

British Diplomats To Visit I

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A delegation of British government officials will arrive in Brevard on the weekend of Saturday, Oct. 18 to participate in the Allison family's celebration of heritage. The 2003 National Allison Family Association will be held at Brevard College on Saturday, Oct. 18 to celebrate the 345th anniversary of the Allison family's departure from London, England in 1658, and founding of the family in the New World. In addition, 2003 marks the

225th anniversary of the early American pioneer family's arrival in the remote Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina.

Among the distinguished guests will be two high-ranking British officials, Michael Bates, OBE, Her Majesty's Consul General, and Stephen Collier, MVO RVM, Her Majesty's Deputy Consul General, the British Trade Consul.

Stephen Collier will be

making his first visit to Transylvania County. In addition to his current assignment to the United States as a diplomat with focus on trade between the two nations, he has served Her Majesty's Government since 1969 in Germany, South Yemen, Malawi, Nigeria, Spain, Jordan, Namibia, and Peru. During the Queens official state visits to Malawi and Namibia, he was awarded the Royal Victorian Medal and was elevated by Her Majesty to the Royal Victorian Order. Collier will be accompanied by his wife Erica and will participate in a memorial service at Brevard College honoring the British ancestors of the Allison family. H.M. Deputy Consul General Collier will formally present a memorial wreath during a solemn pipe and drum performance of "Amazing Grace."

Her Majesty's Consul General, Michael Bates, OBE, and wife Janice will make their fourth visit to Transylvania County, and the third appearance at the National Allison



Jane Conolly

Conolly Helps People Overcome

Employment Security Surchar N.C. Em

By Harry Payne

During the decade of the 1990s, North Carolina employers benefited from a series of unemployment insurance (UI) tax cuts that resulted in the Tar Heel State having the third lowest average tax liability among the 12 largest states in the country.

This tax liability attached only to those employers who were liable to pay UI taxes owing to the good economy and stable employment. Many N.C. employers enjoyed a zero tax rate.

Consequently, N.C. lawmakers agreed to lower UI taxes on employers, spurred into action

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Fear Of Snakes

By Jennifer Uhl-Ford
Staff Writer

Jane Conolly, a Park Ranger with the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation, helps people overcome their fear of snakes through education.

"People are really afraid of them, but then they're fascinated too," she said, as a bright orange corn snake encircled her forearm.

The non-venomous corn snake, which came from Davidson College, is part of Conolly's desensitizing program.

On the afternoon of Sept. 6, Conolly educated visitors to Gorges State Park near Sapphire with her hands-on snake demonstration.

She explained that only four types of snakes, out of the more than 100 species found in North Carolina, are poisonous.

The venomous snake known as the cottonmouth prefers warm, damp and swamp-like conditions and so inhabits only the coastal regions of the state.

The coral snake, while also labeled as poisonous, is rare and reclusive, and even researchers have a difficult time finding the species, Conolly said.

As a result, the only two species of concern in western North Carolina are the copperhead and rattlesnake.

"Definitely you need to give these two guys respect," she said.

To identify a copperhead snake, which can range in color from copper tones to grays, people need to look for a repetitive hour-glass pattern along the body.

Similarly, the rattlesnake can vary in color but has definitive diamond-shaped markings running from the head to the tail.

"When trying to identify them, it's the pattern to look for more than the color," Conolly said.

When in doubt about whether or not a snake is venomous, Conolly suggested looking at the shape of a snake's head.

In order to accommodate a strong venomous jaw, a poisonous snake will always have a

large arrow or diamond-shaped head.

"All the other ones you know are safe," she said.

Conolly began her snake program after transferring to the area three months ago. She has since been developing several informational programs for visitors to Gorges State Park as well as the area schools.

She said she recently visited Brevard Middle School to present her program on snakes and hopes to also host similar demonstrations for more schools in the county. The programs can either take place at the school or Gorges State Park.

In addition to the program on snakes, Conolly will host a night hike at the end of September and a program on bears in early October.

For more information on the programs call the Gorges State Park office at 966-9099.

by a very healthy UI Trust Fund (from which unemployment benefits are paid) of more than \$1.5 billion. In 1992, a 20-percent tax surcharge that employers had been paying was not imposed because of the balance of the UI Reserve Fund.

When recession settled over the country in March 2001, North Carolina was hit particularly hard in several of its main industries—especially manufacturing—resulting in an exceptionally high number of jobless workers tapping into the UI Trust Fund. As the economy continued to struggle throughout 2001 and 2002, more businesses folded and/or laid off employees, draining the Trust Fund to dangerously low levels.

The N.C. Employment Security Commission (ESC), which oversees the UI system for the state, began to draw from the Reserve Fund that was collected through the 20-percent surcharge. By law, the surcharge on UI taxes was to be reinstated if the fund dropped below \$163

Establishment

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Burger King
Cardinal Drive-In
Country Skillet
Domino's
Glen Cannon Country Club
Grammy's Restaurant
Hallelujah Health Foods
Henry's
Huddle House
Jordan Street Café
McDonald's
Old Hickory House
Papa John's Pizza
Rocky's
Winn Dixie Deli
Womble Inn

* All restaurants and food service establishments are required to pass a sanitary inspection once each quarter. A rating of 80-89.5 is a B rating, and 70-79.5 is a C rating. A rating below 70 is closed by the Health Department.



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