

The Hampton B. Allen Library is hosting a chair exercise class Thursday, July 11. The class begins at 10:00 a.m. in the library's Pritchett Room. Everyone is welcome. Any questions please call 704-694-5177.

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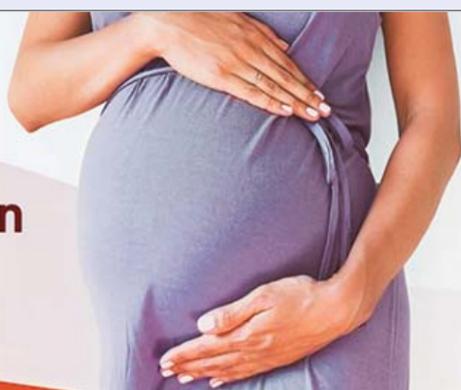
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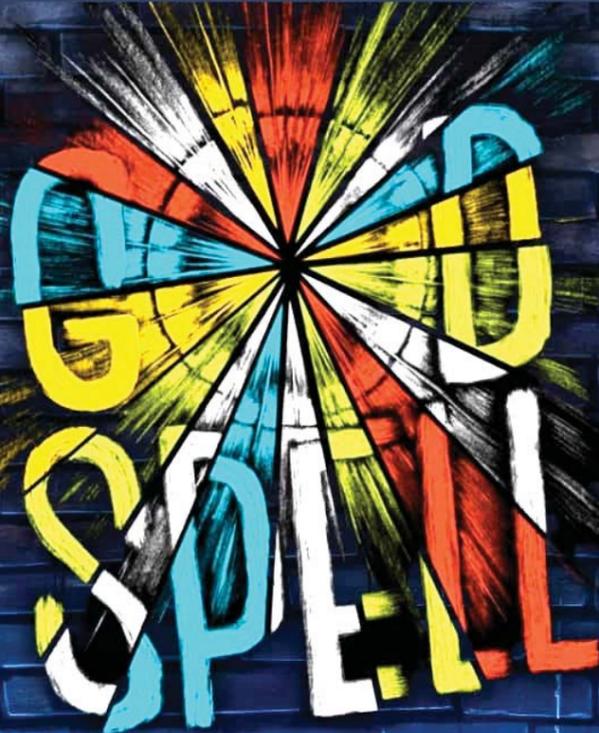
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To the Country Store For a Moonpie and a Mountain Dew

Do you have a country store in your collection of memories from past experiences? Recently I observed a photo of a country store setting along with a caption reading, A moonpie and an RC Cola at the Country Store. Thoughts of my own visits to the country store washed over me like warm ocean waves in the summertime.

Of course, growing up in Polkton provided several country store experiences. There was Sugartown, White Store and Carl Lee Jackson's to name a few. But the one closest to my heart, and I mean that literally, was Mr. Frank Griffin's Country Store located on the Polkton-Ansonville Road, just a couple of miles out of town.

We lived in what we commonly referred to as the big curve on that same road, just before you got to the Allen's and Brooks' family homes, within the city limits. And on many given Saturdays my little sister Tammy and I would ride our bicycles out to "Mr. Franks." If we had managed to save some change during the week, each of us could purchase whatever we wanted, visit with Mr. Frank and then pedal back home. It was my version of a fantastic way to spend a Saturday afternoon.

Tammy would usually buy a pack of sweet tarts and I remember them lasting for the remainder of the weekend. That's what you call savoring. I usually had a hankering for a cold Mountain Dew, there weren't many things better back in those days. But, as we made this an "every sunny Saturday afternoon occasion," Mr. Frank took notice and somehow knew when we would arrive. Soon he had a pack of sweet tarts waiting on the counter and would be making his way back to a small, rounded old refrigerator located at the back of his store - it was his personal refrigerator - and that made it even more appealing to me. Upon his arrival up to the front counter he had in his hand two Mountain Dews, so cold they had formed slush inside the bottles. He would snap off the caps with his church key bottle opener, hand me one of the bottles and take the other himself. We'd clink the two bottles together like they did in the movies and sit there on wooden Coca Cola crates, telling stories of what had taken place during that week.

Even as a fairly young kid I knew it was a special time and a special place. Where else would the store owner make preparations for a kid's visit, take extra care to be certain that slushiness had formed inside the bottles and then take the time to share it with me? I couldn't think of another place and that made me feel special too. Like my sister, I would make that Mountain Dew last as long as possible whilst we talked and he told stories about his past experiences. He had hundreds and I loved each one.

This probably sounds very hokey in comparison to what the kids of today do to fill their Saturday afternoons. Most are too busy to pedal their bicycles to the middle of nowhere, much less take the time to sit on a crate with an "old gentleman," and have a "real life" conversation. But for me, and as you can see by this story I write, it was worthy of making my "most cherished memories list."

Eventually we moved to within just about a stone's throw to the store and I could pedal there in about a minute and a half. I was older and wiser, but the scenario didn't change otherwise. Because the bike ride had become a lot shorter we wouldn't need two Mountain Dews, so Mr. Frank would only prepare one, and we'd split it! He would pour what he called "half" into a cup and leave the other "half" in the green bottle. He'd always slide the bottle toward me where the contents contained far more than "half," and I knew that. Often I would try and get him to take the bottle rather than the cup, but he wouldn't hear of it. After that little tug 'o war we'd continue as usual, sipping slushy Mountain Dew and telling stories about God only knows what, until it was time for me to go. This same story played out week after week, and even year after year.

I recall the day I told him that I had been accepted to Wingate College and would be leaving soon. If you can believe this, tears welled up in his eyes and he gave me a sweet hug. "You know I'm proud of you, Melanie. But I'm gonna miss you just a little bit," he said. His words made tears stream down my face as I replied, "I'm gonna miss you too." And then, instead of talking about old times and old stories, we began a new chapter called, "Tell me what you're going to do with your life and what you want to become." It was the end of one book and the beginning of a new one.

On the weekends that I came home I drove out to the country store and visited with Mr. Frank. It wasn't every Saturday, but I went as often as I could. The Mountain Dews never had slush in them anymore but they still hit the spot just the same. Sometimes he tried to slip a \$10 bill into my brown paper sack, "it's just a little spendin' money," he'd say. But having had it happen once, I always made it a point to look before leaving and hand it back to him with a heartfelt "Thank you, but I just can't."

I found out that his store was closing and went out to see Mr. Frank. As we enjoyed a Mountain Dew together he said that he was glad to be retiring, but that he was going to miss some of the people who patronized his store, and that I was one of them. Then he told me that he would like for me to have something from his store...to look around and have anything I would like. The aisles were mostly empty by then, but I spotted a wooden Coca Cola crate and asked if I could have it. I used that old crate for many years as a shadowbox, and now have it stored safely at my mother's home.

Those were the days my friends. What a peaceful sense of comfort I feel as I reminisce. If you're under the age of 50 you're probably calling me something along the lines of "Dorky." But for some, you'll know exactly what I'm talking about, because you too have your own country store experiences in one of the many stores located throughout the hills and backroads of Anson County. If so, I hope you take the time to remember them fondly.

Now, every time I see the clear green glass of a Mountain Dew bottle, in photographs of course, I remember the sweet, good times I shared with Mr. Frank and that country store of his. Sometimes I cry a little, but more importantly, I always smile. Here's to you Mr. Frank. I can still hear those two bottles go clink!

By Melanie Lyon

What Is N.C. REAL ID?

Beginning May 7, 2025, federal agencies will enforce the REAL ID Act, which requires a REAL ID, U.S. passport or another federally approved identification to board commercial flights and enter secure federal buildings.

The N.C. REAL ID is a REAL ID Act-compliant driver license that is just like a traditional license or ID but has a star at the top. Driver licenses and IDs without a star are noted "Not for Federal Purposes."

N.C. REAL ID Is Completely Optional You do not need a REAL ID driver license or identification card to do any of the following: Drive; Vote; Apply for or receive federal benefits (e.g., Veterans Affairs, Social Security Administration, etc.); Enter a federal facility that does not require an ID (e.g., a post office); Access a hospital or receive life-saving services; or Participate in law enforcement proceedings or investigations (e.g., serve on a federal jury, testify in federal court, etc.).

A REAL ID, however, might be helpful for anyone who frequently: Boards a commercial airplane; Visits nuclear sites; Visits military bases; or Visits federal courthouses, federal prisons or other federal facilities.

An individual without a REAL ID or U.S. passport may still be able to board flights or make visits to the facilities mentioned above, but they may have to provide additional documentation with their traditional license or ID.

Getting an N.C. REAL ID Even though the federal law is not effective until May 7, 2025, anyone can get a REAL ID now. To do so, visit an N.C. Division of Motor Vehicles driver license office with the required acceptable documentation. Be prepared for your office visit. Use the N.C. REAL ID Document Wizard to create a list of documents you will need for your visit. ncdot.gov/REALID/wizard.

Skip the line at driver license offices by making an appointment online at ncdot.gov/appointments. If you do not find an available appointment, please continue to check back as new available appointments are added each day.

Please note: When making your driver license office appointment, select Duplicate License, unless you are renewing your license. In either case, make sure you tell the examiner you want to make your license or ID a REAL ID when you check in.

Other Details to Know Your first N.C. REAL ID cannot be obtained online. It can only be issued at a driver license office, where required documents will be scanned and permanently stored, as required under federal law, in your NCDMV record.

Getting an N.C. REAL ID driver license or ID card costs the same as getting any other license or ID for the first time, and the process is similar.

If you get an N.C. REAL ID outside of the renewal period, the cost is same as a duplicate license or ID card. You will have to take a new photo, but no tests are required.

The cost is the same as a renewal, if the REAL ID is obtained within six months of expiration. You will have to take a vision test and take a new photo.

Applying for a North Carolina driver license or ID card will cancel any licenses or ID cards from other states through the State-to-State Verification program.

Atrium Women's Care Mobile Health Event is July 13

'Drive to Thrive' event will provide a wide range of services

Atrium Health Women's Care Drive to Thrive is mobile care unit that provides a range of women's care services in a warm, welcoming environment. It will be in the front lot of Atrium Health Anson on Saturday, July 13, from 9:00 a.m. until 2 p.m.

**Atrium Health Anson is located at
2301 US Highway 74 West in Wadesboro.**

Services include:

- Cervical cancer screening (Pap smear)
- Screening for urinary tract infections
- Screening and treatment for sexually transmitted infections
- Birth control (contraception), including same-day access to long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs), like intrauterine devices (IUDs)
- First-time prenatal visits, if not established with an OB/GYN
- Postpartum visits
- Ultrasounds
- Mammogram referrals
- Social worker on-site to help connect with other resources

Walk-ins are welcome, but appointments are recommended. You can call 704-468-0137 to schedule an appointment.

Visit AtriumHealth.org/MobileHealth or scan the QR code for the Drive to Thrive mobile health schedule, locations and more information. The website includes information on the Community Sliding Fee Discount Program that can provide up to a full 100% discount for qualifying patients.