomasville, N.C.

## Phrases To Use Often For Successful Relationships

- I appreciate your efforts.
- I like you.
- Help me better understand.
- I'm listening.
- I'm sorry.
- I forgive you. Can you forgive me?
- I am committed to you.
- Let's have some fun.
- What do you think?

## Surry Ag Prayer Breakfast

The 2023 Surry Ag Prayer Breakfast was on April 27 in The Barn at Heritage Farm at Dobson. The Surry County Farm Bureau Women's Committee presented it and extended an invitation to all Surry County farmers to attend: "As the growing and planting season begins, join us as we come together to pray for a safe and prosperous season for the farmers of Surry County." Guest speakers were Austin Caviness, Pastor of Salem Fork Christian Church, and Jake Parker, N.C. Farm Bureau Secretary & General Counsel. The North Carolina Farm Bureau Federation advocates for farm and rural families.

## Math Works

Thanks to Surry County Schools Director of Publicity Hollie Lyons, I attended a Surry County Middle Schools' MathWorks rehearsal at Central Middle School in Dobson where highly talented 6th, 7th, and 8th graders develop their math skills while preparing to face competition at the district level. I can best describe the sessions as "highly intense."

With gratitude I thank Central Middle's staff and students for astutely placing on glass partitions and painted walls the following inspiring messages:

- Hello Sunshine.
- Change our thoughts and change our world.
- The best teachers teach from the heart, not from the book.
- I think I'll just be happy today.
- Leadership attributes include vision, motivation, encouragement, and confidence.
- We are resilient, collaborative, active listeners, accountable, self-aware, noble, communicative, respectful, accountable, and accepting.
- Knowing what's right doesn't mean much unless we do what's right —Theodore Roosevelt.
- Make today amazing.
- Math — the only subject that counts.
- Inspire, learn, invent, dream, create, send, and receive.

## Standing On Strong Shoulders

Wife Charlotte, cousin Sarah Johnson, and I attended a recent Greater Mount Airy Chamber of Commerce Business Awards Banquet at Cross Creek Country Club. Seated to my left was Dr. Katie Bowman, Director of Institutional Research at Surry Community College. Our chats revealed her connections with Tony Martin, the college's Chief Financial Officer and Executive Vice President. Dr. Bowman is most fortunate to have Tony Martin as a mentor and counselor. Tony is a willing and capable advocate and he has chosen in Dr. Bowman a most worthy recipient of his acumen and vision.

## Shannon Myers

When Shannon Myers was named General Manager of Cross Creek Country Club, she became the first woman to hold the position since the club opened in 1973. The announcement was made by Interlam Inc. President Skip Eckenrod who, with his wife Cathy, purchased Cross Creek Country Club in 2020.

"Since taking ownership of Cross Creek, we've made a number of changes and improvements in order to better serve our members and the community," Skip said. "One of those changes is naming Shannon Myers as our new General Manager. Shannon has an impressive background in marketing and sales, and we are fortunate to have her join our team in this most important leadership position."

Shannon studied marketing at Florida Atlantic University. She said, "I'm honored and excited to have the opportunity to manage an historic facility like Cross Creek Country Club, especially as we celebrate our 50th anniversary."

Cross Creek Country Club is at 1129 Greenhill Road on Mount Airy's north side. The semi-private club features an 18-hole, tournament-quality golf course, Olympic-size swimming pool, four tennis courts (two clay, two hard surface), and several dining venues including an open-air pavilion and The Grand Ballroom that accommodates community events, weddings, and receptions.

## Word Match Game

Match the word on the left with its definition from the right.

- |                  |       |                |
|------------------|-------|----------------|
| 1. prevent       | _____ | A. Terraplane  |
| 2. belittled     | _____ | B. dank        |
| 3. marked by     | _____ | C. pensive     |
| 4. high rated    | _____ | D. thwarted    |
| 5. lowest deck   | _____ | E. flange      |
| 6. vessel        | _____ | F. crucible    |
| 7. musty         | _____ | G. Miserablés  |
| 8. moody         | _____ | H. abased      |
| 9. access risk   | _____ | I. flout       |
| 10. shedding     | _____ | J. bask        |
| 11. Hudson       | _____ | K. indelibly   |
| 12. impenetrable | _____ | L. primetime   |
| 13. poor ones    | _____ | M. actuary     |
| 14. sightseer    | _____ | N. under-rower |
| 15. moocher      | _____ | O. inclement   |
| 16. pleasing     | _____ | P. deciduous   |
| 17. strengthens  | _____ | Q. impervious  |
| 18. sneer        | _____ | R. freeloader  |
| 19. a measure    | _____ | S. day-tripper |
| 20. harsh        | _____ | T. girth       |

(See answers on Page 7)

## Significant Teammates

During my Sunday School lesson at Mount Airy Friends, included is my lesson of the minor biblical prophet Micah (Micah 6:8) with mentions of several community team players that daily emulate the teachings of Micah who wrote, "Our Lord looks for us to seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God." Several of these contributors are:

- The late Clinton Moseley served the Surry County Schools Board of Education for 31 years and his son John, owner of Merritt Machine since 1992, shared his dad's primary campaign card from May 26, 1956. Mr. Moseley listed that he was sober, honest, and dependable.
- Chuck Morris, who was the Superintendent of Mount Airy City Schools in the mid-1990s, attended the retirement dinner of the legendary Jerry Davis in 2019. Larry celebrated 47 years of service. Mr. Morris came from Greensboro to praise his protégé and colleague.
- In 2006, Surry Community College Facilities Director Curtis Workman heard my name mentioned at a staff meeting and called to thank me for supporting a college initiative. We've been close since and his efforts taught me a wonderful lesson as to how we can grow relationships by passing along a compliment.
- Tom Beroth Sr. of Pilot Mountain started Beroth Tire in 1957. During a visit to his King, N.C., store in 1998 to interview his son, the late T Beroth, I was honored that Tom Sr. was making his rounds and learned his lifelong motto is, "People are typically predictable and remember we more than likely won't be able to teach them to care!"
- A life-changing invitation by Geneva Mabe in 2002 to speak at the Copeland Seniors who met monthly at the Copeland Ruritan Club. Over 50 gathered for fellowship, spiritual inspirations, devotions, fun, and relationship building. Mrs. Mabe served several terms as the group's president and she had and has an endearing nature that brings people together for blessings, hope, and joy.
- Mount Airy City Commissioner Phillip Thacker gives his leadership interest to supporting the Mount Airy City Schools Educational Foundation in its annual fundraising efforts. He invites interested leaders to share a meal and learn accolades of students, teachers, staff, administrators, and stakeholders. At my table was business owner Gary Harold, Renfro executive Stoney Stone, philanthropist and professional musician John Rees, dentist and developer Dr. Dean Simmons, and journalist Gary York. Highlights for me were meeting Shannon Myers who was recently named Cross Creek Country Club General Manager and being served by Judy Atkinson who has nurtured CCCC guests for 47 years.

## Most Memorable Mentor

Dr. Swanson Richards grew up on a tobacco farm near Beulah, N.C., graduated at Appalachian State University, earned his PhD at Florida State, and honorably led our Surry Community College for 23 years. He and wife Ruth reside at Ridgecrest north of Mount Airy.

We met when our family returned to White Plains in 1955. He was always neatly dressed and sported a huge ASU ring. I think he taught virtually every course that needed a teacher. He coached all sports. My first responsibility for him was to fire the pot-bellied stoves at our gymnasium before boys and girls basketball games. When snow cancelled school, he would pick us up in his 1957 Chevy and we'd practice basketball all afternoon. He was always searching for a competitive edge.

In summers he seized opportunities to pick up proficiency leading new state and federal programs. His administrative skills led to his becoming President of Surry Community College in 1970.

Dr. Richards had a keen interest in leading all students to graduation. Former White Plains athletes and students Kenny Kallan and Ronnie Venable shared that Dr. Richards encouraged them to attend college after graduation at North Surry High School, and both graduated at Catawba College and enjoyed wonderful careers. Only with his encouragement were they led to hone their skills at four-year colleges and earn degrees.

## Great Friends

Many of us are blessed with good friends at our exercise class at the Armfield Recreation Center. One such couple is Gerald and Teresa Plaster of Tom's Creek Road west of Pilot Mountain. Both are UPS retirees.

On March 7, after returning from a cruise, Gerald suffered a minor heart attack which required bypass surgery at Forsyth Hospital. Unfortunately, Gerald was confined at Forsyth for 10 days prior to the surgery. On a Friday afternoon, April 14, before the Monday surgery, a rare coincidence occurred. Unplanned, uncommunicated, and no two at the same time, Mike Felts, Tim Childress, Gary York, and Phillip Gordon visited Gerald and Teresa at Forsyth between 1 and 5 p.m.

Gerald is well and back at our exercise class. We are like family!

## The Power Of A Touch

Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring — all of which have the potential to turn a life around.

—*Leo Buscaglia (1924-98), author and speaker*

## Goof Becomes A Gift

While going through the long line at a recent funeral and approaching the family, I saw a face I couldn't connect with a name and, as often occurs, he knew mine and remarked, "Coach York, I can sense you don't remember my name. It has been 55 years!" It would have helped us both if he'd jogged my memory with a bit more information, something like, "Coach York, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ from Surry Central's football team in 1966. Thanks for being here to console us." We have these embarrassing encounters almost daily and, when we can, quickly embrace another with the gift of volunteering our name first. Turning a goof into a gift soothes both souls.

Another opportunity to give a graceful assist is to answer our telephones by first saying our name. At WIFM Radio we answer by saying, "Good morning. Gary York. How may I help you?" A few days ago, former Mount Airy Public Works Director Jeff Boyles called, and after my greeting he answered, "Gary, this is Jeff Boyles. Have I caught you at a good time?" Proper and helpful in both regards.

Jeff is a Sunrise Rotary fundraiser, and I look forward to his annual call for our support. He has a nice way of asking, and I recently committed to get on board. He's also a most respected helper for our causes.

To add to this story, most of all I know in regard to one of our area's most valuable natural resources — an abundance of fresh water — I learned from Jeff starting with our relationship when he was a utility engineer with the City of Mount Airy and I was a Surry County commissioner in 1998.

I've worked to become more knowledgeable about water. Today, Mount Airy provides water to Pilot Mountain, Toast, White Plains, Dobson, Flat Rock, the Mount Airy/Surry County Airport, Bannertown, NC/VA Rest Areas on I-77, Highway 89 at I-77, Zephyr Road and I-77, and many rural areas in Surry County. Mount Airy is blessed with the capacity to produce more than 12 million gallons of water daily, and currently is producing 2 million. Its intake from Stewarts Creek and Lovills Creek is water of the best quality in North Carolina. Jeff Boyles and Kevin Heath of Adams-Heath Engineering of Galax, Va., joined to bring our region to distinct prominence in water and sewer extensions.

## In Memoriam

Regrettably, three close friends from the Mount Airy High School Class of 1961 passed away. They are Ray Tate, Buddy Pike, and Johnny Wilson. All were honorable, humble, and kind. Our class size was 140; 65 survive. May God bless our journeys.

## Those Who Succeed

I was introduced to Missy D. Shore, the City Executive of the State Employees Credit Union's office on CC Camp Road in Elkin, while attending State Treasurer Dale Folwell's presentation at the Yadkin Valley Chamber of Commerce in Elkin, N.C. on Friday, April 14. Having been a huge SECU fan for years and knowing its advertising budget, since inception, is zero, I promptly mentioned that I had seen a small ad on WXII-TV. Mrs. Shore quickly explained that SECU was changing leadership and several company policies. I then asked if WIFM Radio could be in the mix and she promised to investigate for us. In two working days I received the below email from Mrs. Shore:

"Good afternoon, Gary! You asked me last Friday about SECU advertising with your station. I have passed information along to our Marketing Dept. and they said they would evaluate as to whether this would align with the objectives in our campaign. I have provided them with all of your contact information. Hopefully someone will contact you soon. Thanks so much!"

All we have in growing a business, WIFM, is the opportunity to ask for the sale. Tom Madson of Parrish Tire in Winston-Salem once said, "Gary, sales is a numbers game. Those who ask more sell more. It's really very simple."

I applaud SECU for attracting credible associates like Mrs. Shore. Most people promise to care, only to fade away and ignore promises. Doing what we say is one's most honorable attribute. I adopted this habit in October of 1986 after attending Charlie Farrell's seminar in Winston-Salem entitled "The Right Stuff: Doing What We Say."

Attending the Yadkin Valley Chamber's event was life-changing, to say the least. Mrs. Shore has great skills and we can benefit by following in her footsteps. She grew up in Elkin and has served Elkin's SECU for 20 years. She shared that a quality of her character is a need to always fulfill promises immediately after making a commitment.

## Earned Asset

During a chat at a local retailer's, I asked, "Before coming here did you go to Surry Community College?" His reply was, "Oh, yes, and I'm three courses short of graduating with my Associate's Degree. Every day I think of going back. Our company has a 100% tuition reimbursement plan. For some reason, I continue to find excuses to not follow through."

Several times during my visit, I'd think, "When he goes back and passes the requirements, he'll never have to make that excuse again." Education is an asset, and once learned, no one can take it away.

## Historic Site

The corner of Oak and Main streets in Mount Airy has been occupied nearly continuously for 200 years.

The first Blue Ridge Hotel (or Blue Ridge Inn) was built in 1823. The wooden structure burned down some years later. The hotel was rebuilt sometime between 1835 and 1840 and it stood until the 1880s. The third Blue Ridge Hotel was built on the same location around 1891, but as a much grander building. Mount Airy's Great Fire on New Years Day in 1892 destroyed the hotel and the whole city block. Shortly after, a group of business owners rebuilt the hotel, which was revered as one of the best in the state, serving the community and many visitors until around 1965. We fondly recall our Mount Airy High School football team enjoying pre-game meals there in the 1950s and 1960s.

The hotel building was razed to make room for a bank and parking lot. Today the site is home to the Carlos Jones Blue Ridge Park including a gazebo whose design elements are a tribute to the hotel. The late Perry Robertson was an advocate for the park development that honors his friend, World War II Navy veteran Carlos Warren Jones who died on active duty in 1945.

On the side of the site along Oak Street is The Whittling Wall dedicated in 2018. The brick-faced retaining wall has alcoves occupied by eight statues honoring local icons who helped shape Mount Airy's history and culture. They are "The Whittler," an anonymous figure representing the downtown workers who used to spend idle hours there together; the late Tommy Jarrell, a legendary fiddle player; the late Fred Cockerham, a renowned banjo player; the late Ralph Epperson, founder of WPAQ Radio; Donna Fargo, a famous country singer and songwriter; the late L.H. Jones, a groundbreaking public educator for the African-American community; the late Floyd E. "Flip" Rees, a businessman who led the way in revitalizing downtown Mount Airy; and "The Mill Worker," another anonymous figure, representing the thousands of women and men who worked in local textile mills. North Carolina artist Brad Spencer created the brick sculptures. The Whittling Wall has become one of the city's most popular backdrops where both residents and visitors today pose for photos.

## Broadcasting Pioneers

Ken Lowe and I first met at the Mount Airy Visitors Center in 2004 when he and the late Ralph Epperson, founder of WPAQ Radio in 1949, were justly honored for bringing our city incredible connections to broadcasting history. Ken pursued a career in radio. He graduated from East Surry

High School and UNC, moved up the career ladder until he led media giant Scripps Company, and is credited with founding the early and iconic cable channel Home & Garden Network that was later sold to Discovery Channel. His parents were the late Wayne Lowe and his mother Barbara Lowe continues to reside in Westfield.

In several interviews, I've absorbed countless memorable nuggets of broadcasting memories and experience. Ken shared that he and his founding HGTV team lived by two truths. They insisted that clients would interact with the producers and that the developers would install a 24-hour help desk from Day 1. He said, "We learned more from buyers than any of us knew. Every person alive wants to matter and be heard and we encouraged that. It paid us in spades. We were happy no one else thought to implement these strategies."

## Word Pictures

Writers can paint vivid pictures with words. Easy to say, hard to do. It's putting everyday words together to describe something in a way the listener can see and feel. One can experience the words, not just hear the words. Let's see:

- On Easter Sunday at sunrise the morning sun broke over the trees behind the Cool Springs Baptist Church planted in 1805. As early risers gathered, the sun only covered the church steeple, leaving the church building and attendees in the darkness. What a spiritual experience to see!
- My high school mentor, the late Eddie Dorsett, volunteered in the late 1990s to man the spectator gate at the Surry Pride American Legion Baseball games. Seeing him in his orange screen-printed T-shirt and black Surry Pride fitted cap, sitting in his lawn chair, was a most prideful picture. Sitting with him and similarly dressed was his assistant, the late Foster May, player Alan York's granddad.

## Peanuts

Peanuts originated in Brazil. They are grown underground, and are planted in the spring and harvested in the fall. They are not nuts, but rather legumes. They are grown in 13 U.S. states and the leading producer is Georgia. Former President Jimmy Carter famously was a peanut farmer in Plains, Ga. Most peanuts used in the Little Debbie Nutty Buddy® Wafer Bars are grown in Georgia. North Carolina, the fourth-leading state, produces about 510 million pounds of peanuts annually.

Peanuts are a vital source of protein and contain all nine essential amino acids required for humans' nutrition. A 12-ounce package has about 550 peanuts. Agricultural scientist and inventor George Washington Carver (1864-1943) developed more than 100 ways to use peanuts as a food staple.

## Co-Working Space

The former BB&T Blue Ridge Burke Insurance company buildings at 187 W. Independence Boulevard and 190 Virginia St. in Mount Airy have been transformed into a multi-use office complex including the corporate headquarters for Workforce Unlimited and Surry County's first co-working space: Interworks. CEO Mike Brannock took me for a walk-through tour, and when he mentioned that stellar local builders Lee and Judy Mills were the development's general contractors my assessment and appreciation skyrocketed. Lee Mills Construction Co. Inc. is mostly the building contractor of choice in our region. The Mills' touch gives an unequalled sense of opulence. They remodeled a home in Mount Airy in 1988 for me, and my devotion to them is steadfast. They enhance decorators' designs.

## We Haven't Lost Until We Quit

Years ago, Michael Shepherd walked out of his 10th-grade Biology class, vowing never to return. At 10 o'clock the next morning, his teacher appeared in his tobacco field and asked about Michael's absence from school. After he replied, "I've quit," the concerned teacher said, "Michael, you can't quit. You are our best student. I expect to see you at 8 a.m. tomorrow morning."

After Michael reflected on his decision, he relented and was back in class the next morning. Michael shared that he had no encouragement at home, and his parents needed his help, but thanks to the discernment of a dedicated high school teacher, Michael went on to earn a Master's Degree and become a respected Wilkes County principal. He retired with full benefits and now is the executive director of a thriving nonprofit caregiver.

With a portion of encouragement, most of us have the resolve to stick it out. Just think: No more excuses, a deep sense of achievement, and earning the degrees. Find a way to stay and live to share with others how it works.

## H.A.L.T.

Alcohol and drug rehabilitation programs are usually days filled with advice on how to stay sober and pass years later clean and sober. Many of us have our own words of advice and insights that are basic and foundational. The one I hear most often is, "If you think you have a drinking problem, you do!" If we ever question our condition, we have a problem. If we look forward to drinking, we are alcoholic. If we feel differently when we drink, we are alcoholic. If we don't remember what we did when drinking, we have a problem. When we set a limit and count our drinks, we have a problem.

Our most popular lesson at the Charlotte Treatment Center was the H.A.L.T. Method. We were instructed to never allow ourselves to get:

- H — Hungry
- A — Angry
- L — Lonely
- T — Tired

The probability of relapsing — falling off the wagon — is much more likely when we become emotionally and physically drained. In reality, we should remember that recovery goes with those who adhere to the adage that it is more important to be sober than under the influence.

When asked what was my turning point, I say I got sick and tired of being intoxicated. I wanted to be a better person, to reach my potential, and to fulfill my dreams. Being down and out is a compromising state of mind. Being the real me is who I want to be.

## Wisdom From The Furrow

John Deere Company established The Furrow magazine in 1895 as "A Journal for the American Farmer." Its goal remains unchanged: to tell stories that people enjoy reading and provide them with knowledge they can apply in their operations. Here's a sample of its memorable aphorisms:

1. Success is the sum of small efforts repeated day in and day out.
2. The best throw of the day may be to throw things away.
3. Be not simply good, but good for something.
4. A drop of ink can make a million think.
5. One seldom repents of having spoken too little.
6. A somebody was once a nobody who wanted to and did.
7. Nothing is enough for the man to whom enough is too little.
8. We tend to live up to our own expectations.
9. Home is where we are loved the most and act the worst.
10. We can't have everything. Where would we put it?
11. We can have anything, but not everything.
12. The true measure of a man is how he treats someone who can do him absolutely no good.
13. Frustration is having nobody to blame but ourselves.

## Word Match Game answers

(from Page 3)

- |      |       |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. D | 6. F  | 11. A | 16. J |
| 2. H | 7. B  | 12. Q | 17. E |
| 3. K | 8. C  | 13. G | 18. I |
| 4. L | 9. M  | 14. S | 19. T |
| 5. N | 10. P | 15. R | 20. O |

# The Communicator

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