

# THE EXPRESS

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**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO EVERYONE! ENJOY LETTERS TO SANTA IN THIS EDITION.**

## Need 2013 Tax Write-off?

### Make a Contribution to the Barn Blast

If you're looking for a last minute tax write-off for 2013 and an investment in the future of Anson County, here is your answer. The Anson County Partnership for Children's eighth annual Barn Blast will be held on Friday, January 31 at SPCC's Lockhart-Taylor Center in Wadesboro.

All Barn Blast sponsorships and contributions are tax deductible. Sponsors and donors will also receive advertising in the Barn Blast program, immediate recognition on Facebook and the Partnership's website, and recognition at the event. All profits from the Barn Blast are used in Anson County for the Partnership's programs for young children. These include Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, which mails a book each month to over 1,000 children in Anson County, as well as many other literacy and early childhood programs. You can invest in the future of our county and receive a tax write-off by being a 2014 Barn Blast sponsor or donor.



For more information on Barn Blast sponsorships or donations, please call or come by the Anson County Partnership for Children, located at 117 South Greene Street, in uptown Wadesboro. You can call 704 694-4036 or visit [www.ansonchildren.org](http://www.ansonchildren.org).

Anson County Partnership for Children is a non-profit public/private organization which was formed in 1996 in response to the North Carolina Smart Start initiative. The Partnership is responsible for developing collaborative strategies to meet the unique needs of children and families in Anson County, focusing on Child Care, Health, Literacy and Family Support.

## Legislative Report

*From Sen. Gene McLaurin:* Since this is my final newsletter and legislative update for this year, I begin by reflecting on remarks I made when I was sworn in to office as your state senator almost one year ago, on January 4, 2013. I promised you I would use whatever God given abilities I have to serve you and our great state of North Carolina. I stressed I would be a strong voice for our rural area of the state and that I would reach across party lines to build consensus to solve our problems. My top priorities would be to help our communities recover from this recession and create jobs, improve educational opportunities for our citizens, and help those among us who truly need our assistance through no fault of their own. I promised I would be a good steward of your hard earned taxpayer dollars and I would promote openness and transparency in how your tax dollars are spent. Finally and most importantly, I asked for your prayers. As we close the chapter on 2013, these will continue to be my priorities going forward.

Just this week, I read some interesting data about voter registration in NC. More and more citizens who are registering to vote in our state are not choosing a political party affiliation. In fact, unaffiliated voters now represent 26% of all registered voters in NC, according to data from the NC Board of Elections. This is happening for many reasons, but it certainly sends a message that citizens are paying attention and do not necessarily feel comfortable with the current political climate. A few days ago a good friend told me he had changed his registration to unaffiliated because of the NC legislature's cuts to education, cuts that I could not support because I believe education is the key to economic prosperity. After spending the past year in Raleigh, I can understand these feelings and frustrations and it is exactly why I have focused on working with my colleagues in both parties on common sense legislation to find positive ways we can improve our state. Regardless of partisan affiliation, we need to remember that citizens elect us to solve problems and collaborate on finding solutions to build a better NC for the next generation.

I have realized over the course of my personal career in business and in public service just how important it is in times like these to work together. This year, it has been a goal of mine, especially as a freshman legislator, to keep an open mind, to look for ways to work together, to listen to other viewpoints and to do what my grandfather used to do when confronted with a problem. He would say you should examine all sides of an issue, seek the advice of others, and then make a decision you feel is in the best interests of those who are impacted by your decision. It was good advice then and has helped me many times since. So while we have all seen examples of extremism on both ends of the political spectrum, I truly believe we should work together on the state level to make a difference, and to find ways to make the future more prosperous for our children and grandchildren.

I thank you for your prayers, encouragement, and advice on issues of importance to you and your families. It is an honor for me to serve you in the NC Senate. I am inspired and optimistic we will meet the challenges before us as we begin a new year in 2014. I have met so many wonderful people in my district which includes Anson, Richmond, Rowan, Scotland, and Stanly Counties. During the session and since our adjournment, I have heard from many of you on issues ranging from education policy and funding to taxes, agriculture, environmental concerns, and job creation strategies. While we do not go into session again until mid-May, please remember that my office is here to help with any state government issues and problems you may have with agencies and services. My staff and I have worked on behalf of constituents, students, businesses, physicians' offices, and local governments this year to expedite NC Tracks payments, to intervene when agencies are not being responsive and giving you the support and assistance you deserve. Our office is open to advocate for you and I encourage you to contact us anytime.

Finally, I want to wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. As the angel said on that quiet night, "I bring you good news of great joy, which will be for all the people..." (Luke 2:10) This Christmas as we celebrate the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, many of us have family traditions we observe each year. For our family, one tradition is attending Christmas Eve service together. As we worship on this Christmas Eve, be assured I will be praying for God's continued guidance for me. My prayer will also be for you and your loved ones - that you will know peace, love, and joy in the New Year.

As always, please contact us at (919) 733.5953 or by email at [mclaurinla@ncleg.net](mailto:mclaurinla@ncleg.net) (Katie Stanley) or [gene.mclaurin@ncleg.net](mailto:gene.mclaurin@ncleg.net) (Senator McLaurin) if we can be of assistance. If you would like to learn more about the legislature, please visit: [www.ncleg.net](http://www.ncleg.net). If your high school student is interested in serving as a Senate page in the upcoming Short session, please have him/her contact Katie Stanley in my office the 2nd week of January to request an application. There are only 5 page positions open. We hope to have one page per county serve.



## Ansonville Elementary School Reading Night

Ansonville Elementary School held a Reading Night for students, parents, and community members. The auditorium was filled with excited family members as they watched each grade level perform. All students worked diligently to learn new songs and lines from their Reader's Theatre scripts.

Kindergarten performed *A for Apple* and *Five Little Pumpkins*, and then again along with first grade, *Fly Little Bats*, and *In My Garden*. Second grade performed the Reader's Theatre *Room for More*. Third grade performed *The Meal Must Go On - A Lesson In Cooperation*, fourth grade performed *The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything*, fifth grade performed *Know an Old Teacher*, and sixth grade performed *The Boy Who Wanted the Willies*.

Each and every student did a fantastic job. AES Reading Night was a huge success with a great turn out!



## State Fire Marshal: Celebrate Safely this Holiday Season

During this year's holiday season, Insurance Commissioner and State Fire Marshal Wayne Goodwin is reminding North Carolina families to prevent fires and injuries by taking a few simple steps when decorating, cooking, entertaining and heating their homes. "It is so easy to get caught up in holiday preparations that we sometimes forget to exercise caution," said Goodwin. "By taking some simple precautions, families can keep their homes and families safe during the holidays and throughout the year."

### Holiday Trees

- Choose a tree with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched.
- Place your tree in a stand filled with water and add water daily.
- Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from heat sources, such as fireplaces, heat vents, candles and lights, and make sure it isn't blocking any exits. If you are using an artificial tree, make sure that it is flame-retardant.

### Holiday Lights

- Use only lights that have the label of an independent testing laboratory on them.
- Make sure to select the correct lights for the area, as some lights are intended only for indoor or some only for outdoor use.
- Replace any string of lights that has worn or broken cords, or loose bulbs connections.
- Turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.

### Candles

- Light candles carefully and keep them at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn, including decorations, blinds and curtains.
- Whether using one candle or more than one in a candelabra, kinara, or menorah, make sure that the candle holder is sturdy and always place it where it cannot be knocked over.
- Keep candles out of reach of children and pets, and never leave a child alone in a room with burning candles. Keep matches and lighters up high and out of children's reach.

### Cooking

- Cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires, and most cooking fires involve the stovetop. Create a "kid-free zone" of at least three feet around the stove and areas where hot food and drink are prepared or carried.
- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, roasting or boiling, check the food regularly and remain in the home while food is cooking. Use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
- Keep a lid nearby when you are cooking to smother small grease fires. Slide the lid over the pan and turn off the stovetop carefully. Leave the pan covered until it is cooled and never try to pick up or carry a hot or burned pan. Never put water on a grease fire.
- For an oven or microwave fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed.

### Heating

- Establish a three-foot "kid-free" zone around open fires and space heaters.
- Never use an oven to heat your home.
- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.
- Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Ensure that a working smoke alarm is installed inside every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement. Smoke alarms give everyone in the home an early warning and an opportunity to escape a fire quickly.

For more safety tips, go to the Safe Kids North Carolina website at [bit.ly/safeholiday](http://bit.ly/safeholiday) or the National Fire Protection Association website at [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org).

## Dr. Victoria Rommel Earns Certification as Wound Specialist

The American Board of Wound Management (ABWM) has announced that Victoria Rommel, MD is now a Certified Wound Specialist. She is also a Fellow of the American Academy of Family Practice (FAAFP) and a Certified Medical Doctor.

Dr. Rommel will continue to practice office medicine after the closing of Anson Community Hospital. She will relocate to one of three locations in Wadesboro to be announced this spring, where she will see her office patients as well as seeing Nursing Home patients.

Dr. Rommel is participating with hospital staff, rotating responsibilities for the care of patients admitted to Anson Community Hospital until it closes.

## Do You Need a Coat or Blanket? Would You Like to Donate?

The Faith-Based Center of Hope has begun their "Warm Coats, Warm Hearts" program. They have distributed coats to several of the churches and schools in Anson County.

Blankets for the elderly are also available.

To donate coats and blankets or to request help, please contact Vancine Sturdivant at 704-848-4412 or Ester Lindsey at 704-848-8452.

## Unauthorized Access to Payment Card Data in Target Stores

Target Corp has confirmed that up to 40 million customers' credit and debit cards could be affected by a massive security breach which allowed access to private card information used at it U.S. stores. Unconfirmed information from Visa and MasterCard indicates that the breach began on Black Friday (Nov. 27th). Stolen card information may include customer's name, card number, expiration date and three-digit security code, Target said.

Uwharrie Bank issued a release stating, "This breach has nothing to do with any particular bank or financial institution. Financial institutions were not breached, only Target. Nevertheless, all financial institutions who issue debit cards and/or credit cards will most likely have customers who have been affected. Target customers who used a debit or credit card at a Target store from Nov. 27th until last Monday, December 16 should monitor their account activity for suspicious charges and to immediately report any suspicious or unauthorized transaction to their card issuer."

The Better Business Bureau warned Target shoppers, whose credit and debit cards may have been compromised by the data breach, to watch out for scam emails claiming to be from Target. Target announced that it had sent all forty million customers an email about the data breach. This email announcement from Target opens the door for scammers to send out fake "Target" emails that contain viruses that can lead to identity theft. With Target customers expecting an email from the real "Target," they may open fake "Target" emails and click on links or download attachments.

The BBB has this advice for Target shoppers:

- 1) Do not open a "Target" email if it is flagged by your operating system as spam or if it goes to your junk mail folder.
- 2) Look at the sender's email address. The sender's domain name should end in "@target.com." If it has any other letters or numbers after the "@" symbol other than "target.com" it is probably a scam email.
- 3) If you get an email from "Target" do not click on any links or download any attachments in the email, regardless of how real the email appears. Scammers can easily create emails and websites that look like the real company.
- 4) If the email from Target does have links in it, you can hover over the link without clicking on it, to see what the web address is for the link. If the web address ends with anything other than "@target.com" it could be a scam.

For more information about phishing scams and identity theft, please visit [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org).

## A Remembering holiday message from Ed McBride

