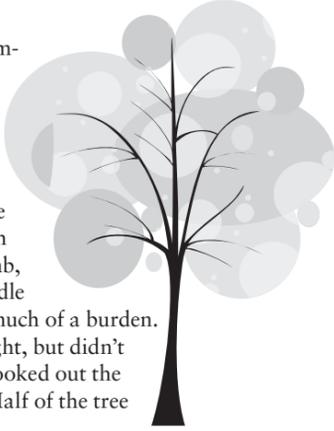


My tree, my love

By Jeff Davidson

For six years, I lived in Summerfield Crossings, at the end of Mossbark Lane in Chapel Hill. One morning, during a fierce winter storm, my favorite tree, a monumental fixture of the front yard, now with ice hanging from every limb, split almost down the middle when the ice became too much of a burden. I heard the crunch that night, but didn't know what it was until I looked out the window in the morning. Half of the tree had fallen to the ground.

I felt a bit heartbroken. My magnificent friend had been halved in an instant. Still, the tree conveyed many benefits. It provided a cover for the front yard and my car, and still had excellent appeal. As the spring came around and the leaves came into full bloom, there was enough shade. My tree could go on serving its



original purpose.

The following autumn, while I was on a trip for business, the condo association, in their infinite wisdom, decided to chop the tree down – unbeknownst to me. When I returned from my trip, something was completely wrong as I pulled up in front of my house, but I couldn't focus for a moment. The yard looked naked, barren. My apartment looked entirely different, and I found it upsetting.

When I got out of the car, only then did the obvious strike me in full force. My beloved tree had been cut down, taken from me, snatched away while I was traveling. No discussion, no reason, nothing. I felt enraged, as I fell to the ground.

I wanted to talk to the people who were responsible for this, but I was too tired to do anything that evening but go to bed. The next morning I got on the phone to determine who authorized such a move, and why it needed to be done, why I wasn't told, etc. I went to the longest-standing member of the community. She told me in matter-of-fact language that the tree was deemed to be a danger.

"Who determined that the tree needed to go down? It had proved over many months that it was standing firm and that there was nothing wrong with it. Why on earth did you have to cut it to the bone and why did you have the tenacity to do it while I was away?" She had no answers. The tree was never coming back, so I insisted on a replacement.

Twelve weeks later, another tree was planted, eight feet further away, so that even in full bloom, should I ever choose to stay that long, it would never provide the comfort, the curb appeal, the shade, or anything that the previous tree had provided.

My tree had been a friend to me. I understood for the first time how deeply people could care about nature. I have never been a 'nature' type, but I have always appreciated it. That tree, taken from me, synched the deal.

The following spring, I decided to move. It was too painful, every night, always noticing where my friend had been. More than that, the hot sun beat down on my car and aged it prematurely, whereas the tree would have kept it in cool shade, young and sublime.

Years passed and, amazingly to me, I still missed that tree. One day, while clearing out the hard drive of an old computer that I was going to donate to Goodwill, I came across a splendid photo of my former front yard and the tree. I had long forgotten about that picture. Nothing supernatural here, but the photo of my tree in its full regalia so lifted my spirits, it's as if it had come back from the dead to say, "I'm okay, I'm still here with you."

Jeff Davidson, www.BreathingSpace.com, holds the registered trademark as "The Work-Life Balance Expert®." Jeff is the author of "Simpler Living," "Breathing Space," "The 60 Second Self-Starter," and "The 60 Second Organizer."

BRIEFS

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3 to 5 p.m. during the open house periods.

A brass ensemble, Brassissimo!, will play from the portico from noon to 1:15 p.m. leading up to the main ceremony at 1:30 p.m. Brass bands were quite popular in the 1880s and often played for special events.

The Reopening Ceremony is at 1:30 pm in the second floor courtroom. It will feature the unveiling of the new portrait of the Earl of Chatham, which was painted by artist Luana Luconi Winner from Raleigh with the financial support of Luck Stone Corporation in Moncure; a special video tribute produced by UNC-TV videographer Mike O'Connell and sponsored by the Chatham County Bar Association; Ringing of the clock tower chimes; Sheriff's Office Honor Guard; Rededication of the Cornerstone, Columbus Masonic Lodge 10.

"We know that space for the ceremony is limited by the size of the courtroom, but we will do our best to accommodate as many folks as possible," said County Manager Charlie Horne. Those wanting to attend can line up no earlier than 12:30 pm and doors will open at 1 pm. Those with limited mobility should use the north entrance facing downtown Pittsboro.

The Town of Pittsboro will host a Street Fair in honor of the reopening that will begin at 5:30 pm. More information on this will be coming from the town.

Chatham Community Library Book Sale

The Spring Book Sale of the Friends of the Chatham Community Library (FotCCL) will be held on **Thursday, Friday and Saturday, April 11 to 13**, at the library on the campus of Central Carolina Community College in Pittsboro.

The hours of the sale are Thursday, April 11, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Friday, April 12, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.; and Saturday, April 13, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free, and purchases may be made by cash or check only.

On Thursday, most hardcover books are \$3; trade paperbacks are \$2; and small paperbacks are 50¢, plus sales of \$200 or more earn a 20 percent discount. On Friday, all books and materials are half price, and on

Saturday anyone may purchase a grocery bag of books they choose for \$5, with no limit on the number of bags.

More than 15,000 books and audio and video materials will be available for purchase. A popular feature of the Friends sale is the "Collectors' Corner," which offers rare and special books for \$15 and up. A listing of these books may be found on the Friends Website at www.friendsofthechathamcommunitylibrary.org.

This year, the sale also includes more than 2000 books from the collection of the late Doris Betts, celebrated author and beloved Chatham County neighbor. Doris's family generously donated her library to the Friends for this sale in honor of Doris's love for Chatham County and the library.

Included are many volumes inscribed to Doris by authors who were her students or admirers. Other books from her collection include her handwritten notes or copies of reviews that she wrote. Some of these will be included in the Collector's Corner, but most will be available at the regular prices.

All proceeds from the book sale are used to benefit the library for underwriting programs; purchasing needed books, materials and equipment; and improving its technology and services. The book sale will be held in the Holmes Family Meeting Room of the library, which is at 197 NC Highway 87 in Pittsboro.

Chatham Habitat celebrates milestone

On **April 20** at 11:30 a.m., Chatham Habitat for Humanity will celebrate the completion of their fifteenth and final home in the Chatham Oak subdivision in the East Cornwallis neighborhood in Pittsboro. The dedication of Maria Benitez's home at 93 Acorn Park Lane is not the end, just the beginning. For each partner family, their new home is the start of a new life. Long-term hopes and dreams can become a reality because of the beneficial effects of living in a safe, well-built home.

Safe, decent, and affordable housing truly is the stepping stone toward a better life, creating a stronger community, and opening doors, that didn't seem possible before. Each home, each subdivision, strengthens our community in a vast number of ways.

Please join us on April 20th to celebrate another new beginning at 11:30 a.m. at 93 Acorn Park Lane. Deb McManus, North

Carolina House Representative for District 54, will be the keynote speaker.

CORA birthday party at Chatham Empty Bowls

On April 17, CORA Food Pantry will have completed 24 years of service to Chatham County. To celebrate, CORA invites the public to the 4th Annual Chatham Empty Bowls Fundraiser on **Sunday, April 14**, 5–8 p.m., at a new venue with new features on the menu, beautiful local pottery, live entertainment, and of course, a big birthday cake and celebration. The new Bella Donna Italian Restaurant is the setting for this year's Chatham Empty Bowls. Bella Donna is also baking the bread for the Empty Bowls meal that features delicious soup from local restaurants. New this year will be light hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar. Your participation helps CORA Food Pantry feed hungry residents from all over Chatham County.

Attendees will be able to choose from the many beautiful handcrafted bowls on display contributed by local potters, and then choose healthy and delicious soup and bread also made locally. The meal includes beverage and dessert.

Tickets can be purchased at the door: \$25 for a bowl, hors d'oeuvres, soup, bread, beverage and dessert. \$10 for food and beverage only, and \$3 for food and beverage for kids under 12. Cash bar is extra. All ticket proceeds will go to CORA Food Pantry, which provides a week's worth of food for individuals and families in crisis in Chatham County. Client numbers have increased 40 percent in the last two years, 22 percent in the last year alone. CORA now serves more than 500 families (almost 1700 individuals) a month. For more information on CORA (Chatham Outreach Alliance, Inc.) visit the website at www.corafoodpantry.org.

Cat's Cradle to present Carrboro Block Party

Sunday May 5, Cat's Cradle will present Carrboro Block Party, a free concert in its parking lot at 300 East Main Street featuring Lost in the Trees, The Love Language, and Loamlands. In addition to the main stage entertainment, the community festival will include additional live music inside Cat's Cradle and The ArtsCenter, food trucks, beer and fun. The gates open at 4 p.m. and

the music begins at 4:30.

While the event is free to the general public, vouchers guaranteeing entry will be available starting April 9th at www.carrboroblockparty.com. There is a limit of two vouchers per person and the voucher guarantees entry to its holder before 6 p.m.

In addition to music on the main stage, Carrboro Block Party will feature a stage sponsored by ReverNation inside Cat's Cradle. Local artists are encouraged to submit their music for consideration on ReverNation.com at <http://bit.ly/YLSLII> and two acts will be chosen to perform by Cat's Cradle and Trecky Records representatives. The ArtsCenter will also feature music in its West End Theater during the festival.

Festival-goers will enjoy local beer from Carolina Brewery and food provided by local food trucks and area restaurants. Local non-profit Farmer Foodshare will be on-site celebrating their 4th Anniversary and selling a limited edition Lost in the Trees T-shirt with all proceeds going to their mission of connecting people at risk of hunger and malnutrition with fresh produce from local farms.

May 5 promises to be a busy day in Carrboro. The Town celebrates Carrboro Day throughout the afternoon, Carrboro Block Party continues the celebration into the evening and an incredible day in Carrboro will close with a free concert inside Cat's Cradle featuring Stillhouse.

For more information, please visit www.carrboroblockparty.com.

Siler City wins Built Asset Assessment Grant

Siler City was selected by the Construction Professional Network Institute (CPNI) and the Development Finance Initiative (DFI) of the University of North Carolina School of Government to participate in the NC Rural Economic Development Center's Built Asset Assessment and Finance Program.

The grant application was a joint effort between the Town of Siler City and the Chatham Economic Development Corporation. Assessments in Siler City began in March. Elkin, Plymouth and Maysville, NC were also selected for the program.

For more information about the project, contact Jack Meadows, Siler City Director of Planning and Community Development, at 919.742.2323 or jmeadows@silercity.org.

To the Editor:

The Greater Pittsboro Community Development Corporation was founded in 2010 and its President and Chairperson is Randolph Voller, Mayor of Pittsboro. There is a lot of overlap between Randy's roles as Mayor of Pittsboro, President/Chairperson of the GPCDC, and Chair of the NC Democratic Party. How well he can separate these and be impartial for Pittsboro's citizens?

Until recently the GPCDC website also listed three town commissioners as Advisory Board members raising the question of just what their role was and if they should have recused themselves from votes involving GPCDC projects. Immediately after the question was raised, the GPCDC web site was updated to remove the three town commissioners and other members. In fact commissioner Michael Fiocco said his name was up on the Corporation's website without his knowledge or permission.

In 2012 the Pittsboro Board discussed and voted to accept a grant from the NC Rural Center on behalf of Alpha Install for building renovations. The grant required a 5 percent match from the town of Pittsboro. During the discussions, there was no mention of the GPCDC, nor were there any recusals.

However, the GPCDC website contains a press release touting the grant: "The town of Pittsboro, working through the GP-CDC, applied for and received a grant of \$128,000 from the NC Rural Center's NC Building Restoration Program..." The press release also highlights the efforts of Mayor Voller who spearheaded the grant effort. Exactly who was Mayor Voller representing during the grant acquisition process? Isn't there an inherent conflict of interest in the Mayor working to procure grants for businesses, developers or investors dealing with GPCDC, especially when that exposes the town to financial liability?

Mayor Voller was the Chair of the Chatham Democratic Party, and is now Chairman of the NC Democratic Party.

The GPCDC is set up as a 501(c)3 Corporation has clear restrictions on political activity: "No substantial part of the activities of the corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the corporation shall not participate in or otherwise intervene (including the publishing or distribution of statements) in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office" But this is the very definition of a Party Chairman. In order to keep these roles separate, Mayor Voller would have to compartmentalize his mind to such a degree that he would almost qualify as schizophrenic.

The citizens of Pittsboro would certainly benefit from someone who had the time and interest to be more focused on our needs rather than all of these other agendas.

Brad Johnson, Pittsboro