

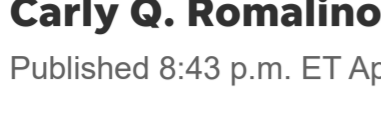
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SOUTH JERSEY

## Wenonah woman leaving local landmark for smaller home

Carly Q. Romalino Courier-Post;

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Diana Salomone held her 6-pound Yorkshire Terrier under one arm, and with the other, pointed moving men toward boxes in the third-floor hallway of her Wenonah mansion.

What didn't fit in the Mayflower big-rig parked in her driveway Wednesday is headed to auction Saturday.

"It's bittersweet," Salomone said.

She spent decades "living for" the stone and granite landmark on Mantua Avenue. Next month, she'll start a new life in a modest three-bedroom home on South Carolina's Hilton Head Island.

"The (Wenonah) house had been my husband's for 27 years. It never divorced me," she joked.

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Salomone, calling herself the borough's "mystery woman," moved into the 6 and 1/2-bath, 8-bedroom house in 1988. Then-boyfriend Louis Paolino — owner of waste removal companies and landfills — bought the 12,000 square-foot mansion and cottage for \$450,000, she said.

When Paolino left for Florida in 2000, she stayed behind, working as a hairstylist, a bartender and caterer to cover the \$1,000 monthly utility bills and more than \$30,000 in annual taxes.

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She recently sold the estate for \$1.1 million to Princeton couple Tony and Jenn Pizi. They close on the six-acre property on April 30.

"I'm happy and sad," said Salomone, a 52-year-old Williamstown native.

"I put my blood, sweat and tears into this house."

Auctioneers Nick Mesiano and Douglas Adams on Saturday will sell items inside and out, from pool and patio furniture to gym equipment, from antique bedroom sets to the 2001 royal blue Porsche in the driveway.

Even two bedrooms full of clothes, shoes and coats will be on the block.

"You will not hear, 'no sale,' " Mesiano said, tinkering with a speaker system in the backyard where Adams will auction off tennis court furniture and a kids' playhouse with its own set of chandeliers.

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"Everything sells."

Mesiano couldn't estimate how many people might turn up under the big white tent on Salomone's front lawn. His last estate auction drew 600 people on a sweltering 95-degree day.

He expects the 9:30 a.m. auction to go until at least 5 p.m.

The Pizis' Princeton home is on the market for \$3.8 million. The couple — who worked on Wall Street — will start fresh in South Jersey.

"We wanted something with character," Jenn Pizi said. "We were blown away. (Salomone) has kept it in pristine shape."

Original mahogany molding, leaded glass windows, and the winding staircase sealed the deal. The house's history is the icing.

Robert H. Comey, a straw hat maker, began construction in 1901. It was completed four years later.

Comey owned a half-dozen Panama-style straw hat factories in the United States and Canada. He made his fortune when President Theodore Roosevelt was photographed wearing a straw hat on a visit to the Panama Canal, Pizi said.

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The house is also connected to Ethel Milfred Royal, heiress to the Royal Typewriter Company fortune.

"They loved the history," Salomone said. "When they walked through the door, I knew they fell in love with the place."

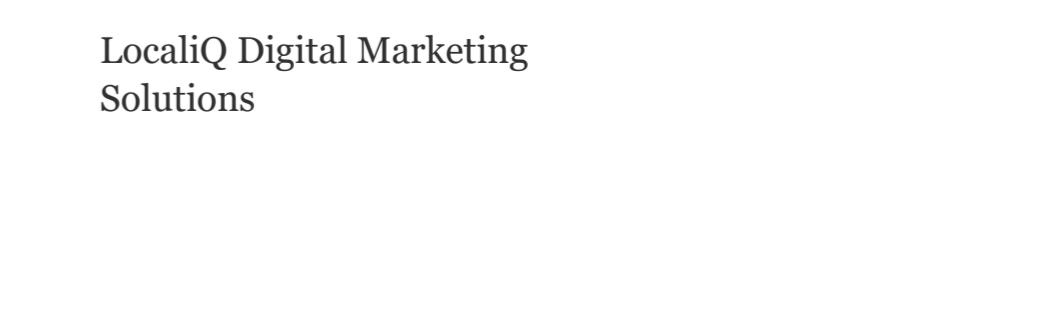
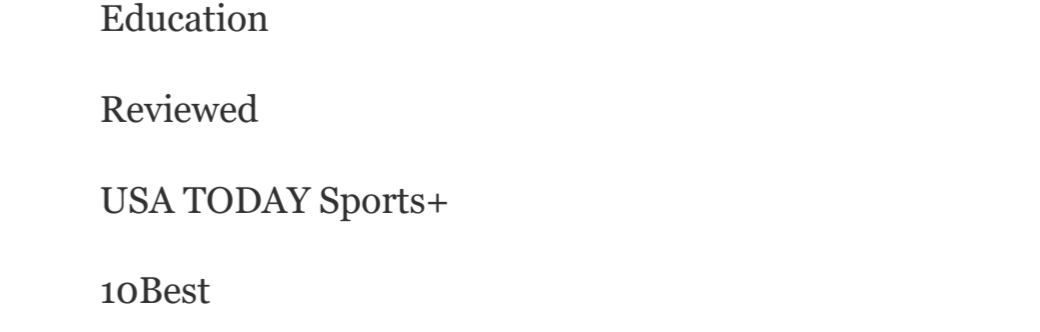
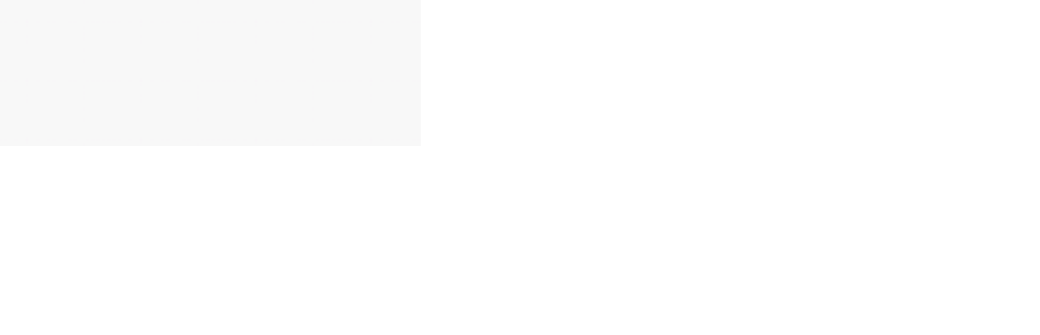
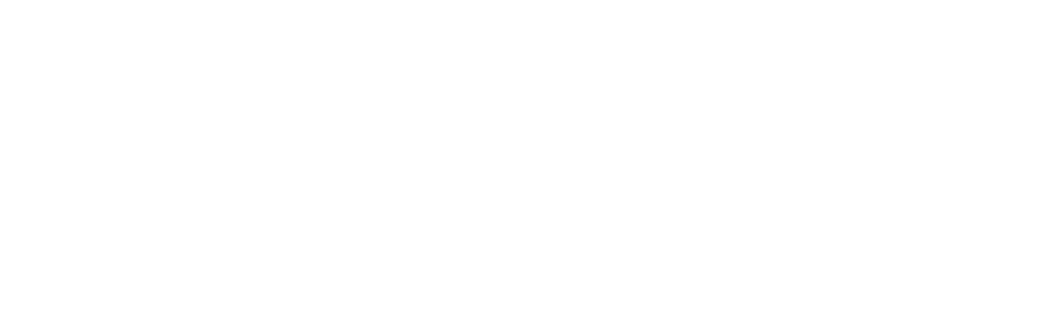
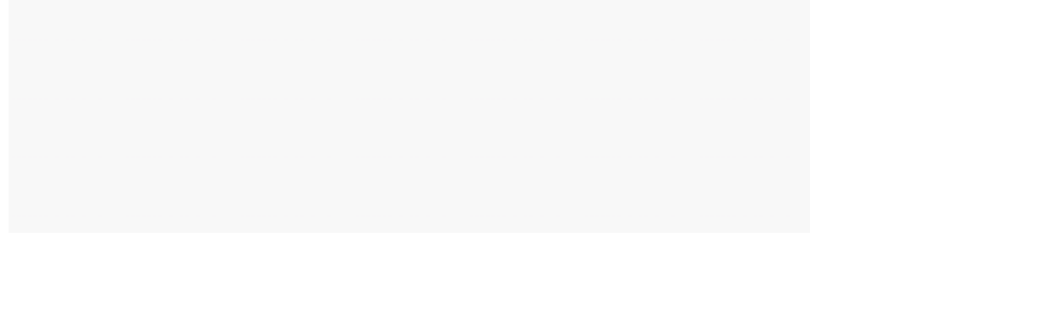
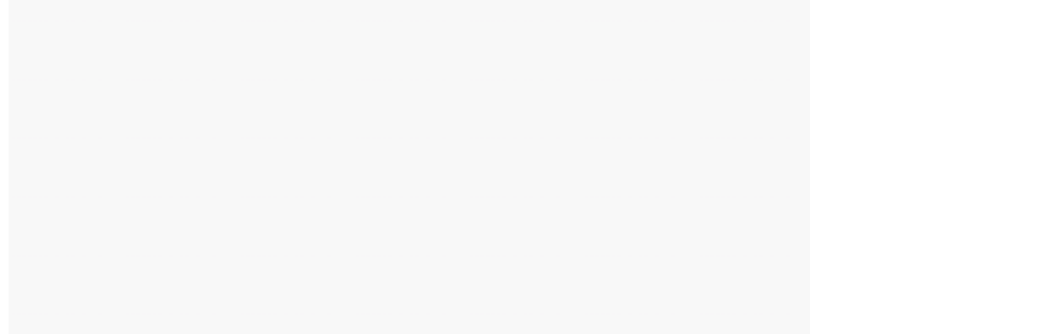
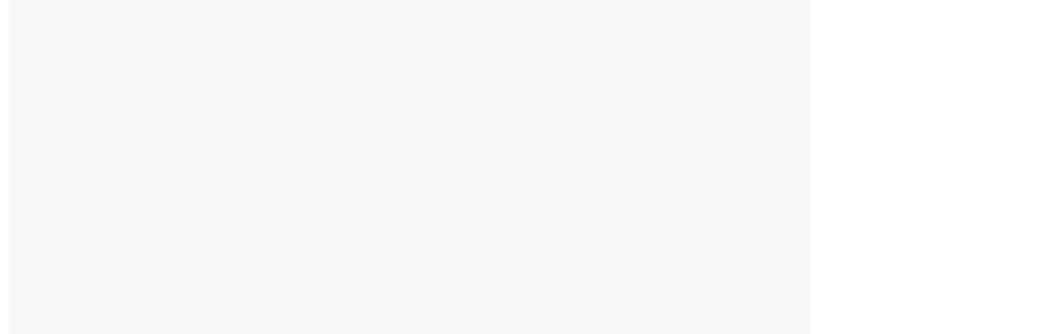
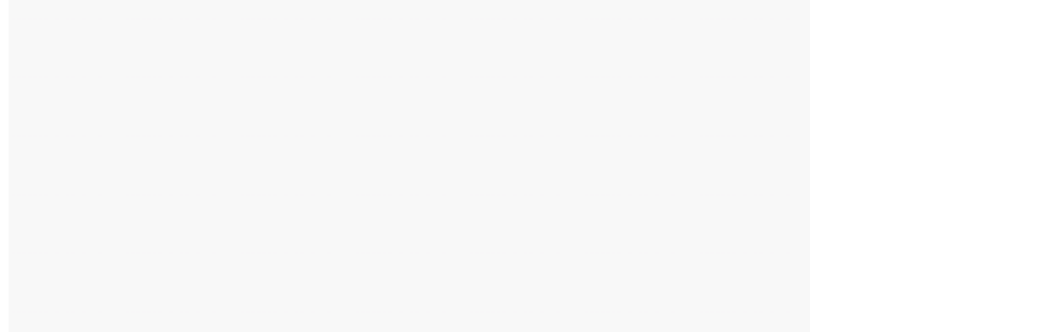
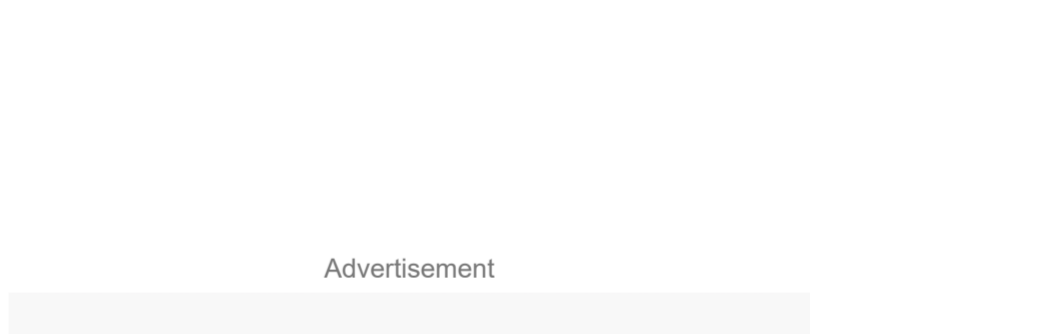
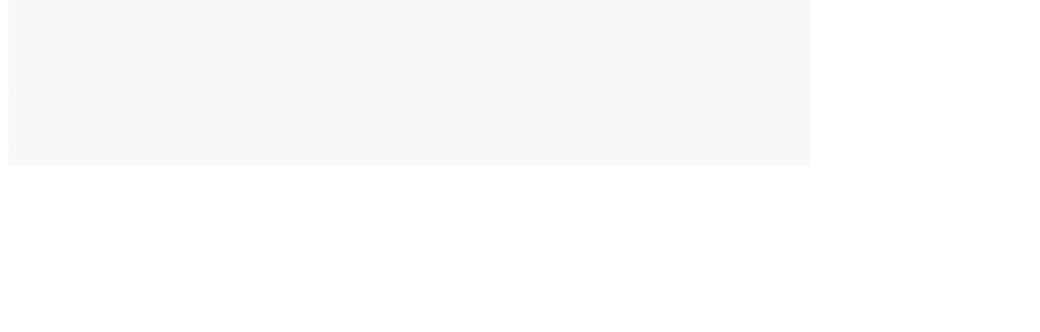
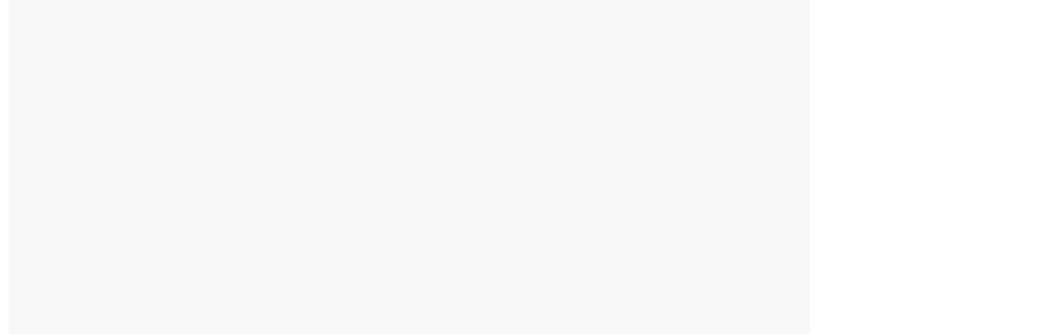
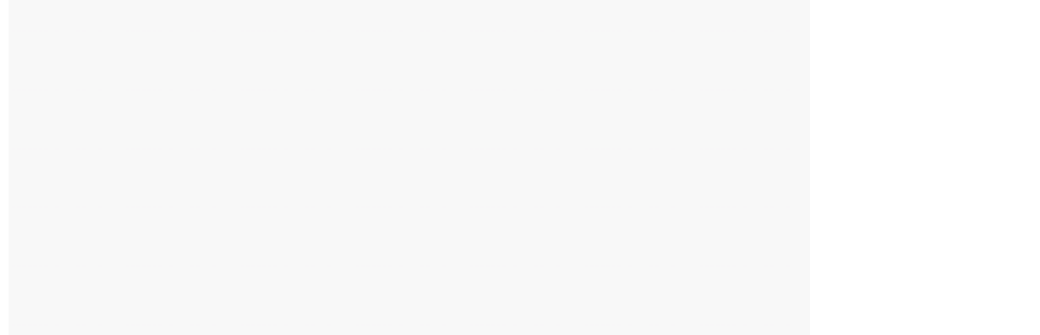
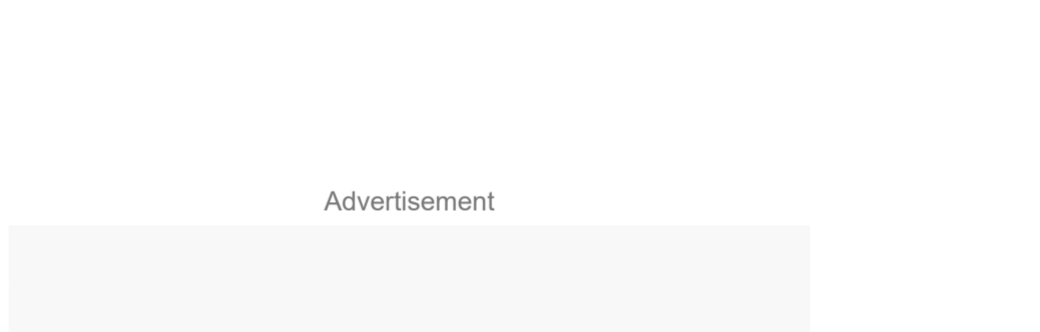
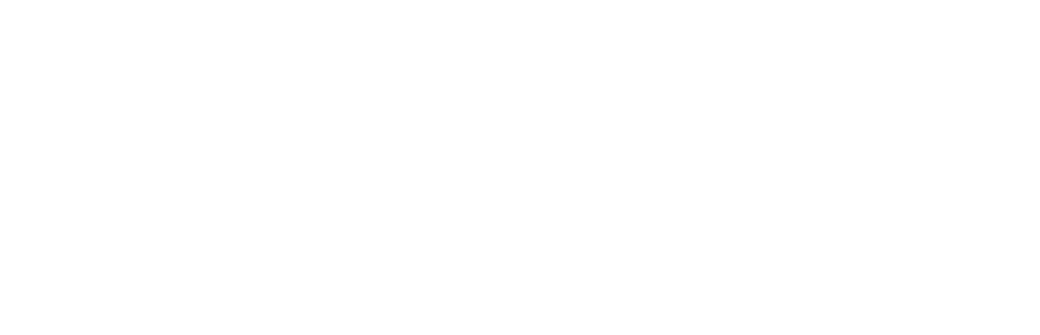
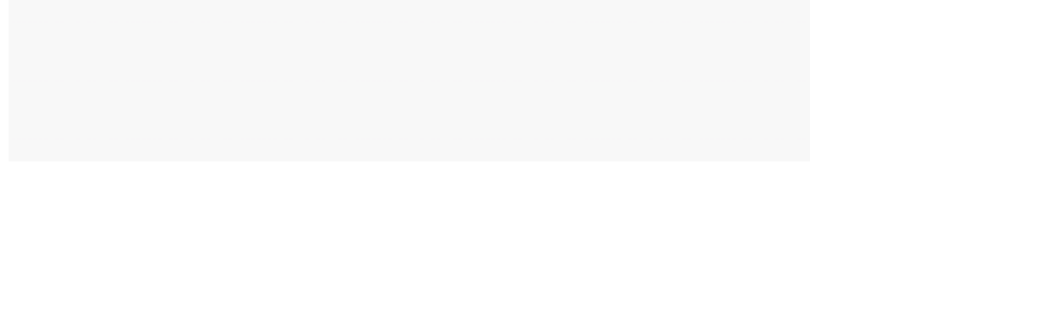
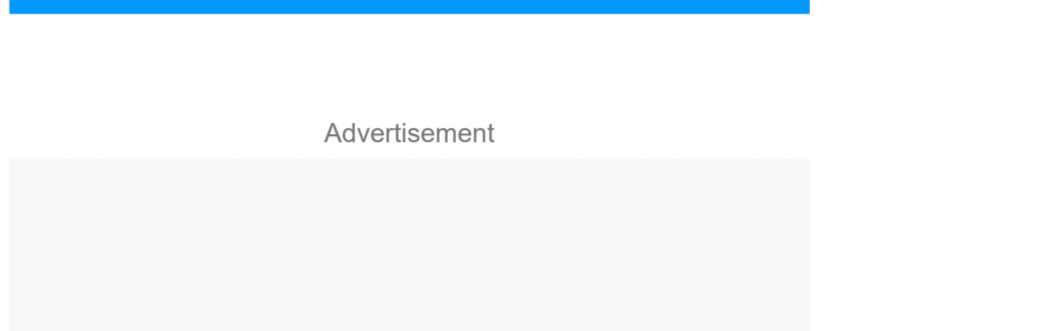
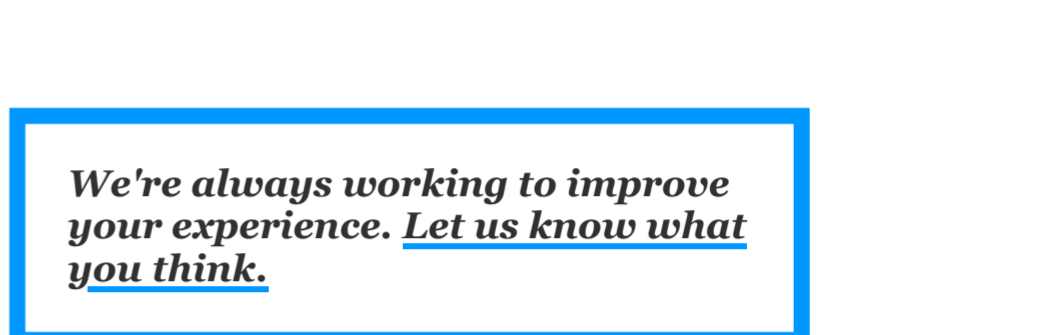
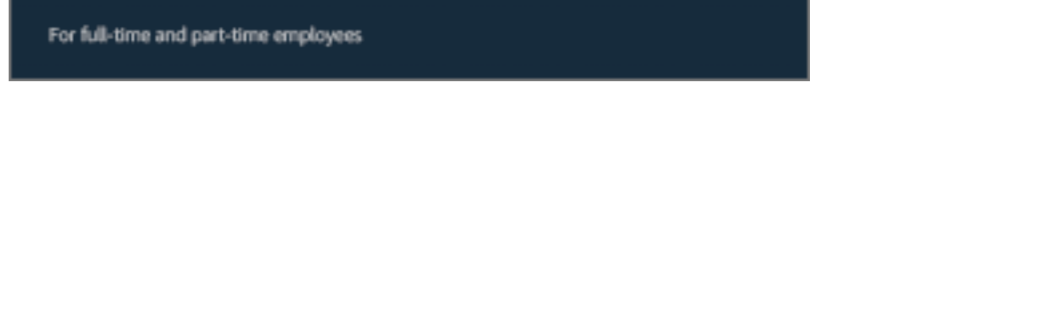
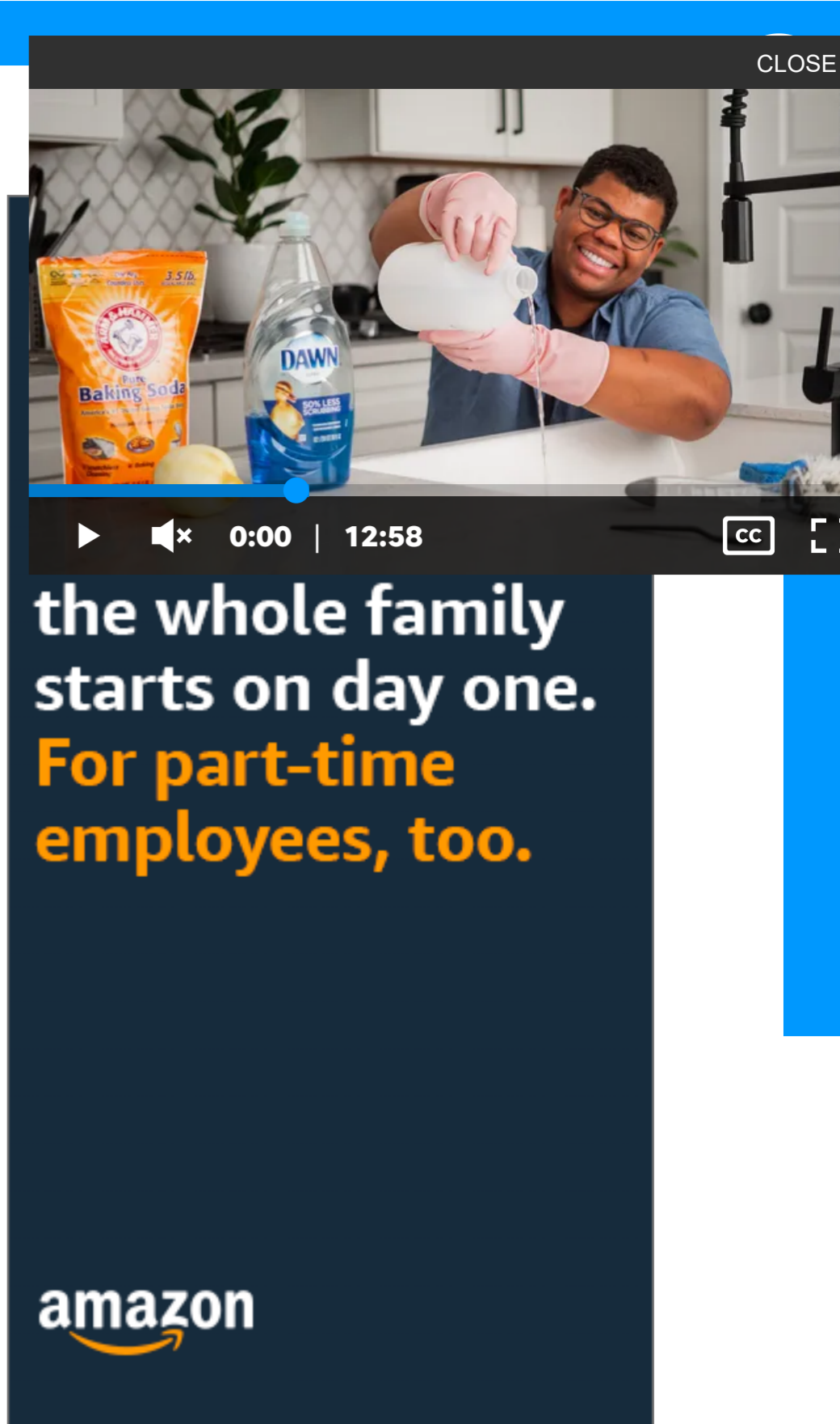
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### If you go

The Salomone estate auction will start with a preview at 7:30 a.m. Saturday. Sales begin at 9:30 a.m. at 500 E. Mantua Avenue, Wenonah. For more information, call (856) 305 6550.



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