

THE COMMUNICATOR

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Principal Of The Year

Some public schools' Boards of Education routinely move their monthly meetings from one school to another, making attendance more convenient for people in the vicinity. The Surry County Schools Board of Education had its June meeting at Cedar Ridge Elementary, a top-performing school where we are honoring its Principal Donna Bledsoe, recently named the North Carolina Principal of the Year from among 2,500 principals statewide.

In our interview, Mrs. Bledsoe said her strategy for making a school successful requires leading a group of teachers and support staff that chooses to work together as "a team that puts the needs of children as a priority." The results at Cedar Ridge Elementary were significant improvements in end-of-year assessments of progress.

She also shared her secret for winning the local, zone, and state Principal of the Year awards. Her preparations for interviews mostly focused on maintaining her composure, rather than scripting answers. She also cited the nurturing of the late Surry County Schools Assistant Superintendent Pat Widdowson as a vital contribution to her career development. She shared, "Mrs. Widdowson knew how to teach children to learn, and she could transform the needs of teachers. In essence, no mentee was willing to let down Pat."

Many teachers she mentored say Mrs. Widdowson was the most influential administrator ever to instill masterful teaching in the Surry County Schools system and countywide. She could bring instruction from darkness to light. A former superintendent shared that Mrs. Widdowson was his all-time best Curriculum Coordinator in 45 years.

Transportation Leaders

We recently celebrated the retirement of Surry County Schools Director of Transportation Rodney Hardy after leading the 100-bus contingent (including transportation services for Elkin City and Mount Airy City schools) for 11 years of service.

The system is pleased to announce that Amy Sample is replacing Rodney. She is already on

board. She said she felt called to be in the position and shared her gratitude to have been chosen. She said having the opportunity to serve bus drivers, school children, and families is her lifelong dream.

The native of Wilkes County holds degrees from Lees-McRae College and Western Carolina University. Surry County Schools Superintendent Dr. Travis Reeves said, "She brings incredible expertise to her role and I'm sure she will serve as a thought leader for our team and all the employees she will directly oversee."

Rich Tradition Honors Drivers

There are a hundred-plus public school bus drivers in the transportation system that serves Surry County Schools, Mount Airy City Schools, and Elkin City Schools. Those most-appreciated and CDL-certified men and women are vital to our educational process. With the retirement of Rodney Hardy, Amy Sample is Surry's new transportation director. John Doss serves the Mount Airy system and Phil Crisman is Elkin's director.

The Surry County system's garage and parking area is at East Atkins Street in Dobson. After the last morning of school in June, all buses return to Dobson for a summer of rest and rehabilitation, and the drivers are honored with a lunch of hot dogs, Chick-fil-A cookies, soda, and chips.

The scrumptious lunch is prepared and served by the Board of Education members: Chairman Dale Badgett, Vice-Chair Clark Goings, T. J. Payne, Kent Whitaker, and Tony Hutchens. Assisting were Superintendent Dr. Travis Reeves, Teresa King, Kim Freeman, Amy and Josh Sample, Stan Newman, Neal Atkins, Kevin Via, and Dr. Deanne Danley.

Assets For Sure!

David Cline, who always wears a smile, told me in 2015, "Gary, every great community has countless assets and among them are a great public school system, access to top-notch community colleges, a reputable and thriving local hospital, and a viable country club." In our Yadkin Valley, Mount Airy, Elkin, and the Wilkesboros are truly blessed to have these assets and others too.

Athletic Director Hopeful

On Monday, June 6, a huge crowd attended a reception honoring Principal Donna Bledsoe at Cedar Ridge Elementary School. The Surry County Schools Board of Education was having its monthly meeting at Cedar Ridge Elementary's gymnasium equipped with member desks and chairs, a P.A. system, and more than 200 individual chairs for honorees and guests.

Sitting alone, right side, back row, was Surry Central High School rising junior Daniel Poindexter. As my curiosity led me to introduce myself, I asked, "Who are you and why are you here?" He replied, "I'm Daniel Poindexter and I attend all school board meetings." I added, "Why?" Daniel explained, "I'm seeking a career as a college athletic director and I come to meetings to learn all I can about a school day. Soon I'll start an internship at Surry Central High School." He also stated, "There are many major universities that offer majors in athletics directorship. I could also become a conference commissioner of a professional team, etc."

Quite impressive is the extent of preparation Daniel is investing in his chosen career. Major universities pay well, too.

Roll Tide Roll

Jerry Duncan was a superstar at the Sparta High School in the early 1960s and by Coach Gray Boyles' encouragement the legendary Alabama Crimson Tide's Coach Bear Bryant offered Jerry a full scholarship in 1962. With perseverance and fortitude he became an All-SEC tackle and scored touchdowns on tackle-eligible plays. He was a sideline radio reporter for 24 years. He and wife Karen are happily married and most successful in Birmingham, Ala. They attend most Crimson Tide games and are most active in the Crippled Children's Charities in Birmingham. He is an avid Elkin Rescue Squad contributor and we speak weekly by phone. When he and wife Karen visit their tree farm in Alleghany County we connect.

When I realized N.C. State Sen. Eddie Settle and son Matthew are renowned Alabama football fans, I connected Jerry and the Settles for lunch at Cedar Brook Country Club on June 2. Just imagine Jerry sitting between Eddie and Matthew, talking Alabama football for three hours. Wives Karen Duncan and Sheila Settle were also at our six-seat table.

Eddie and Matthew attend the Crimson Tide vs. LSU games in Tuscaloosa. Part of the fascination with Alabama is the Settles' attachment for the Alabama Football Hall of Fame Museum. Jerry Duncan shared it's probably the largest and finest college collection of football lore in the United States

Yadkin County Principal

Jonesville Elementary Principal Ida Weisner is the 2023 Yadkin County Schools Principal of the Year. The county bordered on the north and east by the Yadkin River has 14 public schools and 5,105 students and a branch of Surry Community College. Its motto is, "Big enough to provide educational opportunities and small enough to know everyone." Its school board has seven members. Its superintendent is Dr. Todd Martin. Its school office is in Yadkinville. Its high schools are Forbush and Starmount.

Toby, Lee, and Greg

In 2000 I met SYEMC trusted associate Lee Bedsaul and although we may connect only once a year he sure is a Day-Brightener. His son Stetson honorably serves North Elkin Tire, graduated from the Surry Early College and Surry Community College. During a recent Saturday morning chat at the Armfield Recreation Center in Pilot Mountain, Lee shared his 23 years at SYEMC and praised its CEO, Greg Puckett, a 28-year veteran. Lee stated, "Greg is a great role model, is kind and fair, and can see the construction field and understands the financial aspects of our very successful electrical co-op, which was founded in Dobson in 1951."

Dear colleague Toby Speaks, the SYEMC Board of Directors' chairman, is also appreciative of Greg and Lee. Toby is the most astute conversation listener I've known. The co-op's Customer Appreciation Day is a wonderful day for me to shadow Toby's listener acumen. In five dedicated hours Toby will have involved conversations with at least 50 customer/members. Every SYEMC associate is grateful for Toby's member attentions.

Armfield Center's Amanda Cook

Most mornings I'm greeted at 5:25 a.m. at the Armfield Recreation Center by Amanda Cook, a most warm, kind, and cordial associate. Not only is she inviting, she always arrives early.

She recently graciously accepted two gallons of Bullington strawberries and promised to make sonkers later that day. Amanda also shared she and granddad Danny Cheek (husband of Geneva, also an Armfield superstar) are proud cooks and bakers. His specialties are coconut and chocolate cream pies, banana pudding, and to-die-for Boston baked beans. Can't we see granddad and granddaughter standing side by side at the oven?

Amanda puts a smile on our faces by greeting us at the front door. She blesses and welcomes our senior team of Gerald, Teresa, Lupe, Mike, Jimmy, Tim, Phillip, Avalina, Virginia, Robin, Daniel, Matthew, and Lee.

Wilkesboro Methodist Men

For 17 years, Robert Rizoti and friends have staged an charity golf tournament at the Oakwoods Country Club in Wilkesboro, N.C., that contributes \$20,000 annually to local charity and emergency relief. Patrons, many who've had 100% annual participation, start to gather about 11:30 for the 1 p.m. tee-off time to catch up, share stories, renew friendships, and cultivate relationships.

This year's group included 22 four-man teams — 88 devoted supporters. The Oakwoods Country Club staff — Holden Abrams, Charles Metz, and Brad St. Clair — is tournament-savvy and player-friendly. The 18-hole course, founded in 1964, is well-kept and challenging and those staging charity events are most fortunate to have a cooperative course in close proximity to the church. Most participants live a matter of minutes from the course. Many teams are comprised of family members and siblings. Ninety percent of all teams are repeat teams and register for next year at the current year's finish.

Immediately following the play, the staff of the Brushy Mountain Smokehouse and Creamery provided a delicious barbecue meal sponsored by Carolina West Wireless. Mainstay contributor Arnold Lakey is the Ball Sponsor. Hole sponsorships, nearly a hundred and many memorializing the lives of deceased family members, contributed to the financial success of the gathering.

Those who play and volunteer are the most spiritually uplifting crowd I know. Wilkesboro United Methodist minister Karen Roberts welcomes us and gives a gracious invocation. Robert Rizoti thanks us. The event was dedicated to John Henry Groce, the church's head usher.

Acknowledgements

Many times daily we are thanked, praised, informed, encouraged, and inspired. A nice habit is to be aware and cognizant of the acts of kindness and summarily and quickly respond. One day at mid-morning, legendary community servant from Wilkesboro, Robert Rizoti, dropped in at WIFM Radio in Elkin with a dozen Krispy Kreme doughnuts straight from the Stratford Road outlet in Winston-Salem, a great story about his mother-in-law in Smithfield, a golf tournament reminder, a Pickleball "dink" (jargon for a soft finesse shot), and much-needed words of encouragement.

Robert brought copies of The Upper Room devotional guides from November-December 2022 and May-June 2023. One advises that "confidence can't be purchased; it is a gift from God" and one attribute of mine is confidence. The second is titled "A Simple Note" and focusses on encouragement. It instructs us to read 1 Thessalonians 5:9-15 and it specifically quotes 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NIV):

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." It offers this Thought For the Day: "Through my simple words of encouragement, God can change lives." And The Upper Room gives us this prayer from reader Tom Smith of Utah: "Dear Lord, show us the people who need our encouragement so that we can share your love through our small acts of kindness today and every day. Amen."

Daily devotionals from The Upper Room are on its website, www.upperroom.org/devotionals.

Exceptional Achiever

Presley Barker of Traphill, N.C., is a virtuoso acoustic guitarist, singer, and songwriter who's performed on the Grand Ole Opry stage in Nashville, competed in the TV show "American Idol," and earlier this summer opened the 2023 Merlefest music festival on the Doc Watson Stage in Wilkesboro. He also graduated No. 1 in his class and received his high school diploma from East Wilkes High School plus an Associate's Degree from Wilkes Community College. In August he'll enter University of North Carolina-Charlotte as a junior. He's 18 years old.

Word Match Game

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

- | | | |
|----------------|-------|--------------|
| 1. Wilson | _____ | A. unstable |
| 2. Lou | _____ | B. pattern |
| 3. Harmon | _____ | C. modify |
| 4. athletic | _____ | D. overseer |
| 5. restless | _____ | E. dog |
| 6. anxiety | _____ | F. Gehrig |
| 7. pedant | _____ | G. mundane |
| 8. blasé | _____ | H. petulant |
| 9. trite | _____ | I. Killebrew |
| 10. spiral | _____ | J. wise |
| 11. jettison | _____ | K. discreet |
| 12. junkyard | _____ | L. strategy |
| 13. pout | _____ | M. director |
| 14. gig line | _____ | N. alignment |
| 15. photoshop | _____ | O. roll-off |
| 16. A.D. | _____ | P. Pickett |
| 17. squeezebox | _____ | Q. café |
| 18. judicious | _____ | R. stressed |
| 19. plan | _____ | S. abdicate |
| 20. scalawag | _____ | T. meld |
| 21. fuse | _____ | U. profiteer |
| 22. dumpster | _____ | V. apathetic |

(See answers on Page 7)

The Wedding

Travis Bohr's and Elizabeth Surratt's wedding ritual was timely, faith-based, and attendee driven. We opened with prayer, a gracious welcoming, bride and groom promises, guest commitments, exchanging vows, and rings. I Corinthians 13:3, "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love and the greatest of these is love." Prayer consent, officiant power vesting, partners kiss, and couple presentation.

Several unique features included Harry Underwood and Ashley Marion's compassionate assistance in helping a senior couple onto a golf cart and to their seats at the wedding site. Mount Airy's most successful food provider, 13 Bones Family Restaurant, served a scrumptious meal of chicken breasts, pasta, sauteed potatoes, mixed vegetables, and banana pudding. Cutting and serving a delightful wedding cake concluded the gala. The newlyweds were escorted away from the venue, "The Sky Crest" south of Cleveland, N.C., in a restored 1967 Pontiac GTO.

The wedding party included eight groomsmen and eight bridesmaids. Elizabeth's sister, Kaylyn Surratt, was the Maid of Honor and Doug Bohr was the Best Man. Elizabeth's father, Todd Surratt, gave away the bride.

Officiant

Officiating at the marriage of Travis Bohr and Elizabeth Surratt on May 20 was a challenging and daunting task. Daily mental preparation for two months left much anxiety and stress. The Rev. Jon Cawley was a monumental helper as his experience provided answers to countless questions.

A few moments before taking my place on the wedding stage, our ceremony director Robin Kiser passed by. Sensing my distress, she stopped for a moment and said, "Mr. York, I can surmise your thorough preparation. Please remember that we are all abundantly blessed and in 2 Corinthians 9:8 and Proverbs 11:25 our Lord promises to help us stand up to all worthy tasks." The exact verses are 2 Corinthians 9:8 (NIV): "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." Proverbs 11:25 (NIV) reads, "A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed." With these passages etched in my mind, I gained much-needed courage to conduct the sacred ceremony.

Another huge confidence builder was the assurance by DJ Christopher Pounds, as he was miking me, "Mr. York, rest at ease that I'll deliver your voice at a perfect level regardless of your speech level." As I spoke I could hear a reasonable sound level. Mrs. Kiser and Mr. Pounds rescued me!

Looking Good

Catching up on photos from our Bohr/Surratt wedding on May 20 in Cleveland, N.C., I was stunned by how stately son-in-law John Schmidt looked as his sports jacket was neatly buttoned while my black suit jacket was flipped open to expose my tie, white shirt, and belly. The next week, we were discussing his sharp, clean look. John said, "Oh, in the U.S. Air Force I was taught to button my jacket. It was called the gig line rule. We were taught to align our fly's zipper with our shirt buttons and by all means to button our jacket."

The Air Force Dress and Appearance Standards says failure to align these elements of clothing will result in a "gig," or recorded fault, during inspection. Hence the name: gig line rule.

Friend Brent McKinney commented that when daughters Mamie and Leah were dating, he would always put an eye on suitors' shoes in hopes the young men were regularly showing up with shined shoes. He said, "Shined shoes made a good statement for the men who came calling."

Norman Stockton

The celebrated fine men's clothier Norman Stockton opened in Winston-Salem in 1909 and has involved four generations of Stocktons and today serves us at 99 Reynolda Village in Winston-Salem. Second-generation Dick at 93 lives at Arbor Acres and son Hill and grandson Richard are active and serve as President and Vice-President.

I recently stopped and purchased a Biden Blue Suit and as I walked in the door the owners' greeting made me feel oh-so-special. I had not seen Hill in eight years; however, he remembered my name, family associates, where we lived, and our P-Nut Butter D-Lite. Hill shared that sales are awesome, that his alterations/tailor at 27 is the best he's had in 50 years, and that I could pick up the suit in three days.

The Stockton family has a stellar reputation for quality, value, and service in its offerings, and its amicable embrace was a memory to cherish. To feel deserving and appreciated is oh-so endearing. These gifts will always be vital to success.

Asked And Answered

During the Bohr-Surratt wedding reception Charlotte and I sat with Garrison and John Schmidt, Jerry and Liz Tilley, and Nic and Emily Antonecchia. Someone asked who was a distinguished man at an adjoining table. I said, "I'll ask him," I did so, and he said, "I'm Todd and Angie Surratt's next-door neighbor, Willis Spivey." Guess I'm a bit weird. How many of us would approach a stranger? But I'm a journalist too, and we do it all the time.

Fish Fry Benefit

Marvin and Mary Miller, the owners of Home Acres Fine Furniture in the Hamptonville community in southern Yadkin County, and the Union Grove Amish Community staged on June 3 the annual Benefit Fish Fry that assists Amish missions in South America and the Buck Shoals Volunteer Fire Department. Held at the furniture store, 6224 Windsor Road in Hamptonville, and prepared by the Amish community, the Benefit Fish Fry served 1,100 customers with 500 pounds of flounder plus hushpuppies, cole slaw, and homemade ice cream in two hours. G&B Energy personnel and cooks played a key role in efficient and quick service. This was the eighth year for the event.

Will Altemueller

During a luncheon with Hugh Chatham Health CEO Paul Hammes and HCH Food Service Director Warren Bates, the issue of personnel recruitment was front and center. When I mentioned Will Altemueller, an Elkin High School graduate and Pfeiffer University graduate, is soon to be "Dr. Will," a physical therapist, Hammes quipped, "Would he consider joining us?" After lunch, I shared Hugh Chatham Health's interest in Will's coming back home.

Will worked school breaks at All-Star Rentals and owner Joe Walker said, "Will was the best entry-level associate to work here in my 25 years. He came as a 16-year-old with the savvy, sales experience, and work ethic of a seasoned adult. He came knowing how things work." Quite phenomenal, to say the least. His customer-service instincts are incredible and uncanny.

Jody & Karen King

Last year a huge crowd gathered for David Smith's surprise 60th birthday party at the Bannertown Volunteer Fire Department. Staged primarily by his daughter Teshia, it was extraordinary in many ways. All of his five sisters were there – Farah, Mary, Jeanine, Laura, and Johanna.

Included in my pictures was a shot of Jody and Karen King, a local grading contractor not known to me. David later shared that recently Jody and his equipment had cured a drainage problem that had existed for decades near his home. Oftentimes a new set of eyes can work a miracle.

Thanks to my invitation to the party and my trusted Canon Rebel, I made new friends Jody and Karen King, witnessed Teshia's expertise in gala organization, and was part of a wonderful celebration. David is a dear friend as we've spent days on road trips.

Human Resources Staff

Wilkes County Schools Human Resources staff is like family to us at WIFM Radio 100.9. They are Dr. Westley Wood, Melissa Shepherd, Nicole McNeill, Kimberly Frye, Donna Absher, Hannah Hodges, and Magalene Woodie.

WIFM has been supporting and attending Wilkes County Schools' celebrations of Teacher and Principal of the Year and the district's Personnel Retirements since 2006. After developing pictures of each honoree, we forward the photos to the Human Resources staff and we rest assured each honoree will receive his/her gift momentarily. I'm also assured of a seat near the presenter's podium to give us great access for photos. Wilkes County Schools' Human Resources staff is the Best of the Best.

Volunteer Firefighters

Two devoted members of the elite Westfield Volunteer Fire Department, Matthew and Lee, faithfully arrive at the Armfield Recreation Center in Pilot Mountain to exercise at 6:15. Recently I asked Matthew, "How many fighters usually converge on a raging fire?"

He answered, "It all depends on the size of the fire, availability of fighters, fire condition, water, humans involved, weather, equipment, etc. In essence, there are no exact answers. We have 30 extremely qualified firemen and we work every available fighter. The day and night time is a big factor. At 3 a.m. we'll have more volunteers. At noon we may be limited, as many fighters are confined to their jobs. Firefighting is a variable mission."

Sports Fans Phillip And Marie

Sports fans are invaluable and avid. Great friend Phillip Gordon is a great fan of Wake Forest University's major sports. He makes a weekly Division I game. Most recently he and grandson Tyler were at the Gene Houks Stadium to see the send-off of the Deacons' No. 7-rated NCAA baseball team as it boarded a chartered jet for Omaha, Neb., to compete in the College World Series.

The Demon Deacons' record is 52-10. The team flew from Winston-Salem's Smith Reynolds Airport on Wednesday.

Phillip and wife Marie Gordon are retired Stokes County teachers at Pinnacle Elementary, members of Pinnacle United Methodist Church, and frequent vacationers at Oak Island. He's an avid deer hunter and bass fisherman and she grows world-class flowers that are annually displayed at the Forsyth County Fair. They are both active leaders at the Retired Stokes County Teachers Association.

Ben Marsella

At the end of 1968 I was leaving my coaching career at Bucknell University, a Division III school in Lewisburg, Pa., and was employed by Shell Oil as a dealer representative in Fairfax, Va., along the I-495 Beltway. Our Shell area was labeled The Washington District as it included parts of Maryland. It was the second-largest marketing concentration in the States. Shell owned 200 service stations in the area and was the leading gasoline supplier. We were the dominant brand, and prospective dealers were standing in line to lease stations from the company.

Dealer reps like me started our careers by attending a six-week dealer school. After completing the school, we would be assigned a territory where our tasks involved keeping stations clean, open for mandatory hours, and competitively pricing gasoline and services. Dealer reps were highly competitive and the territory's annual winner was rewarded with a trip for two to Nassau in The Bahamas. My territory, No. 218 around Annandale, Va., was the winner for 1969-70 as I was following a very weak representative.

My fondest memory is meeting fellow rep Ben Marsella from Darlington, S.C., who was a year older and a Clemson University baseball player and graduate. He was the most enthusiastic and uplifting person I had ever met. He constantly was looking for opportunities to lend a hand. He also had a pipeline to the inside scoop and kept us informed. In my two years with Shell, he was a great teacher, influencer, mentor and confidant. He passed in Smyrna, Ga., in 2018. He was a blessing.

Lessons We Learn

From June 1968 to June 1970, I was a dealer representative for Shell Oil in Annandale, Va. As was customary, my supervisor periodically would conduct a Territory Review that involved a physical inspection of my 18 stations in Fairfax, Va. The Washington, D.C. District at that time included 200 service stations. Our district was second only to San Francisco in performance and volume throughout our nation.

When I arrived at 5:45 for our scheduled 6 o'clock meeting, Supervisor Bill Beumer was waiting on me. His first statement was, "Do you know how many lightbulbs are on this lot?" He answered for me, "Ninety-eight, and only 85 are burning. Proper lighting is a Shell tradition. A great dealer representative is responsible for all lights to be burning! Understand?" I replied, "Yes, sir. I've learned a valuable lesson."

When I joined York Oil, Tom York's company, on July 4, 1970, lighting became our trademark, because the perception of safety after dark will

draw business to a well-lighted property. Also, big, spacious lots give customers a sense of adequate turning space. When clients feel safe and secure, they become regulars and will buy regularly, filling up, and use a credit card. He or she will buy at least five times a month. When Neighbors #1 opened July 4, 1981, our lighting presentation became legendary and an industry model and standard.

Sam Moir

We are blessed with unusual circumstances that make our lives memorable and exciting. When I got to Mount Airy High School in 1958, the late Sam Moir was our basketball coach, and he was building a State 3A Championship Team. Our 1959-60 Granite Bears team led by Mike Cooke and Tom Childress went 25-0, and could have beaten many college teams. We averaged winning all three playoff games by 23 points. Someone said no opponent could stop Cooke, and Childress was the best defender in the state. Our confidence was so high that we reveled in the boast that the second-best team in the state was our bench.

For a decade prior to Sam's passing in 2018, several men living in or close to Mount Airy would meet at the Cross Creek Country Club for a three-hour lunch and tell tales about the Moir years at Mount Airy High School. During one such gathering, Coach Sam started to reminisce about how to shoot the jumper. He said Buddy Perry was "the best shooter I've seen, and one day I was teaching our staff about how to shoot the jumper. When I was getting toward the end, I added, 'Except for Buddy Perry. If anyone attempts to change his shot, you are fired. His jumper is our best. His jumper has a right to left draw to it, but I dare anyone to change him. His shot is a thing of beauty – the best!'"

Way to go, Coach, and to Buddy who lives in Belmont, N.C.

Good Bread

A unique gift is a loaf of Captain John Derst's® Good Old Fashioned White Bread. In our area it's found only at the Foothills Meat Center at the corner of South Bridge Street and the Gene Pardue Parkway in Jonesville, N.C.

Captain John Derst's bread has been baked in Savannah, Ga., for more than 150 years. It's yellow in color and has only 70 calories per slice. WIFM Radio's kitchen has used it for a variety of made-to-order sandwiches.

Foothills Meat Center has fresh cuts of meat to order, produce, and a variety of delicacies including John Brown Pimento Cheese made in King, N.C., and the freshest candies in town. Its associates are pleasant, knowledgeable, kind, and generous with smiles and answers when serving customers.

N.C. Highway Patrol

In 1929, the General Assembly established the N.C. State Highway Patrol. Only a half-million registered vehicles were on the state's roads, but nearly 690 people died that year due to traffic mishaps. Traffic control became such a public concern that the legislature gave the new organization statutory responsibility to patrol the highways of the state, enforce the motor vehicle laws, and assist the motoring public.

From its beginning, membership in the State Patrol was highly selective and most rigorous. North Carolina's first Patrol School trained prospective officers in law, first aid, vehicle operation, and related subjects — even proper light adjustments. Four hundred men applied for the first class, 67 were selected to report to the school, only 42 men completed the training, and 37 — fewer than 1 in 10 of the original applicants — were chosen to swear the oath of office.

Over time, the State Highway Patrol's duties and responsibilities grew to include reducing crime, protecting against terrorism, and responding to natural and manmade disasters such as chemical spills and hurricanes. The overall mission is to ensure safe and efficient transportation on the state's streets and highways.

The State Patrol today gives prospective officers 26 weeks of training. Troopers' starting salary is \$66,000 (13th highest among the 50 states).

Today 1,670 troopers serve in eight districts with 88,000 miles of highways — second only to Texas. Troop 3, whose headquarters is in Salisbury, serves Surry County. Our top-ranked executive is Major Tyre Needham who lives in Pilot Mountain. Friend Robert Reavis of Yadkinville holds the rank of sergeant. A previous sergeant, Connie Watson, retired from the State Patrol and was elected Sheriff of Surry County for three terms. The late Robert Montgomery also was our Surry County Sheriff.

Safe Steps For Seniors

Falling at home is a major physical threat to seniors. In my dad Tom's last decade, a weekly fall became his norm, and our Jerry Atkins stood ready to get him back on his feet. I'm prone to the same malady and need to be more careful and conscious of my age. I suppose at least 90% of the spills occur while navigating downward.

Kester Sink owns one of the famous Siamese Twins' homes built south of Mount Airy in 1850 for Chang Bunker. The picturesque tri-level house has several stairwells. During a recent tour, I marveled at how Kester at age 99 masterfully negotiated up and down on the stairs. His movements started by facing the banister to his right and with both hands clutching the rail and feet also pointing to

the right, he first moved his left foot to the first step downward and followed it by next moving his right foot to beside his left foot, and he then moved his left hand down the rail followed by his right hand. This four-step combination continued until he reached the bottom. In climbing upwards, Kester reversed the process. It may seem a bit methodical and laborious; however, it eliminated the toe and heel dragging that causes falls. By the inch, it's a cinch. Kester said he learned the technique at Northern Regional Rehabilitation.

Kester and wife Rosie have meticulously preserved the Chang and Adelaide Bunker homeplace. A unique feature I'll remember is a 12-pane window on the northwest corner — it is original. The full basement was dug in phases. Each room has a fireplace. A west-facing sun room was added by Lee Mills Construction in the late 1980s. A trunk upstairs accompanied Chang during an extensive tour around Europe in the 1830s.

HCH Cardiologist David Kay

Hugh Chatham Health cardiologist Dr. David Kay is one of the most impressive persons I've met. He's one of the physicians that convey instant credibility and professionalism. In our conversation, he spoke of supporting his daughter's softball pitching skills and of his love for HCH's mission and outreach. When I told him my primary-care physician is Physician Assistant Jennifer Marion, Dr. Kay said, "You've made a great choice. She's the best P.A. I've known. As a provider, she's tops. When she sends patients to me, I know they've had excellent care and attention."

Healing Waters

Grandparents L.M. and Jettie York (Tom's parents) made at least a monthly visit to historic Shatley Springs near West Jefferson for a delicious family-style lunch and to fill 20 empty gallon jugs with a fresh supply of healing water from a pipe fed by an underground spring. My grandparents unconditionally believed a couple of glasses a day of the excelsior water was the secret to good health and longevity. Gerald and Teresa Plaster from my exercise group still go, and Teresa says the environment is most soothing and the photo opportunities to and from are breathtaking.

Word Match Game answers

(from Page 3)

1. P	6. R	11. S	16. D	21. T
2. F	7. J	12. E	17. Q	22. O
3. I	8. V	13. H	18. K	
4. M	9. G	14. N	19. L	
5. A	10. B	15. C	20. U	

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