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

## Mother of Shooting Victim Charged

**Three year old girl underwent surgery, reported in good condition**

Anson County Sheriff's Deputies have charged the mother of a five year old boy who found a handgun in the house and accidentally shot his three year old sister on November 28th. Kimberly Davis, mother of both children, was charged late Monday evening, December 5th when she came to the Sheriff's Office. She was charged with Failing to Store a Firearm to Protect a Minor, a misdemeanor. She was released on an unsecured bond.

Sheriff Tommy Allen said that after discussing the case with the District Attorney's Office and his detectives, it was decided that Ms. Davis should be charged. "We were waiting for the child's condition to stabilize and be released from the hospital and that happened today. Ms. Davis was aware that she was going to be charged and came to the Sheriff's Office after the child was released. It's in the hands of the DA now." Sheriff Allen said. The Sheriff reported that the girl is in good condition. She had undergone surgery on the day that she was shot.

To recap what happened: On Monday morning, November 28th Davis' five year old son found a handgun in a dresser in the bedroom and fired one round that struck his three year old sister in the abdomen. The bullet traveled down her right leg, breaking the femur bone before exiting the leg. The child was asleep in bed with her mother when she was shot.

"This could have been a lot worse. We could have had two dead people in that bed. People must keep guns stored in a secure place where inquisitive kids cannot get to them," Allen said. Initial court date for Ms. Davis is set for January 9th, 2012.

## Bright, Beautiful Day For Wadesboro Christmas Parade!



On Thursday, December 1, parade goers flooded to the streets of uptown Wadesboro for the annual Christmas Parade. Mrs. Anjanette Flowers, news anchor at WCNC in Charlotte, served as Grand Marshal. Senator Bill Purcell and Representative Frank Mcguirt sponsored the event while leading the dignitaries for the seventy plus entrants. It was a sunny, bright, beautiful day and you couldn't have preordered a nicer one.

Parades are filled with fanfare and fun and this year's was no exception. Starting the parade at an earlier time allowed everyone participating in the parade to be seen as well as heard. What better way to capture the moment than by actually spying those smiling faces as they walk, ride or march by, usually incorporating their big parade waves to the crowd!

Lynn Edwards and the Wadesboro Chamber of Commerce hosted the event, which was off on a timely manner and was well

attended. "I have already contacted the school system about going back to our traditional 4 p.m. start time on the first Thursday in December, Edwards said. "If we can do that, the students would receive an early release day." Ultimately, that decision would have to be made by the Anson County School Board.

Edwards said that she would like to thank those who helped in making the event a success. Thanks go out to the Wadesboro Police Officers, the Town of Wadesboro Street Department, Mrs. Lois Crumpler and Mr. Don Altieri, and also to those on the scenes, Mr. Russell Sikes, Mr. Fred Sparger and Mr. Harvey Leavitt.

Pictured above are John Crawford and his son Luke. The Wadesboro Christmas Parade has a little something special for everyone...as Dr. Seuss would say, "From the short, the tall, the big and the small." Photo and story by Melanie Lyon

## Unemployment Rate 12.2% in October

Anson County had an unemployment percentage of 12.2% for the month of October, little changed from September's 12.1%. The whole state of North Carolina had an unemployment rate of 9.7%

Anson's total labor force in October was 9,742. Of that number 8,551 were employed and 1,191 were unemployed. In September the total labor force was 9,743, with 8,551 employed and 1,192 unemployed.

Unemployment rates decreased in the majority of North Carolina's counties in October. Rates decreased in 83 counties, increased in 12 and remained the same in five.

"October data showed a decrease in all of the state's metropolitan areas," said DES Assistant Secretary Lynn R. Holmes. "While unemployment rates dropped in most of the counties, there are counties with rates that are higher than ten percent. We continue to work with our workforce partners in assisting our customers in job search assistance in our DES offices and JobLink Career Centers across the state."

North Carolina had 42 counties that were at or below the state's unadjusted unemployment rate of 9.7 percent. Rates decreased in all 14 of the state's Metropolitan Statistical Areas.

Statewide, the number of persons employed (not-seasonally adjusted) increased slightly in October to 4,070,801. The number of people unemployed decreased by 17,212. The number of people unemployed in October was 436,615 compared to 453,827 in September.

Currituck County had the state's lowest unemployment rate in October, at 5.4 percent. Meanwhile, Scotland County had the highest unemployment rate, at 16.6 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.

## "Fire Chief Schutz" Signs Continually Appear and Disappear



As reported in The Express last week, signs with the message, "FIRE Wadesboro Police Chief Janie Schutz (Paid For By The Citizens Of Wadesboro)" appeared in various locations on Monday, November 28th. By the next day the signs had been removed. At the time of that article it was unknown who had placed the signs. In the days

since, the signs have reappeared and again disappeared. At the Wadesboro Town Council meeting on Monday night, December 5th it became apparent who was responsible for the signs. Wadesboro citizen Steve Swarengin appeared before the council to complain that his signs had been removed. Swarengin told The Express that at the meeting he learned that Town Manager John Witherspoon had ordered the signs to be removed by a city employee because "they were improperly placed in a right of way." Swarengin said, "I responded to that by saying that in some locations my signs were purposely placed beside or between existing signs, yet those other signs had not also been removed." Swarengin said that he was offered no further explanation or discussion.

Swarengin added, "At the council meeting I had petitions asking for the dismissal of Wadesboro Police Chief Janie Schutz. The petitions had over 200 signatures that two of us collected on Monday afternoon in only about 2 hours time."

As of press time on Tuesday, December 6th, at least one of the signs was still on display, at the intersection of Morven Road and Moores Lake Road.

## Toys For Tots is in Anson County

Toys For Tots, the largest not-for-profit organization in the United States, will operate their annual campaign in Anson County. After successfully completing the training required in September, Vancine Sturdivant was approved as coordinator for Anson County. When asked why she applied for the program, Vancine stated Congressman Larry Kissell and Travis Manigan told Toys For Tots about the work her organization, Faith-Based Center of Hope, did for kids at Christmas. They filled out the application for her. She is grateful that Anson County was chosen.

Two requirements of the program were to prove there was a need in the county and that the county will stand with the coordinator in helping to fill the need. Vancine said she was able to prove the need through documentation from previous Christmases. Now she is pleading with the county to help her prove we are a county that stands together and will come to the aid of our less fortunate.

Vancine said, "The mission statement for Toys For Tots is to bring joy to a child at Christmas and hope to a less fortunate adult during Christmas. Anson County, I know we as a strong community can do this."

To be a volunteer or to donate, please contact Vancine Sturdivant at 704-848-4412.

Vancine and her volunteers will distribute toys on December 18th at Harvest Ministries beginning at 12:30 p.m. Holla is hosting a Toys For Tots Christmas party for all the children on December 22nd beginning at 4 p.m. at the Holla Center in Morven.

## "Ding Dong the Wicked Witch is Dead!"

Having spun the aforementioned song around in my head a billion times during the billion times I watched the movie *The Wizard of Oz*, I never actually stopped to consider what it meant and how horrible it sounds. The movie, one of my favorite stories, ends happily, or so I thought. It wasn't until I saw the Broadway Musical, *Wicked* that I realized the wicked witch wasn't really as wicked as she seemed. And so the words, "ding dong the wicked witch is dead," could never, ever represent what they once did prior to learning WHY the witch was considered wicked.

How many times in life have we heard adages, which supposedly help us to see the truth? "Never judge a book by its cover," "don't believe everything you hear," "judge not lest ye be judged," "you never truly know someone until you've walked in their shoes," just a sampling of reminders, nudging us to ease up on those we've failed to forgive for whatever reason we have, or THINK we have - words urging us to let go of the stone before we sink in our own muck.

Sometimes you have to learn a lesson the hard way, even when you believe you're right, unequivocally. And on Sunday, October 23, I learned one of those lessons in the worst possible way.

For several years now I've followed MotoGP, the highest form of international motorcycle racing. Allen, my husband, is an avid enthusiast and never misses a race. During his viewings I too have taken a liking to the sport, while determining my favorite riders as well as my least favorite riders just as if I were watching any one of the many ball sports I've followed throughout my lifetime. With ball, take college hoops in North Carolina for example, you either love the Tarheels or hate them. You love the Blue Devils or you'd rather die than cheer for them. Whether you're a Deacon or Terp, Hoakie or Tiger fan, you have your favorite team and you make no qualms about which is best. The rest, well they can fall off a cliff for all you care because in ball sports, that dislike runs strong, and without the rivalry the sport just isn't as much fun.

So I watched MotoGP with the same philosophy by which I watched ball sports. My favorites, Ben Spies and Valentino Rossi, usually managed to keep me on my toes at some point during the races, making me proud on most any given Sunday. The rival rider, the one who disgusted me, the one I loathed, the one I found to be over zealous and cocky, boastful and egotistical, too mad for the sport, Marco Simoncelli, was like a Carolina Tarheel is to a Duke fan. Week in and week out I yelled at "Super Sic," as he was referred, with that horrible "h" word, hate, looming in the forefront of my mind. Honestly, I felt hate for this guy, someone I had never met, and without considering what circumstances made him who he was. He had such an inflated sense of self I couldn't possibly like him, right? But there were millions who did, and I often questioned why? With great passion I cheered Ben and Vale on while discounting Simoncelli at all costs. He was nothing to me or so I thought, and I cast him out of my MotoGP life, as if to say, "You are a worthless."



On October 23, while watching a race I witnessed Marco Simoncelli, that villain rival, as he veered into traffic and crashed. In a split second he had been run over by both Valentino Rossi, his fellow countryman and close personal friend, and American rider Colin Edwards, and I knew in that same instant he was dead, right before my eyes. I've never seen anyone die. People don't die while playing the sports I'm accustomed to watching. It is very rare for death to strike motorcycle racing. But on October 23, I witnessed the death of someone I believed in my heart to have hated during the entire stint that I followed his career. And in that same instant, it was revealed that I never truly hated him at all. I was wrong, so wrong it hurt down through my heart and into my soul. I cried for a man I didn't know and one who I had disliked for all the wrong reasons. I've thought of Marco every single day since, realizing how wrong a person can be about another. How many times have you heard this story, even lived it? So many have and never come to terms with it, not until it is too late, just as it is for Marco Simoncelli and me. I'm fortunate that Marco wasn't my brother, my neighbor, my mother, or someone I should absolutely cherish, no matter how good or how bad I THOUGHT he was. Because now, Marco, like the wicked witch, is dead!

In my case I was completely misguided by my own stupidity and narrow mind. It was not until his death I uncovered the true man Marco Simoncelli was. How his zest for life was extended to those less fortunate than he. He was kindhearted and giving, not boastful and arrogant as he appeared. He was a wonderful friend to those who would have known him best, fellow racers, friends, fans and family members. Many felt as I did about Marco, that he was an egotist; only to find out his persona on the track was totally different from the actual man. And so I've learned a very valuable lesson, but I've learned it at a terrible cost. It's true; you cannot judge a book by its cover. Things are not always as they seem. You never really know a man until you've walked in his shoes. So try considering the source, do unto others, be kinder than necessary, forgive and forget, put the past where it belongs—in the past, live in the present for it is a gift, don't hold a grudge, do not wait to tell the people who matter that you love them, for in an instant, a life could end.

We all know wicked witches, villains, rivals and the like. During this time of year, let us open our hearts and our minds. Look for the good rather than evil. Forgive ourselves for trespasses made and forgive those who have trespassed against us. 'Tis the season for joy, hope, faith, charity, goodness and light. If we all spread a little light, our worlds are more likely to be illuminated with a sense of peace, but more importantly, the light of love for one another.

And now that I have discovered the real you, Marco Simoncelli, I will forever be haunted by your death, but at the same time be redirected in my thoughts as they regard the judgment of others, and the lives they choose to live.

By Melanie Lyon

## Harvest Ministries Holiday Event December 18th

Harvest Ministries (HMOC) has announced that they will hold a community event at their facility on Sunday, December 18. Services begin that day at 10:30 a.m. and the holiday event will begin after area church services.

Everyone is invited to come and join in the fun and fellowship. HMOC has partnered with Toys For Tots this year to reach many children and families, providing hundreds of toys, prizes, bicycles and much more. One lucky person will leave with a new television, \$200 in cash, or a special "surprise prize!" A delicious free Christmas meal will be provided for the entire community. During the meal buses will be running to provide meals to shut-ins, nursing home residents and others.

If you need a ride or have gifts to donate, call HMOC at 704-695-2879. Buses will be picking up citizens on Sunday morning between 9:30 and 10:30 a.m.

## Senior Citizens Christmas Luncheon

The Annual Senior Citizen Christmas Luncheon will be held on Thursday, December 8th, beginning at 11 a.m. in the Ingram Room at the Lockhart-Taylor Center. Anyone interested in attending must call Grace Senior Center to register at 704-694-6616.

## Ho Ho Ho Santa is Coming to Morven!

Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus are coming to Morven. The Town Council of Morven and Rev. Larry King will be presenting Mr. and Mrs. Claus for all the kids who would like to tell Santa their Christmas wishes. So, bring your cameras and have a picture made with Santa and Mrs. Claus. This event is free.

They will also collecting new toys for Toys for Tots and non-perishable food items for needy families. Come out and see Santa and Mrs. Claus this Sunday, December 11th, from 2 to 4 p.m. or until...

They will be located at The Meeting Place building on Main Street, across from Morven Town Hall. Ho, Ho, Ho. Merry Christmas!

## Compassionate Friends Candle Lighting Service

The local chapter of the Compassionate Friends will hold its annual Candle Lighting in memory of deceased children this Sunday, December 11 at 7 p.m. at Calvary Episcopal Church in Wadesboro. The church is located at 308 East Wade Street. The service will be followed by fellowship and refreshments in the church fellowship hall.

This worldwide event starts with candles being lit in New Zealand, progressing westward to create a virtual 24 hour wave of light at 7 p.m. local time in 15 countries around the world, including every state in the United States. "...that their light might always shine."

For more information call 704-694-8774, 704-475-5005 or Leavitt Funeral Home at 704-694-2524.

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