



## Where Duke baseball stands around midway point of season

SPORTS, 1B

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Queen Azalea Elaine Hendrix talks to guests after being crowned Queen Azalea by Azalea Festival President Michael Franklin on April 8. KEN BLEVINS/STARNEWS

## Wilmington blooms with pride at Queen Azalea coronation

**Savanna Tenenoff**  
Wilmington StarNews  
USA TODAY NETWORK

With the crowning of the 79th North Carolina Azalea Festival queen, Wilmington's week-long flower party has officially started.

Actress Elaine Hendrix was crowned this year's Queen Azalea during the annual coronation ceremony on April 8. The ceremony was held on the Battle-

ship North Carolina.

Hendrix was previously an invited guest of the festival, sometimes known as a festival celebrity, in 2009. However, this year it is her time to shine as the festival queen.

"This truly is an honor for me," Hendrix told the crowd on April 8.

Events like the Azalea Festival bring people together in an "uplifting way," said Hendrix.

"I don't think that there's anything

more important than coming together in community and connecting with one another -- live, in the flesh, in person," Hendrix said. "And we need that so much these days."

Hendrix's duties as queen include riding in the Azalea Festival parade, attending most festival functions and making other festival-related appearances.

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## Mass shooting suspect to get mental health care

**Bob Liepa**  
Wilmington StarNews  
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The man accused of a mass shooting in Southport that killed three people and seriously injured several others is to undergo psychiatric treatment in the hope that it will restore his capacity to stand trial.

Brunswick County Superior Court Judge Jason Disbrow said at an April 7 hearing the court has found that Nigel Edge, 41, is incapable of comprehending his situation and assisting in his defense. As a result, the court ordered Edge be kept in safekeeping until a bed becomes available at Cherry Hospital, a psychiatric hospital in Goldsboro.

Disbrow said the court finds Edge probably has a mental illness and is dangerous to others. Delusional beliefs prevent Edge from rationally and reasonably assisting in his defense, said Disbrow.

Disbrow said he reviewed a March 26 forensic report evaluating Edge was submitted by Dr. Matthew McNally, a board-certified state forensic psychologist at Central Regional Hospital in Butner. McNally found that Edge has "delusional ideas," and concluded that Edge could not rationally assist in his defense at this time, said Disbrow.

### A case put on hold

McNally recommended that Edge receive treatment that is likely to include psychiatric medication and therapy, said Disbrow. The judge said McNally believes Edge's capacity will likely be restored if Edge receives treatment and refrains from substances.

In essence, the case has been put on pause while the court waits to see if treatment restores Edge's capacity. "The timeline is indeterminate," said Disbrow.

"Television programs may resolve a case from incident to closing argument in forty-five minutes, but the justice system does not operate on that timeline," District Attorney Jon David said in a news release. "This is a marathon, not a sprint. The proceedings in this case will be slow, methodical, and deliberate, because that is what justice requires."

Disbrow ordered the forensic report be delivered to the assistant attorney general and said criminal charges remain pending against Edge, who is being held by the Brunswick County Sheriff's Office and to be transferred to Central Prison in Raleigh.

"Mr. Edge is to be examined to see if he has regained the capacity to proceed to trial," said Disbrow.

### The Southport mass shooting

Edge fired a gun into the American Fish Company, an outdoor bar in Southport, killing Solomon Banjo, Michael Durbin and Joy Rogers, and causing serious bodily injury to several others on Sept. 27, 2025, according to court records.

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## With residents upset, Pender County suspends property revaluations

**Charlie Kingree**  
Wilmington StarNews  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Pender County residents showed up in full force at the April 7 Board of Commissioners meeting. With more than 200 people in attendance, they couldn't even all fit in the room. They spilled out into the adjacent hallway, straining to see and hear the proceedings.

Eventually, they would get what they came for.

Many of these residents were there for the same reason: to see if their county commissioners would take action after the county's recent property revaluations saw residents' property values skyrocket. According to Vincent Valuations, the company that conducted the revaluation, property values more than doubled on average.

Almost 50 people signed up to speak, although not all of them were present to

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Many Pender County residents were forced to watch the April 7 commissioners meeting from the hallway after the board room reached capacity. Over 200 residents were in attendance, many of whom were there to demand answers on the recent property revaluations. CHARLIE KINGREE/STARNEWS

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