

## WHAT DO STATE LEGISLATORS ACTUALLY DO?

**It's an election year!** Most of the news, ads, and mailers will be about the presidential and congressional federal elections as well as the North Carolina races, like the highly competitive race for governor.

Less attention will be paid to elections for the General Assembly, but you should not overlook them. Elections for the North Carolina General Assembly have more impact on your life on a daily basis!

Federal and statewide offices are important, but all too frequently, people skip the legislative races on their ballots because they don't know as much about the candidates running. But members of the legislature pass laws that impact every North Carolinian.

The United States Constitution gives a lot of power to state legislatures and state law, including the areas of:

- State taxes
- Local infrastructure like bridges, roads, and waterways
- Environmental regulations
- Criminal justice
- Employment and unemployment
- Laws on personal autonomy such as abortion
- Education

### Wait, so what is the General Assembly anyway?

Like the United States Congress in Washington, D.C., the North Carolina General Assembly is made up of 2 different houses or "bodies":

**1. North Carolina House of Representatives**  
**The House of Representatives is made up of 120 members**, elected by citizens from each of the 120 House districts. "The State House," as it's often called, is presided over by the Speaker of the House, who's elected by the representatives themselves. **Currently, the State House is made up of a supermajority of 72 Republicans to 48 Democrats.**

**2. North Carolina Senate**  
**The North Carolina Senate is made up of only 50 members**, elected by citizens from each of the 50 Senate districts. Since there are fewer Senate districts, each Senate district is larger than a House district. Similar to the House of Representatives, North Carolina's "State Senate" is presided over by a "president pro tempore" (meaning literally "president for the time being") – in our case, the lieutenant governor of North Carolina. **The State Senate is made up of a supermajority of 30 Republicans to 20 Democrats.**

Every North Carolinian lives in **2 state districts: a State Senate district** and a **State House district**. The districts spread across the entire state. House districts are smaller and represent fewer people, but they are more numerous. Senate districts are less numerous, but they are larger and represent more people. If you're unsure which districts you're in, scan the QR code below.

### What is a "supermajority"?

A supermajority exists when a political party has enough seats in a legislative body to override a veto by an executive, such as a president or a governor.



## NORTH CAROLINA'S RELAXING LAKES

Want to cool off this summer but can't make it to the beach? Look no further! Cheaper than the beach and with smaller crowds, these North Carolina lakes are great places to swim, relax, and fish in this summer.

### 1. Lake Norman

Just 20 minutes outside of Charlotte sits Lake Norman, North Carolina's largest lake. And with an average depth of 33 feet (and max of 110!), Lake Norman is the perfect place for boating, waterskiing, fishing, and swimming!

### 2. Fantasy Lake

For those looking for more structured fun for the whole family, Fantasy Lake Adventure Park sits just outside of Raleigh. Boasting an inflatable water park, rentable kayaks, and lounge sets, Fantasy Lake Adventure Park is a great choice for fun and relaxation.

### 3. Hanging Rock State Park

Want more adventure? Located just 40 minutes outside Winston-Salem stands beautiful Hanging Rock. Work up a sweat hiking to Hanging Rock's 2,159-foot peak and enjoy its striking waterfall before you cool off in the freshwater lake below.

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- North Carolina's Relaxing Lakes
- What Do State Legislators Actually Do?
- Penny Pincher: Taking Control of Credit Card Debt
- Recipe of the Month
- North Carolina's Top Five
- Event Spotlight

### 4. Falls Lake

Looking just to enjoy the peace and quiet? Located just an hour north of Raleigh sits the majestic Falls Lake. Surrounded by lush pines, Falls Lake's 12,000 acres are the perfect place to hike, swim, bike, and relax.

### 5. Gaston Lake

For those hoping to fish this summer, Gaston Lake boasts tons of coves that are perfect for bass fishing. Nestled on the border of Virginia and North Carolina, the 20,000-acre Gaston Lake is a unique choice for an outdoor getaway.

### Need help planning your vacation this summer?

We've assembled a list of websites to help you plan everything for your trips this summer, from hotel reservations to local restaurants and attractions. You'll be prepared for your trip in no time!

- visitnc.com
- outdoornc.com
- ncparks.gov



## EVENT SPOTLIGHT

### 15th Annual African American Cultural Festival of Raleigh and Wake County

When: Labor Day Weekend, August 31 - September 1, 2024 | Free Admission

On Labor Day weekend, Downtown Raleigh will host its African American Cultural Festival, a family-friendly celebration and exploration of African American culture and heritage. This year, organizers expect over 40,000 festivalgoers to join the celebration, which will include food, musical performances, and social outreach programs to promote education, collaboration, and social change throughout Raleigh and Wake County.

Learn more at: <https://www.aacfestival.org/>

# Community neighbor

YOUR SOURCE FOR NEWS YOU CAN USE

NC's  
TOP 5

LEGENDARY MUSICIANS

Did you know that these legendary Black musicians were born in North Carolina?

1. **Nina Simone**,  
born in Tryon in 1933
2. **John Coltrane**,  
born in Hamlet in 1926
3. **George Clinton** of Parliament Funkadelic,  
born in Kannapolis in 1941
4. **Roberta Flack**,  
born in Black Mountain in 1937
5. **Thelonious Monk**,  
born in Rocky Mount in 1917



NINA SIMONE



## Election 2024 Information

It's an election year, which means you get to vote for who will represent you in government.

On Tuesday, November 5, 2024, the North Carolina General Election will decide the following positions:

### Federal

- U.S. President & Vice President
- U.S. House of Representatives

### State

- Governor
- Lieutenant Governor
- Secretary of State
- State Auditor
- State Treasurer
- Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Attorney General
- Agriculture Commissioner
- Labor Commissioner
- Insurance Commissioner
- State Senator
- State Representative
- N.C. Supreme Court Justice
- N.C. Court of Appeals Judge
- Superior Court Judge

### Local / District

- District Court Judge
- District Attorney
- County Commissioner
- Clerk of Superior Court
- Register of Deeds

THE COMMUNITY NEIGHBOR

## PENNY PINCHER

### EXPERT TIPS ON TAKING CONTROL OF CREDIT CARD DEBT

If you're wondering how to take control of credit card debt, know that you have plenty of company. Sometimes unexpected expenses pop up — even modest use can accumulate unexpectedly. But there are some steps you can take to control your credit card debt and ensure that it doesn't drag down your family's finances. Here are five ideas from top experts on how to start reducing credit card debt:

1. **Know the cost.** Understand the interest rates and terms of each card you own, including billing cycles and penalties for late payments. Interest rates are very high, and unless you plan to pay your balance in full every month, be conscious that the true price of what you're buying is the price tag plus the interest on the loan.
2. **Avoid excessive debt.** Sometimes credit card use is necessary, but a change in spending habits and personal discipline are the best ways to prevent financial pain. Limit the number of cards to one or two with low rates or good rewards programs.
3. **Don't miss payments.** Missed payments lead to higher late fees and interest rates, and your credit history will suffer. A bad credit score lingers for years and can hinder major life purchases.
4. **Keep an eagle eye on your credit score.** Did you know that federal law allows you to get a free copy of your credit report every 12 months from each credit reporting company? Visit [annualcreditreport.com](https://annualcreditreport.com) to get started.
5. **If you get in trouble, ask for help.** If you can't make your payment or think trouble is brewing, notify your credit card company right away. They'll often be willing to work with you to get past a financial emergency.



### RECIPE OF THE MONTH

#### BEEF STROGANOFF








**Ground Beef Stroganoff is fast, easy, delicious, and affordable. It's a great meal for anyone looking to get dinner on the table quickly. And if there are just two of you, the leftovers reheat beautifully! It's also an efficient baking list – you won't be left with a bunch of ingredients you have to scheme to use up in other dishes!**

#### INGREDIENTS

- 2 T unsalted butter
- 8 oz white mushrooms, sliced
- 1 whole sweet onion (like Vidalia), chopped
- 1 lb ground beef
- Low-sodium beef broth
- 1 tsp salt and ½ tsp pepper
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ c all-purpose flour
- 8 oz sour cream
- 16 oz egg noodles

1. Cook the egg noodles in boiling salted water according to the instructions on the package. While the noodles are cooking, make the sauce.
2. Melt the butter in a large frying pan or pot at medium heat. Add the chopped onion and cook for 2 minutes, and then add the mushrooms and garlic and cook for another 5-6 minutes, until everything is tender. (And honestly, it's fine if you just dump everything in at once. But you'll feel fancier if you do it in two batches.)
3. Take the onion/mushroom/garlic mix out of the pan, move it to a small bowl, and increase the heat to medium high. Add the ground beef to the pan. Cook it, breaking the pieces up as you go into medium-size chunks, until all the pink is gone, about 6-7 minutes. Add one cup (NOT the whole can) of the beef broth and the salt and pepper and bring the mixture to a boil.
4. Pour ½ cup of the beef broth into a medium-size bowl and heat it for 30 seconds, then add the ¼ cup of flour. Blend it together with a whisk or a fork and add to the boiling meat mixture. Now add the mushroom-onion mixture and bring back to a boil. The mixture should start to thicken. Take the pan off the heat, stir in the sour cream, and serve over the egg noodles.

Serves: 6 | Cost per Serving: \$2.20  
(if you have butter, salt, pepper, and flour on hand)

DATE	IMAGE	LINK	LICENSED?	EDITORIAL?
		<a href="https://stock.adobe.com/images/a-stroll-along-the-boardwalk-on-lake-norman-located-very-close-to-charlotte-north-carolina/145051097?prev_url=detail">https://stock.adobe.com/images/a-stroll-along-the-boardwalk-on-lake-norman-located-very-close-to-charlotte-north-carolina/145051097?prev_url=detail</a>	YES	NO
		<a href="https://stock.adobe.com/images/take-a-leisurely-walk-along-lake-norman-s-boardwalk-near-charlotte-north-carolina-concept-outdoor-activities-nature-walk-lake-views-charlotte-area-leisurely-stroll/809174757?prev_url=detail">https://stock.adobe.com/images/take-a-leisurely-walk-along-lake-norman-s-boardwalk-near-charlotte-north-carolina-concept-outdoor-activities-nature-walk-lake-views-charlotte-area-leisurely-stroll/809174757?prev_url=detail</a>	yes	
		<a href="https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1041814120647013&amp;set=pb.100044553031168.-2207520000&amp;type=3">https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1041814120647013&amp;set=pb.100044553031168.-2207520000&amp;type=3</a>		
		<a href="https://stock.adobe.com/images/debt-financial-freedom-business-concept/435054199?prev_url=detail">https://stock.adobe.com/images/debt-financial-freedom-business-concept/435054199?prev_url=detail</a>		
		QR Code: <a href="https://www.ncsbe.gov/voting/upcoming-election">https://www.ncsbe.gov/voting/upcoming-election</a>		
		[QR Code] <a href="https://www.ncleg.gov/FindYourLegislators">https://www.ncleg.gov/FindYourLegislators</a>		
		<a href="https://stock.adobe.com/images/traditional-beef-stroganoff-with-cream-of-champignon-mushrooms-in-a-blue-bowl-with-its-ingredients/405928398?prev_url=detail">https://stock.adobe.com/images/traditional-beef-stroganoff-with-cream-of-champignon-mushrooms-in-a-blue-bowl-with-its-ingredients/405928398?prev_url=detail</a>		
	piggy icon	<a href="https://stock.adobe.com/images/piggy-bank-icon/157320194?prev_url=detail">https://stock.adobe.com/images/piggy-bank-icon/157320194?prev_url=detail</a>		
	music note	<a href="https://stock.adobe.com/images/music-notes-wave-group-musical-notes-background-n-for-stock-vector-icon/308301171?prev_url=detail&amp;asset_id=308301171">https://stock.adobe.com/images/music-notes-wave-group-musical-notes-background-n-for-stock-vector-icon/308301171?prev_url=detail&amp;asset_id=308301171</a>		
	north carolina	<a href="https://stock.adobe.com/images/north-carolina-map-on-white-background-vector/103984710?prev_url=detail">https://stock.adobe.com/images/north-carolina-map-on-white-background-vector/103984710?prev_url=detail</a>		