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Contact features writer Jimmy Tomlin



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A COMMUNITY PEARL



PHOTOS SPECIAL | HPE

The 2009 Oyster Roast planning committee poses together at the event, which took place at the home of Elizabeth and Sandy Finch.

High Point Oyster Roast celebrates 25th anniversary

BY JIMMY TOMLIN
ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

HIGH POINT — By all rights, the annual High Point Oyster Roast — the signature fundraiser for Family Service of the Piedmont — should be a thing of the past by now.

When the first one was held in 1995, it wasn't intended to become a signature annual event. In fact, it was only one of several Family Service fundraisers planned for that year, none of which was expected to last more than a few years at most. And considering the inaugural Oyster Roast raised a mere \$7,991 — a pretty paltry figure compared to the agency's total revenue that year of approximately \$700,000 — it certainly didn't seem essential to the non-profit's financial health.

Furthermore, the weather stunk. The event took place early in the year, before the arrival of spring, and Mother Nature showed up that night wearing all white.

"It was nothing but sleet and ice and frozen rain and snow," remembers Lin Amos, who hosted the outdoor party with his wife Nancy at their home in High Point. "It was horrible weather."

So how is it that that the annual High Point Oyster Roast, after such an inauspicious beginning, is about to be held for the 25th time? How has it not only survived but thrived all these years?

"Well, despite the weather, we had a huge turnout and we had so much fun," Amos says. "Everybody was outside in the sleet and sleet, and it was just a really good time. We felt like it was something we needed to do every year. The event was so memorable. It was so novel to throw a party outdoors in the dead of winter in inclement weather, and I think that's why it stuck."

This year's Oyster Roast will be held March 1 at the High Point home of Ned and Katherine Covington, and tickets are available now through the organization's website.

"This is our signature fundraiser," says Jody Susong, chief advancement officer for Family Service of the Piedmont. "It's been our mainstay ever since the first one, and it's provided



Lin and Nancy Amos pose together at the 2010 High Point Oyster Roast, which they hosted at their home. The couple also hosted the inaugural event in 1995.

WANT TO GO?

The 25th anniversary High Point Oyster Roast, a fundraiser for Family Service of the Piedmont, will be held March 1, from 7 to 11 p.m., at the High Point home of Ned and Katherine Covington.

Tickets are \$75 apiece and can be purchased through the agency's website at www.fscares.org.

A raffle at the event will feature a pair of 18-karat white gold diamond hoop earrings (retail value of \$7,700).

All proceeds will benefit Family Service of the Piedmont.

For further information, call Family Service of the Piedmont at (336) 889-6161.

many, many services for children and families over the past 25 years."

The concept of the Oyster Roast is relatively simple: It's a casual outdoor social gathering, built around oysters, beverages, fellowship and live music. This year's band will be Punch, which plays everything from pop and rhythm 'n' blues to



This photo was taken around 1996 or 1997, at one of the early High Point Oyster Roasts. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the popular fundraiser.

rock, disco and country.

Twenty-five years ago, and in several subsequent years, the music was provided free of charge by a local bluegrass band that included High Point physician Mike Hussey. He, too, remembers the first Oyster Roast, when he and his friends played from inside the host couple's old, wooden-floored garage.

"I remember my hands were freezing as we played, and everyone was enjoying themselves out in the sleet," Hussey says. "There were oil-drum bonfires and a fishing boat filled with ice and beverages, and we kept the music going as long as there were people still dancing and enjoying themselves."

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LIFEGUARD CERTIFICATION CLASSES OFFERED

Are you looking for a summer job? Do you enjoy water and being around swimming pools? If so, becoming a lifeguard may be for you.

The YWCA of High Point is offering American Red Cross lifeguard certification classes that are widely accepted at most swimming pools and aquatic facilities. With the completion of the course, participants will receive lifesaving, first aid, CPR, and AED (automated external defibrillator) certifications. Each certification is valid for two years.

The next training session will begin on Feb. 20, and several subsequent sessions are scheduled after that.

For further information, including a full schedule of training sessions, call the YWCA of High Point at (336) 882-4126 or email zmiller@ywcahp.com.

LEARN ABOUT SUMMER ARTS INSTITUTE PROGRAM

The High Point Arts Council will host the Summer Music Programs Fair on Feb. 28, from 6 to 8 p.m., at the Centennial Station Arts Center, 121 S. Centennial St.

Teachers, parents and students are encouraged to attend this free event to learn more about the music program opportunities offered this summer through Guilford County Schools, High Point Arts Council and Moore Music Co.

Participants will be able to learn all about this year's Summer Arts Institute program, which includes the John Coltrane Jazz Workshop, Moore Music Band and Orchestra Jump Ahead, Moore Music Honor Jazz Camp, Moore Music Band and Orchestra Camp, and the 6 Strings and 88 Keys program. Students

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Polar bears invade Russian town

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MOSCOW — Russian wildlife specialists are heading for an Arctic archipelago to try to resolve a situation that has both terrified and delighted the locals: the polar bears that moved into a populated area.

It's not the first time that polar bears have come to Novaya Zemlya, but their numbers this time are striking. More than 50 bears have been spotted in the archipelago's main town of Belushya Guba.

Regional authorities in Russia declared a state of emergency over the weekend after the bears peered into homes, entered buildings and gorged at a

garbage dump outside the town.

Polar bears mostly live on sea ice, where they hunt seals as their main food. A decline in the seal population or the shrinking amount of sea ice as the Arctic warms might have brought them to land, experts have theorized.

Russian officials don't have an immediate solution. Actions under consideration include relocating the dump that gives the bears a banquet and removing the bears. The scientists coming from the national natural resources agency will be equipped to sedate the bears and haul them away.

"That's just an option; at the moment it is being considered, but there's no 100-per-

cent guarantee it will be applied," said Alexander Gornikh, regional head of the natural resources agency.

The ferocity of polar bears may worry many people, but some are also thrilled by the spectacle.

Cell phone videos taken in the area come with sounds of humans exclaiming over bear sightings.

"Thank you! It's so cool! We have seen polar bears," one woman is heard saying after she spotted a female bear and two cubs. "Bye, baby, bye!"

The two islands that make up Novaya Zemlya are farther north than the most northerly city in the United States. That's Utqiagvik, Alaska, previously called Barrow.

Grand Canyon Superintendent cleared of undisclosed allegations

BY FELICIA FONSECA
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — A U.S. investigation at Grand Canyon National Park has ended with the exoneration of the park's superintendent and an announcement that she'll return to work soon.

Christine Lehnertz was reassigned in October while investigators from the Interior Department's Office of Inspector General looked into undisclosed allegations against her.

In an email to park employees Thursday, National Park Service Deputy Director P. Daniel Smith praised Lehnertz and said the allegations against her were "wholly unfounded."

Nancy DiPaolo, a spokeswoman for the Office of Inspector General, said the investigative report wasn't ready to be released publicly. The office typically releases such reports to federal agencies about a month before posting either a summary or the full, redacted report online.

Lehnertz told The Associated Press the allegations haven't been disclosed to her, either, and she would know more when the report is released.

"Until I read the report, I'm really not going to be able to comment on it," she said. "For me, I'm excited to get back to the canyon and eager

to get back to work."

Lehnertz is a trained environmental biologist who has been with the Park Service for more than 10 years.

She took the Grand Canyon job in 2016 as the park's first female superintendent after a sexual harassment scandal led to the retirement of its former chief. She was reassigned during the investigation because the Park Service said it wanted to protect the integrity of the probe.

Lehnertz spent the past four months working out of the agency's regional office in Denver on a project doing development and training for park superintendents, she said.

The investigation had been a distraction from spending time with her family in Denver, she said, after the recent death of her mother.

She's expecting to return to her job at the Grand Canyon after the Presidents Day holiday and about a week before the park celebrates its centennial. The Grand Canyon is among the country's busiest national parks with more than six million visitors a year.

"Over the months, my resolve only grew stronger to return to Grand Canyon," Lehnertz said. "It's been a rough go, but as I return to the park, my focus is going to be the same — building a respectful and inclusive workplace."

OYSTER

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As the event has grown through the years, it also has evolved. This year the music will be performed under a large, outdoor tent on the grounds of the host couple's home, and there will be large heaters warming the guests instead of bonfires.

"It was always very casual, and it still is," Susong says. "You don't have to dress to impress or anything like that. Some things may have changed, but we've mostly been able to keep that same flavor we had the first year, and I think that's one of the things people like."

At the heart of it all



SPECIAL | HPE

The High Point Oyster Roast has raised more than \$2 million in its 25-year history. Pictured here at the 2005 event are (from left to right) Don Scarborough, Marianna Qubein and Nido Qubein.

is a good cause, as all proceeds go to support Family Service of the Piedmont programs, which focus on domestic violence and sexual assault, mental health and substance abuse,

child abuse and healthy parenting, and financial stability.

Last year's Oyster Roast had some 650 guests and raised approximately \$213,000. This year's event,

Test your seeds to check for life, usability

BY LEE REICH
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Depending on where you store them and what types of seeds they contain, your old, dog-eared seed packets may or may not be worth using this season.

Seeds are alive; they do not live forever. Sprinkling dead seeds out in the garden or into seed flats is a waste of time.

When you buy a packet of seeds, government standards assure you that a minimum percentage of them are alive. The packing date is usually stamped on the packet and, if below the standard, the percentage germination. I write the year on any seed packets on which the date is not stamped.

OPTIMUM STORAGE

Low temperature, low humidity, and low oxygen slow biological and chemical reactions and so also slow aging of seeds. My seeds find their low-temperature and low-humidity home in sealed canning jars in the depths of my freezer in spring and summer. By fall, frozen fruits and vegetables claim freezer space, so I move the jars filled with seed packets into my refrigerator.

An easy way to keep the humidity low in the jars is to sprinkle powdered milk from a freshly opened box in the bottom of the jars. Renew the powdered milk each year.

There's no practical way for us backyard gardeners to store seeds in a low-oxygen atmosphere. Some seed companies market their seeds in hermetically sealed, plastic-lined foil packets, although I have never noted better germination from these foil packets than from plain old paper packets.

TO SOW OR NOT TO SOW

Seeds differ in how long they remain viable. Even with the best storage conditions, it's generally not worth sowing celery,



Lee Reich via AP

This undated photo shows seeds being tested in New Paltz, N.Y. Seed testing, which involves sprouting about twenty seeds, is a good way to know whether a packet of seeds is worth re-using this coming growing season.

parsley, parsnip or salsify seeds after they are more than a year old. Two years of sowings can be expected from packets of carrot, onion and sweet corn seed; three years from peas and beans, peppers, radishes and beets; and four or five years from cabbage, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cucumbers, melons and lettuce.

Among flower seeds, the shortest-lived are delphinium, aster, candytuft and phlox. Packets of alyssum, Shasta daisy, calendula, sweet peas, poppies, and marigold can be reused for five or 10 years before their seeds get too old.

TEST THEM

A yearly germination test is a definitive measure of whether an old seed packet is worth saving. Each spring, count out at least 20 seeds from each packet to be tested, and then spread the seeds between two moist paper towels on a plate. Invert

another plate over the first plate to hold in moisture and put the whole setup where the temperature is warm, around 75 degrees.

After one to two weeks, peel apart the paper towels and count the number of seeds with little white root "tails" emerging. Figure the percentage, and if it is low, toss the seed packets into the wastebasket (don't give them away!) or adjust your sowing rate accordingly.

No one knows exactly what happens within a seed to make it lose viability. Besides lack of germination, old seeds undergo a slight change of color, lose their luster and are more susceptible to fungal infections.

The record for seed longevity was thought to be held by a species of lupine, *Lupinus arcticus*, whose seeds germinated after 10,000 years. Great story, but further research showed the seed to be much younger — only a few decades old!

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| May 31-Jun. 2 | Patriotic Festival in Virginia Beach, VA..... | \$479 |
| Jun. 5-9 | Enjoy Breathtaking and Spectacular NIAGARA FALLS..... | \$709 |
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| Jun. 8-9 | African American Heritage Tour..... | \$245 |
| Jun. 8 | Spend a Day at the BEACH-Myrtle Beach, SC..... | \$69 |
| Jun. 8 | Salvage Dawgs & Hillbilly Hide-A-Way - Roanoke, VA..... | \$89 |
| Jun. 8-9 | Historic Savannah Red-Eye..... | \$109 |
| Jun. 14-22 | 7-Nt Exotic W. Caribbean on the Carnival Breeze..... | \$999 |
| Jun. 15-27 | Grand Canyon - TRIP OF A LIFETIME!..... | \$2519 |
| Jun. 15 | Highway 301 Endless Yard Sale..... | \$65 |
| Jun. 15 | Washington, DC Red Eye - See our Nation's Capital..... | \$135 |

RATES PER PERSON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY

CLASSES

FROM PAGE C1

will be able to sign up on the spot and will also be able to test out instruments with Moore Music.

Students who rent or purchase instruments through Moore Music will have their tuition covered for this year's John Coltrane Jazz

Workshop. This will also be a great opportunity for parents and teachers to pick up application forms and learn more about this year's summer

programming.

Light refreshments will be provided.

For more information, contact the High Point Arts Council at (336) 889-2787, Ext. 26, or programs@highpointarts.org.