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

## Fourth Annual Writers Conference Draws on NC Talent

In a release from the Anson County Writer's Club: Margaret Maron, award-winning author of 26 novels, will discuss how she brought her writing home to North Carolina at the fourth annual Carolinas Writers conference on Saturday, April 14. Anthony Abbott also is scheduled to address "Poetry and Secrets of the Heart." The conference will be held from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. at the Lockhart-Taylor Center in Wadesboro. Cost is \$25 at the door and \$20 in advance.



Margaret Maron

Maron will begin the conference with "Coming Home with the Bootlegger's Daughter." Maron said that she was under the impression that crime novels had to be set in a large urban locale and has been delighted to learn that readers in large urban locales find the tobacco fields of eastern North Carolina as exotic as those large cities have seemed to her.

Abbott, Professor Emeritus of English at Davidson College, will open the afternoon session with his talk. He is the author of six books of poetry, including the Pulitzer-nominated "The Girl in the Yellow Raincoat." In addition, Abbott will lead a morning workshop where he will critique a limited number of poems. Visit [www.ansoncountywritersclub.org](http://www.ansoncountywritersclub.org), for submission guidelines. The workshop will be open to attendees whether or not they submitted poems, but only those poems submitted in advance will be critiqued.



Anthony Abbott

Twelve additional sessions that include readings, workshops and lectures are planned following the main presentations. The initial morning lineup includes storyteller Gary Carden, "From Mouth to Pen"; Michele Andrea Bowen, "Writing Christian Fiction"; Kevin Watson, editor of Press 53 publishing company, "The Future of Publishing"; Mary Newsom, creator of PlanCharlotte.org of the University of North Carolina's Charlotte Urban Institute, "A Pro's Tips on Prose"; author Hal Duval, "Never Too Late"; and teen author Dakota Lee, "Inspired: God's Plan for Your Book."

The second hour session leaders are author Marjorie Hudson, "Sparkling the Five Senses"; web entrepreneur Karen MacMurray, "How to Promote Your Book Online"; blogger Adrienne Trent, "Conquering Social Media"; Elbert Marshall and Sandy Bruney, "Co-Writing a Book"; author and poet Dicy McCullough, "The Writer's Journey"; and Charlotte attorney Fred Parker, "Books in the Law and in Contracts." The conference will then break for lunch. Box lunches will be available if ordered in advance.

All sessions except Abbott's will be repeated in the afternoon. The afternoon double session will feature Hope Clark, editor and founder of Funds for Writers.

Following the afternoon sessions, attendees are invited to remain for a panel discussion, "How to Get Published." The conference will conclude with author signings and drawings for door prizes.

For registration information, presenter bios, session schedule, poetry workshop registration, directions and box lunch orders, go to [www.ansoncountywritersclub.org](http://www.ansoncountywritersclub.org) or write to "2012 Conference," Anson County Writers' Club, P.O. Box 363, Wadesboro, N.C., 28170.

The Carolinas Writers Conference is sponsored by the Anson County Writers' Club, South Piedmont Community College and the Hampton B. Allen Library.

A pre-conference program, "Back Porch Stories," will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, April 13, at the Ansonia Theatre in Wadesboro. Admission to the story-telling event is free, courtesy of the ACWC, the Anson County Arts Council and the Anson County Tourism Development Administration.

## Operation Medicine Drop and Child Passenger Safety Station is Saturday

Take-back event offers public safe, secure way to dispose of their medications plus the opportunity for citizens to have their children's car seats inspected

The Anson County Sheriff's Office, in collaboration with Safe Kids Anson County and the Anson County Partnership for Children, is pleased to announce the 4th Biannual Operation Medicine Drop in Anson County which, for the second time, will offer a car seat inspection station.

The event is planned for this Saturday, March 24th at Food Lion in Wadesboro. Sheriff's Deputies and Safe Kids Anson County volunteers will be available from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. for citizens to drop off expired, unused prescription or over-the-counter medications. In the last year Operation Medicine Drop in Anson County has led to the proper disposal of over 14,000 doses of medications. Child Passenger Safety Technicians will also be on hand to provide citizens with information regarding the proper installation of car seats and to assist in making any necessary adjustments to children's car seats.

For more information on the upcoming event please contact Ashlie Jones, Safe Kids Anson County Coordinator, at 704-694-4036 extension 31 or visit [www.ncsafekids.org](http://www.ncsafekids.org).

## VFW Banquet to be Held Saturday

The Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 10403 will have their first VFW banquet at Lockhart-Taylor Center in Wadesboro on Saturday, March 24 at 6 p.m. You are invited to please bring someone to help with the celebration.

If you have questions, please call the Hampton B. Allen Library at 704-694-5177.

## SPCC Registration for Summer and Fall Begins April 10

Registration for new students for summer and fall class classes at South Piedmont Community College will begin April 10 on both campuses. Registration will be from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on April 10-12 and May 21-24 on the Old Charlotte Highway Campus at 4209 Old Charlotte Highway in Monroe and on the L.L. Polk Campus on Highway 74 in Polkton.

The summer session begins May 29 and the fall semester begins August 15.

In preparation for registration, new students should complete an SPCC application online, complete any required placement tests, order any needed transcripts, complete all FAFSA and scholarship applications and complete orientation. All of this must be done before a student may register. The application and orientation may be done online at [www.spcc.edu](http://www.spcc.edu).

There will again be prizes awarded in a drawing for anyone who signs up for college credit courses in the fall semester. The prizes have not been selected yet, but in the past they have included a digital camera, a laptop, a netbook, an iPod and an iPad.

For more information call 704-272-5300 or 704-290-5100.

## Ansonville Elementary School's Terrific Kids in Caring and Fairness



Ansonville Elementary School would like to recognize the following students who were named "Terrific Kids" for the character traits of Caring and Fairness.

**Caring** Savannah Green, Langston Springer, Treyshaun Little, Lexi Griffin, Cameron Sturdivant, Gracie Love, Ariel Smith-Christian, Kristen Hildreth, Meredith Preslar, Montaja Richardson, Tavaree Rogers, Kaylee Lomax, Kenneth Jordan, Sarah Allen, Parker Simpson, Alexis Broadway, Karrington Tupper and Alton Jackson.

**Fairness** Hailey Martin, Ryan Robinson, Susan Harrington, Kunta Ingram, Mary Billingsley, Tristan Ruppe, Makayla High, Santiago Ponce, Daniel Hartung, Jackson Ross, Dalton Hill, Kazoua Thao, Kurstin Hartsell, Joshua Polk, Maliyah Caple, Alice Holloway, Morgan Thomas and Hannah Ross.

## Anson's Labor Force and Employed Numbers Released by the NC ESC Show Large Changes Since December 2011

Anson County's unemployment rate in January was 12%, little changed from December's 12.1% rate. Statewide the unemployment rate for January was 10.5%, up from December's 9.8%.

Looking back at January 2011, the rate then for Anson County was 13.8%. This year's rate of 12% reflects an improving situation locally.

Anson's total labor force in January, as reported from the North Carolina Employment Security Commission, was 10,912. Of that number 9,608 were employed and 1,304 were unemployed. In December the total labor force was 9,638, with 8,473 employed and 1,165 unemployed.

You will notice that January's "labor force" and "employed" numbers show well over 1,000 more people than December 2011's numbers. The Express contacted Larry Parker at the North Carolina Employment Security Commission, and he explained that all of the employment reports are estimates. Parker added, "January 2012 data are preliminary. The 2011 estimates that are issued during the year are undergoing annual revision. The December numbers as well as other all other months for 2011 will be benchmarked in April 2012, and that may lead to changes to counties in regard to over-the-month and over-the-year changes in employment numbers."

Upon telling Parker that a gain of 1,165 employed people in Anson County from December 2011 to January 2012 would be the biggest news story of the year, he suggested that the ESC may need to look further into such a large change in the data in just one month.

Seasonal factors contributed to an increase in county unemployment rates across North Carolina in January. Rates increased in 95 of North Carolina's 100 counties, decreased in three counties and remained the same in two counties. Over the year, unemployment rates increased in 58 counties, decreased in 35 counties and remained the same in seven counties.

"Seasonal losses in retail as well as the leisure and hospitality sector contributed to gains in the unemployment rates," said N.C. Department of Commerce Deputy Secretary Dale Carroll. "While rates were up in January, over-the-year nearly half of the state's counties unemployment rates decreased or remained the same. Our focus continues to be our customers in assisting them in finding work through programs at our DES offices and JobLink Career Centers statewide."

North Carolina had 36 counties that were below the state's unadjusted unemployment rate of 10.5 percent. Rates increased in the 14 Metropolitan Statistical Areas.

Statewide the number of workers employed (not seasonally adjusted) decreased in January by 3,265 to 4,165,580. The number of people unemployed increased 13,681 in January to 488,427, compared to 474,746 in December.

Orange County has the state's lowest unemployment rate in January at 6.4 percent. Meanwhile, Graham County has the highest employment rate at 20.6 percent.

It is important to note that employment estimates are subject to large seasonal patterns and, therefore, it is advisable to focus on the over-the-year changes in the not seasonally adjusted series.

## Ben Smith Wins Overall in Lilesville Catfish Stew Cook-Off

A catfish stew cook-off was held at the Hatcher Park in Lilesville on Saturday, March 10, beginning at 10 a.m., with a \$250 Overall Grand Prize and awards given for the best red (or tomato base stew) and white (or milk base stew) catfish stews, as determined by several expert judges.

I woke up that morning to a mockingbird singing, and after a shave and shower prepared a breakfast for my bride of 44 years and myself consisting of white peppered gravy, Mary Bee's Tee biscuits, bacon and scrambled eggs served with black coffee.

At about 10:15 I headed toward Lilesville to check out what was going on, with the main



Ms. Virginia McCoy of Morven is shown receiving her first place for the red tomato base catfish stew. White base stew winner, Tommy Jarman is wearing the gray shirt.

objective to get a sample of all the different catfish stews. It has been several years since I made a catfish stew, and I certainly looked forward to this event with much anticipation. For 5 dollars you were given a bowl and the opportunity to get a bowl from each entry in the cook-off. Several vendor tables were set-up offering very attractive t-shirts to commemorate the event, as well as an assortment of food, drink and snacks.

I went around to each tent that was set up and gathered some information on each entry and took pictures. However, once the stews were ready, the camera had to go back into my pocket since I had more important things to do like devouring some catfish stew! It is hard to operate a camera and "shovel" down that "beautimus" catfish stew. Several of the stews were spiced hot enough to about self ignite and could easily replace napalm, but that didn't slow myself or others down any.

This was a fantastic event with a Carolina blue sky, with the wind a little brisk at times. The long sleeve shirt and light jacket felt mighty good. I was really impressed with what the Hatcher Park has to offer.

After sampling a bowl from each of the six or seven entries, I was "tight as a Georgia tick on the back of a coonhound in the month of July," grin if you must.

It was around 2:30 when the judging was complete, and Tommy Jarman won for the white or milk base style catfish stew and Virginia McCoy won for the red or tomato base style catfish stew. The Overall prize went to Ben Smith of Lilesville. I did some personal judging of my own and my favorite did not win, but that is why we are all different.

I made some new friends while there and had a wonderful and great time. The food and fellowship was great...and as I have said many, many times, "Two of the greatest ships that ever sailed, Friendship and Fellowship." Story and photo courtesy Bill aka Mickey Porter

## Red Cross Blood Drive is Today

The Anson Women's League is sponsoring a Red Cross Blood Drive on Wednesday, March 21 at the First Baptist Church in Wadesboro. The event will run from 1:30 to 6 p.m.

## Spaghetti Fundraiser is Thursday

The Hands of Hope will hold their 1st Annual Spaghetti Fundraiser this Thursday, March 22 at First Presbyterian Church in Wadesboro. Plates are \$6 and include spaghetti, salad, roll, dessert and drink. They offer free lunchtime delivery for businesses and organizations. All proceeds benefit the Circles of Hope initiative to end poverty in Anson County.

For more information please call 704-994-2333.

## Auditions for Stage Play are Saturday & Sunday

D.I.P presents...Dirty Secrets the Stage Play. Casting auditions will be held on Saturday and Sunday, March 24 and 25 at the Agricultural Center in Monroe. Male and female roles are available. The address is 3230-D Presson Road. Audition times are from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, and then 3 to 6 p.m. each day.

You are invited to come with the following: a prepared monologue along with a recent head shot and body shot. Professional pictures are not required. For more information contact [divineimagepro@gmail.com](mailto:divineimagepro@gmail.com).

## Ansonville Historical Museum Open Sunday

The Ansonville Historical Society Museum will be open this Sunday, March 25, from 2 to 4 p.m. and will have as guest speaker Mr. John Harris, a former Buffalo soldier. Everyone is invited to come out and enjoy this event.

## Board of Education Meets

The Anson County Board of Education will meet in regular session on Monday, March 26th. Closed Session begins immediately after the opening of the meeting at 5:30 p.m., and open session to the public begins at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting will be held in the Charles Riddle Staff Development Center located at the Board of Education Office at 320 Camden Road in Wadesboro.

Look inside for special inserts from IGA