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Matthews - Mint Hill
WEEKLY

Friday, May 4, 2018 • Vol. 11 • No. 18

Paws in the Park
 Saturday, May 5th
 10am-3pm
 Chestnut Square Park
 itsparksandrec.com



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Leaders split on charter school bill

Mayor: Many critics of HB 514 haven't even read it

by Paul F. Bailey
 Matthews Mayor

One of the many things I learned while serving on the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Board of Education is that education policy is not easy. We are fortunate to have excellent schools in Matthews, but the



Bailey

problem is there are too few of them. The enormous growth in our town is putting more stress on our schools. The latest bond package holds little relief and no new schools for Matthews. New schools for this area are decades away. CMS can do nothing relative to raising funds for capital projects yet suffers the blame for not building schools quickly

see BAILEY, Page 4A

Higdon: HB 514 is still not a good idea for our schools

by John F. Higdon
 Matthews Mayor Pro Tem

Just as repeated attempts to try a disliked food rarely improves its flavor, repeated readings of House Bill 514 do not make it more palatable. The bill, which would allow Matthews and Mint Hill to build and operate municipal charter



Higdon

schools, has already passed a State House vote and will likely come before the Senate during the upcoming short session. Here are a few reasons why I continue to believe HB 514 is not in our best interest:

1. Given the choice to recommend new schools for municipalities that have a municipal charter option versus those that do not, I suspect CMS will favor the latter. I fear HB 514

see HIGDON, Page 5A



Matthews-based Southern Deli Holdings is introducing the town to Fuzzy's Taco Shop. Photos courtesy of SDH

It's time for tacos

Fuzzy's Taco Shop opens first state location

MATTHEWS – Fuzzy's Taco Shop will bring its unique Baja-style fare to North Carolina with its first location opening May 3 at 2225 Matthews Township Pkwy.

This is the first Fuzzy's built, owned and operated by Matthews-based Southern Deli Holdings LLC.

SD Holdings began in 1999 as a single-store franchise, but has since grown into one of the country's largest McAlister's Deli franchisees. The Matthews firm has expanded its franchise footprint, now owning and operating more than 100 restaurants across six states within multiple

brands, such as MOD Pizza, Sonic Drive-In and Fuzzy's Taco Shop.

"We've been fans of Fuzzy's for a long time, so we are looking forward to finally being able to share the concept with the Matthews community," said Merrick McKinnie, Fuzzy's Taco Shop franchisee. "We think our guests will fall in love with our tacos, gauc and frozen margaritas."

The fast-casual Mexican restaurant will feature a cool and laid-back atmosphere designed to make patrons feel at home. A full bar will take center stage and

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Schools nominated for Blumey Awards

CHARLOTTE – Covenant Day leads area schools with four nominations in the seventh annual High School Musical Theater Awards, known as The Blumey Awards.

The Christian school earned nominations for Best Actor (Harrison Chase), Best Actress (Keller Jones), Best Featured Performer (Tori Winsky) and Best Supporting Actress (Elizabeth Bryan) for its production of "Mary Poppins."

Blumenthal Performing Arts will recognize winners in a show that will include performances by some of the nominees at 7 p.m. May 20 at Belk Theater. Tickets are available at www.BlumenthalArts.org or 704-372-1000.

The program celebrates the best in high school musical theater.

"While competition and awards are part of the process, getting to the Blumey Awards is really about working together to create a musical," Blumenthal President Tom Gabbard said. "Everyone there that night can feel the collective pride for what these students, teachers and parents have achieved in working hard to put their shows together."

Several other schools were recognized, including:

- Independence had nominations for Best Actor (Max Becker), Best Actress (Jada Eve) and Best Supporting Actress (Isabela Villanueva) for its production of "The 25th Annual Putnam Co. Spelling Bee."

see AWARDS, Page 2A

Former police officer helps others navigate mental health

by Karie Simmons
 karie@cmgweekly.com

CHARLOTTE – Kareem Puranda had been a police officer in Salisbury for eight years when his world was suddenly flipped upside down.

After a moment of poor judgment, he went from being a well-respected officer in the community to facing several lawsuits and two indictments for using excessive force. The investigations shook him to the core and, despite being found not guilty, ultimately led to his departure from law enforcement.

"Over the years, I became heavy-laden with

burden and stress," Puranda said. "What I discovered was that I was potentially dealing with PTSD and excessive burnout."

Puranda knew he had to be an agent of change, so he returned to school to become a licensed professional counselor, clinical addictions specialist and certified clinical trauma professional. Last year, he opened his own practice, Self-Talk Counseling & Consulting PLLC, to educate police officers, and others, on how to take care of their mental health. He also wrote a book called "Breaking the Code of Silence: A Cop's Journey to Triumph and

see MENTAL HEALTH, Page 2A



Kareem Puranda, a former Salisbury police officer turned counselor, is using his new practice to help cops navigate their mental health. Karie Simmons/MMHW photo

CMG WEEKLY'S 1ST ANNUAL
Women @ Work Luncheon

May 11th, 2018,
10:30am - 1:00pm
 Waverly Hilton Garden Inn

Tickets available online at
thecharlotteweekly.com/womenatwork

IN THE KNOW

PHOTO OF THE WEEK



Matthews Mayor Paul Bailey (right) recognizes Brad Heard during the April 23 town meeting for preventing a man from jumping off the Weddington Road bridge onto Interstate 485. Paul Nielsen/MMHW photo

MOST POPULAR STORIES

1. Many critics of charter school bill haven't read it
2. Higdon: HB 514 – still not a good idea
3. Closer to town-run charter schools
4. Lions back in the hunt
5. I'm back, this time for good

TWEET OF THE WEEK

"Congrats to @JaySam1k & @steelers on round 5 pick from NCSU & our Olde Sycamore neighborhood in Mint Hill NC. We see the signs of #proud parents. Make the most of your opportunity & live out your dream." – 2 Dudes Tony (@TonyVandelinde)

ONLINE EXTRA

• Schools should promote free speech, not political indoctrination. Congressman Robert Pittenger mentions a Butler High School teacher that gave tips to her students on how to be anti-gun activists.

UPCOMING EDITIONS

- May 11: Women @ Work
- May 18: Summer Camps



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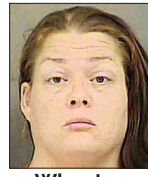
NEWS BRIEFS

Annual BeachFest brings the coast to Matthews

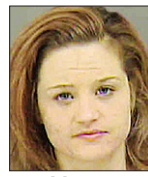
MATTHEWS – BeachFest Matthews returns to downtown for the 10th year. The event takes place May 11 and 12 at Stumptown Park, 120 S. Trade St. Admission to the festival is free. Performers include Gary Lowder & Smokin' Hot, Blackwater Rhythm & Blues, North Tower Band, Carolina Soul Band, Too Much Sylvia and The Fantastic Shakers. Families can enjoy carnival rides, inflatable bounce village, arts and crafts boardwalk, food trucks and interactive exhibits. The Cruisin' Car Show returns at 9 a.m. May 12 and car enthusiasts are encouraged to participate. Registration costs \$5 per vehicle in advance or \$10 per vehicle on event day. Awards go to the Top 20, Best of Show and Mayor's Choice. To accommodate pedestrians and vendors, Trade Street will close between John Street and McDowell Street at 9 a.m. May 11. The Trade Street closure will move to Main Street at 5 p.m. until the event ends around midnight May 12. Visit www.beachfestmatthews.com.

Women accused of trying to fraudulently cash check

MATTHEWS – Police arrested two women that tried to fraudulently cash a check at 2:47 p.m. April 18 at the State Employees Credit Union at Matthews Township Parkway. The two women left the bank at a high rate of speed after being refused service. Officers stopped a vehicle matching the description. Officers arrested Dusty Wheaton, 34, on charges of possession of stolen vehicle, and attempted obtaining money/property by false pretense. They arrested Alisha Mower, 33, on charges of possession of stolen vehicle and financial card theft. Detectives believe the women were working with the Felony Lane Gang, a Florida-based group that commits car break-ins to gather financial information to commit fraud. Call Detective Stacy Cooper at: 704-847-5555 with any details about the case.



Wheaton



Mower

Two downtown businesses report break-ins

MATTHEWS – Police are investigating a pair

of break-ins that occurred April 24 at downtown businesses. A security alarm company contacted police around 3 a.m. at Ming Fu restaurant (115 W. John St.). Police received another call at 7:41 a.m. that the Artful Gourmet Carryout and Catering (131 E. John St.) had also been broken into. Police believe both break-ins were committed by the same suspects. Call Detective Lori Valdes at 704-847-5555 with any details about the case.

Expo focuses on healthy living

MATTHEWS – The Matthews Chamber of Commerce presents a Healthy Living Expo with free screenings, fitness activities, healthy cooking demonstrations, blood drive and mammograms. The event takes place 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. May 12 on the town green in downtown Matthews. It will include a children's play area and giveaways. Visit www.matthewschamber.org for details.

Seasons change with Charlotte Civic Orchestra

MATTHEWS – The Charlotte Civic Orchestra celebrates the arrival of spring with a special performance at Matthews United Methodists Church. The orchestra presents a special performance of Schumann's Symphony No. 1, in B-flat major, Op. 38, also known as the Spring Symphony. The program includes selections from "My Fair Lady" and music from MGM movies. The concert starts at 3:30 p.m. May 20 at the church, 801 S. Trade St. Tickets are available at the door. They cost \$15 for adults, \$12 for seniors and students and \$40 for families.

Family robbed leaving church

MATTHEWS – The Matthews Police Department is investigating a robbery that occurred April 28 in a church parking lot. The victim told police that a male came to her window, pointed a semi-automatic pistol at her and demanded her purse as she was putting seat belts on her two boys at Assembly of God on Monroe Road. The suspect is described as 6-feet tall with a very slim build, wearing black clothing and a ninja mask. No injuries were reported. Call Detective Lori Valdes at 704-847-5555 with details.

CRIME SCENE

The Matthews Police Department reported these incidents April 16 to 22:

- **Break-ins, vehicles**
 - 12800 block of Vinings Creek Drive: Wedding band, necklaces and checkbook stolen. April 20
 - 100 block of Plantation Club Drive: Break-in reported. April 20
 - 2200 block of Fair Forest Drive: Utility cover, signal meter, hand tools and identification card stolen. April 21
 - **Property damage**
 - 300 block of West John Street: Vehicle damaged. April 17
 - 3000 block of Rainbow Ridge Drive: Bullets and vehicle damaged. April 18
 - Life Time Fitness, 9915 E. Independence Blvd.: Vehicle damaged with cutting instrument. April 18
 - Kings Jewelry, 1819 Matthews Township Pkwy.: Front door damaged. April 20
 - InTown Suites, 9211 E. Independence Blvd.: Window damaged. April 20
 - 900 block of Park Center Drive: Light pole damaged. April 22
 - **Thefts**
 - Target, 1900 Matthews Township Pkwy.: Amazon Echo stolen. April 16
 - 700 block of East John Street: Gaming system and \$2,500 worth of comic books stolen. April 17
 - 2200 block of Fair Forest Drive: Cellphone and vehicle stolen. April 18
 - Khol's, 9617 E. Independence Blvd.: Four pairs of kids shoes stolen. April 19
 - Plato's Closet, 9623 E. Independence Blvd.: Clothes/furs stolen. April 19
 - Bed Bath & Beyond, 10530 Northeast Pkwy.: Two vacuums stolen. April 20
 - Target, 1900 Matthews Township Pkwy.: Jewelry and clothing stolen. April 21
 - Khol's, 9617 E. Independence Blvd.: Kids clothes stolen and front doors damaged. April 21
 - **Thefts, vehicle parts**
 - 1800 block of Gander Cove Lane: License plate stolen. April 16
 - **Other**
 - 300 block of West John Street: Harassing phone calls. April 16

- Fountains Matthews Apartments office/clubhouse, 10624 Parrish St.: Communicating threats. April 18
- State Employee Credit Union, 1825 Matthews Township Pkwy.: Fraud and possessing/concealing stolen vehicle and stolen property. April 18
- 14000 block of Woodfern Place: Assault with a deadly weapon. April 20
- 2600 block of Pleasant Plains Road: Hit and run, driving while intoxicated and assault on law enforcement officer. Mailbox and vehicle also damaged. April 21

The Mint Hill Police Department reported these incidents April 16 to 22:

- **Break-ins**
 - 4900 block of Stoney Trace Drive: Handgun, camera, musical instruments and camera lenses stolen. April 18
 - **Break-ins, vehicles**
 - 7100 block of Lawyers Station Drive: Paint sprayer and power drill stolen. April 18
 - **Fraud**
 - 4100 block of Peggy Lane: Forgery and obtaining money/property by false pretenses. April 20
 - **Thefts**
 - Family Dollar, 9230 Lawyers Road: Sports drink, candy and USB charging cable stolen. April 20
 - **Thefts, vehicle parts**
 - 5900 block of Oak Drive: Passenger side mirror stolen. April 21
 - **Other**
 - 6300 block of Wilson Grove Road: Communicating threats. April 16
 - 7200 block of Tressel Lane: Resist, delay and obstruct. April 16
 - 9400 block of Wilgrove-Mint Hill Road: Possession of methamphetamine. April 18
 - 8100 block of Blair Road: Assault by pointing a gun/knife, communicating threats and vehicle damaged. April 20
 - 4700 block of Margaret Wallace Road: Cocaine possession. April 20
 - 9700 block of Buckskin Lane: Assault/infllicting serious injury. April 21
 - 8900 block of Lawyers Road: Marijuana possession. April 22

MENTAL HEALTH

(continued from page 1A)

Truth." Mental health and law enforcement are more closely related than people think, according to Puranda. Throughout basic law enforcement training, officers are conditioned to fight their fears – rather than fleeing or freezing – which diminishes the brain's natural reactions. This can cause an officer's mental health to deteriorate over his or her career. Combine that with long shifts, tense public relations and the anxiety of relying on training to do the right thing and what do you get? A pressure cooker, Puranda said. Officers can't even hide behind the badge for security because the uniform itself is seen as a negative symbol in some communities. Over time, Puranda said, that label can weigh on even the best cops. So how can police officers get help? Many departments have counseling and assistance services, but they aren't required and Puranda said most officers shy away for fear their fitness for duty will be questioned. "Officers are trained to be mentally tough, so vulnerability is seen as a weakness," he said. "It's this idea that officers should be able to handle the job." Without a safe place to turn, many officers suffer in silence. Puranda did for many years and that's where he said he went wrong. "I'm so used to seeing death, I'm so used

to seeing blood and I'm so used to seeing bad situations. We normalize it, but these things, they become layers," he said. "All we know is to package it and put it away. We fill out the paperwork and go to the next call. Officers are not given permission to vent in the most human way possible. That's why I think counseling is something that should be mandated." At Self-Talk Counseling & Consulting, Puranda offers a confidential way for officers to unload the stresses of their job and navigate their mental health. He believes an officer who seeks counseling will be a better officer long term, as opposed to an officer who doesn't understand their struggles or the benefits of talking them out. Puranda also helps people on all sides of the badge, including military veterans, first-responders and anyone dealing with trauma or addiction. With May being Mental Health Awareness Month, he said it's especially important for everyone to pay attention to the signs of mental health struggles and understand it's OK to be vulnerable. "Vulnerability is a strength when you can share it with someone you trust," Puranda said.

Want to know more?

Self-Talk Counseling & Consulting is located at 2925 E. Independence Blvd. Visit www.selftalkcounseling.com or call 980-285-3689 for details or to schedule an appointment.

AWARDS

(continued from page 1A)

- Providence High garnered nominations for Best Actor (Will Taylor), Best Actress (Sophie Lamm) and Best Student Orchestra for its production of "Cinderella."
- Butler received two nominations for Best Actress (Riana Unger) and Best Student Orchestra for its production of "The Sound of Music."
- Carmel Christian won a nomination for Best Actress (Payton Miller) for its production of "You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown."

TACOS

(continued from page 1A)

complement the taco shop's vibrant décor. Guests can order signature Baja Tacos, served with chicken, brisket, ground beef, pork, veggies, fish, shrimp, fajita chicken or fajita beef. They can be topped with garlic sauce, lettuce, tomatoes, shredded cheese, cilantro and feta. Diners can also choose from burrito bowls, jum-bos burritos, salads, nachos and quesadillas. For a more traditional Mexican dinner, look to one of the enchilada, fajita or combo plates, also customizable with choice of protein. The menu includes all-day breakfast, appetizers, desserts, kids' items and signature margaritas. Service is provided from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, as well as 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Visit www.FuzzysTacoShop.com for details.

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