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Joy Hewett Open Letter to the Pittsboro Town Commissioners

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Main Street Pittsboro on the Move

The excitement was palpable and the food delicious when downtown Pittsboro business owners mingled recently with property owners, elected officials, town staff, and the Board of Main Street Pittsboro at the Postal Fish Company for the inaugural "Main Street Mixer".

The inaugural mixer was held at the Postal Fish Company to highlight the efforts of the organization working with the business owners and the Town to facilitate the smooth opening of a new restaurant in the former Pittsboro Post Office located on Salisbury Street.

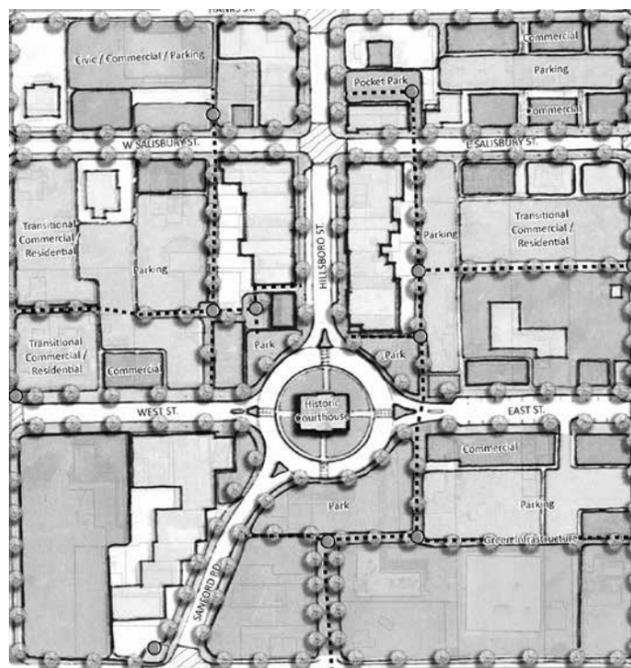
"Seeing all of the property and business owners come together, made me realize how Pittsboro is truly special," said Liquid Amber co-owner Kitty Meham. "I look forward to hearing their ideas and working together to make Pittsboro an exciting place to live, work and explore."

Early on in the meeting, former Pittsboro Mayor Randy Voller asked Virlies Grill co-owner and current Pittsboro Town Board member, Jay Farrell, to read these words to the audience: "Aspire to Inspire before you Expire."

In a nutshell that is the raison d'être of Main Street Pittsboro. The organization is working diligently to energize and convene all stakeholders.

Main Street Pittsboro works in partnership with the Pittsboro Business Association to promote businesses in the Main Street Pittsboro district. Working with the Town

of Pittsboro, Main Street Pittsboro also aims to implement a vision that will keep the downtown vibrant, authentic, and alluring, while celebrating the town's unique history in collaboration with the Chatham Historical Society. All in attendance agreed that downtown Pittsboro is the shared focus as the surrounding area grows and changes.



The meeting began with a series of casual introductions and conversations focused on educating stakeholders about the Town-approved "Downtown Vision Plan". Various exhibits showing possibilities for downtown parks, pedestrian walkways, and property reuses were displayed so attendees could look them over and chat with board members of Main Street Pittsboro and others about them.

Pittsboro ABC Board chairman and Main Street Pittsboro member Jim Nass recalled that the event "...was a great opportunity to bring property owners, business owners, elected officials and Main Street Board members together to share their vision of a vibrant, economically strong Main Street District."

Members of the Oldham family, who have owned and operated the beloved S&T's Soda Shop for nearly 20 years on Hillsboro Street, were happy to attend an event around the corner that was "fun" and "informative". They said they looked forward

to getting more information about the ideas that were presented.

Main Street Pittsboro's President, Maria Parker-Lewis, co-owner of the Pittsboro Roadhouse with her husband Greg, welcomed property owners and tenants of the District with a message of unity and collaboration.

She closed with a heartfelt call to endorse "hope and engagement" over "fear", as Pittsboro and Chatham County face the pressures of growth and change.

When Ms. Parker-Lewis' address ended, economic vitality chair and board member, Randy Voller, got folks fired up when he brought fellow board member, Greg Lewis, up in front of the group to hold up his hand to demonstrate the value of unity with a metaphor of "individual fingers coming together to form a fist."

Voller used this metaphor to illustrate the strength of collaborative partnerships to revitalize Pittsboro's downtown. Fingers standing alone, are weak, and can be broken. Fists are fingers working together and are strong when dealing with challenges.

Commissioner Michael Fiocco, also a Main Street Pittsboro board member and the chair of the design committee, brought attendees up to date on the accomplishments of Main Street Pittsboro. He also shared a variety of ideas to improve the appearance, accessibility and vibrancy of downtown.

Fiocco's words inspired longtime Chatham Arts Council board member and Main Street Pittsboro secretary, Lesley Landis, to opine that "the Main Street Mixer event was a fun next step towards future collaborations that will be essential to making ideas happen like creating downtown residential possibilities, ensuring more retail options at street-levels, providing safe and accessible pedestrian and cycling pathways and sidewalks, and green recreation areas that not only accommodate Pittsboro's seasonal celebrations, but also provide everyday gathering spots."

The meeting concluded with Voller and Lewis thanking the business and property owners for attending the inaugural mixer at the Postal Fish Company and reminding the group that we have tremendous local resources in our creative, agricultural, and local business communities that can make our awesome town even better.

The sentiments from attendees were very positive as many people told board members that they were "all in" for ensuring that Pittsboro's Main Street District continues to be vibrant and unique, with one excited attendee telling Commissioner Fiocco that "he wanted to be part of the fist."

Main Street Pittsboro is a local non-profit 501(c)3 organization. All donations to the organization are tax-deductible as per IRS regulations. Main Street Pittsboro welcomes volunteers and invites readers to visit their website at www.mainstreetpittsboro.org

— Main Street Pittsboro

Barnyard Bull

by Don Basnight

Grandma had me for the day; Mom was ditching one kid out of five. Saturdays back in the 1970's at the livestock market and auction was where Grandma did the money while Granddaddy kept the farm animals moving around the ring for the auctioneer. It was where I perfected peanuts in Pepsi and climbing three board fences. The market would sell cows mostly farmer to farmer; you have to mix the blood you know. One good "new blood bull" is worth a lot to a herd, and a farmer.

I remember my uncle telling me not to wave to Granddaddy, and to sit on my hands in the sales galley. "Boy you might buy a pig." As funny as that is now, it was a real fear for an 8-year-old. As I fidgeted in my seat the auctioneer warned the two ring men of a spirited bull about to be let in the ring. Both men retreated to their saw dusted corner, protected to some degree by a well-positioned corner post. Granddaddy looked relaxed; he had his ash cane, the other man, an electric shock cattle prod. When the bull pranced into the ring, the crowd gasped and the one ring man shivered.



The bull charged my Grandfather! He cracked him on the head between the two horns with his cane. The bulls' whole demeanor changed. He quit prancing so much and kept a side eye on my Granddaddy. I did too. I wonder to this day if the highest bidder kept his side eye on the bull he bought. I hope so.

It was many years later before I was old enough to be told the story of the goring death of my great granddad. The delay was not so much to spare an 8-year-old from a trauma long ago, just waiting for the 8-year-old to matter and the storyteller to reminisce. It pays to keep a side eye on your bull it seems.

Granddaddy's father was 64 years old when his pet bull killed him. He went in

to feed Brutus one morning like he always did and was tossed around the corral like a matador whose time had come, a losing gladiator in bib overalls. He'd fed that bull every morning for three years. Will had to jab Brutus with a pitch fork, making room for Aunt Lucille to drag Pop Pop back home to Granny. You would think the family would shoot the son-of-a-bitch but they sold that Angus at the Raleigh fairgrounds in trade for burying money. On the farm you see, death is not personal. And a burial costs money.

Don Basnight is a real estate sales person in Carrboro who has learned that old people are just young people that have lived a long time. He lives in Chapel Hill with his wife and loves exploring North Carolina.

Nature Cures Cabin Fever, Culture Funk

by Joe Jacob

How bad has your case of cabin fever been? I know mine was and still is pretty bad. It has been a long, long winter with spring teasing me way too many times. I knew better when we had the warmer temperatures back in March, but my case of cabin fever was so bad this year that my mind jumped to the warm smells and feelings of April. Silly, silly me.

Is cabin fever an illness? You bet it is. If you do a search on google or look up the words in your old Webster Dictionary, you will see cabin fever defined as "irritability, listlessness, and similar symptoms resulting from long confinement or isolation indoors during the winter". The definition does not include the insanity of our so-called civilized world, but that

is a topic for another article.

Is there a cure for cabin fever? The good news is that if you have not already killed a co-worker or family member, there is a cure. First, you have to recognize that everyone is not as dumb as you think they are. You are just irritable and being irritable takes a lot of energy. That is why you feel listless. It is not their fault, and it is not your fault. I know you will hate to hear this, but you are just being human and everyone who lives above the freeze zone in the northern hemisphere either needs psychological counseling after a long winter or just maximum time outside in the sun doing what they love doing most. Of course, for me, it is getting onto the Haw River doing what I love most; either paddling a canoe or kayak while soaking in as much of Nature as I can.

It is so easy for an individual to disappear into a funk, another word for cabin fever, during late winter months. We tend to withdraw and become unconscious of what is going on around us. We find ourselves just going through the motions, doing things that deep down we know are not supportive because that is what we have always done. What is scary to me is that as a society, we do the same thing regardless of what time of the year it might be. As a society, however, we cannot blame it on cabin fever.

Several years ago I read a book entitled *Ishmael* written by Don Quinn. The book starts off with a classified ad that reads "Teacher seeks pupil. Must be willing to save the world. Apply

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