

Obituaries

You Decide: Will We Soon Have a Four-Day Workweek?

The common five-day workweek has been around since 1940. That was the year the five-day, eight-hour workweek became standardized by the federal government. The legislation required companies to pay overtime wages for workweeks longer than 40 hours.

Prior to this, companies were free to set their own workweeks. The move to a standardized work week actually got started in 1869 when President Ulysses S. Grant guaranteed eight-hour workdays for government employees. Then in the 1920s auto manufacturer Henry Ford brought the five-day, eight-hour daily workweek to his auto factories, where he reduced workers' hours but maintained their pay. Ford concluded that longer workweeks yielded little benefit to auto production.

We may have entered a new debate about the workweek. Recently U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders introduced a bill in Congress to reduce the standard workweek from 40 hours to 32 hours. The bill would motivate business adoption by requiring time-and-a-half pay for work days longer than eight hours, and requiring double-time pay for workdays longer than ten hours. The bill would also prevent firms from reducing current hourly pay and benefits with the shorter workweek. Sanders argues that some European countries - specifically Norway and Denmark - have already adopted workweeks shorter than 40 hours. He also argues many studies show workers are happier and less "burned-out" with the shorter workweek, and employers are happier too.

Why has this issue suddenly popped up? I think you know the answer - the COVID-19 pandemic. Remember the labor shortage during COVID? Massive business shutdowns occurred, plus the federal government provided significant income support for furloughed workers. The return of workers to jobs was slow. As a result, there was more competition for workers, and businesses used incentives such as higher wages and better working conditions to fill their job slots. COVID also made people think more about their lives and future. The term "work/life balance" became popular and motivated workers - especially young workers - to put more emphasis on their lives outside of work.

The rise of remote work has also been another factor raising the profile of the workweek. How so? Remote work has allowed workers to spend more time at home, where they can interact with their family, integrate household chores with their work and enjoy more flexibility to schedule necessities like medical appointments and shopping.

A final factor is the ongoing prospect of labor shortages. The country's birth rate recently reached a record low. If continued, this change may result in a smaller future workforce. With employers competing for hiring from a smaller number of people, companies will look for more ways to appeal to workers as well as to attract more people - such as senior citizens - into the workforce.

The conclusion is the power between employers and employees may have shifted toward employees in recent years. Offering a guaranteed shorter workweek, but with the same pay as with the longer workweek, is one way of attracting and keeping workers.

So, is a shorter workweek a win-win? Advocates answer yes. Workers will have more time to relax, spend time with their family, handle obligations like doctors' appointments, and simply enjoy a better work/life balance. For two working spouses with children, childcare expenses will be reduced. Also, commutes to work will drop 20%, thereby helping reduce traffic congestion and pollution. Some studies also find less stress and better mental health for employees working fewer days and hours.

Advocates say businesses will also benefit. Operating a firm four days rather than five days a week will lower costs. Several studies have found worker productivity - meaning the amount of work accomplished per hour-increases with the shorter week, so much so that some businesses will realize increased revenues.

But before you start shouting, "32 hours, 32 hours," recognize that not everyone is on board for the shorter week. Some studies report worker stress increases with the shorter workweek as employees try to accomplish in four days what they previously did in five. Critics also point out that if all firms go to the shorter week, the total amount of business transactions could fall and shrink the economy. If all businesses are, for example, closed on Friday, then how does that help families schedule appointments? Then there's also the same concern as heard for remote work - the shorter workweek would reduce the time available for worker collaboration, something that is extremely important in many companies.

There are two viewpoints about where the workweek debate should go next. One says legislation - like that proposed by Senator Sanders - should be passed with the four-day, 32-hour workweek being accepted as the standard in the country. Backers say the benefits from the shorter workweek are too great to ignore.

The second viewpoint doesn't reject the shorter workweek, but opposes having the government impose it. Instead, why not allow individual businesses to decide for themselves whether to keep the 40-hour week or go to something shorter? Those supporting this viewpoint ask a simple question: if workers and businesses both benefit from the 32-hour, 4-day week, then wouldn't we expect them to willingly make the switch?

I look for the workweek debate to heat up. One reason is because of the emergence of artificial intelligence, which has the capacity to take over many worker tasks. In this case, the workweek may shrink simply because there's less work for people to do.

So, will we soon be working fewer hours each week? You decide.

Mike Walden is a William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor Emeritus at North Carolina State University.

Dignity, Sympathy and Respect

Our reputation is based on competence and caring. Every detail is taken care of.



704-694-2524

Visit us online at leavittfh.com



Susan Robbins Lyon

Susan Robbins Lyon died peacefully on Saturday, July 6, 2024, with her three siblings nearby.

A private graveside service was held on Wednesday, July 10, 2024, at Eastview Cemetery in Wadesboro.

Susan was born in Wadesboro on April 23, 1948, a daughter of Anne and Risden Lyon, and the first of four children. She completed the Special Education Program under Mrs. Alice Burch, where she excelled at reading and writing, and made lifelong friends.

Susan was renowned for her prodigious memory. She could always be counted on to remember names, birthdays and family stories. She loved all kinds of music, and enjoyed singing, playing keyboards and drums. Susan

also loved being an active part of the First Baptist Church in Wadesboro, and spending time with her many friends and family as part of the West Wade gang.

Susan lived in the family home until age 59 when she moved to Raleigh to be with her sister Mary Lou and her family. The Capital City offered many new opportunities to indulge her growing interests, including singing (as a member of the celebrated MnM Singers), horseback riding, art, enjoying restaurants, volunteering and shopping. For 15 years Susan adored a busy membership at Hayes Barton United Methodist Church and its Starnes Class.

Her many circles of friends were legend. Andy Griffith and Vince Gill had no greater fan.

There was no sweeter, more helpful, purer spirit than Susan. Our Susan remained good-natured, funny and beautiful until the very end.

She is survived by her siblings, Mary Lou (Rob) Gelblum, Ruthie (Marco) Fuchs and Allen (Melanie) Lyon; her nieces, Annafrancesca Fuchs (Ryan Balch) and Isabella Fuchs; her nephews, Reuben Gelblum and Morris Gelblum (Mariana); her great-nephew Vim Lucio Balchfox; her first cousin who was like a sister, Dodie Little; and her favorite fur friend Dumppling.

Susan was preceded in death by her parents; her dear Aunt Mary Louise Little (Aunt Lou) and Uncle Hal Little; and her first cousin Henry Little.

We would like to thank the wonderful people who helped with Susan's care over the years, and became like family. Susan was always surrounded by love and happiness.

Susan had a deep love and respect for all animals. In lieu of flowers, contributions to the Anson County Animal Shelter would be an honor to her memory. The address is: Anson County Animal Shelter, 7257 US Highway 74, Polkton, NC 28135, or Venmo (Friends of Anson County Animal Shelter), or email mlett@ansoncountync.gov.

The arrangements were in care of Leavitt Funeral Home and online condolences may be made at www.leavittfh.com.



**(980)
286-2928**

**CRIMINAL
DEFENSE
TRAFFIC
TICKETS
DWI DEFENSE**



Sable L. Toney, Esq.

**S.TONEY
LAW, PLLC**

107-C East Wade Street • Suite E
Wadesboro, NC 28170
Phone: (980) 286-2928
Fax: (980) 346-5173
Email: info@stonelaw.org

Affordable Health Screenings Coming to Wadesboro

Residents living in and around Wadesboro can learn about their risk for cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, diabetes, and other chronic, serious conditions with affordable screenings by Life Line Screening. First United Methodist Church will host this community event on Monday, July 15. The church is located at 118 East Morgan Street in Wadesboro.

Screenings can check for:

- The level of plaque buildup in your arteries, related to risk for cardiovascular disease, stroke and overall vascular health.
- HDL and LDL Cholesterol levels • Diabetes risk • Kidney and thyroid function & more

Screenings are affordable and convenient. Free parking is also available. Special package pricing starts at \$159, but consultants will work with you to create a package that is right for you based on your age and risk factors. Call 1-877-237-1287 or visit: lifelinescreening.com. Pre-registration is required.

CROSS COUNTRY Located in Wadesboro

HOME IMPROVEMENT

FENCING Privacy, Chain Link, Farm, Aluminum

PAINTING Home & Business • **STAINING**

PRESSURE WASHING & MORE!

Licensed & Insured Free Estimates
Jimmy Chapman 704-589-8610

T O Z





Holly Allison Kiker, OD

ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS • ACCEPT MOST INSURANCES

**ANSON FAMILY
OPTOMETRIC, PLLC.**

1134 Holly Street in Wadesboro (On Hwy 74 across from CVS)
Mon-Thurs 8:30-5 & Closed Fridays 704-694-3618

CLASSIFIEDS

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

**CRIDER & CRIDER
PROPERTIES**

704-694-3030

EVENT SPACE AVAILABLE

James Holbrook Building at 400 North Greene Street in Wadesboro. Includes tables, chairs, linen, china & centerpieces. Find with Facebook!

Call Kathy at
Crider & Crider Properties
704-694-3030

TONY'S REPAIR SERVICE
3119 Stanback Ferry-Ice Plant Road in Wadesboro
704-438-5523 Mon-Fri 8-6 Sat 7-12



PICK UP & DELIVERY
WE REPAIR ALL BRANDS
**LAWN MOWERS
TRACTORS
ATVS & MORE**
If it has a motor & needs repair, give me a call!

Steve A. Northcutt's
SHINE'S SHEDS & SHELTERS
SELLER OF PINE VIEW BUILDINGS
PORTABLE STORAGE BUILDINGS
RENT TO OWN NO CREDIT NO SECURITY CHECK DEPOSIT
8613 Highway 74 East in Marshville
704-624-0395 www.shinessheds.biz

**MARSHVILLE
FAMILY DENTISTRY**
General, Cosmetic & Implant Dentistry
6604 E. Marshville Blvd.
Marshville, NC 28103
704-624-6300
www.marshvilledentist.com

WE SELL APPLIANCE PARTS
**MARTIN FURNITURE
FACTORY OUTLET**
High Quality - Low Prices
1367 Highway 74 West
Wadesboro • 704-694-3185