

# MINUTE BY MINUTE

Editor:  
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Johnston County

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Clerks,

It is hard to believe that almost a year has gone by since I took office as your President. It has been a wonderful, exciting, and rewarding experience, and one that I will cherish always. Thank you for the confidence that you placed in me and for your unwavering support.

It was good to see so many of you at the Annual City/County Clerks' School in January. At the Business Meeting on Thursday morning we had a total attendance of sixty-six. This included several new clerks and deputy clerks.

I would like to personally thank each of the Officers - Linda Hardison, Kathy Myers, and Marian Savage, and the Board of Directors - Jeanette Deese, Debby Gore, Angelena Kearney- Dunlap, Effie Varitimidis, and Marcia Wilson. I appreciate your cooperation and hard work during this past year. Also, I would like to express my appreciation to those clerks who chaired and served on the various committees.

I would also like to say a big thank you to each member of the Clerks' Association. Each of us has an important part to play, but it takes all of us working together as a team to achieve common goals. I encourage each of you to take an active role in the Association and continue to provide new ideas and leadership.

Everyone should have received your registration packet for the Annual Conference scheduled for April 17-19, 2008 at the Doubletree Biltmore Hotel in Asheville, NC (Buncombe County). Kathy Hughes and Libby Corn, conference co-hosts, along with Linda Hardison and the Program Committee, and Gwen Bryan and the Professional Development Committee, have been hard at work to ensure that we have a great conference. I hope you are planning to attend. Please remember to bring door prizes and items for the goody bags.

Again, thank you for your support and guidance, and for allowing me the opportunity to serve as your President.

I look forward to seeing you in Asheville.

Sincerely,  
Brenda B. Hunter, President

### **REMINDER:**

Please remember to bring door prizes and items for the goody bags to the Annual Conference in Asheville at the Doubletree Biltmore Hotel - April 17-19, 2008!



*To put the world right in order, we must first put the nation in order; to put the nation in order, we must first put the family in order; to put the family in order, we must first cultivate our personal life; we must first set our hearts right.*

*Confucius*

# CLERKS IN THE NEWS

The deputy clerk of Cherokee had surgery in February. Maria is unable to work for several weeks. Let's keep her in our thoughts and prayers.



Randolph County welcomes new Deputy Clerk Amanda Varner in March. Amanda V. replaces Amanda Jones, former editor of *Minute by Minute*.



Nann Bryant has served as the Town of Hoffman's Clerk and Finance Officer for over 55 years. She will be turning 91 on April 19<sup>th</sup> and has no plans to retire! Nann, you are truly an inspiration, Happy Birthday!



Jeanette Deese, Carteret County Clerk submitted this story about her son, who returned from a yearlong tour in Iraq. (The entire article is on the next page, photo from story is below.) Jeanette, you must be so proud!

Marine dad surprises son with return. Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Chad Kuczka, who returned from a yearlong tour of Iraq Tuesday morning, holds his son Dylan while his wife Renee holds their 20-month-old son Aidan during a surprise visit to Dylan's classroom Tuesday morning.



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*GEORGE MOORE*

MOREHEAD CITY —Dylan Kuczka, a second-grader at Morehead City Primary School, expected his father, Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Chad Kuczka, who has been serving in Iraq for more than a year, to return home Feb. 3.

But thanks to a carefully orchestrated surprise by his mother Renee Kuczka and his teacher Martha Ruffin, 8-year-old Dylan got the surprise of his young life Tuesday morning when his father unexpectedly showed up in his classroom.

Staff Sgt. Kuczka is among more than 200 Marines and sailors with several 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing units who arrived home from Iraq about 2 a.m. Tuesday. Staff Sgt. Kuczka is stationed at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point.

Mrs. Kuczka has been planning the surprise for her son for more than two months. She knew her husband was arriving Tuesday, but in order to surprise her son she told him his father would arrive home Feb. 3.

"I had told his teacher in the event Dylan was in school when his father returned home I wanted to surprise Dylan at school. I've seen it on the news and different places and thought it was such a neat thing to do," she said. "But I don't like to keep secrets from him (Dylan) and that's been hard," she said.

Mrs. Kuczka's idea surprised her husband, as well.

"She had told me she was thinking about it about a week ago but I didn't know we were really going to do it until she picked me up this morning," he said.

After talking her idea over with Mrs. Ruffin, Mrs. Kuczka decided the best way to surprise her son was to already have her husband hidden in the classroom when Dylan arrived at school. Since her husband wasn't scheduled to arrive home until the wee hours of Tuesday morning, she decided to have Dylan spend the night with his grandmother, Jeanette Deese, longtime clerk of the County Board of Commissioners. Her job was to take Dylan to school about 10 minutes late so his parents could already be in place in the classroom when he arrived.

Mrs. Ruffin had been careful not to tell any of his classmates what was planned so there was no opportunity to ruin the surprise. So Tuesday morning a somewhat bleary eyed Staff Sgt. Kuczka, who had not yet been to sleep, his wife and their 20-month-old son Aidan arrived about 7:30 a.m. before students entered the classroom.

Staff Sgt. Kuczka hid behind a portable coat closet and waited for his son to arrive. The unsuspecting Dylan, who was a little upset with his grandmother for getting him to school late, entered the classroom and sat at his desk.

He and the other students were a bit curious as to why there were several television cameras and media in the classroom, as well as his mother and brother. But Mrs. Ruffin explained it was all part of a study about community.

Once class began Staff Sgt. Kuczka stepped out from behind the closet, said Dylan's name and began walking toward his son. When Dylan realized what was happening he jumped up, exclaiming "Dad," ran and leapt into his arms. His mother and little brother quickly joined him.

Dylan said he was truly surprised.

"I had no idea," he said. "I looked up and saw my dad."

Although he had at first been a bit apprehensive about the whole idea, Staff Sgt. Kuczka said he was glad they did it.

"It was awesome. Just to see the look on his face and to do it with everybody was awesome," he said.

Mrs. Kuczka said it was worth all of the planning and wait.

"I'm very excited about the way it worked out," she said. "I'd had my church praying that it would all work out, and it did."

Mrs. Ruffin said she was glad to be able to help create a special moment for not only the family, but for her class.

"I'm thrilled they decided to do it," she said. "They (students) learned life lessons today instead of paper and pencil. This is something they'll always remember."

To help Dylan celebrate the return of his dad, the students had created a large welcome home card on poster board. Each child had written a short note to welcome Staff Sgt. Kuczka home.

Morehead City Primary Principal Renne Newman, who came to the classroom Tuesday morning to witness the emotional event, said she was happy to be a part of making it happen.

"We appreciate the family allowing us to share in that celebration," said Mrs. Newman. "That moment when we saw Dylan's face when he saw his dad — it's just one of those moments you won't forget."

On top of the surprise of seeing his father early, Dylan was excused from school the remainder of the day to spend time with his dad. And what was he looking forward to?

"Playing with my daddy," he said.

The family also planned to celebrate a late Christmas for Staff Sgt. Kuczka Tuesday evening.

"We left the tree up and have presents under the tree for Chad," said Mrs. Kuczka.

This is Staff Sgt. Kuczka's third tour of duty in Iraq and he plans to continue his career in the military, although it's tough to be away from his family. He hopes to remain home for at least a year.

"Leaving is not fun, but coming home is the best," he said.



## Spring Cleaning Chore Checklist

It's Spring!

Warming breezes scour the last of winter from house and garden. Spring rain awakens the earth and calls forth new life.

Meet the rising sap with a new broom. Spring clean indoors and out to prepare home and hearth for the return of warm weather.

This Spring cleaning chore checklist will help you take care of important seasonal chores and welcome Spring to an organized home:

### Around The House:

- Schedule a family garage clean-out. Create efficient storage for sporting goods, camping equipment, recreational vehicles, and garden tools. You'll have the jump on summer fun!
  - Inspect, clean and repair outdoor furniture.
  - Tour house exterior and grounds. Make a list of any needed seasonal maintenance.
  - Inspect the roof for winter damage: leaks, missing or broken shingles or tiles. Arrange for any needed repairs early; roofing contractors can be hard to find during summer's construction season.
  - Use a sunny Saturday to scrape, prime and paint peeling spots on trim or woodwork. You'll protect wood against Summer's heat and moisture--and prevent a more difficult paint job come fall.
  - Clear away any remaining dead foliage and weeds from beds and lawn. New growth will be protected from damage or disease.
  - Begin major Spring landscaping projects. Spring's the time to put in shrubs and trees, but check with your local extension office for specific planting recommendations for your area.
  - Changing seasons, changing clothes. Hold a family wardrobe check as you bring out warm-weather clothing. Sort winter clothing for discards and donations before you store.
  - Hold a garage sale! Declutter house and garage to turn trash into cash.
  - Pick a weekend and enlist the family for Spring cleaning. Many hands make light work! Reward the team with dinner at a pizza parlor.
  - Wash windows inside and out.
  - While at the window area, check drapes and window treatments. Vacuum any dust; send dirtier drapes to the cleaners.
  - Move furniture and vacuum beneath it.
  - Arrange for a spring inspection of cooling systems. Don't wait for the first hot day! Air conditioning firms will give better service when they're not busy.
  - When the weather warms, deactivate heat system humidifiers. Check the system manual for instructions on how to power down for the summer.
- Drain sediment from hot water heaters.