

Democrats gather in Chatham to honor

By Randy Voller

On Sunday, March 18, Chatham County was the locus point for Democratic politics in the state of North Carolina. Minority Leader and former Speaker of the House, Joe Hackney, and longtime State Senator Bob Atwater were honored at the 29th Annual Fleet-Reddish Dinner.

A sold-out crowd packed the room at Carolina Meadows to celebrate the honorees who were feted. From Mayor Tim Cunnup of Goldston, "As Mayor of Goldston, I would like to thank Representative Hackney and Senator Atwater for their many years of dedicated service to Chatham County and the great state of North Carolina. On a more local note, they have both been instrumental in working side by side with the Town of Goldston on our sewer project..."

Commissioner Sally Kost stated, "Bob and Joe have represented Chatham County with the highest level of integrity. I especially appreciate how responsive they both have been to issues that I brought to them as a county commissioner."

Candidate for NC House Jeff Starkweather opined, "Joe will be forever known in Chatham and statewide for restoring

integrity and openness to the House Speakership. Whenever I contacted Joe about a legislative concern, he always responded directly and swiftly. He's had the most distinguished legislative career of anyone representing our county," and, "Bob Atwater demonstrated his integrity on the issue of out-of-control residential sprawl when as a County Commissioner he cast the sole dissenting vote against a controversial development that has since gone bankrupt. Bob has shown the same integrity as our State Senator, including an outstanding record in supporting environmental protections and public education."

Rev. Anthony Davis of Mitchell's Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church provided a stirring invocation and I, Mayor Randy Voller, local party chair, welcomed the guests and emceed the event that began with County Commissioners Mike Cross and Sally Kost leading the assembled guests in the pledge of allegiance and Karl Kacheris singing the "Star Spangled Banner". Guests then viewed a compelling video from the NCDP about the 2012 election entitled "What's at Stake?"

A highpoint of the evening for me was my invitation for all current and former elected officials to come on stage and honor



Governor Perdue talks with Pittsboro Town Commissioners Bett Wilson-Foley and Beth Turner.

Joe Hackney and Bob Atwater.

In her address, Governor Perdue reminded the crowd about the importance of investing in education and creating an environment across the state that was inclusive and attractive for investment. The Governor was followed by the State Democratic Party Chair, David Parker, who built on the themes from the video "What's at Stake?"

Gubernatorial candidates Lt. Governor Walter Dalton, Congressman Bob Etheridge, and Rep. Bill Faison spoke both to the careers of the honorees as well as provided insights into their own campaign platforms.

Themes ranged from the need for a return to investments in education and job creation, to a cautious view on fracking, and opposition to Amendment One.

The evening was wrapped up with closing remarks from Congressman David Price who reminded the audience of the importance of this fall's election. Edna Bell and her Gospel Singers set the musical tone for the evening preceding the dinner. Instrumental music from Justin Johnson and Friends of the Mayor's Jam provided a harmonious thread that kept the evening celebratory.

It's party time in the garden

By Ginny Gregory

This year I find myself leaning into the spring. Sheet lightning and evening rain are pure evidence that it has arrived. Redbuds abound with vibrant color, Corylopsis is dripping with pale yellow teardrop blossoms and the peonies are popping thru the earth's soft crust. Each year I am mystified by the ever evolving change in the landscape. Each really warm hour pushes yet another bloomer over the edge into full show. The Daphne genkwa is such a show

off... naked it shows itself to the world. It is ever so slightly fragrant with its lavender petticoat of color.

The forest floor is covered with lightest blue of bluetts. It is the magic of living in the woods. The Mazus is covering the walkways with blues and white. The garden is looking as if jellybeans have been thrown all around... a new surprise just around the corner. The winter was so mild that the plants I usually dig up and over winter to later set out... well, they are happily

emerging as if they were just sleeping off a "party night". The garden is one big party that is just staring now. It lifts me up and carries me thru the day. Spring gives me something to lean on. I look forward to each new discovery. Soon Virginia blue bells will be unfurling just as the Japanese painted ferns join in. Nature has the perfect blend of color and texture.

The blue birds are flashing as Chloe jumps hoops to dive after the new skinks that are waking up under the woodpile. The

cocottes' howl have the dogs tied in knots. It is such a new night sound now blended with the frog's chorus. As I lean into spring, I want to enjoy every moment. I take more joy in the moment these days. It is an intricate part of aging. I am grateful for the chance to notice... for the love of my puppies, and the delight of a new day.

Ginny Gregory is a regular contributor to Chatham County Line. She is the owner and creative energy behind Beyond The Pail...Creating Gardens and Beyond www.beyondthepail.net

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