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**Winter and Wives' Tales**

*Weather predictions  
come from  
unusual sources*

BY ELIOT DUKE  
Staff Writer

DENTON — If woolly worms and persimmon seeds are any indication of what kind of winter is coming, Davidson County residents should get ready for a lot of snow in the next few months.

Winter predicting wives tales have been around for ages, and they tend to make for great conversation amidst farmers and anyone else who has heard of nature's little signs of weather to come. In Davidson County, a Denton couple has proof positive that snow, and a lot of it, is definitely in the winter forecast. Sort of.

Curt and Sara Jack own The Persimmon Branch Farm in Denton where the couple grows apples, peaches, asparagus and hachiya persimmons. What people may not know is that persimmon seeds are thought to be a great predictor of what kind of winter is coming. When a seed is split open, one of three shapes — a fork, a knife or a spoon — can be found on the inside of the shell, and each one carries a much different fore-



At left, Curt and Sara Jack display the inside of a persimmon seed, which is often used as a predictor for the upcoming winter. At right, is Cole Peurifoy and his Woolly Worm Jack.



TIMES PHOTOS/ELIOT DUKE/COURTESY

cast. "A knife symbolizes a very cold, icy winter," Curt Jack said. "A spoon means heavy snow and you'll have to dig yourself out. A fork is an indication of a mild

weather." What have the Jacks seen the most of so far? Spoons. "Everything here has been spoons," said Curt Jack. "We had few that we opened up that

had the knives. We'll have to wait and see. We've had a lot of people ask if we've been seeing the same thing. We've been

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**Jobless rate  
continues to  
decrease**

BY ELIOT DUKE  
Staff Writer

North Carolina's unemployment rate continued its downward trend in September, but experts feel the state isn't out of the woods quite yet.

According to statistics released Friday by the Employment Security Commission of North Carolina, the state unemployment rate dropped to 9.6 percent in September, marking the seventh straight month in which the rate has dipped. It also marks the first time the state rate is not above the national rate since March 2008.

Employment in September increased by 10,100 jobs with the largest growth occurring in government. Manufacturing, however, lost 3,800 jobs, and the fact the state isn't experiencing a broader range of job growth is one of the reasons experts feel the recession will linger.

"The bigger thing we're looking at is overall job growth," ESC spokesperson Larry Parker said. "We've had so much up and down from month to month throughout a lot of the job sectors. But something we're starting to notice is that some of these job sectors are having some pretty good gains, albeit small ones. Construction and manufacturing are down but pretty much every other job sector is up. I think it's just going to be a slow process. Over the last six or seven months, we've just had inconsistent job sectors."

Unlike the recession from 2001-02, when the

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**Education, business support a priority for Williams**

BY ERIN WILTGEN  
Staff Writer

Kevin Williams entered into politics inspired by his children — and their future.

A Democrat from Lexington, Williams will face seven challengers for the four Davidson County Commissioner seats in the Nov. 2 election, and though neither of his kids have started kindergarten, that age is fast approaching.

"Education is important, it's the No. 1 reason families might stay in a county

other than jobs," Williams said. "We need to make sure that schools continue to be good so people stay and people move here. That in itself will raise some money — people spending more money here, more sales tax, more property tax."

With that in mind, Williams says that ensuring quality education rests on the shoulders of county commissioners.



Williams

**2010 ELECTION**

"I think the county should have the primary responsibility of educating the citizens and making sure the schools hold pace, are not overcrowded, and making sure that there is enough staff to teach the kids," Williams said.

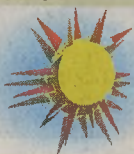
Part of that involves an aggressive stance in pursuing grant money for schools and in advocating for higher teacher pay, he add-

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**Today's Weather**



Sunny, 73/49



**Empowerment Week reaching out to community**

BY ERIN WILTGEN  
Staff Writer

Emmanuel Baptist Church has taken its mission of empowerment to a whole new level.

When the Rev. P. Michael McNair sat down with church leaders to plan the 2011 calendar, he voiced the idea of creating a week of empowerment. Even then, he hadn't envisioned anything as complex as what it has become.

Combining five days full of enrichment activities, Empowerment Week 2010 — which spans from Wednesday, Oct. 27, to Sunday, Oct. 31 — will seek to educate the entire community about health,

family, the economy, jobs, outreach, and friends.

"Every day is a possible life-changing opportunity," McNair said. "That's how powerful information is. The right information to the right person at the right time can change your life. No one should miss out on this opportunity."

The week kicks off Wednesday with a health awareness fair from 3 to 8 p.m. This fair features booths from a variety of health institutions from the Thomasville Medical Center to the Dragonfly House to the March of Dimes. Different groups will provide blood pressure checks, HIV testing and dental screenings free

of charge. The Red Cross will bring its mobile unit for blood donations since the blood bank rests at a critical low.

"It's just a wealth of health organizations and information that we as a city, a community, a county need," McNair said. "I'm an advocate for information. Lack of knowledge is probably America's biggest enemy."

Aside from the agencies looking to improve individual health, the fair also will host insurance companies to offer options to those who may not be able to afford the costs of health care.

"It's rough to hear that you need to do this with

your teeth and this with my body but at the end of the day you don't have the money to afford it," McNair said. "We're not going to leave you out

there." In a jump to less cerebral activity, Family Day

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TIMES PHOTO/ERIN WILTGEN

Brenda Green of Emmanuel Baptist Church holds one of the many items that will be given to those in need.

I AM A BUSY MOM, STYLIST, PET LOVER,  
SPORTS FAN. I AM A SURVIVOR

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