

THE EXPRESS

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Serving Anson County and the Municipalities of Ansonville, Lilesville, McFarlan, Morven, Peachland, Polkton and Wadesboro.



Grace Senior Center Has It Going On In March!

Grace Senior Center is an excellent resource for Anson County's senior citizens. They provide programs, services, activities and fellowship that are beneficial... **ALL FREE...AND ALL FUN & INFORMATIVE!**

Be sure to check the Express Events Calendar for even more activities at Grace Senior Center.

Grace Senior Center is located at 199 Highway 742 South in Wadesboro, on the left just past IGA.

For information call 704-694-6616.

- **Thursday, March 6** Book Club, 9am - 2pm
- **Tuesdays & Thursdays** Exercise Class 10-11am
- **Friday, March 14** Happy National Potato Day 9am-4pm. Free bags of potato chips will be given out.
- **Monday, March 17** Senior Shenanigans Day 1-3pm. Stop by and play "Friendly Feud Game" and win prizes!
- **Tuesday, March 18** Aging Adults Ministry (NCBAM) Disaster Preparedness Workshop, 10am-12 noon. Receive a preparedness packet.
- **Friday, March 28** Movie Day 2pm. Come watch the movie "Leap Year." Refreshments served.

The Anson County Health Department is Here to Serve All Anson Citizens

The Anson County Health Department has served the Anson County community since 1938. Its mission is to protect our environment, prevent the spread of diseases and promote the health and well-being of all the citizens of Anson County. The Health Department is available to "all" county residents. They offer many low cost, and, in some cases free, services based on a person's income status.

The staff of the Health Department provide physical and acute care visits. Services include:

- 1) Family Planning, pap smears, and birth control;
- 2) Sexually Transmitted disease diagnosis, prevention, and treatment;
- 3) Women, Infant and Children (WIC) food services;
- 4) Immunizations;
- 5) Annual wellness visits (ages 21+);
- 6) Sports Physicals (ages 12+);
- 7) Laboratory testing;
- 8) Environmental Health;
- 9) Health Education;
- 10) TB Skin testing;
- 11) Sick Visits for minor illness for ages 21+;
- 12) And a host of other services.

Brian Ellerby, Director of the Health Department said, "Anson County Health Department has a knowledgeable and friendly staff ready to assist you and your family with your healthcare needs. Our goal is to assist our residents in their achievement of better health and wellbeing. If the residents of our county are healthier, then our county; Anson County, is healthier. If the county and its residents are healthier, our county is stronger!"

Ellerbe concluded, "In the end we seek to Provide, Partner, Protect, Promote and Prevent illnesses and Diseases that impact the citizens of Anson County, North Carolina."

Anson County residents can call the health department at 704-694-5188. The Health Department is located at 110 West Ashe Street in Wadesboro.

You can find them on Facebook and the website is: www.co.anson.nc.us/164/Health-Department.

The Mission of the Anson County Health Department is to Protect our environment, Prevent the spread of disease, and Promote the health and well-being of all the citizens of Anson County.

Commissioners Meet March 4

The first regular meeting for March will take place on Tuesday, March 4 at 6:00 p.m. The second meeting in March takes place on Tuesday, March 18 at 6 p.m.

Meetings take place in the Board Room, Suite 209, of the Anson County Government Center which is located at 101 South Greene Street in uptown Wadesboro.

To schedule an appearance at a board meeting, please sign up prior to the meeting. Information is available at 704-994-3201.

The Commissioners' board meetings are live streamed on their YouTube channel. Also, the videos are archived so they can be viewed at any time. Visit youtube.com and search for Anson Commissioners.

Pictured above are the Writing Contest winners at the awards ceremony held on February 23. They are, from left, front: Ayden Boudreaux, Abigail Boudreaux, Jiya Shah, Terrence Johnson, Jasmin Lugo, Shelby Pierre, and Leid Metcalf (accepting for Calhoun Metcalf).

Back row: Tommy Allen, Cruse Carpenter, Sandy Bruney, Kaye Ratliff, Ambria Nivens, Bentley White, and Troy Anthony Faw.

Writing Contest Winners Recognized at Awards Ceremony

Anson County Writers' Club (ACWC) recognized the winners of the 2024 contests in prose and poetry with an awards ceremony and reception February 23 at the First Presbyterian Church fellowship hall. The winners received certificates and cash prizes for their entries. This year, the winners also received a copy of "Anson Pathways XII," an anthology of the 2022, 2023, and 2024 winning entries.

The ACWC held its first contests in 1989, the year of the club's founding, followed by an awards ceremony the following February. This tradition has been followed every year since, with the exception of 2020 due to the pandemic.

President Kaye Ratliff welcomed the winners and their friends and families before presenting the awards.

• **Abigail Boudreaux** of Wadesboro won first place in the Grades 3-6 division in poetry for "The Big Blue." Terrence Johnson of Wadesboro won first place in prose for "My New School Journey."

• **Ayden Boudreaux** won first place for poetry in the Grades 7-8 division for her poem "Seasons." Bentley White won second place for "The Nice and Sweet Beauty of Nature;" and Jiya Shah received third place for "Stage Fright."

• **Calhoun Metcalf** won first place in the youth prose category for grades 7-8 for "The Temple of the Golden Jaguar;" Shelby Pierre won second place for "The Warlock and the Meercat;" and Sha'Ontae Blue won third place for "My Gender Does Not Define Me." All the grades 7-8 winners attend Anson Middle School.

• **Troy Anthony Faw**, Anson County Early College, won first place in poetry, grades 9-12, for "The Past Shall Stay." Princess Danica Mae M. Bilog, Anson County Early College, won second place for "The Sunset is Coming;" and Ms. KaNyah Caraway, AXIS, won third place for "Social Media Effects on Youth."

• **Ambria Nivens**, Anson County Early College, won first place in youth prose, grades 9-12, for her story, "The Whispers of Whitmore."

• **Sandy Bruney**, Wadesboro, won first place in the adult poetry category for "On Reading Mary Oliver to My Cat;" Noah Cruse Carpenter, Peachland, won second place for "My Mountain Home;" and Madalyn Rohler, Wadesboro, won third place for her poem, "Cataclysm."

• **Tommy Allen**, Monroe, won first place in the adult prose category for "He Up There;" Jasmin Lugo, Wadesboro, won second place for "A Mother's Quiet Strength;" and Kaye Ratliff, Wadesboro, won third place for "The Birthday Girl."

After the ceremony, winners and their families, along with ACWC members, enjoyed light refreshments.

Earlier contests were divided into youth and adult categories. At first, the youth division was divided into the K-6 and 7-12 grades. Since 2022 the divisions are 3-6, 7-8, and 9-12 to reflect the Anson County Schools' elementary, middle, and high school divisions.

The contests are open to all school students, and any adult living in or originally from Anson County; or working in Anson County. Judges are chosen outside the writers' club membership and do not know the names of the entrants.

Club Meetings The ACWC meets at 3:00 p.m. on the fourth Sunday of each month except July and December and is open to anyone who is interested in the club's mission of fostering the art of writing in Anson County. The ACWC does this through regular meetings, bringing public recognition to Anson County writers, developing talent through workshops, lectures, and readings; and sponsoring the annual contests.

New members of all ages are welcome. For more information contact Sandy Bruney at sandybruney@gmail.com or 704-694-5211.

Every three years since 1992, the club has published an anthology of winning entries. Anson Pathways XI and XII, can be purchased from Amazon.

Domestic Violence Coalition BBQ Fundraiser is Friday

Anson County Domestic Violence Coalition (ACDVC) will hold its annual BBQ Fundraiser this Friday, February 28, from 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. or until they sell out. The event is at Calvary Episcopal Church, located at 304 East Wade Street in Wadesboro. **This will be take-out and delivery only** Deliveries require a minimum of five orders. Deliveries to local businesses and organizations are courtesy of Anson County Sheriff's Office. Everyone is welcome to come to the church in person to get their plates. **Costs** Plates are \$10 and include chopped BBQ, slaw, baked beans, roll and dessert. Sandwiches \$5, Pints \$12 and Quarts \$22.

Call-ins or faxed orders are welcomed and encouraged to ensure you get yours before the food sells out! The fax number is 704-694-4515 and the office number is 704-694-4499.

The Anson County Domestic Violence & Rape Crisis Center is a nonprofit organization funded solely by grants and fundraisers. They encourage you to come and to the event for some delicious BBQ while helping to promote awareness against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Thank you for your continued support!

Filing for Unemployment Insurance Gets Easier as New Online Chat System Launches

Friendly chatbot 'Felix' to help people navigate submitting a claim

Today, the Commerce Department's Division of Employment Security launched 'Felix,' a new Artificial Intelligence-powered chatbot to help anyone who files a new claim for unemployment benefits navigate the process of submitting a claim.

"We designed Felix to help streamline the claim filing process, creating a more efficient and accessible system to apply for unemployment benefits," said DES Assistant Secretary M. Antwon Keith. "This is an easy-to-use tool that will assist people any time of the day, allowing them to get answers quickly."

This chatbot improves a person's experience by providing immediate assistance through a natural conversation. To ensure privacy and security, Felix does not include any personal or sensitive data.

Felix is embedded in the MyNCUIBenefits claims system to provide real-time assistance to people who file new unemployment claims on or after February 21. The Generative AI chatbot will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Designed to guide people through the claim filing process, Felix addresses potential stumbling blocks by offering answers to commonly asked questions about application screens, required documentation or previous employers.

"Using innovative, user-friendly technology in the form of the Felix chatbot, we feel should enhance the user experience and aid in getting unemployment benefits into the hands of our neighbors that deserve them," said Assistant Secretary Keith. Learn more at: www.des.nc.gov.

Police Tip Line

From the Wadesboro Police Department: The Wadesboro Police Department are committed to providing the Town of Wadesboro with professional, fair, and effective law enforcement. However, we realize this is only possible through a partnership with the community. We believe this reciprocal partnership must be rooted in trust between the department and you, the citizens we serve. We ask that you trust us with your tips, information, and knowledge, and we will in turn provide you with a safer community that we all call home.

To further those ideals, the Wadesboro Police Department has established a Tip Line, allowing all citizens to directly inform officers. If you have any information about a crime past, present, or future, please call (704) 694-2160 and leave a message with as much detail as possible. If you would allow us to contact you with any follow up questions, please leave your name and number, if not, anonymous tips are fine too. Even if you choose to leave your name, your identity, and any information you provide will remain confidential.