



■ Chatham County alive to the sound of music. page 3.

■ Letter from former County Commissioner Gary Phillips. page 11



Land-use plan way to shape future

To see where we should go, take a look in the rear view mirror

By Larry Hicks

Contrary to what some may believe, planning Chatham's future did not begin last summer with the proposal of Briar Chapel in northeast Chatham. The first strategic planning effort initiated by the Board of Commissioners (BOC), with links to today's debate, actually began around 1978. The issues

For more information on land use, access the county's website, www.co.chatham.nc.us/index2, under Planning Board and Land Use Plan.

and challenges reported out of that committee were similar to those the County faces today, some 25 years later ... the ability to balance residential and economic growth, protect agriculture, education, and the future of the County for all citizens. Unfortunately, this initial effort was shelved, and the recommendations were never enacted.

Nearly 14 years later, around 1991-92, another strategic planning effort was initiated by the Economic Development Corporation, this time involving the County Extension Office's Agricultural Department, the Planning Department, Public Works, plus a few other groups and individuals, including a small-business committee. The BOC did not initiate this endeavor, and it too eventually stalled.

Around 1994, strategic planning was revived once again, through a project called Chatham Action Now, or CAN. This project, a joint venture with a rural electric cooperative grant, and again the Economic Development Corporation, brought in a team of "experts", conducted interviews throughout the County, reviewed prior work, and offered a series of actions for the county to take. This report too may have been shelved, except that a group of motivated and committed citizens lobbied to continue the endeavor.

As a result, the Strategic Plan **LAND USE** continued on page 10.

Real estate development explodes across Chatham



It's full steam ahead for residential building in Chatham County.

By Robert N. Eby

According to records in the Chatham Planning Department Office, new building permits have increased annually, from a rate of 500 new residences in 1999 to 699 in 2002. The County's population increased from 49,329 in the 2000 census to a U.S. Census Bureau estimate of 54,000 in the middle of last year.

When and where will this influx into the county slow down? It would seem that, tempered only by an economic slow down in the Triangle, Chatham will see a continuation of growth for the foreseeable future. Encouraged by the expansion of U.S. 64 and U.S. 15-501, comparative lower home prices, and the current rural aspects of Chatham, new homeowners appear likely to flock to Chatham.

Although the Chatham's Planning Director, Keith Megginson, says, "New building permits seem to be down a bit for 2003," recently approved large developments, and one in the final stages of planning, would indicate a continued high level of new housing coming to the northeastern section of the county. During the past four years

some 64 percent of the building permits in Chatham were issued for the northeastern part of the county (the Northwood High School District), with 68 percent being for single family homes and 25 percent for mobile living units.

East-West Partners, who are completing Meadowmont in Chapel Hill,

REAL ESTATE continued on page 10.

The birth of a village

Developer R.B. Fitch recounts how Ferrington Village was conceived and brought into being.

By Julian Sereno

Ferrington Village is home to the only five-star restaurant and the only five-star hotel in the Carolinas. Its residents are well-heeled and cosmopolitan. But if you talk to R.B. Fitch about what makes Ferrington so special, he'll talk about the village atmosphere and its sense of community.

Fitch, who grew up in Chapel Hill in the '30s and '40s, had special feelings for Ferrington since his childhood. He admired it whenever his family would head to the beach going south on U.S. 15-501.

"I saw the Ferrington Farm and thought it was one of the prettiest things I've ever seen," he said. "In 1974, Jesse Ferrington decided to retire and sell his property."

And so Ferrington Village was



R.B. Fitch says that he faced no opposition from Chatham residents when he began developing Ferrington in the 1970s.

PHOTO BY JULIAN SERENO

born. The farm buildings would form the core of the Village, and the houses would be built on the surrounding 600 acres of farmland. The farmhouse would

become the five-star restaurant and the barn a meeting place for the community.

"My late wife, Jenny Elder, grew up in Siler City. We're both products of small North Carolina towns. We liked the village or small-town feeling," said Fitch.

Fitch faced no opposition from Chatham County residents at large, although "there was a lot of opposition from a newspaper in Pittsboro," he said. "Eventually, the County voted a PUD or Planned Unit Development ordinance - [which specifies] so many units, so much common space, so much open space.

"It's been a good way to develop. The County's interests are protected and it allowed us to proceed in an orderly way. Chatham County is a friendly place to do business."

Building in that measured way, Ferrington Village has grown from its first resident in 1975 to

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briefs & announcements

dispatches

Sailboats race on Jordan Lake's waters

Sails decorated Jordan Lake's horizon as the Governor's Cup sailboat race skimmed over its waters on the first weekend in summer. Almost 100 sailboats, in nine different classes, participated in the Carolina Sailing Club sponsored event. The race had been planned for Kerr Lake but was moved to Jordan Lake due to the flooding of Kerr's launching ramps.

Commissioners plan to extend water lines

Chatham County Commissioners have decided to build a countywide system of water lines that would supply fresh water to parts of the county that lack their own water systems.

Commissioners voted unanimously in favor of the first phase of the plan, which entails building three large trunk lines to pipe Jordan Lake water to Bonlee Bear Creek, Siler City and environs. The western part of Chatham County was particularly hard hit by last year's drought.

The second phase of the plan will involve connecting homes and businesses to the trunk lines.

The project was proposed by consultants hired to help the county develop a water master plan. The first phase is estimated to cost \$8.4 million and should take between a year and a year-and-a-half to complete. The commissioners voted their approval at their May 5 meeting.

New subdivision to begin building soon

Potterstone Village, a new subdivision off of U.S. 15-501 about a mile south of the Chatham County Courthouse, has formed a builder team and is getting ready to start construction in the next weeks. The planners describe the subdivision as a "custom home community priced from the \$170s and offering ranches and 1?-story homes built by the area's finest custom builders." When com-



A committee boat monitors the sailboats during the Governor's Cup Boat Race on Jordan Lake on June 22.

© PHOTO BY JOHN SHILLITO

pleted it will include 192 houses, a swim club, pond, and walking trails.

Developed by Larry Witek of First Capital Investments, the marketing effort will stress Potterstone Village's proximity to Triangle towns and Jordan Lake, and the charm of Pittsboro. Sales are being handled by the Coldwell Banker Neighborhood Builder Services, Howard Perry and Walston corporate office in Raleigh.

briefs

Fiesta Latina slated for Siler City July 26

El Vínculo Hispano invites everyone to FIESTA LATINA 2003 Sat. July 26 at Bray Park in Siler City from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. The Fiesta is a family event with live music, soccer tournaments, great food booths, kids' games, a raffle, dance performances, piñatas, a swimming pool and so much more.

More than 4,000 community members attended Fiesta Latina last year. For information, rates please call: El Vínculo at (919) 742-1448 or email Ilana Dubester at hl@pinehurst.net.

Solazo and Botsford to perform Aug. 1

Pepe, Kike, Miguel, Pancho and Beverly will perform together for you to dance to and listen to at 9 p.m. Fri. Aug. 1 at the Barn at Ferrington. Doors open at 7:30. Guillermo Escobar and Melissa Stansbury will offer salsa and merengue lessons from 8 to 9. Solazo will perform Afro Cuban music, with Andean flavors, from 9 to midnight. Refreshments, beverages and light snacks available.

This musical event is presented by Chatham Arts and the Village of Ferrington and will benefit Chatham Arts. Tickets are available at the door for \$17, or \$15 for Chatham Arts members. For information: 542-0394, arts@emji.net.

Summer skies to offer astronomical spectacles

The Persied Meteor Shower will peak on Aug. 14. Everyone is invited to join astronomers from UNC's Morehead Planetarium to view the Shower and watch Mars and the moon rise. Meet at Ebenezer Beach. Viewing lasts from 9 to 11 p.m. No fee

charged for entrance after 8 p.m.

On Sat. Sept. 6, Mars will be at its closest position to Earth in more than 100,000 years.

Astronomers from UNC's Morehead Planetarium invite everyone to take a look at Mars up close. Meet at Ebenezer Beach. Viewing lasts from 8:30 to 10:30 p.m. No fee will be charged for entrance after 7 p.m.

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Chatham County Line is a community newspaper serving all of Chatham County as well as the southern part of Orange. Our mission is to inform our community by providing a forum "where all voices are heard." We seek all views and ideas about our community, and we report on important matters - including our cultural life - comprehensively and in depth. Our commitment is create the best-written, best-edited and most stylish community newspaper anywhere. Chatham County Line is published five times a year - in February, April, June, September and November.

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Julian Sereno

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Kelly Prelipp Lojk

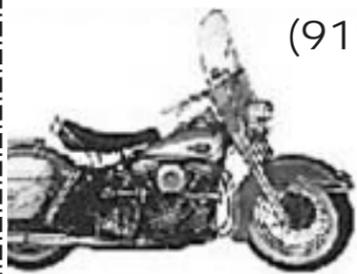
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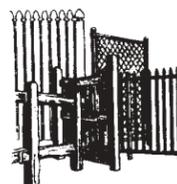
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Live in Chatham County

By Dee Reid

When I moved to Chatham nearly 25 years ago, I knew I had found the good life. But I had to drive a long ways to Chapel Hill for delectable food, legal liquor, and live music.

Not so anymore. Now I can get all three every week in downtown Pittsboro, thanks largely to the General Store Café, which has inspired a growing arts, food and entertainment scene that has significantly enhanced the quality of life in our little corner of paradise.

I am hooked on the Thursday evening jazz sessions that were launched about two years ago when Pittsboro saxophonist Mahlon Hoard began inviting an assortment of talented musicians to jam each week at the General Store. It has always been provocative and at times has made me feel like I have been transported to Greenwich Village.

Now the General Store serves up entertainment at least three or four evenings a week, including jazz, bluegrass, old-time, folk, blues, electric and eclectic music. There is even salsa dancing on Wednesdays. The fact that the action begins at 8 (important for this aging boomer) and can be enjoyed with a jerk-chicken quesadilla, Corona light, and a soy Chai latte, all in the company of old and new friends, seems miraculous. Pittsboro has arrived.

Chatham's growing arts and entertainment landscape doesn't end with the General Store Café. Around the corner, The Scoreboard Grill has beer and burgers as well as blues bands, beach music, karaoke, and shag lessons. And the Little Creek Farm Deli up the street has offered swing and gospel outdoors on their patio. All right here in River City, er Pittsboro.

For folks who seek the real deal in roots music, there's also the Bynum General Store. There's nothing like it when the old timers stop by for string music and break into spontaneous clogging and buck dancing. Even when Tift Merritt had a CD about to hit the national charts, she returned to her old stomping grounds to serenade us there under the stars.

Then there's the diverse entertainment brought to you by Chatham Arts (formerly known as the Chatham County Arts Council). In January they presented Solazo, offering Andean ballads and dance tunes, spiced with Afro-Cuban rhythms by Beverly Botsford. That night was so magical that the Arts Council is offering an encore performance Fri. Aug. 1 at Ferrington Barn.

Chatham Arts also sponsors the Clyde Fest (honoring favorite folk sculptor Clyde Jones) and the Heart of Carolina Festival, all with live music and artisans.

Ferrington Village has gotten into the music act as well, co-sponsoring the Solazo concerts, and presenting live jazz and other entertainment outdoors and in the Market Cafe on the weekends, to go along with their



Visitors to Clydefest enjoy some sounds. Live music and plenty of it is a staple at Chatham County fairs and festivals.

© PHOTO BY JOHN SHILLITO

gourmet food and wine.

You have probably heard about those folks associated with Donna the Buffalo (an Ithaca, NY based "roots music" group with a national cult following), who began looking for a southern spot to expand their annual festival. They purchased about 80 acres in Silk Hope and before you could say "Oh, brother where art thou..." the first annual Shakori Grassroots Festival emerged in April. Look for more excitement from these clever new neighbors. There's already talk about a possible fiddler's convention at the site.

Of course lots of great musicians call Chatham County home. Tommy Edwards, Snuffy Smith, Tony Williamson, Bill and Libby Hicks to

name just a few. Time was when you had to travel out of the county to catch their music, but now they have more opportunities to play here at home. Hallelujah.

Chatham's growing music scene may still be one of the best-kept secrets in the Triangle. My first impulse is to say, "Shhh, let's not tell." But there's a problem with that: The artists who bring us this backyard bounty need larger audiences to support their work.

In fact, the night before I wrote this column, I attended what may have been the final Mahlon Hoard jazz session at the General Store, at least for the near future. This time he was joined by riveting guitar wizard Scott Sawyer, plucky percussionist

Botsford (who has studied in Cuba, Africa and Brazil and, with Sawyer, often tours with jazz diva Nnenna Freelon— next stops London and Rome), and bassist extraordinaire Robbie Link. Adding to what was already a very special evening, a surprise guest poet burst into an oral riff on "The Blues" while Hoard and friends improvised a musical response. Could this really be happening in P'boro?

Well, it won't keep happening if we don't support it. Hoard, whose creative energy gave Pittsboro the gift of what was the best weekly jazz jam in the area, is moving on to other venues largely because he needs to pay the rent. The General Store, Chatham Arts, and Ferrington Village, God bless 'em, will continue to have live jazz and other music week in and week out — but only as long as we support them.

So next time you get a hankering for good food, legal drink and live music, check out the possibilities right here in Chatham. The end of the rainbow may be closer to home than you realize.

Dee Reid is a writer living in Pittsboro. She was an editor and reporter at the former Chatham County Herald and one of the founding editors of The Independent.

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Carolina Meadows home to good neighbors

By Des Reilly.

It's true that Carolina Meadows has a Chapel Hill postal address and that its residents are involved in many neighborhood activities. We are active sponsors of UNC-TV's Annual Festival, with teams of residents manning phones every March. Under the auspices of the OPC (Orange, Pearson, Chatham) Foundation for Mental Health, children come each summer to our Camp MeadowWood to enjoy games and sports. Residents work with Meals on Wheels, teach courses in the Chapel Hill Senior Center, help with tax returns and work as Hospice and Hospital volunteers.

But our first loyalty is to our home County of Chatham where almost 700 of us — the biggest Continuing Care Retirement Community in the State — live and pay our taxes. Carolina Meadows provides and maintains a Community Soccer Field for the Chatham Soccer League where local youngsters of all ages play evenings and weekends through the season. We are major contributors to Chatham's United Way, reaching higher goals each year. For its regular food drives to provide emergency help to our Chatham County neighbors, Carolina Meadows residents are major contributors of canned and packaged food and cash donations.

Our residents serve as arbitrators for the District Court in Pittsboro. Chatham County Schools welcome our residents as teacher aides and administrative assistants. Last fall we supported

Chatham County Together! with a back-to-school support drive including book bags for 60 youngsters.

Volunteering is a big part of life at CM. Our Annual Volunteer Fairs, held in May and organized by the Community Outreach Volunteers Committee (COVC) give residents the chance to meet face-to-face with representatives from 25 local non-profit agencies and find out where they could best help their neighbors.

The big news this year concerns our very special involvement with Chatham Habitat for Humanity, the organization that provides qualified families with affordable housing. Chatham Habitat's 39th house was fully funded by the residents and staff of Carolina Meadows. This is the very first time a Continuing Care Resident Community in North Carolina has fully funded a Habitat home.

How did Carolina Meadows Habitat home sponsorship come about? Carolina Meadows' involvement with Habitat did not begin with this drive. Besides donating individual items over the years as residents downsized, Carolina Meadows regularly donates household fixtures, furniture and appliances to Habitat as villas and apartments change hands. Recently our Dining Services donated 194 dozen no longer used china place settings for sale in the Chatham Habitat Home Store.



At the dedication of the Carolina Meadows Habitat House are (from left) Vickie Badrow, Charity Lassiter, Bert Morhart and Dick Ballard.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Residents who are members of the Carpenters' Club contribute \$25 each time a new Habitat house is dedicated.

Donating over \$50,000 for a Habitat house in Chatham County was not the end of the story for Carolina Meadows. Residents and staff sent work teams to help Americorps and local volunteers build, equip and paint the new house, while box lunches

were provided from the Carolina Meadows dining room.

Continuing to play our part as good neighbors, our residents recently sponsored and organized a special charity performance of the play "Lettuce and Lovage" at the Temple Theater in Sanford. The total proceeds were shared by four Chatham County agencies — the Arts Council, the CORA Food Pantry, Family Violence and Rape Crisis Services.

"Being good Chatham County neighbors is a year-round business for us," said Joan Blewett, chair of the Outreach Volunteers Committee.

Des Reilly, retired advertising manager, marketing professor and freelance writer, has been a Chatham County resident since 1986. He and his wife, Dot, lived in Ferrington Village until 1994 when they moved to Carolina Meadows.

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Katie Wasileski is dogs' best friend



Katie Wasileski hugs two of her foster dogs. Wasileski and her husband currently care for 17 dogs for Chatham Animal Rescue and Education.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By Judy Hogan

Katie Wasileski has loved dogs since she was born. Her South Carolina family always had dogs — but one at a time. She and her husband, Doc Ski, currently provide foster care for 17 dogs for Chatham Animal Rescue and Education (CARE) as well as having four of their own. When you drive up to their home, off Crawford Dairy, a chorus of barking announces you. Dogs of all sizes, breeds, and mixed breeds seem utterly at home. Here they are family, no matter what has happened to them before. Katie points to eight fat puppies. She brought the mother home from the animal shelter just before she gave birth and turned the study into a birthing room and nursery. The puppies will be offered for adoption soon over the CARE website and on Saturdays, CARE's day at Pet Smart in Cary and at Phydeaux in Carrboro.

Four years ago, as Katie was driving to work at a school in Randolph county (she works part-time as a school psychologist) on a deserted stretch of road, she saw three tiny black puppies, recently abandoned and smack in the middle of the highway. She pulled over, scooped them up into a box, and drove back home. Ski suggested they keep them until they were old enough to be adopted. She called CARE and asked if they could help with adoption. They didn't have room to foster more dogs, but they said she could foster them. She had found her niche. She finds four-footed creatures easier to work with and help than two-footed ones.

So the Wasileskis became foster parents and put in fences to create three dog areas. The biggest one also has access to the house through a dog flap. Inside the house child safety gates keep dogs from certain areas. The mother and her pups are housed in a

smaller pen. One dog, Sweetie, whom they've had for over a year, is feral (wild), and although she will let Katie and Ski near her, she's afraid of other people. Katie told me that after 12 weeks a feral dog may be tamed but not domesticated.

While we talked, she let in Mischa, a white dog with a malformed hind leg. Katie took Mischa and her white litter-mate from the shelter. The other puppy developed normally, but Mischa did not and will soon have her sixth leg surgery at the NCSU Vet School. CARE holds fund-raising events to pay for medical needs for their foster animals. Mischa sat very near the cranberry bread Katie served us and at first was admirably restrained. But when Katie was caught up in talking, Mischa nibbled her cranberry bread. Katie told her "No," and she stopped. Soon Mischa will be ready for adoption, and then, Katie admits, she'll find it hard to let her go.

Last fall Katie and Ski took in three puppies someone had abandoned. Only four weeks old, they so were filthy and covered with fleas that they needed antibiotics for their skin. Katie raised them in her bathroom at first. By the age of six months, all but one had been adopted.

Katie is proud of CARE. The board of directors takes in animals based on criteria other than money. She tells of a St. Bernard, with a normal weight of 130 pounds, which had been tied to a tree without food. It weighed only 40 pounds when CARE took it in and was near death. In three weeks it had gained 30 pounds. "Such a sweet dog. I don't understand how people can neglect dogs like that." Another time they took in a dog a neighbor had become concerned about. The collar had not been loosened as it grew, and

WASILESKI continued on page 6.

Experiencing the other side

By the Rev. Bertha Thomas



There is an old saying: "I've been there, done that, and now I know." I agree. March 1 of this year, while walking in my house, I fell, and this fall was the hardest I have experienced in my 81 years of living. My leg bone separated from my knee bone. As I slid backward toward my front door, I noticed the cord of my cell phone hanging over the edge of my desk, where it was charging. I was able to reach it, and the phone fell into my hand. I began to dial numbers of neighbors living nearby. No one was home. I reached the front door, unlocked it, and then finally a neighbor arrived who had gotten my message.

An hour later I was on my way to the hospital in my first ride in an ambulance as a patient. I had taken care of patients in hospitals and private homes. Now I was the patient. I began to guide my caregivers in the best procedures for broken limbs. My slogan when I was working as a nurse was: "If you apply for the job, be prepared to do the work."

My hospital stay was two days. My physician housed my entire leg in a plastic cast. I chose to go next to The Laurels of Pittsboro, a rehabilitation home, probably because of my desire for independence. My children work and have their own families. Making the choice myself took the burden off

them. This worked out well for us all, and while I was there, my sons prepared my home for a wheelchair.

All of this was new for me. I was living on the other side. The bed was my home. I bonded with the nurses during my stay and found it an interesting adventure. When I meet the Laurels staff in the grocery store, they say, "When are you coming back to visit?"

When I returned home, I was blessed to have a health aide visit for three hours a day, five days a week. I also had a physical therapist three times a week. Four months later, I am still mending.

For many years I served others, and now I know how they felt. I am not happy to have had a broken limb, but I am happy to experience living on the other side. I can truly say, "I've been there, experienced that, and now I know how it feels." Other sayings come to mind: "Don't judge others too quickly if you haven't walked in their shoes." "Don't be hasty to get into deep water when you don't know how to swim." "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

I am thankful for my experience even though I still need help to walk. I share this with others for we never know when we may be the one on the other side.

The Rev. Bertha Thomas lives in Moncure, where she was born. She serves as Associate Minister of the Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church.

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WASILESKI

continued from page 5.

it had grown into its neck and had to be surgically removed.

Katie says the hardest thing she does is volunteer on Saturdays when CARE helps the County Animal Shelter hold an adoption day. It's so hard for her to walk past "those little faces," knowing they'll be euthanized if they aren't claimed or adopted.

She knows that she is making a difference for many homeless dogs. When she and Ski get ready for bed at night, the eight puppies go into their nursery, and the other 13 dogs join them in their bedroom, four or five in their new king-sized bed, the rest on the floor. Even in the new bed, there's not quite enough room for the two-legged ones. "You have to plan ahead when you want to turn over." Everybody sleeps! Katie says she has never been happier. Her only regret is that it took her so long to find work that feels so worthwhile.

For Katie, dogs are as important as people and make such great companions.

The Chatham issue that concerns her most is that there isn't enough money for the county's animal shelter. They have wonderful staff, but they are overworked and underpaid. The vast majority of the animals who end up in the shelter are euthanized.

Her advice to others: "Treat all living beings with respect and cherish life. We need to think about what we do in terms of its effect on others. We share our planet with a lot of other creatures, and they depend on us to take care of it and them."

For more info on CARE and its programs, call 542-5757 or visit www.chathamanimalrescue.org.

Judy Hogan is a regular contributor to Chatham County Line. A published poet and prose writer, she lives with her affectionate dog, Wag, and heroic cat, Achilles, in Moncure.

BRIEFS

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Old-Fashioned Farmers' Day

Old-Fashioned Farmers' Day returns on Fri, Aug. 29, Sat. Aug. 30 and Sun. Aug. 31. The event is packed with fun-filled activities including antique cars, antique tractor pull and display, arts and crafts, musical performances, contests, summertime picnic food, steam engines in operation, exhibits, and more. Admission fee.

It will take place at the G.T. Petty Memorial Park on Silk Hope Rd, Siler City, NC 27344. For information, call 742.3333 or email gsyd-nor@earthlink.net

nor@earthlink.net

Flatwoods Festival to offer family fun

Festivities, including a grand parade of antique cars, trucks, tractors, and farm machinery are planned for the Flatwoods Festival on Fri Sept. 5 and Sat. Sept. 6. The festival will feature arts and crafts, pony rides, petting zoo, antique tractor pull, and bluegrass music.

The festival will take place between Sanford and Asheboro, off Hwy 42/22, at the Hussey Farm, Bennett, NC. For information or directions call (336) 581-3677 or (800) 316-3829 or email husseyfarm@RTMC.net.

Said Fitch, "Farrington really has become an integral part of Chatham County."

Julian Sereno is editor and publisher of Chatham County Line. Disclosure: His company, Avanti Media, provides public relations for Galloway Ridge, a Lifecare retirement community being built at Farrington Village.

FITCH

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about 2,000 residents inhabiting between 1,000 and 1,100 homes in 2003. When completed, Farrington Village will cover 1,000 to 1,100 acres and include about 1750 units.

"We've purposely built it over a period of time," said Fitch, "about 30 houses a year."

Asked about the proliferation of development plans across Chatham County, including across U.S. 15-501 from Farrington Village, Fitch offered qualified support.

"If they are done well they shouldn't hurt the quality of life here," he said. "But they need to bring something to the community. They need to be part of the community – not an island."

Fitch is proud of the activism of Farrington residents in the life of Chatham County – from serving on County government boards and non-profit boards to reading to elementary school children in Siler City to building houses for Habitat for Humanity — just to name a few. And groups from across Chatham County use the Barn at Farrington for fundraisers of all kinds, not to mention concerts and art exhibitions.

A workout from comfort of home

By David Williams



I cannot stress enough how important it is to do some sort of strength training as you age. You can lose both muscle and bone mass dramatically each year after the age of about 30 if you do not strength train. However, you can significantly slow this process by some simple strength training.

There are a few common reasons why people avoid working out. Among these reasons are lack of time to get to a gym, intimidation of other people in a gym, and the expense of joining a gym. So, what can be done about this? If you can afford a couple standard pieces of equipment (think of it as the price of joining a club for a month), you can get a good weight program within your own home. Among equipment that works well in the home are; balance balls, medicine balls, dumbbells, and stretch cords. A few sample exercises are given below.

"Bench press" – While lying on a bench, hold a medicine ball with both hands on your chest. Raise and lower as you would with a standard bench press being sure to breathe out when pushing the weight up. Or, using a dumbbell in each hand works well and gives the benefit of allowing you to use varying widths of your hands to work slightly different parts of your muscle. Using stretch cords, face away from the cord's loop, which should be at chest level, and push the handles straight out from your chest.

"Squat" – Holding dumbbells or a medicine ball simply bend your knees until your thighs are about horizontal with the floor. Keep your knees straight and head up for safety.

"Lunges" – Again, holding dumbbells or any other kind of weight take a step forward. Take a big enough step so that when you bring the back knee toward the ground the front

knee does not move in front of that foot. The back knee bends down to the floor or horizontal to it. Then, step back to the beginning position.

"Lat pull-downs" – For your major back muscles, you can pull back stretch cords to adequate tension, lean over facing the cord's loop, and pull with both arms from an extended position back to your sides. Another option is to bend from the waist with your arm extended toward the ground with a dumbbell and pull your arm up to your side keeping your hand toward the floor.

"Triceps and biceps" – To work your bicep muscles, you cannot beat dumbbell curls. You can also stand on a stretch cord to vary the tension as you curl your arms. For your biceps, or the muscles in the back of your upper arms, you can bend over from the waist, keep one elbow next to your body and start with your hand down toward the ground. Push your hand behind you to straighten your arm behind you tightening your triceps.

You should always include core exercises in your program as well. These muscles include your abdominal, or stomach muscles, and lower back. The balance balls are spectacular for these exercises. The key is to be sure to do a range of exercises to spot the upper, middle, and lower abdominals and lower back. Many of the balls come with descriptions of exercises you can do.

These are only a very small sampling of the exercises you can perform at home if you cannot get to a gym. You should get a physical before beginning any program and be sure to exercise with proper technique. Otherwise, work hard and have fun!

David Williams is co-owner and coach of Triangle Multisport. He is a USA Triathlon certified coach, the NC masters swim team coach, and has qualified for both the Olympic and Ironman distance 2003 World Triathlon Championships.

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Is Shearon Harris safe?

By Judy Hogan

On April 30 Progress Energy announced a possible halt to the shipping of radioactive spent fuel rods to the Harris plant by 2005. Local citizens, with the help of NC WARN, have been requesting the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to insist that these shipments be stopped immediately. This is the only high-level nuclear power waste being shipped now in the country.

Stan Goff of NC WARN called Progress's announcement "an essential first step," but seeks for the company to "(1) move all waste over 5 years old at all its plants, into dry, hardened storage; (2) disperse and protect the dry containers with earthen berms; (3) lower the density of cooling pools to reduce risk of catastrophic fire."

On May 31 a day-long Citizens' Hearing on Reducing the Risks at Harris was held at the Salem Elementary School in Apex. Speakers included Robert Alvarez, former Senior Advisor, U.S. Dept. Of Energy; Dr. Arjun Makhijani, Institute for Environment and Energy Research; Lisa Gue, Public Citizen Transport Specialist; and Stan Goff. Attended by 150 local residents, as well as by a Progress Energy spokesperson, both citizens and experts sounded the same concerns regarding train shipments and crowded waste pools.

Whether Harris is considered safe depends on whom you ask. Progress Energy spokesperson Sharon Hall insists it is. "We recognize that, given world events, security is an area of concern for many people. We have a dedicated staff of professionals who work on these issues 365 days a year. We have a "defense in depth" strategy that coordinates closely with local, state, and federal agencies. The Harris Plant has a very robust concrete and steel construction for both the reactor building and the building housing our spent fuel pools. In addition, we have state of the art security technologies, extensive training, and an excellent security force on site."

If you ask Stan Goff of environmental group N.C. WARN, who prepared a Security Analysis report on Harris released in May (www.ncwarn.org), the nuclear plant, as presently operated, puts the 2 million residents within 50 miles at very great risk. He says that the 10-mile Emergency Preparedness Zone (EPZ) is an example of the arbitrariness of safety standards and demonstrates that they are designed to meet only a minimal radiological release scenario. He notes: "(1) FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) and the NRC are acting to stabilize public confidence in the industry and not in the interest of public safety. (2) The FEMA-NRC emergency preparedness exercises test neither the viability nor the adequacy of emergency planning. (3) The standards for evaluation are vague, subjective, inadequate, and largely dictated by

Reactor emergencies continue

On Sat. June 14, and Sun. June 15, Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant had two failures, one a pump malfunction in the main feedwater system, which led to an emergency shutdown of the reactor, and the other a human error in the same cooling system as it was being brought back on line. In May Harris had five emergencies in a three week period, one of which led to a special investigation by the N.R.C. The industry average is one emergency shutdown each 18 months.

— Judy Hogan

the industry to the putative regulators. (4) The evaluators themselves don't hold the plant accountable for clear deficiencies even within the parameters of their own criteria. (5) Progress Energy is controlling the development of emergency plans, which are minimally and poorly constructed and vastly under-funded."

Goff makes an interesting analogy with a military approach to a similar situation. "In the military, which is my background, individual and discrete small unit tasks are tested, as are communications networks. But no reasonable commander could conclude from these task testing evaluations that his or her whole unit is prepared for the battlefield. Discrete task testing, like the NRC-FEMA annual exercise, is never confused with evaluating systemic readiness, that is, to determine the readiness of the whole unit to respond in a dynamic situation." The whole unit, in this case, would be an actual evacuation, which has never been practiced.

Annually residents within the 10-mile zone receive calendars with evacuation instructions. They are not to pick their children up from school. They are to go to shelters 20 miles from the plant. They are not to use the phone unnecessarily. People with special needs will be individually rescued by volunteer emergency personnel and should be on a "Special Needs" list.

Does anyone make sure they know these things? No. There is an annual siren test, about which residents are notified, but Progress staff says that it isn't necessary to hear the sirens inside your house. There will be trucks with bullhorns. It will be on radio and television.

What if it's at night when everyone's asleep? Orange County's Nick Waters has comments on the evacuation plans at www.co.orange.nc.us/ems.

Possible terrorist attack scenarios have not been expanded to include the possibility of light or heavy aircraft. Furthermore, when these invader threats were actually tested, 27 out of 57 resulted in mock attackers gaining access to the targeted reactors. No utility lost its license

based on these failures to prevent access to the reactor. There is no consideration at all for a well-designed larger group of terrorists as was used in 9-11 attacks.

Furthermore, despite the acknowledgment by both Progress Energy and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission that a spent fuel pool fire is possible, there is no requirement to prepare for such a fire, which would be catastrophic, affect an area at least 50 miles from the plant, and likely lead directly to a core meltdown. If the whole Triangle had to be evacuated, it could not be done in four hours, which is the present official estimate for evacuating the 60,000 within the EPZ. To evacuate everybody within 50 miles could take five days, according to an Orange County study. If the people within the EPZ were stuck in traffic, they would be exposed to the very dangers they are trying to escape.

Lucille Zane, a Moncure EPZ resident, commented: "I keep emergency equipment and supplies in my car at all times, dried and canned food, bedding, changes of clothes, and my plan is to get as far away as possible, though I don't know how far that could be without an expanded plan by emergency management."

Emma Smith, also of Moncure, commented: "They (Progress Energy) don't care about us. They just sit up there on their butts

and rake in the money."

Dr. Steve Wing, professor of Public Health at UNC, did the recent population study around the plant. He says, "The risks from the loss of coolant in a spent fuel storage pool are truly staggering. Radiation levels would rapidly rise to the point where no work could be done on the unit. Then fuel would burn spontaneously. Brookhaven [National Laboratory] estimates there would be acute lethal gamma doses from Cesium 137 within a mile or two of a fire from a storage facility smaller than the one at Harris. The same report notes that widespread contamination in the southeastern U.S. could be worse than the Chernobyl fallout."

Judy Hogan is a writer, writing teacher, editor, and new farmer living in Moncure, eight miles by air from Shearon Harris.

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readings, writings & all things literary on the Chatham scene

chatham writers' corner

with Marjorie Hudson



This month the theme of CCL is development in Chatham County. A "newcomer" of some 19 years dwelling here, I fell in love with Chatham soon after I visited, a burnout case from the Washington, D.C., Capitol Hill environmental lobby.

I had been working to save America's most beautiful landscapes, in National Parks, for four years solid for a salary that barely covered my rent-controlled apartment. I had worked nights and weekends pretty much on a regular basis, counted barbecue potato chips and coffee as breakfast, attended international conferences about wilderness and acid rain, saved rivers and chose some of the most exquisite scenes on earth as cover art — without ever having seen them in person.

When it came down to it, other than an occasional junket rafting the Shenandoah River, sneaking a walk on the canal or a joyride down the Dupont Circle Metro escalator was the most outdoor adventure I got. When a friend from Chatham took me to a farmhouse she wanted to rent, after four days of pouring rain, the sun came out and there was a rainbow. I took it for a sign.

I gave 30 days notice, scooped up my dog and left most of my garage-sale-vintage furniture behind. The house I moved to is the inspiration for the place described in the opening lines of the short story excerpted below. You may recognize the house. Every farmstead of a certain era in Chatham resembles this place, and places like this have become my muse, the engine that runs my writing. I am ever grateful to the land and people here for saving me from a life of Metro escalator escapes and hopeless causes. Here, one voice can make a difference. If you ever doubt that, think of how a single kindness has made a difference for you, or a single shaft of light illuminating the road after a rainy day.

THE CLEARING

Excerpt from *West Branch*,
Winter 2002 issue.

The farmhouse sat on a rise at the end of a long dirt road, in a clearing surrounded by fruit trees and ninety acres of pines. It was painted white, and peeling, and some former hippie tenant had scribed a mandala on the wall just inside the front door in fine-point magic marker. I painted over it, but it bled through again and again. I finally left it there, a pale and pastel version of itself, hanging ghostlike in the hall.

My first weeks here, wandering the neglected orchard, driving down dirt roads, it seemed that this part of the South was abandoned, left to the deer and wild persimmon tree, and what people remained lived solitary lives. The few I saw were isolated figures in a landscape—a man on a tractor across a field, a woman at her mailbox by the side of the ditch. I was the recluse, the

woman with dark wild hair, the stranger in the house at the end of the road.

It takes no time at all to fall in love with such a place, if you are paying attention. All it takes is a luna moth quivering on your porch light. A newborn mantid's quick infant maw, attacking your little finger in the grass. A strange throbbing from the shrubbery at dusk, mysterious and sweet and insistent as sex: the call of a country bird, a whippoorwill. All it takes is a particular scent, the breath of a place like a lover's breath before a kiss, full of the richness of life, digestion, desire. The breath of the clearing where I lived fell from pines and poplars, sweet gum and oak. It fell from the mouths of neighbor cows rummaging the apple tree and rose from the fermenting apples themselves.

It rose from the meadow grasses at evening, and settled into their dry stems, humming, at noon. It sang from the creek, under rocks, and from the pond, from the bellows of chilled, slow-moving frogs in the cool of the evening.



How can I describe this place? It was rich as molecules. I knew the microbes of the soil lifted to my tongue; sometimes rain fell, metallic and dusty as a tin roof. I knew the smell of my own body—legs, breasts, hair—inside the scent of the surrounding woods. All these things held in the air like the gold must of evening or the pink chatter of dawn.

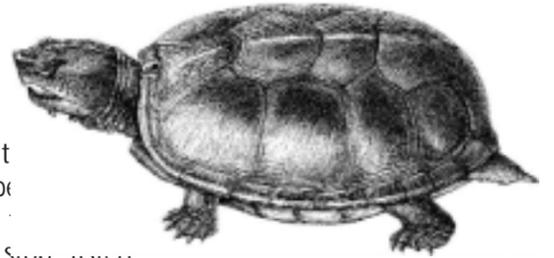
In those first weeks, I lay in my bed, heart pounding with yearning for this place where I lived, my body infused with a delicious loneliness. Mine, I mouthed to the glimmering dying day. I wanted to die, so I could merge my molecules with that mungy ferment. I wanted to die of happiness.

— Marjorie Hudson

This story has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Marjorie Hudson is former Features Editor of National Parks magazine and author of Searching for Virginia Dare. She is working on a novel about three people who live in a rural landscape threatened by development.

We are not alone here

By Maggie Wilson



It's not raining. In this spring of monsoons that's a miracle. I've got to mow now — I'm way behind. I know the belt that drives the mower may break any minute. I stop, listen — it's making more noise than usual, I think, though it's hard to tell — it's so loud and I have my earplugs in. I go on, wanting to push out, get as much done as I can before it rains or gets dark or the belt breaks.

On my first loop around the north acre I'm careful to watch for turtles — I missed one by inches last time, stopped with it right in front of the mower. No one in that same place this time. Second round, I'm still listening for bad noises from the belt but I keep on. Back in the corner I look over at my new lawn chair, placed for Zen viewing. It's filled with rain and grass clippings. I back up, lean over, tip the water out, then go forward again.

A foot to the right, going as fast as she can, is a turtle with a bloody hole ripped in the top of her shell. While I was looking at my chair, I had run over her, cut her open.

I shriek, shut off the blades, the engine, leap, weeping, oh, no, oh, no. I wonder if she could possibly survive like that. I think of what to do, should I kill her, how, look around for something heavy. Nothing. I jump back on the mower, head for the house, crying, oh, no, oh, no. No big logs on the woodpile — just sticks.

I get to the house, call upstairs "Paul, I need help. Can a turtle survive with a hole cut in her shell?"

"No."

He runs downstairs, says go quick and see where she goes.

I go to the barn, get the maul we use to split wood. Riding back the mower goes so slow I scream at it.

I finally get back to her. She's hiding in some deeper grass inches from where I hit her. I stand weeping, looking at her. I remember Paul telling me about hitting a raccoon with his car, getting out to look, seeing it's hurt badly but not dead, having to get back in his car and run over it again to kill it.

I have to do this myself. I can't expect Paul to do it. I hurt her, I have to finish my work. I take the maul in my hands. I pray, help me, help me do this.

I whisper to the turtle, "I'm sorry, I'm so sorry."

I pray once more for help and begin swinging. Blood and guts fly around me, shell pieces, eggs, until I know there can't be any life left.

I stop, still weeping. Paul is there then, holding me.

A while later he says, "We'd better bury her."

I say, "No, let's leave her for food for someone."

I look at the mower, say, "I'd better get back on now or I won't be able to." I start to mow again.

Twenty feet later the belt breaks. If I'd stopped when I heard it making bad noises, if I'd been watching where I was going, if, if, if....

Back in the house I read about turtles in the encyclopedia. The box turtle, the kind I killed, is becoming extinct because of development.

I am the enemy. I moved from the city to 10 acres of country and built a home that hadn't been here before. Horses and cows used to keep the field mowed.

The whole process of mowing goes against my nature — there are lots of creatures out there in the field that I hit every time I mow that aren't as big, as obvious, as precious to me as turtles, but who get just as dead. Not to mention all the plants that I kill.

And for what? A lawn?

Well, more than that — for open space, which is also precious to us. We need air, light, space.

But what right have I to do such things? Do the deer mow fields? Do turtles cut down trees to make room for their homes?

It's a dilemma I can't solve. I'll keep mowing. I'll cut more trees to make more open space around the house. But I'll keep feeling the pain of killing these beings who share this home with me.

Maggie Wilson is an artist and writer living in her dream house in Chatham.





Runners gather at the starting line for the June 14 Race for the Cure in Raleigh.

© PHOTOS BY JOHN SHILLITO

Everyone wins in Race for Cure

By Gail Smith and Gloria Wilkins

More than 70 walkers, runners, and phantom participants represented Ferrington Village in the Seventh Annual Komen NC Triangle Race for the Cure® at Meredith College in Raleigh on Sat. June 14. The team, Galloway Gals and Guys, was the first ever from Ferrington Village. The Ferrington team members joined over 15,000 other runners and walkers, many of them survivors of breast cancer, in the race to support breast cancer awareness and research.

The Ferrington Team left by chartered bus from the Gathering Place at 6:15 AM. A number of residents who were not racing got up early to applaud the participants and see them off. The group competed in the open 5 K race that left the starting line at Meredith College at 8 a.m.

As the clock ticked down to the start, the Galloway Gals and Guys banner was held up and the team members, dressed in their specially designed T-shirts, gathered behind it. On the count of "Three, Two, One, Go" Ferrington runners broke through the banner to begin the 3.1-mile course.

Prior to that memorable "break-through" and to the start of the race, a picture of all of the participating survivors among the people who came for the day's events was taken. The survivors, wearing their pink survivors' T-shirts and caps, formed a pink crossed ribbon, the symbol of breast cancer awareness. Survivors shared stories of hope, fear, and love. As Brenna Crowson, the awards ceremony chairman, (running in honor of her mother who died of breast cancer four years ago) said of the day's activities, "It's a four-hanky event".

Gloria Preminger, a member of the Ferrington team, was quoted in The News & Observer as saying "It's important that they find a cure." Mrs. Preminger is a 33-year survivor of breast cancer.

Many runners wore pink "In Celebration Of" signs on the back of their race shirts to honor friends and family members who had breast cancer. Some of the most moving said simply, "My Mom" and "Gram, My



Two of the Galloway Gals enjoy camaraderie after the race. Roses went to breast cancer survivors

Hero."

To experience the sea of runners making their way along Hillsborough Street cannot be adequately described with words. It is an event that must be experienced. Along the racecourse, runners were cheered on by local residents, some accompanied by their dogs wearing pink ribbons around their necks. High fives and congratulations were the order of the day. At the finish line, the crowd cheered the racers.

On the bus ride back to Ferrington, participants used words like inspiring, emotional, gratifying, and exhilarating to describe their experience. But the sentiments of the group were best described by one of the members who said, "It was a most uplifting experience. I'm looking forward to participating next year and to eventually NOT needing a race for the cure".

Special thanks go to R. B. Fitch and Fitch Creations for providing team T-shirts and the bus for the Ferrington Team and Phoebe Lockely-Fox of Fitch Creations for designing and fabricating the fabulous Galloway Gals and Guys T-shirt.

Gail Smith and Gloria Wilkins organized and co-chaired the Ferrington Village Team, Galloway Gals and Guys, in the 2003 Race for the Cure. Both are breast cancer survivors.

Ferrington Happenings

Pre-School Storytime at McIntyre's. McIntyre's Fine Books & Bookends is pleased to announce PRE-SCHOOL STORYTIME Every Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. For more information, call Sarah at 542-3030.

Wine Tasting at Fowlers. Fowler's of Ferrington will host an After Hours Wine Tasting every Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. Six different wines and a selection of hors d'oeuvres will be featured in each tasting. The Wednesday Wine Tasting is \$15 per person and reservations can be made by calling 545-5717. Limited space is available.

Weekend Wine Tasting at Fowlers. Fowler's of Ferrington will feature a free wine tasting every Saturday from 1-3 p.m. Join Dan and his staff to pick up great tips on wine! Call 545-5717 for information.

Farmers' Market at Ferrington. Local farmers sell their finest produce at the Ferrington Farmers Market every Tuesday from 4 p.m. Flowers; salad greens; plants; strawberries; greenhouse tomatoes and more! Located next to the Administration Building. Call 542-4000.

Music At The Market. Jazz musicians Frank Corbi and Grant Osborne will play at the Market Cafe. Call 542-5505 for details or dinner reservations. July 11, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Buckner F. Melton, Jr. will read from his new book A HANGING OFFENSE: The Strange Affair of the Warship Somers at McIntyre's. A HANGING OFFENSE is the true story of an attempted mutiny aboard the U.S. brig-of-war Somers in 1842, the hanging of the perpetrators, and the sensational court-martial that followed. The event led to the founding of the U.S. Naval Academy. Call McIntyre's at 542-3030 for details. July 12, 11 a.m.

Have Folk; Will Swing. Trilogy will entertain at The Market with their blend of swing and folk; standards and originals; three-part harmonies and solo performances. Come on over and check out the great music. Deli, dinner and snack menus available. July 25, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Sharyn McCrumb will read from her new novel, GHOST RIDERS. This book is set during the Civil War in North Carolina and includes Zeb Vance, governor of N.C. during the Civil War, as well as Keith and Malinda Blalock from the N.C. mountains. Call McIntyre's at 542-3030 for details. July 27, 2 p.m.

Solazo - Pepe, Kike, Miguel, Pancho and Beverly, performing for you to dance to and listen to, at the Barn. Another musical event presented by Ferrington Village and the Chatham Arts Council. Come early for Salsa/Merengue dance lessons from Guillermo Escobar and Melissa Stansbury. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. Dance lessons from 8-9 p.m. Afro Cuba music, with Andean flavors, from 9 to midnight. Aug. 1, 9 p.m. Refreshments, beverages and light snacks available. Bring all your friends who love to dance or just come, relax and listen to the hottest Latin music anywhere. Tickets are available at the door for \$17 or \$15 for Chatham Arts members. For information call 542-0394 or e-mail arts@emji.net.

Chef de Cuisine Graham Fox will lead a class on **Seafood and Plate Presentation**. Knife Skills; Seasoning; Fish Preparation; Shrimp Bisque; Gravdax; Halibut with Vanilla Sauce; Shrimp Salad with Cous Cous and Lime Vanilla Oil; and Lavender Brulee with Orange Syrup will be featured in this class. The wine and hors d'oeuvres reception, dinner at The Ferrington House Restaurant, overnight accommodation, gourmet breakfast; Cooking Class instruction and hand-outs are included in package. Rates range from \$415-\$617. Call 919-542.2121 for reservations. Aug. 10, 11 a.m.

The Duke Institute for Learning in Retirement are offering a weekly class at Ferrington Village from Sept. 8 through Dec. 1 (excluding Oct. 13 and Nov. 24), 2003. The class, "Great American Trials", will be held at McIntyre's Bookstore from 9:30 to 11 a.m. and taught by Ferrington resident Joe Weissman. Numbers are limited and registration with DILR is required. Please contact Pat Green at 681-3476 or email her at patgreen@duke.edu.

Join us for a double author event at McIntyre's Bookstore. **Julie Cannon** will read from her new novel TRUELOVE & HOMEGROWN TOMATOES and **Mark Dunn** (author of ELLA MINNOW PEA), will read from his new novel WELCOME TO HIGBY. Call McIntyre's at 542-3030 for details. Sept. 11, 7 p.m.



Searching for Virginia Dare:
A Fool's Errand
by Marjorie Hudson

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— Lee Smith, author of *The Last Girls*

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Northwood masonry student excels at national competition

Peyton Holland, a rising senior at Northwood High School, placed first in the job interview competition at the national VICA Skills USA conference held the last week of June. This Career Development Event was one of the categories of competition held annually at the Kansas City conference.

Holland earned the right to participate at the national level after finishing in first place in the job interview category at the state VICA Skills USA competition. He has a strong record in this category because he was both the 2003 state and national winner in the job interview competition.

During the spring state convention, Holland ran for and was elected



George Braxton, masonry teacher at Northwood High, stands with prize pupil and national award winner Peyton Holland.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

as the North Carolina VICA Skills USA President. He is the first Chatham County student to hold this office. One of his recent opportunities in this role was to participate in a meeting with the state Board of Education, where he was able to speak on behalf of Skills USA and Career and Technical Education.

Citizens for Effective Communities, hopes that by working with residents and County officials "Smart Growth" principles will be incorporated into this important new ordinance. Final enactment might come in September or October.

Just recently Richard Stradling reported in the News & Observer that Weyerhaeuser is planning to sell 8,815 acres in Chatham County through a bid process to start in July. One 350 acre tract to be sold is located on old N.C. 87, just north of Russells Chapel Road, and would be a prime target for a housing developer.

With new housing will come new retail and office developments. The Planning Board and Board of Commissioners, who seem to encourage such commercial development to provide both employment opportunities and tax income, are being pushed to see that major four-lane highways, such as U.S. 15-501 and U.S. 64, do not turn into—heaven forbid! —continuous strip malls.

In the mean time new residential housing continues to be built at Chatham's three largest existing developments, The Governor's Club, Farrington Village, and the Preserve at Jordan Lake as well as in other subdivisions such as Chatham Forest, Colvard Farm, Monterrane, and May Farm.

Also Chatham's second Continuing Care Retirement Community, Galloway Ridge at Farrington Village, is preparing to break ground in July. Stan Finch, Director of Marketing, estimates that residents will begin moving into the planned 233 independent living units in the first quarter of 2005.

Robert Eby follows Chatham's development scene for the Farrington Homeowners Association. He moved to Chatham County in 1995 after retiring from his profession as a chemical engineer.



Student has perfect attendance

Christy Ellis, left, who just completed her eighth-grade year at Perry Harrison School, has had perfect attendance from kindergarten through eighth grade. Her principal, Beverly Browne, excitedly passed on this admirable fact.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

LAND USE

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Development Committee (SPDC) emerged to further define the planning goals and desired outcomes, and to develop actions to accomplish these goals. The SPDC, charged by the BOC in 1994, represented the most extensive research, investigation, and participation by citizens and stakeholders the County had experienced to date. The result of the three years of exhaustive effort was the April 1997 adoption by all five elected governing bodies within the County, (the BOC, Goldston, Pittsboro, Siler City, and the Board of Education), of a Strategic Plan, and a Joint Resolution committing all jurisdictions to participate in the strategic planning effort.

Sadly, the five elected Boards never collaborated on strategic planning from that point forward. The SPDC was dissolved in the fall of 1998, and a Strategic Plan Steering Team was created to facilitate action steps arising from the desired outcomes and goals of the Plan. It spent three years floundering, with the BOC failing to formally appoint a full committee, or provide clear direction.

Around the same time, the County's Planning Department, with assistance from the Triangle J Council of Governments, had formed a committee which included members of the Planning Board and a wide range of citizens and stakeholders, to craft a countywide Land Conservation and Development Plan.

Major components of the adopted Strategic Plan, the threads of which go back as far as the 1978 report, were incorporated into a draft document and brought before the Planning Board for final review, revision, and approval. During the ensuing debate, the Planning Board, in one of the most bitter and virulent meetings ever experienced by an appointed citizen body, failed to adopt any component of the Land Conservation and Development Plan.

Refusing to let the Plan die, however, as had been the fate of past efforts, the BOC worked through critical components and guidelines of the Plan, adopting it in November 2001. When the Newland Communities proposal for Briar Chapel was submitted as a

high-density project last year, however, the Planning Board, BOC, and citizens alike all began to realize that the newly adopted Land Conservation and Development Plan, while a good starting point, was still unfinished. It could not guide the County in its deliberation of a compact community proposal.

From this realization emerged a proposal to create a Land Use Plan Implementation Committee, comprised of members of all pertinent County appointed boards and stakeholders. LUPIC began its work in mid-summer 2002, its first charge to flesh out a Compact Community Ordinance. Guided by the adopted Strategic Plan and the Land Conservation and Development Plan, it presented its recommendations to the community in early spring of 2003, where the debate now reigns. It is a daunting task, with many new and immediate pressures. It requires the balancing of competing interests, which has always been the county's Achilles heel.

The citizen's vision is there, the goals are there, the desired outcomes are there, and the issues of balance are there, as are the results of 25 years of planning attempts, all with similar conclusions and vision. It will take a visionary BOC and people with diverse views working together.

This time the stakes are higher and more immediate. Let there be no doubt, the Ordinance will have a profound influence on the future of the County. Will the results mirror the citizen's vision as outlined in the adopted Strategic Plan and the Land Conservation and Development Plan, or will the BOC take Chatham down a new, unexplored path?

Larry Hicks, a resident of Chatham County for 17 years, has been involved in planning efforts including the Strategic Plan Development Committee (SPDC), Chair of the Strategic Plan Steering Team (SPST), Chair of the Land Use Plan Implementation Committee (LUPIC), and a member of the Planning Board. Larry is also Chair of Healthy Chatham, a community-based action team sponsored through the County Health Department, which has worked at incorporating the ideals of the adopted Chatham County Strategic Plan relating to health issues.

REAL ESTATE

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have received first stage approval from the city of Pittsboro for Powell Place. This 148-acre community at the intersection of U.S. 64-Bypass and U.S. 15-501 will contain over 1000 living units. Buck Mountain Golf Development, for which the developers of The Preserve at Jordan Lake, Bluegreen Corp., have recently gained preliminary approval from the County Commissioners, will add 700 more residences on 792 acres along old N.C. 87 north of Pittsboro.

Cary has expanded into the northeastern most part of the county to accommodate the Amberly development. This mega-community of 5400 living units, shows 1757 "age restricted" units (no one under 21 permitted) to be built in Chatham. These communities should be ready for their first residents in two years or less.

And still in the wings is Newland Communities planned submission of a new proposal for Briar Chapel. Occupying some 1590 acres, mostly between Manns Chapel Road, Andrews Store Road and U.S. 15-501, Briar Chapel would be the largest development ever to hit Chatham County. Newland's development manager, Mitch Barron, indicates that the proposal will seek approval of 2200 to 2400 living units. They will be a mix of apartments, town houses and single family homes. At completion Briar Chapel, with an estimated population of 6,500 to 7,000, would be the second largest community in the county, exceeded only by Siler City.

The final design of Briar Chapel awaits the enactment by the County Commissioners of a new Compact Community Ordinance, which is winding its way through the Planning Board, a Public Hearing, and the Commissioners. Mary Bastin, chair of a newly formed group, Chatham

Litter Box

By R.L. Taylor

Not long ago on the morning Imus show, the host asked Bill Bradley how The Washington Post escaped the heat when a Post reporter admitted a prize-winning series she did on an eight-year-old drug addict was fiction.

Bradley was executive editor at the time and Watergate hero Bob Woodward was managing editor. The scenario then was a dress rehearsal for the Jayson Blair-New York Times debacle of this past May.

Woodward reached down into his staff and found a likely black reporter named Janet Cook with a sure-fire scheme to win a Pulitzer Prize for Miss Cook and the paper. Her assignment was to expose the horrors of Washington's abundant black drug culture.

Southern editors always knew they had a certain Pulitzer if they advocated integration or fought exploitation of blacks in any way. Miss Cook was a shoo-in. And to make sure she won the prize, the Pulitzer committee even changed the category of her entry in order to grease the skids. It worked. The Post won yet another Pulitzer and Miss Cook won brief fame. Unfortunately, that publicity finally prompted a few simple questions about Miss Cook's facts and she quickly confessed she made it up.

The details of the Times and Post fiascos are identical. Editors seemed hell-bent on giving minority reporters an edge, but unlike Jayson Blair, Miss Cook disappeared quietly and within a few days it was non-news. Bradley told Don Imus he had no idea how the Post avoided the heat of the Jayson Blair incident.

Indeed! He did not know? Any fool could answer that question because Bradley, the NY Times and the three television networks controlled the litter box. When bad things happened they simply buried it. They never denied those precious news organizations made a mistake. They merely hid their mistakes like a cat, in the litter box and nobody wanted to dig it out. Also buried in the same litter box was Jesse Jackson's running the biggest shakedown scam in the country. Peter Arnett's story about Baghdad milk plant workers who wore "milk plant" in English on the backs of their coveralls was also in the litter box. Of all the national news icons, Britt Hume is the only TV anchor who admitted seeing the milk plant bit.

It is no wonder Americans are losing faith with the press. Adding to the Janet Cook and Jayson Blair blunders the editors of the Boston Globe had to dismiss their own black female reporter for the same sin, writing more fiction than fact. They said it was not racial and fired Mike Barnicle, a white man and their best columnist, for stealing jokes from Jim Carlin several years earlier. Barnicle was stunned. You should know the Globe is owned by the NY Times and that story also went into the litter box too and the rest of the national press ignored it.

We could say Jayson Blair and his boss, Howell Raines, were exposed because the litter box was so full it overflowed. But it was not newspapers that came in to clean up the mess, it was television's cable news that uncovered that stench. And America's once vibrant and wonderful free press slipped another notch, less respected than used car salesmen.

Bradley said he didn't know how the Post escaped? He came away clean because the majority of other news organizations were more concerned about making stars out of reporters than the facts reported upon. Bradley's mistake is he had it too good too long. He even escaped condemnation for being a procurer for John Kennedy. The logical question is: How did he escape that heat?

R.L. Taylor has been a newsman for 50 years, working as a reporter, editor and publisher. He has also been an advisor to newspapers in Slovakia, Romania and Russia.

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Whither development?

By Don Lein

A number of people who deserve our respect have opined on how development should proceed in Chatham County. Unfortunately, they have come out in direct opposition to each other. When looked at in other contexts we can see where logical people can come out with different conclusions when they start with different premises.

As a case in point, let's look at gun control. If it is your belief that guns cause crime, then it logically follows that in order to limit crime, one should place restrictions on gun ownership. If, however, you believe that evil people cause crime, then you would be in favor of policies that make it easier for people to own guns, so that they can protect themselves. The situation is similar with the minimum wage argument. If you believe that a textile manufacturer must employ 200 people to meet his production objective, then raising their wages will clearly benefit the workers. However, if you believe that the manufacturer is sensitive to increased labor

costs and might substitute automation or move the manufacturing to a place where labor costs are lower, then you would not want policies to increase wage costs, since it might cost workers jobs — and low wages are better than no wages.

There are those who believe that the optimum way to ensure the ideal living/working environment for all of us is to require certain kinds of activity through well-intended laws/regulations/ordinances. Other well-meaning people claim that this approach is trying to regulate human nature and/or the market place and it will fail. In addition, they equate additional regulations to added costs and ask where those dollars are coming from. Of course we are all worried about the "Law of Unintended Consequences".

Land use laws in California have been highly restrictive and their unintended consequences have been frightening. In San Francisco during the decade 1990-2000, the

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A LETTER FROM GARY PHILLIPS

Life on the urban-rural fringe

In the end, our society will be defined not only by what we create, but by what we refuse to destroy.

JOHN C. SAWHILL

The first days of summer have brought a new energy into the little clearing where I am building a house made of dirt. My builder-friend and I begin a conversation in the open courtyard and soon retreat to the shade of the tall earthwalls, under the dogwood and pin oak we managed to protect from the earthmovers last fall. I can hear the carpenter bees as they colonize the cedar fascia, fierce, determined, faithful to the task, like the boys and women who have worked here to make this shelter I'll be privileged to live in. Soon, I think to myself. Soon.

These summer days have certainly fulfilled their promise, after the coldest wettest spring in my Piedmont memory. Our woods are awash with mushrooms now, and mosquitoes and ticks and tree frogs and lacey spider webs and sweet berries and every other gift of a hot sun overlaid a wet season. The creek is full of tadpoles and little frogs; this morning I caught a tall blue heron slowly marching down the center of it, taking his morning meal. I have not seen the pair of pileated woodpeckers who like the tall oak grove nearby, but last night I heard my first screech owl of the season, and a Carolina wren has just hatched her second clutch of spotted eggs in a box of books I keep in the shed. Her Latin name, Troglodytidae, means cave-dweller, because of her beautiful domed nest, feather lined and with an entrance on the side.

I have seen St. John's Wort blooming this week, which my grandma called High John the Conqueror because of its magical qualities. Made into a tea, it helps calm the soul and set the raw world aright. The buttonbushes along our creek are very lovely right now. Other treats in this rich season include the tiny orchids of rattlesnake plantain, which disappear so quickly, the white

umbrells of elderberry (best wine-maker), trumpet creeper vine, July's chorus of katydids, and brilliant seductive silk moths fluttering into the house in pursuit of light.

My new house overlooks the creek and has a window to the eastern sky. It has many outdoor rooms: a balcony, an open porch, and a walled courtyard. I tried to make as little a scar as I could when I built the place, but I have years of work to do to make gardens, replant and soften the place into its landscape. Everything we do affects the world, makes ripples out into the web and texture of life. Amazing.

The message of summer is slow down, move with the flow instead of against it, celebrate the fecundity of life, even a Piedmont life filled with chiggers and ticks as well as flowering herbs and sudden beauty on the wing. Scorpio is in the sky, which looks like a great cradle scythe, and Libra, with Sagittarius's teapot close behind. It's a good time for bonfires and storytelling, under July's powerful waxing moon.

Here in lucky Chatham County, river otters are roaming the Dry Creek watershed again, coyotes and bobcats have been sighted in Silk Hope, and Jordan Lake was chosen by the National Audubon Society as one of the best birding sites in the country.

On the other hand, The National Census Bureau has declared our Chatham one of the fastest growing counties in America. We have a lot of decisions to make in the next several years, decisions that will affect all the communities of life in Chatham County. I hope we find the courage and conviction to protect the best of what we have.

Have a good summer.

Gary Phillips is the former chair of the Board of County Commissioners in Chatham County. A writer and amateur botanist, Gary is building a rammed-earth house above an unnamed tributary of Terrells Creek in the Haw River watershed of the Upper Cape Fear Basin.

ClydeFest 2003



Musica, artistas, comida, y divertimientos para niños fue el orden del día por el segundo Clydefest, una fiesta celebrando Clyde Jones, el artista folclórico muy famoso de Chatham el 21 de Junio.

Music, artists, food and fun activities for children were the order of the day for the second annual Clydefest, a festival celebrating Clyde Jones, Chatham's world-renowned folk artist, on June 21.



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CHICKEN Festival



Mucha gente visitó Siler City por la Fiesta de Pollos sábado el 17 de mayo. Música, comida, artesanía, informes para la comunidad y pollos — con un pollo muy grande — ofrecieron divertimientos para todos. Este fue el 15º año de la fiesta popular.

People thronged in downtown Siler City for the Chicken Festival on Sat. May 17. Music, food, arts and crafts, information booths and chickens – including one huge one – provided fun for everyone. This was the 15th year for the popular festival.



PHOTOS BY JULIAN SERENO

DEVELOPMENT?

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number of blacks decreased from 79,000 to 61,000, the number of children declined and yet the total population increased by 50,000. Nearby San Mateo County exhibited a similar pattern. In the past, schools have had to be closed in Palo Alto because of a lack of students. The average age in

communities like these and in places like Beverly Hills and Malibu continues to rise into the high 30s and 40s.

So, what is the answer? I don't know. My vision of Chatham County in the future has always included parks, with minorities and children enjoying them.

Both sides of this discussion should tell us what their basic premises are, where they think their

vision will lead us in 20 years, provide us with the underlying rationale for their conclusions, empirical data which support these conclusions and real communities where their approach has been tried and was successful. Then we will be able to make an informed decision.

Don Lein is President of the Chatham County Parks Foundation.