

# THE DAILY DISPATCH



NANCY WYKLE, PUBLISHER  
nwykle@hendersondispatch.com

VANESSA SHORTLEY, MANAGING EDITOR  
vshortley@hendersondispatch.com

DESIREE BROOKS, ADVERTISING DIRECTOR  
dbrooks@hendersondispatch.com

304 S. CHESTNUT ST.  
HENDERSON, N.C. 27536

PHONE: (252) 436-2700/FAX: (252) 430-0125

## DAILY MEDITATION

Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee.

Jeremiah 32:17 (KJV)

## GOOD NEWS & GOOD NEIGHBORS

### From the unthinkable rises compassion and grace

The families of Ahmad Campbell and Alisia Dieudonne are living every parent's nightmare.

The two A&T University students were killed by gunfire this fall while they were doing what most college students do — attending a party. A fight erupted at the party. As people were leaving, an unknown assailant fired a gun, hitting Campbell and Dieudonne, neither of whom had been involved in the altercation.

The person who did this has left a wake of grief for Campbell's and Dieudonne's families and friends. The families want the person responsible caught, and justice for their loved ones. They have also done something remarkable.

On Thursday, they turned from their grief, anger and frustration to an effort to keep other young people safe when Southern Vance High School held its first Campbell Anti-Violence Walk.

Named for Ahmad, who was a Southern Vance alumnus, speakers from law enforcement and nonprofits delivered important messages to the teens present: Your life is valuable; do not throw it away over something stupid; you do not want to go to prison; if you see a gun, speak up.

With their grief still fresh, family and friends listened to the messages. Meanwhile, Ahmad's and Alisia's slayings remain unsolved. The parents believe people know something but are afraid to say anything about who killed their children.

Still, the Campbells and Dieudonnes were present Thursday, trying to prevent what they are going through from happening to another family. That takes remarkable strength and compassion.

We hope the students heard the messages delivered to them by people who care about them and their future.

As the two mothers made their way around the track hand-in-hand during the walk, lending each other strength and support, there could be no clearer message about the harm violence does. But their very presence on Thursday to help other young people also made clear that there is love, grace, compassion and caring in this world.

## LETTERS

The Daily Dispatch welcomes letters to the editor.

Please limit letters to 300 words or fewer and include your name, address and phone number.

Letters represent the opinions of their writers and may be edited.

Send submissions to nwykle@hendersondispatch.com; Letters to the Editor, The Daily Dispatch, 304 S. Chestnut St., Henderson NC 27536; or by fax to (252) 430-0125.

# Your opinion

## Thank you for good county water

My wife and I have had a place on Kerr Lake since 1982. Our first well was a bored, shallow well that often was unfit to drink from and occasionally went dry. In 2002 we retired from our jobs in Raleigh and built a new home on our lake property. We had a deep well drilled, which gave us plenty of water, but the water smelled and tasted bad and had black grit in it. We had to install two separate filtration systems but still had damages to the refrigerator icemaker and water faucets; nothing we did eliminated the iron stains in our toilets, showers, and laundry or the bad smell and taste of the water.

When the Vance County Water District implemented Phase 2A & 2B in the Williamsboro township in 2010, we signed up, but it took six more years before water lines were close enough for us to hook up.

We paid the fees and costs to run a water line to connect to the county water line, and now pay a monthly water bill, but we finally have great tasting, clean water from Kerr Lake with plenty of water pressure. Thanks go to the planners, county commissioners and everyone who helped make county water available to this area.

Special thanks go to Commissioner Deborah Brown, County Manager Jordan McMillan, and J.P. McCann with EnviroLink.

Many people living on highly taxed property in the lake vicinity feel that they are paying more than their share for county services received. However, county water service is a benefit to all, and as with our new library, new concert hall and new animal shelter, it is a progressive step forward for citizens of Vance County.

Ed Jenkins  
Henderson

## Thanks to community for helping flood victims

I would like to thank all of our local citizens who were so receptive to giving to the drive I sponsored for the 20 needy families in Mar Mac, North Carolina.

These families lost all of their personal belongings and their homes in the wake of Hurricane Matthew.

When I started this drive, I had no idea it would become so large. We had a U-Haul trailer full of cleaning supplies and clothing for these families. This experience was so humbling and gratifying to see all of you good people come together in a time of need.

Special thanks to Mayor Eddie Ellington, Chris Fisher, Church of the Holy Innocence, Tracey Madigan, Supply Line and to all the other generous donors. We cannot thank you enough for all you have done for these families. May God bless all of you. Thank you.

Sara M. Coffey  
Henderson

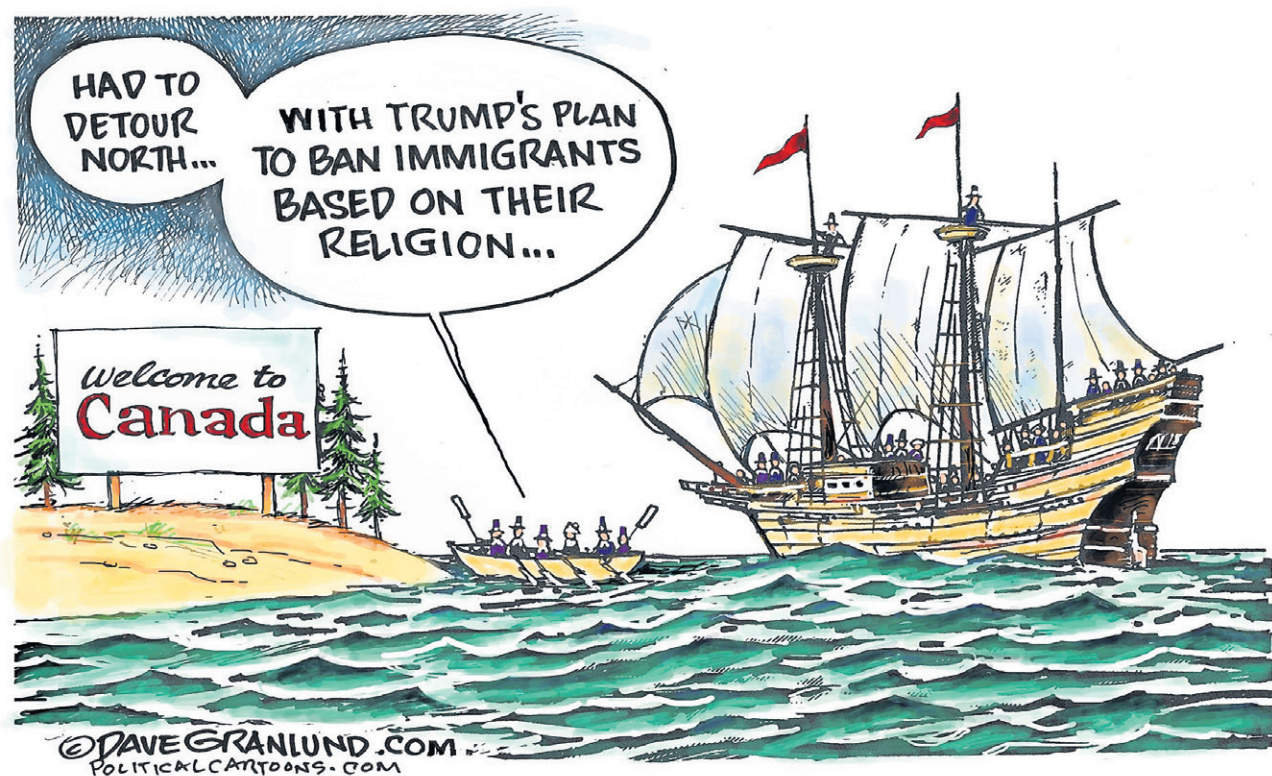
## Davis family grateful for outpouring of sympathy

We would like to just say thank you for all of the phone calls, visitors and sympathy cards that were sent to us as a result of the passing of our father, Mr. Lonnie Davis Jr., better known as "Coach Davis."

The appreciation shown by everyone has just been overwhelming and is a true testament to the compassion and kindness of the citizens of this great city.

We would like to say a special thanks to the people who helped care for our father during the past year while he was home: Crystal Williams, Cynthia Perry, Mary Ann Thomas, Patricia Alston and Sam Smith. We will always be eternally grateful and no matter where we are, we will always know that in our hearts, Henderson will always be home.

Lonnie G. Davis III  
Valencia Davis



## Where will we live?

Fewer than 50 years ago — in 1970 — North Carolina was still a rural state. Over half (54 percent) of the state's residents lived in rural areas. In fact, at that time only five states — Vermont, West Virginia, North Dakota, South Dakota and Mississippi — had a higher percentage of their population living in rural counties.

That's all changed. North Carolina is now an urban state, with two-thirds of the state's people living in cities and high-density counties. Urban areas are booming, while some rural counties have actually lost population in recent decades.

Some say this is the future, with people increasingly living in metropolitan regions where jobs, new industries and entertainment options are available. There are forecasts of more than 80 percent of North Carolinians living in metro areas by midcentury. At the same time, these forecasts also predict 33 of the state's 100 counties will have fewer people in 2050 than today.

There are several factors behind this reshuffling. The changing economy is a big part of it. The economic sectors in the state that have rapidly expanded like pharmaceuticals, technology, instruments, finance and health care have mainly been developed in

urban areas where the big universities are located. The sectors need access to the high-skilled talent graduated from the universities as well as the cutting-edge research conducted by the schools' faculties.

The movement of young people to the state's cities is another part of the explanation. With more than 60 percent of North Carolina high school

graduates going to college, and with the state's big colleges and universities being primarily in urban regions, many talented rural youths end up moving to the cities after high school. Since the jobs as well as the shopping, restaurants, entertainment and lifestyle young folks want are in urban areas, college grads end up staying in the city and never returning home.

So a big reason for the growth of metro regions in North Carolina is their attractiveness — or "pull" — on people living in rural areas. But at the same time there has been a complementary "push" from changes in rural regions causing residents to consider moving to urban centers.

The biggest "push" has been the challenging economy in many rural areas. While globalization, the tech revolution and the ramping up of educational requirements have favored urban areas, they have hurt rural regions. Many

of the industries driving metro areas, such as technology, have benefited from globalization with the opening of foreign markets increasing their sales. Yet at the same time, globalization introduced foreign competitors for the textile, apparel and furniture industries largely located in rural regions, resulting in reduced sales and fewer jobs in our rural counties.

When the technology revolution began, many futurists predicted it would spark a rural revival as people telecommuted and teleworked, never having to leave their home to be productive. But guess what? Just the opposite has occurred, with cities and urban areas growing faster during the information age. It turns out that as technology has expanded the number of acquaintances we can make at almost an exponential rate, many people like business persons, managers or just friends still want face-to-face contact with a certain percentage of those acquaintances. And, face-to-face contacts are still easier to make in cities.

Also, as rural areas have lost their "best and brightest" to the big city lights, the decline of jobs, attractions and entertainment options motivate even young people without college aspirations to migrate to urban areas where the jobs and excitement exist.

So will the urban-rural divide continue to widen, leaving large swaths of North Carolina with no

people and a limited future? The smart money probably says "yes," but there are some potential game changers that could reverse the trend.

One would be a boom in rural-based industries, like agribusiness, tourism, retirement living and large-scale manufacturing. A second would be rising costs in urban areas resulting from fast growth — costs such as housing prices and traffic congestion — causing some businesses and households to decide the city is too expensive and rural areas are preferable.

But maybe the most intriguing game-changer could be technology that now favors rural locations. One innovation would be virtualization, whereby individuals could interact on a personal basis with others without being in the same location. The other is driverless transportation, which would mean long commutes from rural to urban areas could be used productively by the traveler.

Economic forces have caused North Carolina to become more of urban state, reversing its tradition of small town and rural living. Will it remain that way, or will the shifting tides ultimately cause a reversal? You decide!

Mike Walden is a William Neal Reynolds distinguished professor and extension economist in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at N.C. State University.



MIKE WALDEN  
N.C. COOPERATIVE EXTENSION