

The Triangle TRIBUNE

THE TRIANGLE'S CHOICE FOR THE BLACK VOICE

"Celebrating Our 23rd Year"

VOLUME 23 NO. 8

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 21, 2021

\$1.00

HBCU sports world lost another icon last week.



ACA is back for a short time

By Tom Murphy
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Health insurance shoppers stuck in a bad plan or unable to find coverage have a new option for help. A sign-up window opened Monday for government insurance markets and runs through May 15 in most states.

It's available for people who don't have coverage through work, and it is expected to make finding a plan less of a hassle for those who lost a job.

President Joe Biden last month ordered government health insurance markets that ended their annual enrollment periods in December to reopen. The Affordable Care Act created state-based insurance markets for people to buy individual coverage either for themselves or their family.

Biden's order applies to 36 insurance markets run through the federal government's platform. But nearly all states that run their own marketplaces will offer a similar extended window through May.

This new window could be useful for people who recently lost their coverage or couldn't find a plan last year. Experts have said the number of uninsured people has risen during the pandemic due to layoffs.

People who don't have coverage but recently developed a health problem and want better access to care could also use this opportunity. It also could help those who have insurance but may want a new plan because it doesn't cover their doctors or prescriptions like they expected when they signed up.

"Anybody who doesn't have coverage or isn't happy with their coverage should be looking at the marketplace during this extended enrollment period," said Karen Pollitz, an insurance expert with the nonprofit Kaiser Family Foundation. Any coverage purchased will start on the first day of the following month.

A six-week window in November and December is usually the main opportunity insurance shoppers have every year to pick a plan. Those who want to stay covered then have to stick with that plan unless they have a life-changing event like a job loss, marriage or the adoption or birth of a child.

Those events qualify people for a special enrollment period in which they can buy a new plan. Shoppers normally have to submit proof that they qualify before they can

Please see **NEW/2A**

3 reasons it's time to get more serious about snoring

By Jason Wooden, Ph.D.
SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

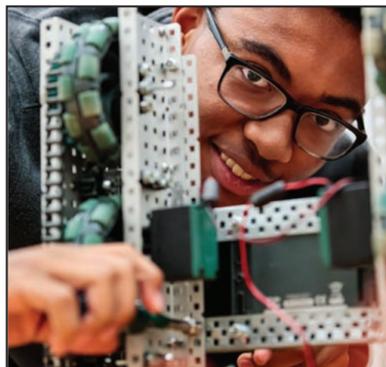
Let's have an honest conversation about snoring. You know, that nighttime menace that people complain about but all too many accept as a fact of life. Maybe you've gotten complaints from people over the years and feel you're doing the best you can. Or, perhaps, you're the spouse of a full-blast snorer, and you've given up that things can get better.

In either case, you're not alone. According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, 40% of adult men and 24% of adult women are regular snorers.

It turns out you're more likely to snore if you are overweight, pregnant, congested, sleep on your back, consume alcohol at bedtime, smoking, taking meds that relax the throat and other. The CDC says 1 in 3 adults don't get enough quality sleep. There are many different reasons people sleep poorly and snoring has got to be on the list, especially for couples. Right now, snoring may seem like an unavoidable fact of life, but there are good reasons to start taking it more seriously.

Please see **SNORING/2A**

School is back in session for Wake



COURTESY

Wake County public school students attended in-person classes Wednesday for the first time in 11 months due to COVID-19. North Carolina lawmakers finalized a mandate for school districts to offer daily in-person instruction to K-12 students. The House's 77-42 vote approving the compromise measure with the Senate, which voted for the same bill Tuesday, sends the measure to Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper's desk. The passage now sets up the year's first public showdown between Republicans, who control the legislature, and Cooper, who can sign the bill, veto it or let it become law.

Death of Black mothers, babies 'has to stop' in United States

By Freda Freeman
CORRESPONDENT

DURHAM - Hoping to stop Black mothers from dying during childbirth, state and local elected officials and community leaders are coming together in a concerted effort to fight racial disparity in health care. During a news conference last week, Action NC and its Race and Gender Equity initiative launched its Black Maternal Health campaign and advocated for passage of a local Mommibus Act.

About 700 women die each year from pregnancy-related complications, and Black women are three to four times more likely to die than white women, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Health Statistics. These racial disparities exist regardless of education, career or income.

"Pregnancy, childbirth, and aftercare should not put a mother's life in jeopardy, yet in far too many instances, we see every day that women are dying from complications of lack of care and the racial discriminatory practices that continue to happen in our medical institutions. This has to stop!" said Gloria De Los Santos, Durham director of Action NC. "It's time to dismantle the racial barriers that deny Black women and women of color equal access to reproductive health care."

Nana Asante-Smith had heard so many horror stories about Black women during childbirth that she had decided not to have any children. Later, when she did become pregnant, she had to deal with her own "debilitating fear." "I had been hearing the stories and the learned



FILE

Seven hundred black women die each year.

experiences of Black women here in this country and beyond in terms of experiences with maternal health. I also recall being in the hospital myself getting ready to give birth and looking one of the nurse's in her eyes and telling her that I along with my son had to walk out of that hospital alive."

Asante-Smith, who leads the Mayor's Council for Women in Durham, said it is a shame that harrowing childbirth experiences are common for Black women and they must be protected.

"This requires investment from not only the Black community but communities and societies around us. We cannot do this work alone. This work cannot be ours alone because we live in and are part of a system that has dehumanized and abused black women for so long. So, these wrongs are not just for us to correct. Yes, our lives depend on it, but our society also depends on it as well," she said.

Bethel Mayor Gloristine Brown recalled when she was a

young mother who had minimum health insurance and lived in a rural area with limited access to a doctor. She said she understands why Black women don't seek proper prenatal care when they are "treated so badly and talked to and looked upon like you're nothing."

"I am a testament to this because I am one that it happened to. It's very hurtful, it's very painful not having the resources and ability to get the care that you need. They do the very minimum. I was treated like it didn't matter, just do what you need to do for her, give her what she needs but don't go overboard."

Recalling the delivery of her twins, Durham City Councilwoman DeDreana Freeman said she is blessed to be alive. "As I have experienced two pregnancies leading to the birth of my three wonderful children by C-section, I also have had this experience, and I've been blessed to survive, when many women cannot say the same, including my grandmother,

Please see **DEATH/2A**

COVID disparity linked to NC prisons

By Jordan Wilkie
CAROLINA PUBLIC PRESS

One in five people who have been in North Carolina's prisons since March have tested positive for COVID-19, matching the national average for prison infections. One in four prison staff members have tested positive, according to data from the N.C. Department of Public Safety, which oversees state prisons. That's compared with one out of 13 people testing positive for the virus statewide.

Because inmates and prison staff are much more likely to be Black than North Carolina's population as a whole, the outbreaks happening behind prison walls are disproportionately harming Black people and Black communities in North Carolina. What's happening in North Carolina follows the national trend, according to Aaron Littman, deputy director of the COVID-19 Behind Bars Data Project at UCLA School of Law. "The incidence of this disease has been heavier on communities of color, and our practice of racially discriminatory mass incarceration worsens that," Littman said.

The factors that cause greater infection rates among Black communities create a cyclical process for infection, and prisons act as both incubator and distribution center for the disease, according to multiple experts in the law, public health and sociology. John Eason, founder and director of UW Justice Lab and sociology professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, studies where prisons are built and who works at them. He was among the first to show a correlation between where prisons are located and the rapid spread of COVID-19, a conclusion that has since been supported by work from other researchers.

More often than not, communities around prisons are mostly Black, Eason said, and those communities were among the first to get COVID-19. Essential workers, like correctional officers, have to go to work in person. Though census data shows that roughly 22% of people in North Carolina are Black, just over half of people in prison and half of correctional officers are Black.

Eason's research has shown correctional officers are often the vectors that bring COVID-19 inside prisons, where it spreads rapidly among the incarcerated population and exposes other prison staff to the virus, who then take it back out into their communities. Because a disproportionate number of people in prison and correctional officers are

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Black maternal deaths

Continued from page 5A
Josephine Smith Harris, who died birthing her fifth child. I'm fortunate enough to be able to tell the story by grace."

Fayetteville City Councilwoman Shakeyla Ingram said her mother was the only one of her grandmother's nine children to survive childbirth. Ingram said that in 2019, Cumberland County had the highest Black maternal health mortality rate in the state.

"The opportunity to improve the well-being of our mothers and to save children is an important public health crisis for us to overcome, not just in the United States but here in North Carolina. Our mothers' well-being and lives determine the health of the next generation and can help prevent future public health challenges for families, communities, and the public health care system,"

she said.

Sen. Natalie Murdock said state legislators are pushing for the passage of several bills intended to protect Black mothers and infants, including a local bill modeled after the federal Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2021. The federal bill is being re-introduced by U.S. Rep. Alma Adams of Charlotte; U.S. Rep. Lauren Underwood of Illinois; and Sen. Cory Booker of New Jersey.

Murdock said Reps. Julie von Haefen and Zack Hawkins have introduced North Carolina's version of the Momnibus Act in the House, and she and Sen. DeAndrea Salvador will sponsor the bill in the Senate. The bill calls for funding community organizations working to improve Black maternal health; diversifying the perinatal workforce to help ensure mothers receive

maternity care and support from health care providers they can trust; improving data collection to better understand the causes of the maternal health crisis; increasing access to mental health services; improving maternal health care for incarcerated women; investing in telehealth for underserved areas; and supporting midwives and doulas.

"As a young Black woman who has witnessed far too many of my friends facing their fatal prenatal and perinatal health challenges, I campaigned to improve Black maternal health outcomes for Black women here in North Carolina. As painful as it is, we have to continue to tell our stories, to share our pain, and shed light on these near-death experiences that far too many of us have witnessed," Murdock said.

3 reasons it's time to get serious about snoring

Continued from page 1A

Let's take a deeper look at why. How did you feel when you woke up this morning? If you're a regular snorer, you may not be sleeping as well as you could.

Research has shown that snoring can affect sleep quality. For some people, the sound of their snoring may even wake them up during the night.

Much has been written about the downsides of poor sleep - you feel miserable, your brain doesn't work as well as it should, it's hard to focus, and you don't cope as well. Also, sleep-deprived people do not perform as well on the job and have a tougher time dealing with the everyday issues in relationships. Does any of this sound like you or someone you know?

That's plenty of motivation to get serious. It's been said that nothing will test a marriage like snoring and insomnia. Snoring is one of the most common spousal complaints. In a National Sleep Foundation survey, over 40% of the respondents said their partner's snoring had a big effect on their sleep.

And it's no surprise it can be just as bad for a spouse as it is for you with all the downsides and sugar on top. If both of you are sleep deprived, stressed and strung out emotionally, you've really got a problem. Those are pretty high stakes for you, your spouse, and your relationship.

It turns out snoring can be a symptom of a serious medical issue lurking beneath the surface, obstructive sleep apnea. It's a common sleep disorder in which breathing repeatedly stops during the night. It's a real sleep killer because it keeps you out of the deep restorative sleep your body needs to recover and recharge. And it's mostly undiagnosed.

In fact, there may be as many as 30 million adults in the U.S. alone living with



Snoring could be more serious than just bad noise.

obstructive sleep apnea, and most don't know it.

Obstructive sleep apnea has been linked to high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and depression. Research at Johns Hopkins University has shown that severe sleep apnea in middle or old age can up your risk of dying prematurely by up to 46%. That's pretty serious.

Keep in mind not everyone who snores has sleep apnea but many do. All the same, it's not something to take lightly.

That's pretty high stakes and even more motivation to take action. If you're wondering what to look for, the symptoms include snoring; choking, gasping, or snorting sounds; dry mouth or sore throat; difficulty staying asleep; waking up frequently to urinate; morning headaches; fatigue during the day; excessive daytime sleepiness; irritability or mood swings; and attention, memory or learning problems.

Despite so many people accepting snoring as a fact of life and quietly enduring it night after night, it doesn't have to be that way. There are plenty of practical things you can do. While some of the remedies are simple and others are more involved, they're all well worth it.

Your options include sleeping on your side; elevating your head with a wedge pillow or using an

adjustable bed; weight loss; snoring devices; and surgery.

Be sure to get a checkup with a doctor. Many other health issues and prescription drugs can sabotage your sleep. A sleep specialist will help figure out a snoring and sleep apnea treatment plan that works for you.

Lastly, don't forget about sleep hygiene, the everyday things that can affect the quality of sleep. It's important for everyone.

For better sleep hygiene, you should keep regular wake-up and sleep times; avoid naps; exercise during the day; avoid large meals, alcohol or stimulants such as caffeine before bedtime; maintain a bedtime routine to wind down; and keep your bedroom quiet, dark, and cool.

These things can work together to get you and anyone who shares the same night time space with you on the road to healthy sleep. Along the way, it's OK for you and a spouse to sleep in separate rooms as needed while you figure things out. What's important is that you're working together for the common goal of better nights and days for everyone.

Jason Wooden, a founder of BetterSleepSimplified.com, has worked for over 20 years in biomedical research and health care technology research and development.

BOOK

Right Here, Right Now
Life Stories from America's Death Row
Editor: Lynden Harris
Contributors: Henderson Hill, Timothy Tyson
Duke University Press,
\$22.95 PB

Upon receiving his execution date, one of the thousands of men living on death row in the United States had an epiphany:

"All there ever is, is this moment. You, me, all of us, right here, right now, this minute, that's love."

"Right Here, Right Now" collects the powerful, first-person stories of dozens of men on death rows across the country. From childhood experiences living with poverty, hunger and violence to mental illness and police misconduct to coming to terms with their executions, these men outline their struggle to maintain their connection to society and

sustain the humanity that incarceration and its daily insults attempt to extinguish.

By offering their hopes, dreams, aspirations, fears, failures and wounds, the men challenge us to reconsider whether our current justice system offers actual justice or simply perpetuates the social injustices that obscure our shared humanity.

"Everyone must read this book. We cannot measure our moral standing or national prestige by the glittering towers of the privileged, but by the integrity of our criminal justice system and the humanity of the institu-



tions where the incarcerated work toward the freedom of decent and productive lives. These voices lead us to the unavoidable conclusion that these men's lives were never met with justice, either within our broader society or within our criminal justice system." — the Rev. William J. Barber II, author of *The Third Reconstruction: How a Moral Movement Is Overcoming the Politics of Division and Fear*

ABOUT THE EDITOR: Harris is the founder and director of *Hidden Voices*, an arts collective that collaborates with underrepresented communities to create performances, exhibits, and media that explore difficult social issues. Hill is senior counsel at the *ACLU Capital Punishment Project*. Tyson is senior research scholar at *Duke University*.

NC prisons contribute to racial imbalance in COVID-19 impact

Continued from page 1A

Black, because prisons are disproportionately built in Black communities and because Black people live in disproportionately segregated communities, prisons put Black people behind the walls and across the state at higher risk of exposure to COVID-19.

"This is compounded, and this is why all of this inequality is being laid bare," Eason said. "COVID is just ravaging Black people because it shows the depth of the daily existence of being Black in this country, the depth of inequality that goes along with being Black in this country."

The limited data provided by DPS and the state Department of Health and Human Services shows prison policy and medical care are not making racial disparities for COVID-19 infection, serious illness or death any worse for the people who are already incarcerated. But the data is

incomplete. Not only does DHHS not differentiate between prison staff and inmates in its data, but the race is also not known for one out of every three correctional officers or incarcerated people who have tested positive for COVID-19.

The data is more complete for COVID-19-related deaths in the prison system, and it shows people are dying roughly in proportion to the racial makeup of the prison population and staff.

It is not a surprise that the medical outcomes for people in prison are similar across race, according to Taled El-Sabawi, an assistant professor at Elon University Law School who specializes in health care management in correctional facilities.

For years, studies have shown that mortality was not worse for Black people than white people in prisons, El-Sabawi said. Since the virus is indiscriminate in whom it in-

fects and prisons provide the same health care to everyone behind bars, it is not surprising that the trend is holding true in the age of COVID-19.

But the long-term effects of the disease are still unknown and could still reveal racially disparate outcomes. "We don't really know what the true mortality rate of COVID is yet from complications," El-Sabawi said.

She pointed to studies showing that people who have been incarcerated have higher rates of underlying health conditions than the rest of the population, including asthma, diabetes, heart conditions and high blood pressure.

"We're going to see increases in mortality in years to come in prisons from heart conditions, for example," El-Sabawi said. "For people who are released, that can mean, you know, lower life expectancy rates after release."

New enrollment window opens for health insurance

Continued from page 1A

shop for coverage. That won't be necessary for this new enrollment window.

People can get help from the government to buy coverage in these marketplaces, depending on their income. Those who make between 100% and 400% of the federal poverty level are eligible for assistance with premium payments in the form of tax credits. This year, the high end of that range amounts to \$106,000 for a family of four.

Shoppers first have to estimate their annual income to get this help. That can

be tricky when counting unemployment pay or income from a temporary job. Those who estimate too low — and wind up getting more help than they should — will have to pay back all or part of the assistance at tax time.

People who have lost their jobs and have no income may qualify for Medicaid before unemployment pay starts. That program bases eligibility on current income, not what's estimated for the year. Marketplace websites or health insurance navigators can help shoppers determine

whether they qualify. "Don't assume you aren't eligible. It's really worth it to look into it," Pollitz said. "Medicaid is catching a lot of people."

Shoppers can wind up with dozens of plans to choose from, each with different price tags, deductible requirements or networks of covered doctors. Help isn't always easy to find. A Kaiser Family Foundation survey last year found that half of the people who looked for coverage during the main sign-up period had some sort of trouble. That was shortly before the pandemic hit.



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This shouldn't be
how we say hello
...or goodbye.



It's our reality right now. But it won't be if we do what it takes to beat COVID-19. Vaccines are coming, but until enough of us are vaccinated, we all still need to wear our masks, stay at least six feet from others, and avoid indoor social gatherings. The more we slow the spread, the faster we'll return to normal hellos ... and fewer goodbyes.

Learn more about vaccines and slowing the spread at [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)



Brought to you by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Classified Deadline: Wednesday at 5p.m., prior to Sunday's edition

AUCTION

Online Only Auction, National Firearms Dealer Inventory Reduction Auction Session 3, Begins Closing: 2/23/21 at 2pm, Firearms Located at Ned's Pawn Shop in Rockingham, NC, ironhorseauction.com, 800.997.2248, NCAL 3936

Bankruptcy Online Only Auction, Farm Equipment including John Deere Tractor and Equipment, Rockingham, NC, Begins Closing 2/23 at 12 noon, Bankruptcy Case 19-11418, ironhorseauction.com, 800.997.2248, NCAL 3936

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LEGAL NOTICES



PURCHASING DIVISION
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ADDENDUM NO. 1

Drink and Snack Vending Services for DCo Buildings

(RFP No. 21-019)

This **ADDENDUM No. 1** forms part of Durham County's Request for Proposals (RFP No. 21-019) – **Drink and Snack Vending Services for DCo Buildings**. All other requirements of the original Scope of Services remain in effect in their respective order. Receipt of this Addendum should be acknowledged on the Addendum Acknowledgement Form included in the RFP document.

1. The due date for receiving proposals for RFP No. 21-019 has been extended to April 20, 2021 by 2:00 P.M., Eastern Time.
2. The last day for receiving questions regarding this project was April 7, 2021 by 3:00 P.M., Eastern Time.
3. All proposals for RFP No. 21-019 SHOULD BE RECEIVED BY US MAIL OR ANOTHER PACKAGE DELIVERY SERVICE due to the Durham County Stay-at-Home Order.

Should you have any questions regarding this Addendum, please contact Candy Harmon, Procurement Specialist, at 919-560-0741.

LEGAL NOTICES



ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS
IFB No. 21-026

ROOF REPLACEMENTS AT DURHAM COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER

Bids will be received by the County of Durham Purchasing Division, Durham County, 201 East Main Street, 7th Floor, Durham, North Carolina 27701, until 2:00 P.M. Eastern Time, on April 13, 2021. The work contemplated will include the removal and disposal of all existing sprayed on polyurethane foam, existing built-up roof membrane and insulation down to the metal decks and plywood decks, provide new flat and tapered polyisocyanurate insulation system with cover board and provide adhered fleece/felt backed thermoplastic single-ply membrane over all low-sloped roof areas and the removal and disposal of existing roof system including shingles, underlayment membranes, and sheet metal down to plywood decking and provide new underlayment membranes and asphalt shingle roofing system over all high-sloped roof areas.

A Pre-Bid Conference will be held on Tuesday, March 16, 2021 at 2:00 P. M. Eastern Time, at 2117 East Club Boulevard, Durham, NC 27704. All bidders who intend to bid are encouraged to attend.

Site Visit will be held immediately following the Pre-Bid Conference.

Instructions for submitting bids, specifications, a complete description of the work involved, and the apparatus, supplies, materials, and equipment for this bid, can be invited can be examined at the office of Durham County Purchasing Division, Telephone No.:(919)560-0051; REI Engineers, 9121 Anson Way, Suite 100, Raleigh, NC 27615, Telephone No.: 919-845-1450, and at the following locations:

City of Durham Equal Opportunity and Equal Assurance Office
Durham , NC 27701

NC Institute of Minority Economic Development
Durham, NC 27701

Construction Connect
Cary, NC 27518

Questions concerning administrative matters should be directed to Candy Harmon, Procurement Specialist), at (919) 560-0741.

A hard copy of the Plans, Specifications and other contract documents may be obtained by those qualified and who will make a bid, upon a deposit of **\$150.00** for each set issued to Contractors. Deposit checks shall be made payable to the "REI Engineers". Contractors may secure document sets after 8:30 A.M. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday at the office of REI Engineers, 9121 Anson Way, Suite 100, Raleigh, NC 27615, Telephone No.: 919-845-1450. The full deposit shall be returned to those Contractors who return the Specifications and Plans in good condition within ten (10) days after the date set for receiving bids. Plans and Specifications are to be returned to the office of REI Engineers, 9121 Anson Way, Suite 100, Raleigh, NC 27615. **Document can be issued electronically at no cost, if preferred.**

Contractors who bid must be licensed to do work in the State of North Carolina under the Act to Regulate the Practice of General Contracting. The Contractor's North Carolina License number shall be designated on the outside of the envelope containing the bid.

A 5% bid security is required with each bid that equals or exceeds \$300,000.00.

Bids will be evaluated and the Contract will be awarded in accordance with statutory public contract requirements as supplemented or altered by the Minority/Women Business Enterprise Utilization Ordinance of the County of Durham (MWBE).

The County reserves the right to reject any and/or all bids, waive informalities, and/or accept such bid as appears in its judgement to be in the best interest of the County.

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The Triangle TRIBUNE

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Deadline:
Wednesday @ Noon
Prior to Sunday's Edition

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Major Richard Toliver at Luke AFB in 1975.

Fighter pilot finds freedom from racism and self

By Karen L. Willoughby
BAPTIST PRESS

Southern Baptist "Top Gun" Richard Toliver found freedom in the cockpit, from which he dodged missiles and anti-aircraft fire while flying 446 combat missions in Southeast Asia during his 26-year Air Force career. He also battled racism.

Toliver's idyllic childhood was spent in multi-racial California — "paradise," as he remembers it — during the early 1940s. He dreamed of flying airplanes like those that flew overhead from nearby Oxnard Naval Training Base. That dream shattered when his family returned to his segregated birthplace in the South after wartime jobs ended. "I hated the next 10 years living in the South," Toliver told SBC Life. "I was trapped in a prison. Everywhere there were barriers of poverty, color, hopelessness, despair, and vicious name-calling."

Today, Toliver at 82 years old, has held key positions at Apollo Baptist Church, an SBC congregation in Glendale, Arizona. He also is president of the local chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen, active in the Red River Valley Fighter Pilots Association, and a nationally known motivational speaker.

In his nearly 500-page memoir, "An Uncaged Eagle: True Freedom," Toliver gives credit to the many people who encouraged him throughout his life. He writes of his courageous mother, family relatives, and a white man who was a "ray of light" in the darkness of racism.

That man provided Toliver, a Black high school graduate, with a scholarship to study at Alabama's Tuskegee Institute, now Tuskegee University. There he met and learned from the Tuskegee Airmen who broke the military's color

barrier in World War II, who "inspired, motivated, and prepared" him for an Air Force career, he said. Civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., fellow Air Force officers, and 1990s' presidential candidate Ross Perot were others who impacted Toliver's life.

More than anyone else apart from God, Toliver credits his wife Peggy's Christian life for his success. Married 58 years, she dazzled Toliver and the Air Force community with her gracious attitude, warmth, and servant's attitude while successfully parenting the family's three biological and five fostered or adopted children.

Toliver's disciplined character and Peggy's background as an educator and stalwart Christian kept their children on the right path, the retired colonel said. They were also aided by Peggy's mom, Elsie Hairston, who lived with the Tolivers for 27 years after his father-in-law died. "The most important part of my life's experience was discovering that God is in control of everything," Toliver said. "He allowed me to become all that I am today."

After years of putting God off and making "deals" he failed to keep, Toliver had what he calls a "Damasus Road" experience at high altitude in clear air. The F-15 he was piloting was struck by lightning. After safely landing the crippled jet, Toliver heard a voice that said, "How long are you going to keep up this charade? How long are you going to refuse to settle your debt with me?"

Toliver wrestled with those questions over the next few days. "Even the family dog avoided me!" he said. He found himself spiritually and mentally on trial. There was a "Prosecutor," who listed even his sins from childhood and declared him "guilty." However, an abiding "Presence" stood in Toliver's

defense, and "the hand of Jesus reached down and grasped my outstretched hands," Toliver writes of his gripping salvation experience in his book.

Toliver, the first fully qualified African American F-15 pilot and successful in hundreds of combat missions, once acquired the nickname "Black Baron." This was in deference to the acclaimed German "Red Baron" of WWI. After Toliver's conversion, others started using "Preacher" as his call sign as a recognition of the pilot's frequent scripture-based remarks and lifestyle void of previous colorful language and behavior.

Working out his salvation took much longer than his initial capitulation to Christ, Toliver said. He had to deal with the incessant anger that burned within him whenever faced with adversity, setbacks, and real or perceived racism. "I was committed to allowing the Lord to guide my path, but 'self' kept getting in the way," he said.

Through Bible study and prayer, Toliver eventually came to realize that achieving success in the Air Force had become an idol for him. Ultimately, it was in the person-by-person forgiving of people who had wronged him that Toliver first glimpsed true freedom.

He had to forgive his father for leaving his mother with six children to struggle for themselves in the Deep South. Next it was his brother-in-law for his mistreatment of Toliver's sister. "Only then did the healing begin for past hurts caused by racial prejudice, slights, disappointments, and other emotional barriers," Toliver wrote. "I finally found my freedom. The cage of despair had to be opened from the inside, and the path to freedom was through the door of forgiveness."

Pandemic division causing pastors to leave ministry

By Diana Chandler
BAPTIST PRESS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Brian Croft jokes that masks are the new "color of the carpet argument" in churches, with similarly poor outcomes. Pastors are resigning from the stress "kind of in a way I've never really seen."

The founder of Practical Shepherding transitioned from full-time pastoring to lead the shepherding outreach in January, pulled by a need for coaching and counseling that has steadily increased among pastors over the past decade. Then came COVID-19.

"I know of pastors who are quitting just over the stress of this issue and what it's causing in their churches, and I know churches splitting over whether you should wear a mask or not," Croft said. "COVID has impacted every pastor to some degree. Usually it has brought more challenges and more difficulty."

Pastors are pulled by con-

flicting views among congregants over whether to mask or not to mask, whether to meet in person or virtually, or whether social distancing is even necessary. A divisive political year has compounded the issues, Croft said.

"Once masks and no masks got politicized, and once masks and no masks became about what's right and what's wrong, instead of about what is an individual's conscience on the matter, then that's where these unnecessary divisions started setting in, in a really unhealthy way," Croft said. "That's pretty much what's happening all over the place. ... And this is global, too. I work with pastors all over the world."

Though Croft is not a statistician and does not have hard numbers, he counsels and coaches hundreds of pastors through Practical Shepherding. He is also an adjunct professor and senior fellow for the Mathena Center for Church Revitalization at Southern Baptist Theological Semi-

nary. Lifeway Research, describing pastors as resilient, said about 250 pastors are known to leave the ministry each month, as opposed to a "prevailing myth" that the number is 1,500 to 1,700.

Croft is eager to see what statistics will indicate once the pandemic ceases.

"There are pastors in Africa, there are pastors in Scotland and England, there are pastors in Brazil. I mean there are pastors everywhere who are having to wade through these waters of just disagreement around should the church gather or not," Croft said, "because it's not just an opinion about your mask or no mask, it's politicized; it's wrapped up in fear for a lot of people or frustration over the people who are in fear. So people are not really wired and prone to just love one another where they are."

"These divisions have just kind of imploded some churches."

AROUND THE TRIANGLE

RALEIGH BLACK HISTORY
Raleigh Parks will host a scavenger hunt for all ages Feb. 20-21 virtually. The link will go live at 9 a.m. Visit raleighnc.gov.

ALZHEIMER'S
The final seminar of the Alzheimer's Association NC Chapter is "Navigating a Dementia Diagnosis: Live Well," Feb. 24, noon to 1:15 p.m. Visit www.alz.org.

BABIES
A virtual kickoff meeting for Best Babies Zone is Feb. 24, 2-4 p.m. Contact Dauline.singletary@wakegov.com.

DEMOCRATS
Wake County Democratic Party will hold its next virtual meeting Feb. 24, 7 p.m. Register on www.meetup.com.

GARDEN
Juniper Level Botanic Garden on NC State's campus will open Feb. 26-28.

READING
Friends of Oberlin Village is hosting a Reading with Ruth virtual event Feb. 28, 3 p.m. Email friendsofberlin@gmail.com.

DURHAM FUNDRAISER
Together We Stand NC commemorates the murder of runner Ahmaud Arbery with MAUD 2.23, a virtual 2.23 mile run and strength training session on Feb. 23. Visit www.strongerandfasterdurham.com to participate.

CEMETERY
The next tour of the historic African American Geer Cemetery is Feb. 27 at 10 and 11:30 a.m., and 1 and 2:30 p.m. Visit durhaminplainsight.com.

BOOK DRIVE
A Coffee and Culture multicultural book drive is Feb. 27, 9 a.m. to noon, Pearisontown Elementary, 4915 Barbee Rd.

CHAPEL HILL STORYTELLING
UNC Process Series presents Storytelling Festival: Remembrance and Renewal streaming live Feb. 17-21. Visit www.process-series.unc.edu.

PUPPETS
Tarish Pipkins, aka Jeghetto, will showcase his skills Feb. 28, 2:30-3:30 p.m. via Zoom. Register at CarrboroRec.org.

CONTEST
Chapel Hill-Carrboro chapter of Delta Sigma Theta is sponsoring a Youth Oratorical Contest May 23, 3 p.m. Application deadline is Feb. 28. Email education@chcaa-dst.org.

MISC. CODING
Reskills Americans is offering tuition-free coding classes for Black and Latinx U.S. citizens. Visit Reskill-Americans.org. Deadline: March 7

BUSINESS BRIEFS

RALEIGH CHAMBER
* Feb. 25, 9-10:30 a.m. — Young, Gifted & Black: Recruiting & Retaining Exceptional Talent. Register at raleighchamber.org.

EXPO
Triangle Virtual IT Career Expo is Feb. 25, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Visit trianglecareer-expo.com.

WOMEN HOF
Nominations are open for 2021 NC Women Business Owners Hall of Fame. Visit ncwbhalloffame.org/nominations/. Deadline: Feb. 26.

OPENING
* Tammie Harris Real Estate will host a floating grand opening/open house Feb. 26, 4-7 p.m., at 4002 Barrett Drive, Suite 201. RSVP at (919) 418-1376.

Send business briefs to info@triangletribune.com.

Triangle Tribune Business Spotlight

WEBINAR SERIES

Sleep Your Way To A Better Life

Your snoring may be a sign of something more serious. The life-changing and deadly consequences of untreated sleep apnea.

Speaker:
DR. JASON WOODEN

Thursday, February 25, 2021
7P - 7:30P
FREE to Attend

[REGISTER](#) 919.688.9086

Better Sleep Simplified
Better sleep every night

Hosted by
The Triangle Tribune

The Durham County Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Board will begin accepting applications on March 1, 2021 for its FY 2021 grant program. All 501 (c)(3) community based non-profit agencies and educational institutions with programs that address alcohol abuse education and prevention within Durham County are eligible to apply. The Durham County Criminal Justice Resource Center (Drug Treatment Court) is also eligible to apply.

Applications must be submitted online using our ZoomGrants application process no later than midnight on April 30, 2021. All applications will be assessed to determine which applicants best meet the eligibility and performance criteria outlined in the Durham County ABC grant program guidelines. Grant funding decisions will be determined by the Durham County ABC Board. Grant recipients will be notified by June 15, 2021 of their selection.

To submit an application this year, applicants will need to create a ZoomGrants account or use an existing account, if applicable. Information about the ZoomGrants application process and the grant program guidelines can be found at <https://durhamabc.com/grant-program/>.

Interested organizations are strongly encouraged to attend the **Information Meeting** which will be held virtually via Zoom Meetings on Tuesday, March 2, 2021 at 11:00 am. Please visit our website at <https://durhamabc.com/grant-program/> to RSVP and to access the virtual meeting information.

For questions, please email grants@durhamabc.com.

Virtual CIAA Tourney Week is better than nothing

The third week in February is normally a nerve-wracking and hectic time around here.

First, it's the week before the CIAA Tournament and all of the hoopla that comes with it, like what to pack, checking on hotel reservation, making sure I don't leave any important papers, etc.

Then there's the annual report card of all 24 teams plus individual and team postseason awards.



BONITTA BEST

While folks fill their calendar with day parties, night parties, private parties - you name it - those of us actually working the tournament are preparing for the long days and nights ahead of nonstop games and deadlines.

And last, but certainly not least, food. The most important agenda during tourney week was to grab the free food coupons before they all get gone, 'cause let me tell you straight up: nothing puts a journalist in a bad mood than having to pay for food while working.

The one question that kept making the rounds at last year's tourney in Charlotte was, "Are you going to Baltimore?" And, for the most part, the jury was still out.

I lived in Baltimore for almost 20 years and still have friends there. But it's easy to get spoiled, and a 2-1/2 hour drive to Charlotte is a piece of cake compared to seven or eight to Baltimore.

Not to mention you have to time your trip so as not to get caught up in that dreaded DMV traffic, or else the tournament might be over before you make it through. Then, after working like a slave for six straight days and nights, it's time to make that long return trip home.

But the decision of whether to stay or go was taken out of our hands with COVID-19.

Instead, student-athletes, media and fans will be introduced to CIAA Virtual Vibe, a week of virtual tournament events with Baltimore as the host beginning on Feb. 23. Here are a few:

* High School Education Day will allow high school students to meet virtually with HBCU recruiters. Feb. 23 is for students from Baltimore City and the surrounding counties, while the next day is reserved for out-of-state students. Thousands of high-schoolers attended high school day in Charlotte.

* For the bigger kids, there's a career expo on Feb. 25. Current students and graduates can interview with potential recruiters. I hope these are actual job opportunities and not just folks showing up for a PR photo shoot. But don't mind me, I'm cynical.

* Women's Empowerment Brunch will kick off Friday's activities. Following the brunch will be the John B. McLendon Hall of Fame ceremony, which will air on the CIAA Sports Network. This year's induction class is particularly special since it's my first as a member of the nominating committee. I'm thrilled to see St. Paul's College alumnus Greg Toler finally get his due. It's easy to be put in the Forgotten folder after your school closes its doors.

* Other mentionables are a panel discussion on COVID with former White House reporter April Clark; a financial planning seminar hosted by media legend Cathy Hughes; and the traditional concerts, step shows, and cheerleading competitions.

All events are free, but registration is required since only so many people can be online at one time. Visit ciaa-tournament.org. And let's hope that alumni have sent the monies they would have spent on hotel, clothing, transportation and partying to their alma maters instead.

Sports

Millbrook JV boys streak snapped



MILLBROOK HIGH

Millbrook junior varsity boys basketball team went undefeated during the 2019-20 season. The Wildcats continued the streak through their first eight games of 2021 before losing to rival Southeast Raleigh, 66-65, in overtime. Millbrook (12-1) regrouped and has won its last four games by an average margin of 30 points.

COLLEGE CORNER



COURTESY

North Carolina Central volleyball is off to fast start.



Lane College baseball is ranked No. 1.

Spring sports already?

It's too cold for spring sports, and CC still doesn't understand why they call it spring sports when it's winter time.

Anyway, the Eagles will participate in the Campbell Softball Invitational this weekend. NCCU will play Mount St. Mary's, Kentucky (twice) and Campbell. The team's home games will be at Thomas Brooks Park in Cary.

In volleyball, the ladies are off to a 2-0 start after defeating South Carolina State twice. (Remember, volleyball was delayed from the fall semester.)

NCCU has four straight home matches coming up: A&T Feb. 18-19 at 6 p.m., and Norfolk State Feb. 25-26. You can watch the Aggies matches on video.

In baseball, NCCU begins its final season this weekend against Army at Durham Athletic Park on Foster Street.

Another one bites the dust Morehouse College has canceled its winter and spring sports seasons. The SIAC delayed the start of the seasons until March 1.

"This was not an easy decision to make, but after carefully considering all of the available information provided by public health officials, we feel this is the right decision for the well-being of our student-athletes and staff," athletic director Curtis Campbell said. All scholarships will be honored for next season.

Ready for their close-up Commissioner Charles McClelland said at the SWAC Media Day that the conference planned to push for more exposure on the ESPN family of networks.

They got their wish. A record 16 games will either be broadcast or streamed beginning Feb. 21 at 2 p.m. with Edward Waters at Jackson State on ESPN3.

"It was our commitment to deliver to our fans as many opportunities as possible for them to watch our games via ESPN's wide variety of linear and digital platforms," McClelland said. "This schedule is obviously a significant measure towards assisting us with achieving that objective. We

Please see **SPRING/7A**

HBCU BASKETBALL



IN LOVING MEMORY
Clara Gaines



Jason Crafton

In memory of Clara Gaines

By Bonitta Best
editor@triangletribune.com

In case you missed it last week, Clara Gaines, wife of the late, great Winston-Salem State basketball coach Clarence "Big House" Gaines, passed away at the age of 95. The Gaineses were married for 55 years. Coach Gaines died in 2005.

Flashback CIAA

Since the CIAA Basketball Tournament is kaput this season, Aspire TV is rebroadcasting regular season and tourney games from 2019-20.

On Feb. 26:

* 10 a.m. - Bowie State vs. Lincoln men

* 12 p.m. - Fayetteville State vs. Virginia Union women's championship

* 2 p.m. - Virginia State vs. Shaw men's tourney final

* 4 p.m. - Elizabeth City State vs. Virginia State men's regular season

On Feb. 27:

* 12 p.m. - 2020 women's tourney final

* 2 p.m. - 2020 men's championship

Countdown on

North Carolina Central women (3-6) were swept by rival North Carolina A&T, 87-57 and 72-62, last weekend. The two meet up again Feb. 27-28 in Greensboro. The Lady Eagles travel to Georgia Southern this weekend.

On the men's side, the Eagles are on the outside looking in - again! Their two-game matchup at South Carolina State this weekend has been postponed.

A&T is scheduled to come to Durham Feb. 24 at 5 p.m., which will be broadcast on ESPN3. NCCU turns around and heads to Greensboro next Saturday for an 8 p.m. contest that will also be on the U.

Side hustle

Maryland Eastern Shore men's basketball coach Jason Crafton will join the Delaware Blue Coats broadcast team for the 2021 season. The Coats play in the NBA G League as an affiliate of the Philadelphia 76ers.

"I am truly honored to team up with my Blue Coats family and assist with this season's game-day broadcast," he said. "This year's team has a strong roster and I expect the league to be extremely competitive, so I look forward to adding my perspective to the show while having some fun with the crew."

The games will air on NBA TV, ESPN+ and Twitch.

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Spring sports season kicks off in February

Continued from page 6A
look forward to the increased national exposure this slate of games provides our membership as well as our league as a whole."

Southern at Alabama
State will be streamed on ESPN3 Feb. 26 at 7 p.m., followed by Mississippi Valley State at Jackson State Feb. 27 at 3 p.m.

Eagles in the news
After winning a Super Bowl championship in his rookie season, North Carolina Central alumnus Nick Leverett had his contract with Tampa Bay renewed for a second season.
And speaking of Eagles football, former head

coach Jerry Mack is now a Tennessee Vol. Mack was hired as the running backs coach after three seasons with Rice University, the institution he left NCCU for.

Lane baseball No. 1
Lane College baseball is ranked No. 1 in Black College Nines' preseason poll. Coach Patrick Barbour was named its 2020 national coach of the year in the shortened season.

"We feel very blessed and fortunate to be able to play ball this season," Barbour said. "After last season was cut short, and we lost Courtney (Joyner), the guys just want to get back on the field and play together

for one more run." Joyner was killed in a motorcycle accident last May.

"This season is dedicated to our brother Courtney," senior Treviz Brown said. "We hope to give the same tenacity to the game as Courtney brought, and play as one and through him."

BCN Small School Division Poll

1. Lane
2. Kentucky State
3. Virginia State
4. Jarvis Christian
5. Benedict
6. Bluefield State
7. Miles College
8. Savannah State
9. Florida Memorial
10. Edward Waters



Paeckart and Mbaye return to North Carolina FC

CARY — International players Pecka and Malick Mbaye have signed contracts and will return to North Carolina FC for the 2021 season pending league and federation approval. The two players join Nazmi Albadawi and Josh Coan as NCFC builds out the '21 roster following the move to USL League One.

Brazilian midfielder Wellington "Pecka" Paeckart stood out as a leader as he commanded the midfield for NCFC last season. He played in 14 of the 15 games during the season and started 13 of those matches. Pecka led the

team in assists, passing accuracy, and long pass success rate.

"I'm thrilled that Pecka will be returning to North Carolina FC for 2021," said head coach John Bradford. "He is a true professional who brings a wealth of experience to the club, as well as a tremendously competitive mindset. He will be a key player in our system, as well as a great leader to our younger players."

Mbaye enters his second season as a professional following a rookie season where he made his first appearance with NCFC against the Charlotte Independence. Before coming to NCFC, Mbaye was se-

lected in the second round of the 2020 MLS SuperDraft with the No. 33 pick by Toronto FC. The Dakar, Senegal, native had a stellar collegiate career at Clemson University, where he was named the 2019 ACC defensive player of the year.

"It's great to bring back a talented, young player like Malick," said Bradford. "As a young man who's still very early in his professional career, Malick has a drive and desire to develop that will be great to have in our group. He will play a massive role in our backline and establishing how we want to compete on both sides of the ball."



Michael Jordan gives \$10M for NC health clinics

WILMINGTON — Basketball legend Michael Jordan is donating \$10 million to launch two medical clinics in underserved communities near his hometown in North Carolina, a regional health care system announced Monday.

The Novant Health clinics are set to open in early 2022 in New Hanover County along North Carolina's southeastern coast, according to a statement from the system. The gift marks one of the largest ever from the Basketball Hall of Fame athlete, news outlets reported.
Jordan previously gave

\$7 million to open Michael Jordan Family Clinics in Charlotte in 2019 and 2020. Those clinics have since seen more than 4,500 patients and have administered nearly 1,000 COVID-19 vaccines, Novant Health said.

"I am very proud to once again partner with Novant Health to expand the Family Clinic model to bring better access to critical medical services in my hometown," Jordan said in a statement. "Everyone should have access to quality health care, no matter where they live, or whether or not they have insurance."

Novant said the new clinics would bring services to "more rural and rural-adjacent communities" and to those who are uninsured or underinsured.

Jordan grew up in Wilmington before going on to play at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He later played 15 seasons in the NBA, winning six championships with the Chicago Bulls. "Wilmington holds a special place in my heart, and it's truly gratifying to be able to give back to the community that supported me throughout my life," he said.

BLACK HISTORY FALCON FACTS

Legendary Coach Russell Blunt

By Anthony Jeffries
SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

RALEIGH — The second Falcon Facts profile for Black History Month is Russell Blunt, the legendary high school track & field coach. Before Blunt made a name for himself at Hillside High School, he was a student, coach, and athletic director at then Saint Augustine's College.

Blunt graduated from St. Aug's in 1936 and was named director of athletics and head of the physical education department in 1946. He was head coach of the football, basketball, track & field, and boxing teams at his alma mater.

He spent most of his high school coaching career at Hillside High after arriving in 1955. In 1973, Blunt retired from teaching and became an assistant track coach at Southern High. After spending seven years at Southern, Blunt returned to Hillside in 1980 and retired in 1998.

Under his direction, the Hornets emerged as one of the top high school track & field programs in the country. They won 17 state track titles and were victorious in 118 of 120 dual meets during one stretch. His teams won several state championships in his 80s.

At the age of 89, Blunt became the oldest coach in the country to win a state championship when the Hornets captured the 1997



boys indoor state title. The illustrious coach is in numerous Hall of Fames, including the National High School Athletics Hall of Fame, the North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame, the Saint Augustine's University Hall of Fame, and the N.C. High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame.
Blunt passed away in 2004 at the age of 95.

"A humble guy. He was going to treat everybody the same way, but he was a disciplinarian, too. He

didn't take no crap from nobody. If you stick out what he asked you to do, you knew you would get better. There would be a reward. He had talent but most of it was training. He could take an average guy and make him successful. He said, 'you don't need a lot of talent, just put people in the right places.'" — Lewis Owens, former Hillside track assistant coach under Blunt who became the program's head coach after Blunt retired.



the charlotte post
FOUNDATION

POST BEST BANQUET

April 17, 2021

Virtual but Vital Event 6-7:30 PM
(Available to livestream from anywhere)
Rescheduled from the October 17th due to COVID-19

2020 HONOREES

 Luminary Bishop Clause Alexander The Park	 Educator Dr. Curtis Carroll Vance High School, Retired	 Top High School Senior Raven Funderburke Olympic High School	 Top High School Senior Emory Brinson South Mecklenburg High School
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Contact info
Gerald Johnson • 704-376-0497
president@thepostfoundation.org



<http://tcpfdn.org/2020PBEE>

Affordable senior apts. in north Raleigh



DHIC is working with The Presbyterian Homes to undertake major renovations of Capital Towers Apartments on Six Forks Road in north Raleigh. Capital Towers is a two-building, 297-unit, senior apartment community. DHIC closed on financing in June 2019 and Clancy & Theys began renovations shortly after. The financing partners include the City of Raleigh, N.C. Housing Finance Agency, Wells Fargo Bank, Enterprise Housing Credit Investments, Fannie Mae, and PGIM Real Estate Finance.

The renovations of both buildings will provide all the major life safety, building systems efficiency, and aesthetic upgrades the property requires. New amenities include two fitness centers and community areas, as well as a new game room and community kitchen. Free Wi-Fi for the tenants' use will be added in the amenity areas. All of the apartments will be affordable to seniors earning 60% or less of the area median income. At least 60% of the units in Capital Towers 1 will be targeted to seniors earning 50% of the area median income. Visit www.dhic.org/CapitalTowers, or call (919) 787-1231.



Is COVID changing your college plans?

How students can rethink their dream job

STAFF REPORTS
The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the uncertainty and worry college students annually feel about focusing on the right career and finding their dream job. The job market for young people is down, many schools have switched to remote learning, and many school resources aren't available. As a result, some students are concerned that their majors won't lead to a job in their field, and they're wondering whether they should change majors or their definition of a dream job. But on the bright side, a changing world gives college students the opportunity to fully explore exciting new options, their potential, and end up on a path better than they previously planned, says Vince Thompson, founder and CEO of the marketing agency MELT and author of "Building Brand You: How to Use Your College Experience to Find and Win Your First Job." "Sometimes the path we planned takes a turn, but rather than leading to a dead end, it opens a whole new world to us," Thompson says. "While this is a challenging time, it is also an exciting time if young people approach it the right way. "The best opportunities

can come out of times rife with great change, disruption, and uncertainty. Take the time to consider all options that interest you. With a will, there's always a way to get there." Thompson offers college students these steps to take when rethinking their dream job:
* **Switch your major.** "Students who want to change their career path should look at the curriculum of those majors they have interest in and decide whether it has what they're looking for," Thompson says. "Meet with an academic advisor before making any changes, and if necessary, reach out to the financial aid office to see how a change in major could affect your aid."
* **Launch a startup while in college.** A global crisis has made some college students and recent grads realize that perhaps the best path to job stability and career fulfillment is starting their own business. "Sometimes the best fit with your passion is starting your own business, even if it's on a shoestring and part-time," Thompson says. "You could take entrepreneurship classes to augment your business, gaining classroom education and making connections at the same time."
* **Do your homework.** "It may be one of the toughest job markets in decades,

but you can find opportunities faster than ever before because of the internet," Thompson says. "If you're thinking of changing career paths, Google everything you can on that career. Then go after it like someone has assigned you to write a thesis on this new career. And it's also a big help to look up people in that field on LinkedIn."
* **Stay motivated, show flexibility.** Your dream job might be out of reach right now, but Thompson says it's vital to shift from the disappointment and discouragement you feel to focus on the opportunities available for working - especially remote working.
* **Develop new skills.** "Developing a diverse skill set can expand your appeal to a larger number of employers," Thompson says. "Nowadays, you've got lots of opportunities to learn online at your own pace, either taking individual courses or enrolling in certificate programs for different trades." "The most important thing to remember is that your career is your own. It will be a big part of your life, and, ideally, it will embody your passion, your best skills, and define your professional success. The path you take isn't as important as it is to keep moving down the road toward your preferred destination."

Follow us on social media for a chance to win free prizes!

HBCU NEWS

N.C. CENTRAL
The NCCU Career and Professional Development Center has received a \$100,000 grant from the State Employee's Credit Union Foundation to provide paid internships for 20 students.

This is the second year the SECU Public Fellow Internship Program has offered undergraduate students from various academic areas the chance to learn about and engage with rural communities in North Carolina through 10-week internships. The fellowships are available to rising sophomores and juniors from North Carolina public universities and colleges.

In 2020, six NCCU social work students strengthened their skills by providing services as SECU interns for residents in Granville, Harnett, Pamlico and Wilson counties. The fellows worked alongside master's-level social work students and other human service professionals in an integrated health care model assisting clients served by mental health agencies and social health agencies.

Recent graduate Alyssa McRae is now pursuing a master's in social work after completing her internship with the Harnett County Department of Social Services. "Participating in the SECU Public Fellow Internship Program was an amazing opportunity that allowed me to advance my knowledge of my future profession," said McRae.

The SECU Public Fellows Internship program replaces the former SECU Public Service Intern program, which ended in 2014. The program is designed to connect interested and talented undergraduate students with local leaders for meaningful on-the-job experience with community agencies or organizations, while allowing them to give back to their communities. Seven University of North Carolina campuses, including NCCU, participate in the program.

* Renowned trumpeter and music adjunct profes-



Alyssa McRae



Al Strong

sor Al Strong will release a special rendition of the classical hymn "Lift Every Voice and Sing" in honor of Black History Month. "LEVAS" is Strong's heartfelt arrangement of the iconic song known as the Black National Anthem. The 8-minute performance is a tribute to the African American experience and the preservation of its culture.

"LEVAS is my humble offering as an artist to the African American community that showcases our strength and resiliency as a people, and pays homage to the ancestors and those before us who first estab-

lished the standards for what we call Black Excellence," said Strong.

Strong is credited with co-founding The Art of Cool Project later known as The Art of Cool Festival, a Durham-based music festival that attracts thousands of music lovers to downtown Durham.

He was also instrumental in developing Art of Cool youth jazz education summer camp. The Washington, D.C., native earned a bachelor's degree in jazz studies from NCCU and a master's degree in jazz performance and pedagogy from Northern Illinois University.

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When faced with times like these, anxiety about the future can easily take hold. It's why WUNC is committed to providing fact-based news that helps keep you informed and eases fear of the unknown. For North Carolinians who seek to make sense of their current world, WUNC is the trusted source they can always rely on.



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