

THE ABSOLUTE BEAUTY OF IT ALL

an original play written, produced, directed by
Charlette Rhue Bennett

SHOW TIME
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2024
1:00 PM
COLE AUDITORIUM
HAMLET, NC

Tickets Available At
Cole Auditorium Box Office
Hamlet, NC
Rhue's, Too! Beauty Salon
Rockingham, NC
Lacy's, Inc.
121 S. Green St., Wadesboro, NC

Title Sponsor
Griffin
Automotive Group Hamlet/Rockingham, NC
Diamond Sponsors
McNeill Funerals Rockingham, NC
CONVENIENCE CORNER Hamlet, NC

Town of Lilesville's HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS!

Christmas PARADE **TUESDAY DEC. 10 6PM**

WANT AN ENTRY IN THE PARADE?

Contact Lilesville Town Hall at 704-848-4711. Dec. 6 deadline.

Christmas in the Park

TREE LIGHTING • CAROLING
FREE HOT CHOCOLATE & COOKIES
FOOD TRUCKS
FREE PICTURES WITH SANTA!



AFTER THE PARADE AT HATCHER PARK



**NORTH POLE
MARKETPLACE**
TUESDAY EVENING DEC. 10

Vendors will be set
up in
HATCHER PARK
Paparazzi Jewelry
T-shirts • Soaps
Sweets & Treats
Scarfs
Pocketbooks
& More!!!



FOREVER TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

This event is open to all community members. Please join us on:

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3RD 6PM

Leavitt Funeral Home 2036 Morven Road in Wadesboro

If you would like to place an ornament on the Forever Tree in honor or in memory of someone, please contact: Nia Jones, Bereavement Social Worker at Anson Community Hospice (910) 997-4464. The deadline is November 25.

Or mail completed form to:

Anson Community Hospice, 1119 US Highway 1 N, Rockingham, NC 28379

We request a \$10 donation per ornament. Donations are tax-deductible and will help fund grief support for the community.

Place ____ (# of) ornament(s) in **HONOR** of: _____

Place ____ (# of) ornament(s) in **MEMORY** of: _____

Name and address of individual(s) to send acknowledgment to: _____

Name and address of the donor to send thank you note to: _____

• **RSVP for Tree Lighting Ceremony.**

Will attend the Forever Lighting Tree Ceremony. Yes _____ No _____

Number of Guest _____ Contact number ____/____/____



You Decide: How Can Social Security be Saved?

My wife and I have been receiving monthly Social Security payments for several years. We also receive monthly payments from other retirement programs, so we are lucky not to depend only on Social Security for financial support. Still, Social Security is an important part of our monthly income. This means that like the other 68 million people who receive regular Social Security checks, we are worried. Why? Because on its current path, everyone's Social Security check will be cut by almost 20% in 10 years. Stated another way, by the mid-2030s Social Security won't have enough incoming revenue to pay what the system promised to recipients.

The reason is demographics. For decades we have been moving toward a larger-age-heavy population. The big "baby boomer" generation - of which my wife and I are members - has been increasing the number of Social Security recipients. Also, older people are living longer. And to add to the problem, with all-time low birth rates, at some point we could see an actual decline in workers who contribute to Social Security. This is important because Social Security payments to retirees depend both on what the retirees contributed as well as what current workers are paying.

We've been down this path before. Social Security faced shortfalls in the 1980s, also due to the same types of demographic changes. A commission was appointed to find a solution. They did, and Social Security has been running on that solution for over 40 years. Among the elements of the solution were an increase in Social Security tax rates and an increase in the age for receiving full Social Security benefits. I predict we will follow the same process for dealing with today's Social Security problem. I expect a broad-based commission will be formed in the early 2030s, and it will agree on a fix for keeping Social Security financially solvent.

So what might the solution be? In my viewpoint, there are only four options: increase Social Security revenues, decrease Social Security benefits, both increase Social Security revenues and decrease benefits, or scrap the current Social Security system and install a totally new system.

Let me give some details on each of these possibilities. To increase revenues, there are two major options. One is to increase the Social Security tax rate on earnings, which is currently 6.2% paid both by the employee and employer on the first \$168,000 of earnings. Why is there an income limit for the tax? It's because Social Security benefits to recipients stop rising at the limit. If taxes were paid on earnings above that limit, then the worker would be paying more but without receiving higher benefits. The framers of Social Security in the 1930s wanted to avoid Social Security being viewed as a welfare program. Incidentally, the payment limit (now \$168,000) is raised each year by the previous year's inflation rate.

The second option is to scrap the earnings limit and apply the Social Security tax to all earnings, even while continuing to use the limit to stop increases in benefits for people with earnings above the limit. Of course, this would turn Social Security into a partial welfare program, meaning recipients with earnings above the limit would pay more but with no additional benefits.

Social Security can easily change payments by adjusting the formula used to calculate those payments. Currently, Social Security breaks a worker's lifetime income into segments, applies a factor to each of those segments, and then does a calculation to determine the worker's monthly payment from Social Security. Payments can easily be altered higher or lower by adjusting the segments and the factors for each segment. Also, Social Security can make different changes for different income groups. So, for example, if it wanted to, the Social Security system could reduce payments to recipients with higher earnings and raise payments to recipients with lower earnings. Indeed, under the current system, lower income earnings receive a higher percentage of their earnings in Social Security benefits than higher income earners.

Social Security uses past inflation rates in many of its calculations to make earnings in past years comparable to the purchasing power of earnings in more recent years. But since there are numerous measures of price inflation, Social Security can lower payments by choosing a less generous inflation measure. This is also a possibility.

Many would consider the changes discussed above as minor adjustments. These critics argue Social Security should go bold in its next set of changes. One long-discussed option is the idea of investing some of Social Security's revenues in the stock market. Currently Social Security is legally limited to investing funds in U.S. Treasury securities. Although safe, these investments pay a relatively low rate of return.

While over the long run investors will earn a much better rate of return in the stock

market, there's always the possibility they won't over a specific time period. The framers of Social Security also worried about the influence Social Security could have on the stock market with its large investments, and they wanted to avoid this.

My guess is the next commission on Social Security will choose the option of increasing some revenues while reducing some payments, mainly for higher income earners. This is the approach used by the 1980s commission.

With a few exceptions, virtually everyone in the country is already receiving Social Security benefits now or will when they retire. This means dealing with the looming shortfall in Social Security is very, very important. In a few years, there will be a commission to save Social Security. My advice is to listen to what is proposed, and then decide what is best.

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

SANTA DAY SATURDAY December 7 9am to 12 noon



Come out to visit Santa and Mrs. Claus for free pictures with Santa...and a TOY for every good girl and boy!!!

**Event takes place at Ma's Restaurant
6430 Highway 52 in Morven**



Representative Mark & Lisa Brody Celebrate 50th Wedding Anniversary

Representative Mark and Lisa Brody of Monroe will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on November 29, 2024.

Born and raised in Milwaukee, WI, they were married at Oklahoma Avenue Lutheran Church on November 29, 1974, and resided in Wisconsin until they chose to make North Carolina their new home in 1996.

Mark and Lisa are proud parents of three daughters: Nicole (Jayme) Brody-Pluer of Milwaukee, Nancy Brooks and Neva (Matt) Helms, all of Monroe. Additionally, they are blessed with three grandchildren.

Mark serves in the North Carolina General Assembly as State Representative for District 55, which encompasses most of Union and all of Anson County.

They plan to mark this occasion with a small family gathering.