



Greensboro Science Center



Regan Heberle as Dorothy and Joshua Thompson as The Scarecrow on *The Wizard of Oz Trail*, staged by the Community Theatre of Greensboro.



A Greensboro Symphony Orchestra quartet performs a pop-up concert at SouthEnd Brewing Co. in downtown Greensboro.

Creativity, technology help Guilford arts organizations continue their vital missions

When the COVID-19 pandemic shuttered live musical performances and theater productions in March, the arts community did what it does best. It sought answers in creativity.

Arts administrators looked for ways to keep their organizations engaged and vital at a time when bringing people together is potentially lethal. They also looked for ways to keep dollars flowing to actors and musicians (as well as fine artists) who make their living by practicing their craft.

The result has been a season like no other and with no end in sight. Yet arts organizations have found ways to remain vital, serving the public and artists with energy and grit, and often with a large dose of technology.

Many of the community's major arts organizations are GMA members.

The sudden impact of the novel coronavirus caught everyone off guard.

"It's hard to believe now, but back then, we didn't know what

was going to happen with the pandemic," said Amy Grossmann, executive director of the North Carolina Folk Festival. "We didn't know if we would open up in a month or six months. We just didn't know."

Large public gatherings, which increase the likelihood of viral transmission, were prohibited by order of the governor. Among events cancelled in March were stage productions at the Carolina Theatre and the grand opening of the new Tanger Center for the Performing Arts, which was a concert by the Greensboro Symphony Orchestra.

As the weeks turned into months, arts administrators faced the realities of a long-term shutdown. One of the first concerns was how to help artists pay their bills as incomes dried up.

ArtsGreensboro created the Greensboro Artists Emergency Relief Fund, which raised \$100,000, said President and CEO Laura Way.

The first check to an artist was written in late March. Many checks were for \$25 or \$50. By the time the

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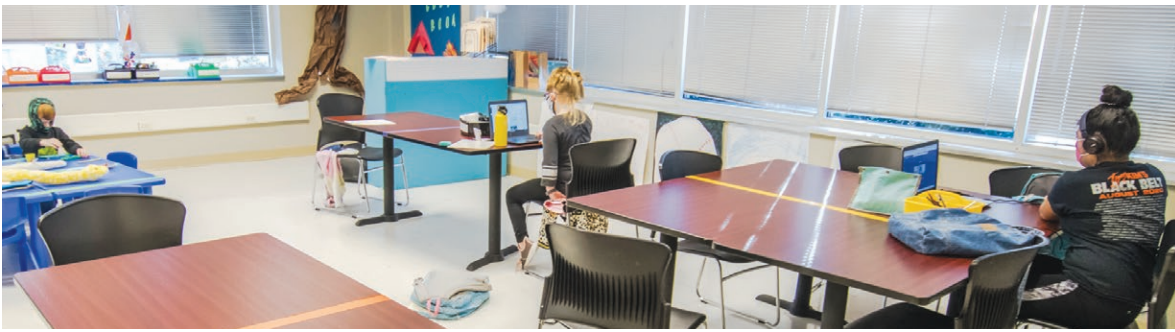
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Trends is a publication of the Guilford Merchants Association.



In school at work

Teacher Emily Taylor assists a student in the classroom at Graham Personnel Services. The company created the arrangement to assist employees during the pandemic. Story and photos, page 2.



Students tending to their lessons in the classroom at Graham Personnel Services in Greensboro.

Workplace classroom benefits students, parents, and employer

Erin Thomas doesn't have to worry about how her kindergarten son, Grady, is doing while she's at work. Three days a week, he's right down the hall with Emily Taylor, a certified teacher whose classroom would look at home in any elementary school.

Taylor is employed by Graham Personnel Services (GPS) as the firm's in-office schoolteacher. GPS employees are welcome to bring their elementary students who are engaged in distance learning to the office classroom. The classroom also is open to relatives of GPS employees.

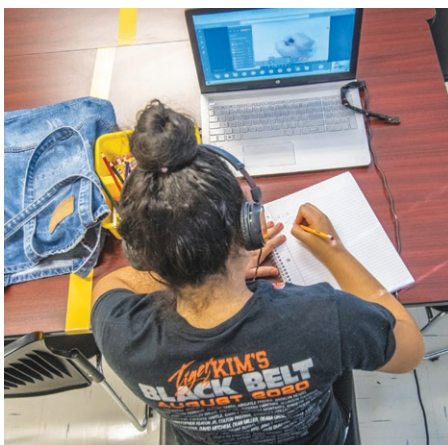
Older students continue with online instruction with their regular teachers and classmates, just as if in a virtual classroom at home. Taylor assists them as needed while giving the youngest students plenty of personal attention.

This unusual workplace benefit relieves lots of stress for parents

like Thomas, a senior professional recruiter.

"This is a huge relief, a weight off my back," she says. "I don't know what I would do if I didn't have this option."

Grady attends a charter school kindergarten two days a week in Randolph County. Without the GPS classroom, the other three days would be a challenge for his commuter mom.



Students engage in virtual learning with their usual classmates, teachers.

"This has helped out tremendously," Thomas says.

The classroom usually has from three to five students. All wear face masks and maintain social distancing, and the space is cleaned and

sanitized regularly.

Taylor, the teacher, takes each student's temperature with a digital thermometer upon arrival.

Gary Graham, president of Graham Personnel Services, says the company hired Taylor and set up

the classroom to support its job recruiters at a time when families and public schools are under intense pressure because of the pandemic.

"It's gone very well," Graham says. "I think it's been fantastic for our recruiters. It gives them a sense of peace and security."

Students, too, appear to have adjusted well.

On a recent school day, third-grader Lorelei and fifth-grader Allison wore headsets attached to their laptop computers as they tended to classwork. Instead of studying at



Teacher Emily Taylor says having a classroom arrangement in the workplace environment is amazing.

home, they were in a more familiar learning environment.

Graham says one GPS recruiter recently shared that her child's performance has improved markedly over "where they were before."

Taylor, who recently married and moved to Greensboro from the Southwest, says the workplace classroom is "different from anything I've ever seen before. But it's amazing.

"It's the best of any situation we could have right now," she says.



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The Guilford Merchants Association is a nonprofit organization founded in 1906. The Association is a business membership organization focused on supporting member companies with educational programming, lead generation activities, marketing opportunities, and overall enrichment while serving as a catalyst for community growth and prosperity.

When is it time to update your company policies?

BY SHAWN STRAUB

One of the questions I am asked most frequently is, “How will I know when we need to revise our policies?”

The answer is complicated and can depend on multiple factors. These may include your company culture, revisions to state and federal law, recent court cases, upcoming court cases, recent events in the news, and recent changes to your business.

Although many factors may come into play and give you pause about your policy manual, here are four events that should cause you to come to a full stop and review your policies.

Something happened, and you don't



Straub

like what the policy is telling you to do.

This is most often the case during a disciplinary decision or similar difficult discussion. The policy is telling you to do one thing, but your gut is telling you to do something else.

I have seen this occur most frequently with Dress Code policies and Zero Tolerance policies. A Zero Tolerance Policy lists all the items that are immediate termination offenses. When it was first created, you felt that you had seen it all, and you were confident that you knew everything that would cause you to fire someone. Then you encountered a new situation, and your gut is telling you that it should also be part of the Zero Tolerance policy.

Your Dress Code policy is rather clear on what may be worn to work. Then your employee surprised

you by coming to work wearing a shirt that had every expletive in the book (and some that were not in the book). When you wrote your policy, you didn't include something that seemed to be common sense, but now it is time for a revision, to include even common-sense items.



Something happened, and there is no policy telling you what to do.

Unfortunately, this occurs most often during crisis situations. There is a weather emergency and you need someone to work, but you never really outlined who that should be. There is a significant illness going around the office, and people are asking to work from home. Yet you have nothing in place that puts any parameters around remote working.

You have made a conscious change

in your company's vision, mission, or values.

As your company evolves, its policies will need to evolve with it. You will want to ensure that all of your policies reflect your culture.

The calendar says January.

It's always a good idea to review company policies annually, and the arrival of a new year is a great reminder to revise and republish your policy book.

Revising the policy manual is an important part of a leader's job. But be sure that you are revising policies at the right time and for the right reasons.

Your employees should always know where they stand. Be sure to communicate any planned changes to everyone implementing the policy. *Shawn Straub, M.A., is the founder and CEO of ALT HR Partners. (336) 965-2827*

www.althrparkers.com



Alison Huber of T-Mobile, left, helps Sue Falcone of Remarkable! A Speakers Bureau, pick out a shirt. The event was held in the GMA parking lot.



Ken Melton, Practical HR Solutions, displays his new T-shirt.

Members enjoy Free Day Friday freebies

GMA provided T-shirts, GMA logo face masks and lunch from Ghassan's on a warm fall day to thank members for their perseverance in 2020.

GMA periodically holds a Free Day Friday, inviting members to drop by for a free product or service offered by another member. Watch GMA email and check mygma.org to catch the next Free Day Friday.



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Arts in the pandemic

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emergency relief fund was exhausted in late August, nearly 1,700 checks were distributed.

The first four months of closures had a \$7 million direct impact on arts organizations, according to a study Way conducted. When considering additional lost revenues, such as expenditures for dining out before a concert or show, the economic hit rose to \$16.5 million, she said.

“That was just from March to July,” Way said. “You could easily multiply that by three now.”

Arts Greensboro continued to advocate for the arts community by advising Guilford County on the distribution of \$500,000 in federal funds that were part of the Coronavirus Relief Fund.

Arts organizations, like businesses, quickly looked to technology for ways to replace large live performances and came up with strategies to produce more intimate concerts and theater experiences.

The Carolina Theatre videoed concerts staged for a legal audience of 10 and posted them on its website.

The Greensboro Symphony Orchestra created a “pop-up concert series” performed by a small ensemble in an outdoor setting. The benefit was two-fold, said Keyshia Haithcock, the orchestra’s director of development.

Pop-up concerts, often at retirement communities, brought music to symphony

patrons and other music lovers. And, she said, the performances allowed symphony musicians to be paid.

“Our musicians are amazing people, wonderfully trained,” Haithcock said. “They’re not able to perform right now, and so many are not making money.”

The High Point Area Arts Council staged concerts from its home in the city’s renovated freight rail station. The head count for the initial concerts was limited to 10, including recording technicians. Dubbed Side-track Sessions, the recordings were placed online for all to enjoy.

“We wanted to make sure that arts patrons, who were sheltering at home, had a live arts event that they could still attend, even though it was virtual,” said Debbie Lumpkins, executive director.

The annual North Carolina Folk Festival, which brings tens of thousands to downtown Greensboro, faced a bleak prospect in June when it became apparent that a live event would not be possible.

“We made the decision to pivot to virtual,” Grossmann said. Rather than attempt to replicate hours of performances by scores of artists, festival organizers opted to “focus in on a really rich experience that would be about the length of a movie.”

The 2020 Folk Festival would also concentrate on



Triad Stage via Zoom: Vanecia Boone as Portia Moore in “A Vindictive Vineyard.”



Above: UltimaNota in a High Point Area Arts Council concert, recorded and made available online.



Left: The Hamiltones perform outside the International Civil Rights Center and Museum as part the 2020 N.C. Folk Festival. All Folk Festival performances were recorded and released online.

Photo by Brendan McLean



Carolina Theatre has resumed showing films with limited seating.

North Carolina artists.

7 Cinematics, a Greensboro video production company that specializes in live concert films, partnered with the Folk Festival to film three Tar Heel musical groups performing outdoors at historic Guilford County locations, including the Charlotte Hawkins Brown Memorial in Sedalia and the Old Mill of Guilford.

“It was all about the richness of what there is to experience here in North Carolina and specifically in Guilford County,” Grossmann said.

Going virtual “forced us to step outside our comfort zone,” she said.

The 2020 N.C. Folk Festival was a hit nonetheless, racking up more than 80,000 views. That number keeps climbing as people view the concerts online.

Triad Stage also took its performances online, mounting original shows via Zoom. “The Vindictive Vineyard,” set at a fictitious winery in Stokes County, was staged just before Halloween.

Actors set up in individual rooms at the O. Henry Hotel, each attended by an assistant. The director and stage manager ran the show from a separate room.

“The Wizard of Oz” is as much a part of fall

in Greensboro as autumn leaves. The 2020 show would have been the Community Theatre of Greensboro’s 25th annual production. Rather than shift to a virtual performance, the show literally was taken to the field. Major scenes were staged over rolling meadows in McLeansville over three weekends. “The Wizard of Oz Trail” allowed performers, family and fans to continue the beloved tradition.

“The magic of theater and all the arts in our community are still happening,” said Rozalynn Fulton, executive director. “We’re just finding creative and different ways to express that art.”

High Point Rockers

Baseball exec is living the dream at Truist Point ballpark

Christian Heimall was that kid who only wanted to play baseball, who couldn't imagine doing anything else.

So when it became apparent to him in college that he wasn't going to make the cut as professional baseball player, he made a slight course correction.

The next best thing to playing the game for a living, he figured, was calling the game.

"It was my dream job to be a major league baseball radio announcer," says Heimall, who grew up in a military family and considers Clarksville, Tennessee home.

An internship in a collegiate sports information department introduced him to the business side of baseball, and that eventually led him to High Point, where Heimall is general manager of the High Point Rockers.

The suspension of the 2020 minor league baseball season on account of the pandemic did not bring a halt to activities at Truist Point ballpark. As general manager, Heimall's job is to keep the ballpark busy even if the Rockers aren't swinging bats.

"In June, July and August, we played over 250 baseball



games," he says, explaining that the events were youth, amateur, and summer collegiate games.

The ballpark offers lots of options for groups to gather outside, socially distanced, yet have access to concessions, catering, restrooms and other services that gatherings require.

Heimall, 31, says "doing a private event is a very easy one-stop shop. We've done wedding receptions. We've done business meetings."

In late October, the ballpark hosted a meeting of GMA's Risers, the group for young professionals. It was the first in-person Risers meeting since February.

Heimall is looking forward to introducing more people to the ballpark's amenities.

"It's a 4,000-seat stadium," he explains, "so we've got plenty of space to be socially distant – but also get together and have a good time. I'm excited for more people to see what this place is capable of."

Highpointrockers.com
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Christian Heimall, general manager of the High Point Rockers, at Truist Point ballpark in downtown High Point.



Pro Messenger of the Carolinas was founded by Joanne Wheelus' father in 1983.

GMA connections and member benefits help firm stay on track

It doesn't matter if the GMA education event is live or virtual.

When Joanne Wheelus surveys the room or a Zoom screen to check out the other GMA members in attendance, she isn't sizing up future business prospects. Instead, she says, she's looking for resources.

Among those other GMA members gathered together to gain marketing or human resources or communications insights are knowledgeable professionals whom she might call upon for advice, coaching, services or other avenues to improve her business.

Wheelus is president of Pro Messenger of the Carolinas, a courier messenger service that her late father, Joe Scutti, started in 1983.

The firm has four employees and 25 contract drivers who primarily serve

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customers based in the Piedmont Triad.

Sometimes a customer needs a package of documents delivered across town. Another may need a carton delivered from Winston-Salem to High Point.

Pro Messenger of the Carolinas regularly transfers customer packages to air freight services at Charlotte Douglas International Airport.

"We run a 24/7 operation," Wheelus says. "We deliver locally, out of state, and internationally."

Some customers depend on Pro Messenger to pick up and deliver items on a schedule basis, perhaps daily or every other day. Others, she says, call Pro Messenger as needed.

"In the past few years,

we've seen an increase in medical deliveries," Wheelus says. "We handle time-sensitive and temperature-critical shipments that include life-saving drugs, direct-to-patient clinical trials, and human tissues and organs for transplant."

As is the case with most small businesses, there's a lot for Wheelus to do besides focusing on Pro Messenger's core services.

Through GMA, she says, she finds the insights and resources she needs.

"I try to soak up as much knowledge as I can," Wheelus says. Plus, "I've met some contacts that have proved to be valuable resources."

Connections made through GMA have assisted Pro Messenger on legal and human resources issues. Employees have attended Workplace Workshops and returned to share their new knowledge with the rest of the staff.

"GMA," Wheelus says, "helps to reinforce what has made us successful for 27 years. I love GMA."

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'We run a 24/7 operation. We deliver locally, out of state, and internationally.'

– Joanne Wheelus
Pro Messenger of the Carolinas

Brighter Click aims to help clients make better marketing decisions

As a digital marketing professional, Colby Flood approaches online events with a critical eye. So when he was invited to be a guest at a recent GMA virtual event, he logged into Zoom with an open mind ... and with what might be called modest expectations.

The event was a Noontime Network, nowadays a 100 percent virtual experience thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic. And was Flood ever surprised.

“It was very, very good,” he says from his office at Holly Hill Business Center in Burlington. “You could tell they had really put a lot of thought into the flow of things and how it was going to go.”

The meeting began with strong group communication that involved everyone, he recalls. That was followed by breakout groups, which placed groups of three into virtual rooms for more personal conversation.

Flood, owner of Brighter Click, a digital marketing and website design firm, was impressed and glad that GMA member Mark Podolle, owner of Wireless Ventures, had invited him to take part.

“I was very encouraged by that first experience,” Flood says. “I could tell that GMA was very well put together. I just went ahead and decided to join.”

‘I could tell that GMA was very well put together. I decided to join.’

– Colby Flood

NEW MEMBER PROFILE

Since then, Flood has taken part in additional virtual networking events. He’s also attended a live gathering of Risers, GMA’s networking group for young professionals.

Flood launched his business almost two years ago after working in digital for small businesses and non-profit organizations.

“I got a good understanding of what non-profits and small businesses go through when trying to navigate the digital marketing waters,” he says.



Colby Flood, owner of Burlington-based Brighter Click.

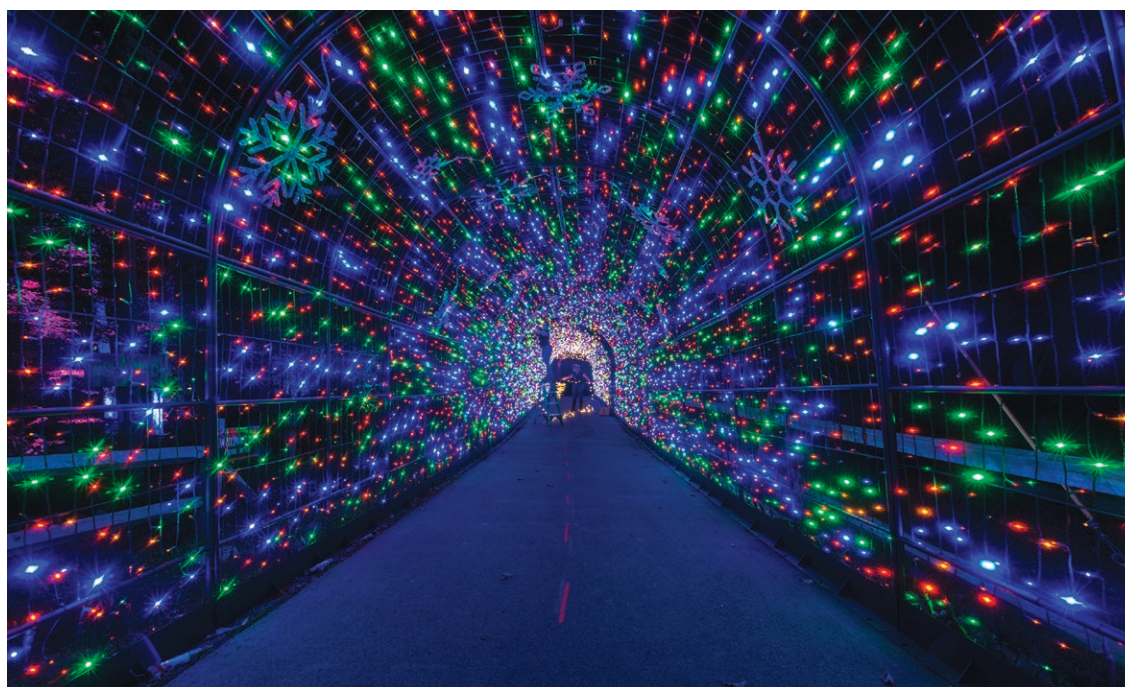
In addition to providing services, Flood wants to educate clients so they can make “smart marketing decisions.”

He comes from a small business background. His family owned a retail store at Alamance Crossing. That’s where he had his first job and got his passion for small business.

Eventually, he says, he hopes to be a presenter at a future GMA marketing communications event. Whether that event is live event or virtual, Flood is excited about the prospect.

“It’s a great opportunity to go after,” he says.

BrighterClick.com
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1-844-722-1822 (700)



Workers install lights at one of the displays at Greensboro Science Center.

Winter Wonderlights: Seasonal attraction debuts at Greensboro Science Center

It’s the Greensboro Science Center, but like you’ve never seen it before.

After dark, Winter Wonderlights transforms the Science Center’s zoo into a magical experience that makes your favorite, familiar places even more memorable and exciting.

“We hope this is going to become an annual tradition at the Greensboro Science Center,” says Erica Brown, marketing manager.

Fountains will be awash with colorful light instead of water. Twinkling colors transform a long paved walkway into an enchanting tunnel. There’s even a giant snow globe-like spectacle that becomes an interactive experience with lights and music.

The music changes as visitors stroll through Win-

ter Wonderlights’ 12 zones. Singers from the Greensboro Opera recorded seasonal music that will be heard in some areas. Visitors on certain nights may find live singers, socially distanced, of course.

Santa will be there, too, virtually. Youngsters will still be able to chat with Santa and pass along their wishes.

All the Winter Wonderlight themes were custom-made by GES Events, an international event technology and marketing firm.

About two years of planning preceded the launch on November 6, Brown says. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic led to several changes, including timed-entry tickets, limiting capacity per half hour, and a one-way traffic pattern to keep things moving. Visitors

should wear face masks and maintain six feet of distance from persons not in their family.

Tickets for Winter Wonderlights are available at greensboroscience.org. Prices range from \$16 to \$24 per person; science center members should log in to receive discounted prices. Children age 2 and younger are admitted free.

Should anyone need additional fun after experiencing Winter Wonderlights, Brown notes that the Rotary Club of Greensboro Carousel will be operating each evening.

The Greensboro Science Center is open daily except Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.

The last day to experience Winter Wonderlights will be January 3.



Fountains splash with light, not water, for the holidays.

MEMBER SALUTE

Furry Companions

The roles played by our animal companions have intensified during the pandemic. We may not be able to socialize with our human friends as we'd like, but our pets are always ready to take a walk, snuggle, or just hang out, at home or at work. Here are a few GMA members with their pets.



Tim Westfall and Marley, Tim Westfall State Farm.



Mary McIver and Samantha, Piedmont Direct Mail.



Tom Pullara and Andy, Dream Vacations.



Robert McIver and Stella, Piedmont Direct Mail.



Jan McDiarmid and Jackson, Cruise Planners.



Mary Sizemore and Willie, High Point Library.



Jay Vics, Juno and Jema, JVI Mobile Marketing.



Alison Schwartz, Merida and Aurora Rose, All Pets Considered.



Mike Murray and Apollo, New Leaf Graphics.

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We wish you a very happy holiday season and a New Year filled with abundance.

