

Hometown

TO RENAME OR NOT? INSTITUTIONS ACROSS NATION RECONSIDER HONORS FOR RACISTS

The massacre at a predominantly black South Carolina church has institutions from Alaska to Connecticut evaluating whether they should continue enshrining the names of historical figures linked to slavery and the Confederacy. **See Page 2B.**

B

Monday, July 6, 2015



Jennifer Thompson, a math teacher at Lincoln Charter School in Denver, competes in the 2015 International Powerlifting Federation World Classic Powerlifting Championships in Salo, Finland. Thompson broke two female world records for her weight class in this competition.

This teacher breaks records

Denver math teacher is world-class powerlifter

By **Eric Wildstein**
ewildstein@gastongazette.com

She could bench press a chalkboard, but she'd rather use it to teach.

Jennifer Thompson is arguably one of the strongest pound-for-pound female powerlifters in the world. Standing at 5 foot 5 and about 130 pounds, she breaks the mold in a sport where athletes focus on three lifts: the squat, bench press and deadlift. She has smashed several world records and has become the face of the growing sport for many young women.

"After nationals, after a world event, I

have all these young women and young girls coming up and wanting their picture with me," the Denver wife and mother of two said. "That is hugely rewarding, and I hope I'm setting a good example for them."

She has become a role model for her students at Lincoln Charter School in Denver, where she has taught high school math for 11 years. She often uses her accomplishments to motivate students to achieve their own personal goals.

>> See **TEACHER**/Page 2B

JENNIFER THOMPSON'S PERSONAL BESTS

IN THE GYM:
Squat: 330 pounds
Bench press: 315 pounds
Deadlift: 450 pounds

IN COMPETITION:
Squat: 325 pounds
Bench press: 312 pounds (world record)
Deadlift: 446 pounds

Jubilation all around

I met a young man a few years back who, without a doubt, has added years to my life and life to my years. His name is Tom. Dr. Tom Bocchino. He deals in



Bocchino

hearing aids, mostly. The "doctor" in front of his name says he deals in much more. This, however, is about hearing aids. I've had experience with hearing aids. When they work, it's like winning an Oscar. When they don't, they are crabgrass in the Garden of Eden. Hang in there while I bring you up to date.



BILL WILLIAMS

Bill's World

The background is that it started with a game of basketball when I was in the eighth grade. Out of nowhere came a fast-traveling basketball. It found a spot on my right ear, and WHAMMO! It blew out my eardrum and left me hurting and wanting. The eardrum was gone.

In its place was a terrible roar. I took the roar home and laid awake that night trying to imagine what life would be like from then on. Sleep soothed it, however, and in a few days, life was almost normal. I didn't tell my parents.

My life wasn't totally fractured, however. Years later, a Charlotte surgeon crafted another eardrum from membrane behind my ear, attached it, and it worked.

It worked well for five years, but then it went away, never to return. So, enter for the first time hearing aid No. 1. Not too good.

>> See **WILLIAMS**/Page 2B

GASTON LOOKBACK

A GLANCE AT NOTABLE NEWS OF THE PAST WEEK

WWW.GASTONGAZETTE.COM || Go online for an interactive feature looking at significant news events from the past week.



6.29.15

GASTONIA II

Monday was Kids Run the Ballpark Night at Sims Legion Park for the Gastonia Grizzlies matchup with Florence, S.C. Kids ages 7 to 13 filled the roles of assistant coach, announcer, reporter and photographer, as well as others.



7.4.15

GASTON COUNTY II

Gaston County residents celebrated the Fourth of July with fireworks, food, music and other activities. It's the one day of the year you also do not need a fishing license to fish legally.



7.2.15

MOUNT HOLLY II

Three men tried to rob the Mount Holly Gun and Pawn on East Henry Street at night, but police arrived before the men could take anything. Police are still searching for suspects though.



7.3.15

GASTONIA II

The Pie for Pride challenge began Friday night as a whimsical way to celebrate Gaston County.



7.3.15

McADENVILLE II

The community known for its decorative fervor when transforming into Christmastown USA late every year began a new tradition. Operation Honoring Freedom is about patriotism. Men, women and children fanned out, placing more than 2,000 10-inch-wide American flags up and down both sides of every street within the picturesque neighborhood.



7.3.15

GASTONIA II

Carolina Speedway attempted to ignite the spirit of Fish Camp Jam at its Union Road dirt track. The track called its Friday night racing Fish Camp Jam.



OBITUARIES / CAROLINAS



JESSE HUFFSTICKLER IV
LINCOLNTON — Jesse William (Bill) Huffstickler IV, 67, passed away Sunday, July 5, 2015. He was born in Gaston County, son of Avis Bradley Huffstickler and the late Jesse William Huffstickler.

He was a U.S. Army veteran of Vietnam, where he earned several medals, including the Silver Star and the Bronze Star.

He was owner of I.C.E.S. of Gaston County Inc., as well as I.S.C.A. He was a past recipient of the Gaston Chamber of Commerce small business Sapphire Award.

He was a three-time Post Commander of American Legion Post 206 and was active in the local Boy's State. He also served the American Legion as District 22 State Commander, was a recipient of the American Legion National Americanism Commission Certificate of Appreciation and was awarded honorary member status of the American Legion 40/8 for his dedication and service to the organization.

He was very community spirited, worked tirelessly helping to establish the Stanley Veteran's Memorial, and gave freely to many organizations, clubs, churches and schools.

In addition to his father, he was preceded in death by a grandson, Eli Weathers.

In addition to his mother, he is survived by his wife, Judy Shaw Huffstickler; daughters, Amy Weathers, of Dallas, Jennifer Carpenter and Jason, of Bessemer City, and Christine Huffstickler, also of Dallas; sisters, TJ Abbington and husband, Dick Webb, of Las Vegas, Kawna Colvard and husband, Bob, of Lincolnton, and Sonya Huffstickler, also of Lincolnton; a brother, Jeff Huffstickler, of Stanley; three grandchildren, Lydia, Nora and Mariella Weathers; and many loved nieces and nephews.

A service to celebrate his life will be held at 3 p.m. Tuesday, July 7, 2015, at the Woodlawn Chapel of Woodlawn Funeral Home in Mount Holly, with Pastor Raymond Johns officiating.

The family will receive friends from 1 to 3 p.m. Tuesday at the funeral home.

Entombment will follow the service at Hillcrest Gardens Chapel Mausoleum with military honors provided by the Gaston County Honor Guard.

Condolence messages may be sent to the family by visiting www.WoodlawnFuneral.org.

Woodlawn Funeral Home of Mount Holly is serving the family.

SEE ADDITIONAL OBITUARIES ON PAGE 3B.

VETERANS
 Obituaries for veterans of U.S. military branches include a small American flag noting their service.

ANTONIO CROCKER

KINGS MOUNTAIN — Antonio O'Brain "Muk" Crocker, 31, of 500 Phenix St., departed this life on Tuesday, June 30, 2015, in Shelby.

Funeral services will be held at 4 p.m. Wednesday, July 8, 2015, at People's Baptist Church, 1010 Groves St., Kings Mountain.

Visitation will be at 3:30 p.m. prior to the service.

Arrangements by Genesis Funeral Services & Chapel of Shelby.

Online condolences may be made at www.GenesisFuneralServices.com.

ARIAL BLOCK 1928-2015

LAKE WYLIE, S.C. — Ariel McDonald Block, 87, died Saturday, July 4, 2015, surrounded by family.

She was born April 22, 1928, in Seattle, Wash., to Alan and Evelyn McDonald.

A memorial service will be at 11 a.m. Wednesday July 8, 2015, at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary Chapel, 14542 Choate Circle, Charlotte.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be given to a charity of one's choice.

Online condolences may be sent to the family at www.HorvathSons.com.

M.L. Ford & Sons of Clover is serving the family.

<< Williams

Continued from Page 1B

Ditto for No. 2. No. 3 was like listening to "O Sole Mio" through bank vault doors.

It was somewhere in that time frame that Dr. Tom Bocchino, of ENT Carolina, came upon the scene. He looked into my ears and mused. I hate it when they muse. It could mean they are having trouble coming up with the right answer.

He admitted that there was a problem; even so, he kept on musing. He put me into an isolation booth (again) and turned some knobs and squeaky little noises appeared from somewhere.

He told me this time that my hearing in my good left ear wasn't bad, but my right-ear hearing was in trouble. He told me what I needed, and a couple of weeks later, I went home with two new aids. Except that one of them was not a hearing aid. That little fellow was an audio transmitter.

Sounds within that aid's jurisdiction were shunted around to be handled by the helper on the other side of my head.

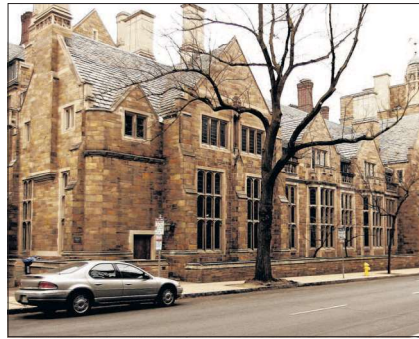
It took a little time to adjust. Under the new order, all right-side sounds had to use the right ear for brain passage. Neat. Pass on. Let the brain figure out the rest. That was a short while ago, and I am in the good graces of Tom the miracle worker. He told me then that the aids I would take home were not the total answer, but that the answer was on the way. He was right. It came within the year. Tom grinned as he turned up the volume and watched my smile brighten as the volume increased.

This was not a chance encounter with happiness. It had been planned for, directed, mapped.

He didn't tell me how much better these two aids were than the old ones. He didn't have to. It was like the time I found a shiny, brand-new quarter when I was a kid. It made everything right. Jubilation all around.

TO RENAME OR NOT?

Institutions across nation reconsider honors for racists



Associated Press

Calhoun College is one of the 12 residential colleges housing undergraduates at Yale University in New Haven, Conn. Some institutions across the U.S. are reconsidering whether to still honor historical figures with ties to slavery and the Confederacy, including the name of John C. Calhoun, a white supremacist.

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — The massacre at a predominantly black South Carolina church has institutions from Alaska to Connecticut evaluating whether they should continue enshrining the names of historical figures linked to slavery and the Confederacy.

The June 17 slaying of nine black worshippers led to calls to curb displays of the Confederate flag after photos emerged showing the suspect posing with one and burning the U.S. flag. But it also has added urgency to discussions on whether it is time to do away with names given to schools, colleges and streets that have come to be seen in a new light in places far outside the South.

A petition is calling for Yale University in Connecticut to change the name of its residential Calhoun College, which honors 1804 alumnus John C. Calhoun, a prominent advocate of the slave plantation system who became a vice president and U.S. senator from South Carolina. The petition says the name, in place since the 1930s, represents "an indifference to centuries of pain and suffering among the black population."

Yale spokeswoman Karen Peart said the university welcomes the discussion.

"The tragedy in Charleston, on top of countless preceding tragedies in our country's history, has elevated public opinion and discourse on difficult subjects that have too long been avoided," she said.

Other campaigns around the country include efforts to change

the names of Lake Calhoun in Minneapolis and New York City's General Lee Avenue in Brooklyn, named after Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee. In Helena, Mont., officials will meet Wednesday to discuss whether anything should be done with a downtown memorial to fallen Confederate soldiers. The foundation was built in 1916 by the Daughters of the Confederacy.

The Charleston shooting took place during Bible study at Emanuel AME Church, and the man charged in the attack, Dylan Roof, posted photos online showing him holding a Confederate flag, along with writings laying out hatred of minorities.

David Glassberg, a University of Massachusetts professor who has researched public memorials, said

the naming or renaming of buildings, monuments and even fundraising dinners is always political. And at the time when many were named, African-Americans did not have political power.

"For sure, African-Americans knew that these people were who they were, but they were really powerless to do anything," he said. "These traditions represent the traditions of past people."

The revisionist sentiment has extended in some quarters to non-Confederate figures. The state Democratic Party will decide this month whether to strip the names of two slave-owning U.S. presidents, Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson, from the moniker of its annual fundraising dinner.

<< Teacher

Continued from Page 1B

She also integrates powerlifting into math equations, such as converting kilograms into pounds.

"It allows me to have another aspect to our relationship because they're real interested in what I do," she said. "I think it makes me more relatable to them."

Thompson started weight training around their age, while she was earning a bachelor's degree in education at Oakland University in Michigan. It was in a small basement gym, where she and her husband worked out with neighborhood friends. Before long, she was pumping more iron than some of the men.

"I never thought in my wildest dreams that I could lift that much weight," said Thompson, as she worked out with several trainees at the makeshift gym in her Denver home. "After a while, we had gotten married and he's like, 'We should be able to do something with how strong you are in here,' and that's how we found powerlifting."

During the next two decades, Thompson rose to the top of her sport. She competed in events across the world and stuffed her trophy case with more hardware than it could hold (She's currently building a new case).

Last month, the 41-year-old broke two female world records in her weight class at the World Classic Powerlifting Championships in Finland. Thompson bench pressed 310 pounds, breaking her own previous world record. She also broke the world record for overall weight lifted in a single competition, at 1,060 pounds.

"To be able to break world records at a world championships is pretty awesome, because you're really just there to get team points," said Thompson, who helped earn a first-place victory for her team. "This was one of those magical moments where you get to a competition and you feel great."

She topped herself again recently, when she bench pressed 312 pounds at the 2015 Summer Showdown in Atlanta. She also took first place overall. While fending off arm wrestling



Courtesy of International Powerlifting Federation

Jennifer Thompson, a math teacher at Lincoln Charter School in Denver, earned first place in the female open division for total weight lifted in the 2015 International Powerlifting Federation World Classic Powerlifting Championships in Finland.

requests from her high school students, Thompson has done her part to grow the sport. She started coaching a powerlifting club at Lincoln Charter two years ago. She teaches students healthy eating and training habits and lets them help organize state and regional meets.

Thompson has served eight years as the state chair of USA Powerlifting North Carolina, where she is responsible for overseeing local and state competitions and state records. In that time, she said, membership has swelled from about 30 to 600 members.

"At our meets, we have to put a cutoff because so many people want to come in," she said. "Every meet we put up, it's filled like that."

It is Thompson's ultimate goal for powerlifting to become an official event in the summer Olympics. She hopes to still be able to compete if that day comes.

You can reach Eric Wildstein at 704-869-1828 or www.Twitter.com/TheGazetteEric.

UNC's 'Silent Sam' statue vandalized

CHAPEL HILL (AP) — Someone spray painted "murderer" and "black lives matter" on the statue honoring Confederate veterans nicknamed "Silent Sam" at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Authorities said they are investigating the vandalism, which was discovered Sunday morning. No suspects have been identified.

University spokesman Rick White said the school will continue to discuss whether statues and the names of buildings on campus respect people of all races, but damaging statues is not the way to have that discussion.

"Silent Sam" was placed on campus in 1913 to honor 321 UNC students who died fighting for the South in the Civil War.

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