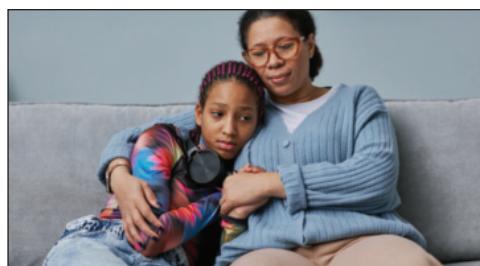




SPORTS

Ebony Racquet Club members enjoy milestones



COMMUNITY FOCUS

NCCU School of Education launches new doctoral program

The Triangle Tribune

THE TRIANGLE'S CHOICE FOR THE BLACK VOICE SINCE 1998

"Serving Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill"

VOLUME 27 NO. 29

Week of July 13 - 19, 2025

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Residents, businesses respond to Chantal's damage

By Alex Bass

alex.bass@triangletribune.com

DURHAM — Durham Mayor Leo Williams saw and heard just what he needed to in the Rippling Stream Road area of the Old Farm neighborhood after Tropical Storm Chantal. "That just gave me so much hope - to see people smiling in a crisis situation," Williams said, recalling words he heard from residents. "We're all right. We're going to be alright."

Chantal induced parts of the Eno River to surpass a level last seen during Hur-

ricane Fran in 1996. "This time, it got out of its banks," said David Swain, Durham's deputy fire chief of emergency operations. "It was moving pretty fast, like the rapids of a river."

Williams noted the active presence of the Durham Fire Department and the American Red Cross, and asked what he could do. "Can you ask everyone to call 1-800-RED CROSS (733-2767)," Williams was told.

An integrated network of municipal, civic and church groups activated collaborative activities. Emmanuel AME Church opened as a

Red Cross shelter Monday. "We're helping people with their emergency supplies, giving them a place to sleep and helping them figure out next steps," said Kelly Flynn, the Red Cross' regional director of communications. "We will continue to keep it open as the community needs it."

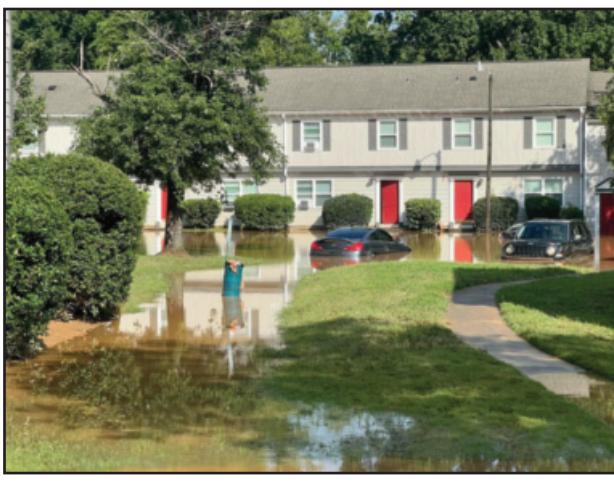
Durham Public Schools Athletics Director David Hackney said he has not been notified of any athletics facilities issues. Beyond Durham, six other counties, Flynn said - Alamance, Chatham, Lee, Moore, Orange and Person -

have homes that were evacuated. More than 60 Chapel Hill residents had to leave their homes Sunday and were transported to a safe shelter.

Public art was decimated at the Eno Arts Mill, now closed "indefinitely," per its Facebook page. That same July 7 Facebook post continued: "It's truly beyond words, and it feels strange to be juggling such gratitude with sorrow."

Chapel Hill resident Salima Smith did just that while contemplating the presence of 3 feet of water

Please see CHANTAL/2A



DURHAM FIRE DEPARTMENT

Flooding at a Durham apartment complex.



Nikita Harris, left, is with Clarissa Ceglio, of the University of Connecticut.

Black debutantes continue legacy of resistance, civil rights fight

By Freda Freeman
CORRESPONDENT

University of Alabama Professor Nikita Harris is on a mission to share the history of Black debutantes and cotillions - not as pageantry but as protest. Harris said the Black debutante tradition is a powerful statement about Black pride and resilience.

"Across the U.S., Black families created their own debutante traditions after being excluded from white institutions. In

places like Durham and Charlotte, these cotillions became sacred rituals of pride, education and refinement. They were acts of cultural resistance designed to uplift Black girls, honor Black families and sustain community values across generations," she said.

A debutante program, also known as a cotillion, is a coming-of-age program for girls, ages 16 to 18, as they enter adulthood. There are also programs for college-age women,

usually 18 to 23, and programs for young Black men, called beauillions. Members participate in community service and attend workshops, such as money management and financial literacy, entrepreneurship, etiquette and social graces. The program culminates with a ball or dance where young women or men are presented to society.

According to newspaper records, African American deb-

Please see DEBUTANTES/2A



COURTESY

Tim Scott

Trump's bill fuels inequality in Black communities

By Stacy M. Brown
BLACK PRESS USA

The legislation President Donald Trump signed into law on July 4 —celebrated by Republican Senator Tim Scott as a milestone of "fiscal responsibility" and "opportunity" — is, in fact, a sprawling blueprint for further concentrating wealth, destabilizing public schools and stripping resources from Black communities.

While Scott touted the bill as a transformative achievement for American families, independent analyses paint a different picture. The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget projects the law will add trillions to the deficit over the next decade, driven by permanent corporate tax cuts and expanded defense spending. That debt load will almost certainly trigger future demands to slash Medicaid, SNAP and housing assistance programs essential to millions of Black families.

Scott, who is Black, repeatedly claimed that the law delivers tax relief to working people; however, the Tax Policy Center estimates that the wealthiest 1% of households will collect the majority of tax benefits, averaging more than \$60,000 per year.

By contrast, the average middle-income household, where most Black families fall, will see only temporary, modest reductions, many of which expire in five years. Among the most dangerous provisions is the permanent expansion of the Opportunity Zone program, which Scott called "maximizing community impact."

Multiple studies, including those by the Government Accountability Office and the Brookings Institution, have found that Opportunity Zones have largely failed to reduce poverty or lift incomes for residents. Instead, they have accelerated gentrification, pushing longtime Black families and small businesses out of their neighborhoods as investors rush in to extract profit.

The law's new permanent school choice tax credit has been framed as a lifeline for low-income children, but the reality is that it primarily benefits those who are already able to afford private school tuition. Public education researchers have warned that this diversion of

Please see BILL/2A

Officials launch mobile service center for the formerly incarcerated

By Ahmed Jallow
NC NEWSLINE

North Carolina first lady Anna Stein joined social justice advocate Kerwin Pittman last week to unveil the state's second mobile Recidivism Reduction Center, expanding an effort to support people leaving prison as they transition back into society.

The center is run by Recidivism Reduction Educational Program Services, the nonprofit Pittman founded after his own experience with incarceration. In

just 70 days, the group's first mobile center has served more than 3,000 people in three cities — a pace Pittman said reflects both the urgency of the need and the effectiveness of the model.

"Too many people have fallen through the cracks and aren't given a second chance," Pittman told attendees. "We're here to change that."

The mobile centers — housed in customized RVs — provide case management and a suite of

wraparound services, including job placement, housing assistance, mental health support and help obtaining important documents like identification. The goal is to reduce recidivism by meeting people's basic needs in the critical days and weeks after they leave prison.

About 95% of people in North Carolina prisons will eventually be released, and studies show the first 72 hours are particularly high-risk, with many strug-

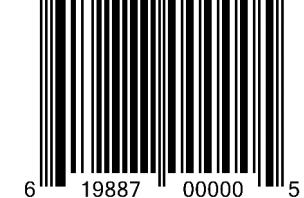
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Durham residents respond to Chantal's damage

Continued from page 1A

and also helping artist Denise Page retrieve what she could.

"Sadly, about 95% to 98% of her art supplies were lost," Smith said. "She has worked really hard to establish herself as an artist and secure her studio space, and it all got washed out in one night. I know that she'll be OK, though. We are a praying people,

and we know that God is in charge."

Back in Durham, Swain said the fire department has resumed somewhat normal operations, with responses in affected areas being for 9-1-1 calls. The department has done post-response analysis and discovered opportunities to enhance early tracking of storms moving from places like Alamance County.

Swain added that Chantal response collaborations among city entities were among the best he has seen in three decades.

"Everything seemed to be very seamless. Everybody knew what their roles were and what they could do to help," he said. "Everybody stuck to those roles and pitched in. Everybody worked to get to those common goals."



Reentry advocate Kerwin Pittman, holding pair of ceremonial scissors, is joined by colleagues and supporters at a ceremony celebrating the launch of North Carolina's second Mobile Recidivism Reduction Center in Raleigh.

Officials launch mobile service for ex-prisoners

Continued from page 1A

Stein, a member of the state's Joint Reentry Council, praised the initiative for addressing those challenges head-on.

"Communities benefit when all residents can achieve their goals," she said. "This work helps build safer, stronger communities by giving people the support they need to succeed."

North Carolina is among a half-dozen states partici-

pating in Reentry 2030, a national initiative aimed at improving reentry outcomes by the end of the decade. The state's Joint Reentry Council — made up of government agencies, nonprofit groups and directly impacted individuals — has identified reducing barriers to housing, employment and health care as key priorities.

RREPS opened its first mobile center in January. The vehicles are equipped with computers, private meeting space and intake systems to connect clients

with services. The organization's goal is to deploy mobile units across the state to serve people in both urban and rural areas who might otherwise lack access to reentry support.

Pittman said the centers are also designed to break down barriers between service providers and ensure formerly incarcerated people aren't left navigating a complex system alone.

"Our mission is simple," he said. "Nobody should be defined by their worst mistake."

The new tax law fuels inequality and displaces Black communities

Continued from page 1A

public funding will deepen educational disparities that trap Black students in under-resourced schools while wealthier families receive tax subsidies.

The repeal of Section 899, a tax provision that imposed penalties on certain foreign-owned corporations, was labeled by Scott as a job creator. Yet tax policy experts agree there is no evidence this giveaway will generate employment. What is certain is that multinational corporations will pocket billions in tax savings, while Black workers are left to hope for trickle-down benefits that rarely materialize.

Even as lawmakers made corporate tax cuts permanent, they allowed the expanded Child Tax Credit — responsible for record reductions in Black child poverty in recent years — to remain expired. In its place, the law provides structural tax advantages to investors and business owners, making it more difficult for Black families to build wealth or afford rising housing costs. The result is a sweeping law that strengthens systemic inequities under the banner of prosperity.

House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries put it bluntly: "The One Big Ugly Bill hurts everyday Americans and rewards billionaires. It's the largest attack on health care in American history. More than 17 million people will lose their health care as a result... folks are going to die across the United States of America."

BUSINESS BRIEFS

NETWORKING

Give It To The People is hosting a "Be In The Ecosystem" networking event July 16, 5:30 to 8 p.m., The Durham Hotel, 315 E. Chapel Hill St. Register at www.giveittothepoole.com.

CHAMBER

Greater Durham Black Chamber and Black Chamber Raleigh will host Third Thursdays Connect July 17, 4-6 p.m., at Massage Luxe, 7436 Creedmoor Road. RSVP at www.gdbcc.org.

MARKET

Raleigh Twilight Market is July 19, 5:30 to 9:30 p.m., 421 N. Harrington St.

NETWORKING

Durham Business & Professional Chain's Big Business Building Breakfast is July 24, 9 to 11 a.m., Nzingas Kitchen, 826 Fayetteville St., Suite 100. Tickets: www.eventbrite.com.

OPENINGS

* The Novus-Durham is now open for pre-leasing.

as it sets a record for the city's tallest rental tower at 27 stories. Learn more at www.thenovusapartments.com.

* Onelife Fitness is opening a second location in North Carolina called OneLife Fitness Durham-Chapel Hill at 3420 SW Durham Drive, home of the former Big Lots store. Visit [onelifefitness.com](http://www.onelifefitness.com).

Send business briefs to info@triangletribune.com.

Black debutantes continue legacy of resistance

Continued from page 1A

Black Debutante Project, which grew out of her research from a fellowship she received from the University of Alabama to study Black debutante programs and cotillions.

Although these programs date back more than a hundred years, much of their history has not been preserved. Harris is working to change this by archiving personal narratives and collecting artifacts, and she encourages other social and civic organizations, like Jack and Jill of America Inc. and sororities, to do the same. She also hopes to expand to include a traveling exhibit.

As part of the project, Harris created a national archive through the Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History in Atlanta, and an exhibit — "African American Cotillions History, Culture, and Tradition" — featuring artifacts donated by cotillion programs throughout the country. The artifacts, collected from the 1920s to 2025, include ball gowns and dresses, photos, program booklets, memorabilia and video oral histories.

"First of all, they were established and grew out of a response to racial segregation and exclusion from white spaces. During the Jim Crow era, Black communities were calling for more equal rights. They wanted to be able to exercise and participate in many of these opportunities that dominate culture had access to in terms of power," Harris said.

"The African American cotillion was a response to the negativity, especially some of the perceptions and stereotypes of African American women. So, they carved out their own space to celebrate young women, to showcase their elegance, education, and sophistication despite the negative stereotypes and messages that were being presented in dominate society."

Harris is the founder of the International League of Cotillions and the National

these people did some amazing work in terms of upliftment and empowerment of women, but we don't have documentation. Those are stories that are very powerful, and those are stories we need even today to reinforce that the work we're doing is important, and it's been important for a long time," she said.

Cierra Gilliam, of Raleigh, was part of the 2020 Capital City Chapter of Jack and Jill of America Inc.'s Biennial Cotillion-Beautillion Rose and Sapphire Ball. She met Harris while attending Alabama and is now an International League of Cotillions advisory board member.

"Preserving history and preserving a legacy is important because we live in troubling times. A lot of people are doing everything in their power to overshadow or overlook the positive things happening in the Black community. It's important to be able to preserve this legacy and make it more accessible to people in our community," Gilliam said.

For more information, to donate artifacts or to host the traveling exhibit, visit <https://intleagueofcotillions.com>.

Redistricting trial has big implications for NC's midterm elections

By Rusty Jacobs
WUNC

In next year's midterm elections, the political slant of North Carolina's Congressional delegation and state legislature could hinge on a federal district court trial likely to wrap up this week in Winston-Salem. Two consolidated lawsuits claim that GOP legislators drew district maps to purposely dilute the voting power of Black communities in certain parts of the state.

GOP state lawmakers redrew the challenged maps in 2023 after the state Supreme Court, with a majority of conservative justices that took over after the 2022 elections, reversed a previous high court decision. That earlier decision had found Republican legislators violated the state Constitution by drawing maps skewed by excessive partisanship.

Last year, those redrawn maps helped Republicans retain majorities in both chambers of the state legislature and changed the North Carolina Congressional delegation from a 7-7 split to a 10-4 GOP tilt. "We see this as yet another example of racially discriminatory, gerrymandered maps that harm minority voters for the intentional purpose of strengthening the majority party's numbers both in the legislature and Congress," said Bob Phillips, executive director of Common Cause North Carolina, one of the plaintiffs.

The lawsuits allege GOP lawmakers devised voting districts that broke up and

dispersed blocs of Black voters in the Triad cities of Greensboro, High Point and Winston-Salem; in a northeastern, rural part of the state known as the Black Belt; and in the New Hanover County city of Wilmington.

The lawmakers then allegedly attached districts with high concentrations of Black voters to more conservative-leaning areas. In redistricting parlance, it's a practice called "cracking."

For example, Phillips pointed out, in Wilmington, the GOP map makers took a part of downtown with a significant population of African American voters, carved it away from other demographically similar New Hanover County areas — forming what one of the lawsuits described as "an awkward notch, resembling the head of a giraffe" — and attached it to a voting district with the more Republican-leaning Brunswick and Columbus counties.

"So, it is a very peculiar manipulation of the maps that is clearly weakening the voting strength of Black voters in downtown Wilmington," Phillips said.

If the plaintiffs prevail, then the three-judge panel considering the case could find that GOP lawmakers violated minority protections under the federal Voting Rights Act in addition to provisions of the U.S. Constitution. The panel is made up of three judges nominated by Republican presidents: Richard Myers and Allison Rushing, tapped by Pres.

Donald Trump; Thomas Schroeder, by Pres. George W. Bush.

But the Republican legislative defendants have maintained they relied on traditional redistricting criteria in making up the maps and that the plans stay within the bounds of acceptable partisan considerations.

"This disentangling of partisanship and race, whether it's possible, whether the court is buying it, that's really the crux of both these arguments in a legal sense," said Professor Chris Cooper, director of Western Carolina University's Haire Institute for Public Policy and author of "Anatomy of a Purple State: A North Carolina Politics Primer."

On the one hand, Cooper explained, you have the plaintiffs arguing that while in recent years the U.S. Supreme Court has weakened the Voting Rights Act, protections for minority communities still matter and must be upheld against GOP efforts to draw racially discriminatory district lines.

"And the defendants are saying, 'No, we didn't do that at all; we discriminated based on partisanship and, by the way, we're allowed to do that.'"

No matter the outcome of the federal district court trial, an appeal is all but guaranteed. Should new maps be ordered, they would have to be completed before the start of candidate filing in December.

Segregated schools have been here for years

By Quintessa Williams
WORD IN BLACK

Decades after the watershed *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, multiple studies confirm that K-12 public schools across the country are more racially segregated today than they were in 1954, when the case was decided.

Just weeks before the

71st anniversary of that historic ruling, the U.S. Department of Justice quietly ended a longstanding federal school desegregation order in Louisiana — a case that had remained under court supervision since 1966. The news received little national attention, but experts warn it could mark the beginning of a bigger unraveling of the legal pro-

tects Brown made possible for Black students.

DOJ officials argue that schools in Plaquemines Parish, a district just south of New Orleans, had already been declared "unified," and in compliance for years. Still, civil rights advocates say the timing and political context of the decision — made as the Please see SCHOOLS/3A



THE IE VOICE BY LAURA KLURE

Segregated schools have been here for years

Continued from page 2A

Trump administration pledges to eliminate the Department of Education — signals a disturbing shift. One where the federal government has moved from decades of federal oversight meant to enforce Brown v. Board to actively dismantling those protections.

"The first thing Black folks wanted after slavery was education," Raymond Pierce, president and CEO of the Southern Education Foundation, tells Word In Black. "Now the gains we made over the decades are in recession. This is a bad time for Black folks to not be educated to the maximum extent possible."

Despite national claims of progress since Brown, the number of majority-minority public schools has increased. That retreat, fueled in part by white flight, contributed to deep racial inequities in access to quality education that decades of federal policy under different presidential administrations have failed to close."

Even though Brown was handed down generations ago, more than 130 school districts nationwide are still under federal desegregation orders, according to the UCLA Civil Rights Project. But research shows that when those orders are lifted, Black students are likely to end up in highly segregated, underresourced schools within just a few years.

"Almost every dimension of educational opportunity — including teacher qualifications, curriculum, experienced administrators, and access to AP courses — is linked to segregation by race and poverty," said Gary Orfield, co-director of the UCLA Civil Rights Project.

That level of segregation continues to result in worse academic outcomes for Black students. A 2023 report from the Southern Education Foundation, "Miles to Go: The State of Black Education," found that Black students are consistently behind in reading, math, science, and graduation rates compared to their white peers — a

backslide from gains made in earlier decades when desegregation orders were more aggressively enforced.

Decades after the watershed Brown v. Board of Education decision, multiple studies confirm that K-12 public schools across the country are more racially segregated today than they were in 1954, when the case was decided.

"We're not being prepared," Pierce said. "Education innovation is transforming the world, and we're not in the loop. Our education systems are not set up for us, and our communities are not healthy enough to close that gap."

Pierce says whether the courts move slowly, or not at all, Black families and communities don't have the luxury to wait. He says they must fight for fair education now. "We can't check out. This is about Jim Crow and the children of the people who survived it," he said. "If we don't fight for them, who will?"

Gov. Stein vetoes bills banning DEI in schools, universities and state government

By Ahmed Jallow

NC NEWSLINE

North Carolina Democratic Gov. Josh Stein last week vetoed three Republican-sponsored bills that seek to ban diversity, equity and inclusion in public schools, universities and state government, calling the legislation a distraction from more pressing issues facing the state.

He also vetoed House Bill 805 — a catchall bill that includes a collection of conservative social agenda priorities, including provisions that target transgender individuals and provide parents with expanded rights to challenge school library books.

The DEI bills — Senate Bill 227 targeting K-12 education, Senate Bill 558 focused on UNC System schools and community colleges, and House Bill 171 aimed at state and local government agencies — had all passed along party lines in recent weeks. Each sought to bar DEI offices, training programs, and what Republicans called "divisive concepts" related to race and gender from public institutions.

In a news release announcing the vetoes, Stein accused lawmakers of fueling "culture wars" and neglecting urgent state business.

"At a time when teachers, law enforcement, and state employees need pay raises and people need shorter lines at the DMV, the legislature failed to pass a budget and, instead, wants to distract us by stoking culture wars that further divide us," Stein said in a



statement. "These mean-spirited bills would marginalize vulnerable people and also undermine the quality of public services and public education. Therefore, I am vetoing them. I stand ready to work with the legislature when it gets serious about protecting people and addressing North Carolinians' pressing concerns."

The DEI measures are part of Republican-led efforts to restrict diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives across the public sector — in government, higher education and K-12 education.

Republican lawmakers say the legislation is meant to restore fairness and ideological neutrality in classrooms, and that DEI programs promote a worldview that "stifles opportunity" and "stokes division" by encouraging students to judge others based on race or sex.

But opponents say the language in the bills is overly broad and would have wide-ranging consequences, chilling speech in classrooms and dismantling DEI offices that support students, workers and communities who

have long faced structural barriers. In a recent NC Newsline story, educators expressed concern that the measures would prevent them from teaching essential parts of American history.

House Bill 805 raised a special level of ire among Senate Democrats who objected to the fact that the measure started out as a noncontroversial House proposal targeting revenge porn and was only amended to include several controversial culture war provisions in the Senate.

Republicans hold a supermajority in the Senate and could override Stein's vetoes there without Democratic support. In the House, however, the GOP is one vote shy of the three-fifths supermajority needed for an override and would need at least one Democrat to cross party lines if all members are present and voting.

When they departed Raleigh at the end of June for an extended break, legislative leaders indicated that the next voting sessions in the General Assembly will take place the week of July 28.

NC prisons endure summer heat without air conditioning

By Rachel Crumpler

NORTH CAROLINA HEALTH NEWS

April Barber Scales recalls her 18 summers spent incarcerated without air conditioning at the North Carolina Correctional Institution for Women in Raleigh — the state's largest women's prison — as physically and mentally demanding as she said relief from the grueling heat was hard to come by. She dripped sweat constantly, felt endlessly sticky and even saw people faint from the heat.

"Miserable is an understatement," she said, describing the sweltering heat. "I mean, prison is miserable, and then when you have 1,000 people that are hot, and then you have attitudes, and then you couple that with the staff with the attitudes for being hot. It's so much worse during the summer."

Barber Scales said she was desperate for any way to cool down during the stretches of summer that felt like they would never end. She kept a wet towel draped around the back of her neck, re-wetting it many times a day. She took an extra shower midday whenever she could, not fully drying off so the dampness could help her stay cool. She drank as much water as possible to stay hydrated.

At night, she wet her sheets in the sink in her cell and then laid down on top of them, hoping for enough relief from the hot temperatures so she could drift off to sleep. Prison staff placed a fan in the aisle of her housing unit, but she said its air flow didn't reach her bed.

"I would just toss and turn until I wore myself out enough so I could go to sleep," Barber Scales explained. "That adds to the



aggravation, to the agitation, because people are hot. They haven't slept."

Twenty-one percent of the state's total prison capacity — 8,579 beds — still don't have air conditioning, Brad Deen, spokesperson for the Department of Adult Correction, told NC Health News.

Family, friends and advocates for incarcerated people are increasingly concerned for the health of their loved ones during the sweltering summer months.

Kayla Dillard, executive director of NC-CURE, a prison advocacy group, said that summer days without air conditioning are a "type of torture."

"There's always a concern of heat stroke because they have nowhere to escape it," Dillard said.

The heat affects correctional officers, too, who work in the same conditions as the people they're charged with monitoring. Like many places around the United States, periods of extreme heat have intensified in North Carolina. On average, July is the warmest month of

the year, with average high temperatures nearing 90 degrees Fahrenheit.

Climate change is making extreme heat events — unusually hot weather that can last for several days — more frequent and intense, posing health risks. Exposure to extreme heat can exacerbate underlying illnesses, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes and asthma. Extreme heat can also have negative effects on mental health and has been linked to increased rates of suicide.

"The N.C. Department of Adult Correction recognizes that heat can be a serious health and safety issue for everyone — our staff and the people in our custody alike — and we do all we can to keep people comfortable in hot weather," Deen said.

Deen told NC Health News that last year one person experienced a heat stroke, the most serious heat-related illness that occurs when the body can no longer control its temperature. Over the past five years, Deen said there have been no heat-related deaths in state prisons.

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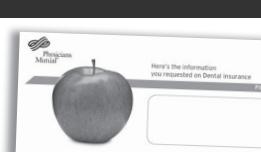
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REAL ESTATE

Down Payment Options Are Unlocking Homeownership for More Americans

(StatePoint) Saving for a down payment is one of the biggest barriers to buying a home, but it doesn't have to be. Not only are down payment assistance programs helping people unlock homeownership, but some mortgage programs make it possible to put down as little as 3%. Here's what to know:

Navigating PMI

Contrary to the popular belief that down payments must be 20% or more, the typical homebuyer makes a down payment between 5% and 20%. However, if you make a down payment of less than 20%, you may have to pay private mortgage insurance (PMI). PMI, which protects the lender if you are unable to pay your mortgage, is a monthly fee rolled into your mortgage payment. If it's required, you'll only need this insurance until you've built up 20% equity in your home.

Securing the Right Loan

There are many types of private and government-sponsored low down payment loan options available. For example, some private lenders have options designed specifically for low- to moderate-income borrowers. Freddie Mac's Home Possible mortgage provides down payment options as low as 3%, financial flexibility and reduced PMI. Some qualified buyers can even attain this mortgage without a credit score. Likewise, Freddie Mac's HomeOne loans, meant for first-time homebuyers and borrowers who need flexible financing, offer similar benefits.

The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) offers down payment options as low as 3.5%. Obtained through lenders but insured by the federal government, they allow lower credit scores than most conventional loans. However, they require PMI and tend to be more expensive.

Looking to build or buy a home in a rural area? The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) two loan types make doing so more affordable for eligible low- and moderate-income buyers. The Single-Family Housing Guaranteed Loan Program has a PMI premium but no down payment, whereas the Single-Family Housing Direct Home Loan Program provides down payment assistance to increase applicants' repayment ability.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Loans are made to eligible members of the military community. VA loans may not require a down payment or PMI and have additional features that can make homebuying more affordable for military families.

Speak with your lender to learn more about these loan options.

Finding Assistance

If you're short on cash for your down payment, help may be available. Many state, county and city governments provide financial assistance for well-qualified people in their communities ready for homeownership. This help can come in the form of grants, second mortgage loans that come with low or no interest rates and deferred payments, as well as tax credits that free up more of your money for your down payment or closing costs. Having a certain kind of job, such as being a teacher or firefighter, or moving to a specific neighborhood, such as one that has been identified as needing economic growth, could also qualify you for down payment assistance. Your housing counselor or lender can help determine which programs you are eligible for.

For more homebuying insights and information about affordable homeownership, visit myhome.freddiemac.com.

With low down payment loans, PMI solutions and support from assistance programs, owning a home is more accessible than you may realize.

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Lincoln Park Holiness Church Pastor Billy Ratcliff.

ALEX BASS

Raleigh church embraces unforeseen food distribution center abundance

By Alex Bass
alex.bass@triangletribune.com

RALEIGH - Two pedestrians stopped at the Lincoln Park Holiness Church food distribution center on Monday.

"We were told that you all were feeding today," one gentleman said to another who was exiting the Cross Street edifice's front door wearing a red baseball hat bearing the initials "LPHC."

The Rev. Billy Ratcliff, a third-generation LPHC pastor, does not have a regularly scheduled Monday visit to the center, which distributes food boxes on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. There, he sees volunteer church members, husband and wife Willis and Jeanette Scott, who are helping out despite not being scheduled to volunteer.

Ratcliff barely can get in his center office overflowing with boxes of resources to be prepared for distribution. He welcomes that problem. As for Monday not being a distribution day, Ratcliff asks the Scotts to prepare "walker bags" for the pedestrians, who departed with gratitude and sustaining nourishment.

"All those scriptures," Ratcliff said of abundance

and harvest, "they are being fulfilled."

Willis Scott added: "Some people just don't know where to go. Some people are too proud to ask for help."

The well-timed convergence of a plentiful harvest and laborers was not guaranteed, even one month ago. "Everybody was wondering and questioning, 'Would our supply be able to meet the demand or would things keep going like they were?'" Ratcliff said. "Some suppliers cut back. Some picked up."

Recent economic challenges necessitated the church limiting its distribution to one box per family. LPHC runs six of its church fleet's vehicles seven days a week to retrieve donations from Wegmans, Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, Food Lion, the Food Bank and the Interfaith Food Shuttle, and delivers boxes to elderly and shut-in residents.

The congregation partners with another church Ratcliff pastored previously in Louisville. There, too, is on-site pickup three days per week beginning at 2 p.m. "Sometimes, we've had over 200 or 250," Jeanette Scott said of boxes distributed in one

day. "I love helping others."

The Scotts - along with goddaughter Aubrey Peebles, age 4 - were preparing the distribution center for pickups on Tuesday, which Ratcliff said usually is the busiest day. The center distributes approximately 2,500 boxes per month.

Willis Scott, while happy to be inside with family, embraces off-campus trips, too, having been homeless himself. "I know how it is not to know where you'll lay your head or get a hot meal," he said. "I know how people are, so I try to do my best to give back."

LPHC received recognition from the Food Bank of Eastern NC for its 2023 calendar year contributions. The church provided 98,536 meals to address community hunger insecurities. That certificate is above the current month's calendar, with the most recent and forthcoming weeks in view as reminders of what was, what needs to be done and what can change instantly.

"You call, we'll come," Ratcliff said is the standing policy for pickups, each of which includes a driver and driver's helper. "If they can't, then I'll go myself."

AROUND THE TRIANGLE

KNIGHTDALE FAMERS MARKET

Farmers Market @ Oak City is July 13, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., 616 N. 1st Avenue.

RALEIGH MARKET

The next Black Farmers' Market is July 13, 1-4 p.m., SE Raleigh YMCA, 1436 Rock Quarry Road.

FUNDRAISER

J. Locke will perform an exclusive acoustic set to benefit Activate Good July 18, 8 p.m. to 12 a.m., Gatsby's bar, 6109 Maddry Oaks Court. Tickets: www.activategood.org.

CONSIGNMENT

Kids Exchange Consignment Sale is July 18-20, 9 a.m. each day, NC State Fairgrounds, Gate 2.

SUMMIT

Mental Health Summit 2025 is July 19, 2-6 p.m., Gethsemane Seventh-Day Adventist Church, 2525 Sanderford Road. Register: gethsemanesdachurch.org.

SCRUBS

Scrubs & Uniforms Warehouse Sale is July 19, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Aloft Raleigh-Durham Airport Brier Creek, 10020 Sellona St.

DURHAM FESTIVAL

Nonprofit applications for cultural festival and event funding are being ac-

cepted by the city through Aug. 11. Visit www.durhamnc.gov/5410.

HOME OWNERSHIP

Habitat for Humanity of Durham is hosting a homeownership information session July 15, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Southwest Regional Library, 3605 Shannon Road. Register: www.durhamcountylibrary.libcal.com.

POETRY

Poetry vs. Hip-Hop presents Poetry After Dark, hosted by Queen Sheba, July 20 at The Pickleback2, 711 Rigsbee Ave. Tickets: www.poetryvshiphop.com.

EXHIBIT

"Unearthing Stories of Geer Cemetery: Using Archaeology to Reclaim, Restore, and Respect Sacred Space" opens July 18, 6 p.m., Museum of Durham History, 500 W. Main St.

PARTY

Book Harvest Summer Block Party is July 19, 1-4 p.m., Durham Bulls Athletic Park, 409 Blackwell St. Rain or shine.

HEALTH FAIR

First Ledge Rock Missionary Baptist's community health fair is July 19, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Holton Career & Resource Center, 401 N. Driver St.

BEYONCE'

"Hive Hoedown: The Ultimate Beyoncé' Fan Experience" is July 20, 4 p.m., Motorco, 723 Rigsbee Ave. Tickets: motorcomusic.com.

VEGFEST

Vegfest Expo-Food Fest is July 20, noon to 4 p.m., Durham Armory, 212 Foster St. Tickets: www.eventeny.com.

CENTERFEST

CenterFest Arts Festival is seeking sponsorships for its 50th anniversary, Sept. 20-21, in downtown Durham. Contact: Laura Montgomery at lmontgomery@durhamarts.org.

CHAPEL HILL GOOD TROUBLE

League of Women Voters of Orange, Durham and Chatham Counties is honoring National John Lewis Day of Action July 17, 6-8 p.m., Peace and Justice Plaza, 179 E. Franklin St.

CELEBRATION

HOPE North Carolina's Founders Day Celebration is July 18, 6-8 p.m., Blue Hill Event Center. Register: opennorthcarolina.net-workforgood.com.



Can we stop calling Black women 'strong' at work?

By ReShonda Tate
THE HOUSTON DEFENDER

We need to talk about the word strong.

For generations, Black women have been praised for their resilience, their unshakeable resolve and their ability to carry the weight of the world on their backs — both at home and in the workplace.

But here's the truth: that label is not always a compliment. In today's workplaces, the idea of the "strong Black woman" has morphed into a dangerous expectation.

It's an invisible burden that demands we show up as unbreakable, selfless, endlessly competent — even when we're exhausted, overwhelmed or in need of support ourselves.

I'm not the only one who feels this. Black women across industries — from corporate offices to classrooms, nonprofits to hospitals — tell stories of being the go-to person: the problem-solver, the emotional caretaker, the one expected to mentor, advise, volunteer and deliver, often without acknowledgment, compensation or even a simple "thank you."

Research confirms what many of us know firsthand: the "strong Black woman" stereotype creates unrealistic, dehumanizing expectations. Studies show that Black women are more likely to be assigned extra

responsibilities, asked to take on emotional labor and overlooked for promotions because they're perceived to be handling it all" already.

This bias shows up in subtle ways. Black women are less likely to be offered flexibility, more likely to be penalized for advocating for themselves and often face harsher judgment in performance evaluations. When we're seen only as resilient workhorses, our humanity — our right to rest, vulnerability and balance — is erased.

Let's be clear: the burden isn't just about workload. It's about emotional labor. Black women are often called upon to mentor younger employees, mediate office conflicts, sit on diversity panels and represent the company's "commitment" to inclusion — all while excelling in their actual jobs. This expectation is draining. It contributes to the growing rates of burnout among Black professional women. We're applauded for how much we can handle but rarely asked: Should you have to handle all this?

This stereotype feeds into deeper workplace biases and microaggressions. Colleagues may assume Black women don't need help or feedback. Leaders may overlook us for growth opportunities, assuming we're already thriving. Even worse, when we express frustration or set

boundaries, we risk being labeled as "difficult" or "angry." We are caught in a no-win situation: expected to be endlessly strong but penalized the moment we push back.

We urgently need a shift in workplace culture, and it starts with dismantling the "strong Black woman" trope. Here's what that looks like:

* **See Black women as whole people.** We are not just pillars of strength or symbols of resilience. We are complex individuals with needs, dreams and limits, just like anyone else.

* **Provide equitable workloads.** Stop assuming Black women can or should carry more. Review task assignments, check in regularly and rebalance responsibilities when needed.

* **Compensate emotional labor.** If Black women are mentoring, advising or supporting DEI initiatives, make sure that work is acknowledged, valued and compensated.

* **Challenge performance biases.** Evaluate how unconscious stereotypes may shape feedback, promotions and leadership pipelines. Are you rewarding overwork but ignoring potential?

* **Support mental health.** Normalize conversations about stress and burnout and offer resources that recognize the specific challenges Black women face at work.



Creating and caring for shade gardens

By Melinda Myers
SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

Those shady spots in the landscape can make it challenging to grow a beautiful garden. Fortunately, there are more plants than you may think that will thrive in low light.

Monitor the amount of sunlight the area receives throughout the day, season and year.

You may be surprised that it gets more sunlight than you thought. Some plants, like spring ephemerals and even sun-

loving spring flowering bulbs, receive sufficient sunlight early in the season before most trees leaf out. Other plants need sunlight throughout the growing season and those sun-loving plants growing in hotter regions often benefit from a bit of afternoon sun.

Make a list of plants you have had success with and those that failed in the shady location. Use these to help you select or avoid plants with similar light requirements. For example,

if peonies bloom and tomatoes produce fruit, this area receives quite a bit of sunlight, enough to grow most full sun plants.

Consider mulching the soil when there is more shade than even shade-loving plants can tolerate. Add a table and chair for relaxing, and a few steppers if needed, to enjoy the cool shade.

When planting under or near trees, be careful not to damage them when creating your shade garden.

Please see SHADE/8A

Deion Sanders declines to discuss health issues

By Stephen Hawkins
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FRISCO, Texas — Deion Sanders declined to address his health at Big 12 football media days Wednesday, which came during his extended absence from Colorado.

"I'm not here to talk about my health," said Sanders, who is going into his third season as the Buffaloes coach. "I'm here to talk about my team."

Since overseeing Colorado's spring game April 19, Sanders hadn't attended football camps in Boulder. The school had said last month, amid reports that the coach was ill, that it could not say why he was absent. Sanders did not specifically answer any questions about his health.

"I'm looking good. I'm living lovely. God has truly blessed me," he said. "Not a care in the world. Not a want or desire in the world."

Sanders was the last of the league's 16 coaches to appear on the main stage over two days at the headquarters of the NFL's Dallas Cowboys, which is about 75 miles from the sprawling ranch that the Pro Football Hall of Fame player has in Canton, Texas.

During his question-and-answer session that lasted nearly 17 minutes, Sanders addressed topics such as his coaching staff, quarterbacks and even Texas Tech coach Joey McGuire. Sanders then returned to the stage for a roundtable discussion with the other seven coaches in attendance Wednesday, but he didn't take part in his media breakout session scheduled for each coach at the end of the day.

It was unclear if the latest health issues are new. Sanders, a month shy of his 58th birthday, has struggled with his left foot since having two toes amputated in 2021 because of blood clot issues while at Jackson State. He missed Pac-12 media day in 2023, his first year at Colorado, after a procedure to remove a blood clot from his right leg and another to straighten toes on his left foot.

Colorado athletic director Rick George, who wouldn't elaborate on Sanders' health, said they stay in constant contact. The AD said Sanders will probably be back on campus in a week or two.

"We always talk. We text, we talk," George said. "We have a great relationship. We trust each other."

While commanding the work of Big 12 Commissioner Brett Yormark in his opening remarks, Sanders said that Yormark called him daily to check to make sure he was getting better. There have also been a lot of calls from his fellow league coaches.

"I love them, they've been calling and checking on me, making sure I'm straight," Sanders said.

This will be Sanders first season at Colorado without having one of his sons on the team. Quarterback Shedeur Sanders was a fifth-round pick by the Cleveland Browns in the NFL draft, and safety Shilo Sanders signed with Tampa Bay as an undrafted free agent.

Also gone is Heisman Trophy winner Travis Hunter, the two-way standout who was also like a son to Sanders. Hunter played for him at Jackson State and Colorado, and now will try to play both ways in the NFL after Jacksonville drafted him second overall.

"Now I only have to be a coach, I don't have the coach and a dad," Sanders said during a segment with ESPN. "You've got to understand, when you're the coach and the dad ... make sure you watch the defense, make sure you watch the offense, but you want to watch your kids as well. I don't have to have that dilemma."

The Triangle Tribune Sports

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ALEX BASS

McKinley Battle drives from Rocky Mount to Raleigh to practice with the Ebony Racquet Club.

Ebony Racquet Club members enjoy history, milestones

By Alex Bass
Alex.bass@triangletribune.com

RALEIGH — McKinley Battle has the drive. Thus, she makes the drive from Rocky Mount to Raleigh to train with the Ebony Racquet Club.

Long before Battle, a recent Rocky Mount High School graduate, won the 2023 N.C. 3A women's ten-

nis state championship, she was "grandfathered" into the sport. "The grandfather that taught me taught my other grandfather also," Battle said.

Battle will continue her academic and athletic pursuits at Winston-Salem State. She scheduled an earlier drive to WSSU for the July 11-13 U.S. Tennis Association's N.C. State Cham-

pionships, which will conclude on the same day as Wimbledon. The club's winning formula per Dempsey Farmer, one of the club's coaches, is simple.

"We're going to out-condition our opponents," Farmer said. "We've got to be ready."

Battle spent Monday afternoon's practice burning up the Biltmore Hills tennis

courts' sidelines with forehand and backhand heat befitting the sizzling weather. Farmer adjusted players' training regimens with water breaks every 15 minutes. Players understand this strategy is a latter part of that winning formula.

"I mostly drink water

Please see EBONY/7A

HBCU FOOTBALL

Playtime is over, the season is almost here

By Bonitta Best
editor@triangletribune.com

The football season officially begins next Tuesday with the first of four HBCU media days. The SIAC opens the window July 15, 10 a.m., at the Tubman African American Museum in Macon, Georgia.

The CIAA is next on July 16, 9 a.m., in Durham. Fans can watch on the CIAA Sports Network. Two hours later, SWAC Media Day begins in Birmingham. The event will be streamed on ESPN+.

N.C. Central

Damon McDaniel Jr., a high school center/offensive lineman, has committed to the Eagles.

Joining McDaniel is high schooler Zy'Dar'Eus Wynn. The former is from Norfolk, Virginia, the latter from Suffolk.

Winston-Salem State

Tickets are now on sale for the 2025 Red Tails Classic between

the Rams and the SIAC's Tuskegee. The season opener for both teams is Aug. 31, 8 p.m., in Montgomery, Alabama, and will be televised on ESPN. The classic is named in honor of the famed Tuskegee Airmen. Tickets: montgomerykickoffgames.com/r edtailsclassic.

And speaking of the Rams, running back Brethen Barnhill recently inked an NIL deal with "CUT SCHOOL," a running back club.

Johnson C. Smith

Pettis Norman, the first Golden Bull to play in the NFL, died Monday at the age of 86. The 1962 alumnus played for the Dallas Cowboys from 1962-70 and was a part of five playoff teams and Super Bowl IV. He was inducted into the 1977 CIAA Hall of Fame.

MEAC

To open its football media day, the conference is hosting its third straight MEAC Girls on the Gridiron Flag Football Clinic

Pettis Norman



July 20 on Morgan State's campus.

Goodbye, Hello.

* Livingstone OL Edyson Edmond transfers to Mississippi Valley State

* Glendale College slot Shadé Schaefer to MVSU

* South Carolina State DL Rashawn Washington to Norfolk State

COLLEGE CORNER

Alabama A&M coach is a fashion queen

Morgan State's Trinity Carruthers and Darrien Roberts were named the 2025 MEAC Post Graduate Scholarship winners.

Carruthers played volleyball for four years and graduated with a degree in nursing. She plans to focus on labor and delivery, which is sorely needed in underserved communities.

Roberts was a wrestler and graduated with a project management degree. He plans to attend law school with a focus on criminal justice reform. Also, much needed.

Hampton recently unveiled its newly designed basketball court. Hopefully,

more wins will come with it.

WOMEN

N.C. Central

Eagle fans are not being kind to CollegeWorld's Top 50 HBCU Rankings. NCCU is No. 14, but that's not the rub. Florida A&M being ranked No. 1 is causing the ire. Google FAMU to learn more.

The consensus is Spelman should be No. 1. Women rock!

Alabama A&M

Basketball coach Dawn Thornton was part of BeautyCon's "Play the Game, Get the Look" panel at the recent Essence Festival in



New Orleans.

Thornton, a fashion icon, has over 7 million views on Instagram showcasing her gameday outfits. "My style is definitely an extension of

who I am," she said. "It's confident, intentional and sometimes a little extra, in the best way. ... Confidence

Please see AAMU/7A

HBCU NEWS

N.C. CENTRAL

The School of Education will launch a doctoral program in counseling, counselor education and supervision in the fall. The program is NCCU's second doctoral program, joining the integrated biosciences doctoral program established more than a decade ago.

"This gets us back on track with the larger plan to increase the number of doctoral programs we offer and to become an R2 research institution," said provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs, Ontario S. Wooden, Ph.D.

The program's inception was identified during a state counseling board meeting in 2022. "We heard that our state was in need of supervisors, people to supervise beginning counselors who are working toward their degree and licensure," said Chadwick Royal, Ph.D., chair of the department of counseling and higher education.

There are just five doctoral programs in counseling at historically Black colleges and universities nationwide.

Associate professor Kyla Kurlan, Ph.D. will be docto-



ral program director. She highlights the program's distinctive features, including a focus on practice-based learning and integration with the department's community counseling clinic.

What sets this program apart is its commitment to practical experience, Kurlan said. Students will complete internships across multiple professional domains and engage in a unique three-article dissertation model that encourages ongoing scholarly writing.

Helen Lupton-Smith, Ph.D., associate professor and counselor education program co-coordinator, emphasized the program's community approach. "We have a community

counseling clinic that is unlike any other," she said. "We're looking to interface doctoral students with telehealth services and outreach to underserved countries, creating a truly innovative learning experience."

Developing the program had challenges. The department navigated complex approval processes, including endorsement from the UNC Board of Governors and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. The program will seek accreditation from the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, a critical step for ensuring graduates professional opportunities.

FRATERNITY NEWS

John H. Scott Scholarship

The Durham Beta Phi Chapter of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity held its annual scholarship event and awarded 10 high school students with the Brother John H. Scott Scholarship Award. The chapter recognized their academic excellence, leadership and community service. The annual scholarship program is one of 12 national mandated programs of the fraternity.



COURTESY

Left to right: John H. Scott; Devin Perkins, Southern High School; Champ Anderson Luat, Jordan High School; Leandro Carreon, Orange High School; Phasia Terry, Hillside High; David Cephalo Glymph, Holly Springs High School; Eddie White IV, J.D. Clement Early College; Jeremiah Jennings, Hillside High; scholarship co-chair Jason Peace; chapter basileus Kumani Simmons; and Scotty Hargrove, Bridge Builder Scholarship benefactor.

JPMorgan Chase opens branch in Johnston County



COURTESY

CHASE Bank's first retail branch in Johnston County opened last week with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 101 St. Mark Avenue in Selma. This expansion adds consumer and business banking to a market where the firm already serves consumers and local businesses through its commercial bank, private bank and investment bank in Johnston County, the fastest-growing county in North Carolina.

Newly signed bill makes it easier to get North Carolina state government jobs

By Colin Campbell
WUNC

Gov. Josh Stein signed a bill that makes it easier to get hired for state government jobs. The legislation will address the high vacancy rate in many state agencies.

It calls for the State Human Resources Commission to review job requirements and create more roles that don't require a bachelor's degree. Stein says that would make it easier for people with military experience or trade school certifications to get jobs.

"The part I'm very excited about is it codifies Gov. Cooper's executive order declaring that a bachelor's degree is not required for

every single state job," he said. "This bill brings us one step closer to that goal, because you shouldn't have to go to a four-year college in order to get a good job."

The bill will also speed up the hiring process. Many state agencies have been facing high staff vacancy rates for years. It can take months to get new hires on the job, and by then some applicants have taken other jobs outside state government.

State Human Resources Director Staci Meyer worked on the legislation to address the problem.

"This legislation was passed and will be signed in one day shy of the time that it takes us to hire a

state employee: A 182-day average," she said.

Agencies will be able to hire finalists from previous job searches for similar positions. And they'll be able to move temporary employees into vacant permanent positions. State agencies will also get more flexibility to set salary levels.

Local government agencies will be allowed to offer signing and retention bonuses for hard-to-fill positions.

Meyer said she wants a younger generation to seek out government jobs. "I want everyone to know that we are hiring and that we want public-spirited people to join our amazing team and make a difference," she said.

Creating and caring for shade gardens

Continued from page 5A

Don't bury, cut, dig or shave off surface roots, creating entryways for harmful insects and diseases. Skip adding soil over the roots as even an inch can kill some tree species. Avoid deep cultivation that damages the fine feeder roots critical for water and nutrient absorption. Keep in mind the majority of tree roots grow within the top 18-inches of soil with 50% of these in the top six inches.

Instead, carefully dig relatively small planting holes between major roots, mulch, and spot water new plantings to minimize root damage. It may take transplants a little longer to fill in, but your tree will be healthier and live longer.

Add a splash of color with a few potted annuals set among the perennials. Or permanently sink a few pots in the ground and set

potted flowering plants inside them. It's easier on the tree roots and your back.

Check soil moisture several times a week and water thoroughly as needed. Plants growing under large trees or overhangs need more frequent watering, especially in the first two years until they become established. The dense canopy of many trees and impervious overhangs prevent rainfall from reaching the ground below. Plus, the extensive root systems of trees and shrubs absorb much of the rainfall that does make it through.

Avoid high nitrogen, quick-release fertilizers that promote lush succulent growth that is more susceptible to insects and diseases. And with limited light as a potential plant stressor, this can increase the risk of problems. Use a low nitrogen, slow-release fertilizer that promotes

steady above and below-ground growth.

Protect new plantings especially hostas, impatiens, caladiums, coleus, turtleheads, wax begonias, Solomon seal, and other plants often damaged by deer and rabbits. Apply animal repellents before the animals start browsing for better results.

Select a rain and snow-resistant product, like organic Plantskydd (plantskydd.com), so you won't need to reapply as often. Always check the product label and follow the directions for the best results.

You can create a beautiful shade garden for years of enjoyment with proper plant selection and care.

Melinda Myers has written over 20 gardening books, including *Midwest Gardener's Handbook* and *Small Space Gardening*.

Durham Mayor Williams files for reelection

Mayor Leonardo Williams is running for reelection. Williams canceled his visit to the Board of Elections Monday due to the damage caused by Tropical Storm Chantal. "Durham has a story to tell," Williams said. "But for too long, others have tried to tell our story for us. I take immense pride in being a champion for our community. From corner to corner, street to street, I see the incredible things happening in our city every single day. There's a reason people want to live here. There's a reason so many say they love being part of Durham."



COURTESY

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