

Living in the moment, planting right now

So often it is the break in pattern that makes me see change. The leaves are still missing as I write, but I do see in the distance a hint of buds on various tree limbs. As I wash my dishes at night, I look to the west and see the very muted tones of blue and pale tan spread into the most vibrant hot coral and sea foam green and teal. It pulls me to the front door. I see a panorama of movie like "fade ins and outs" of color and then I am sitting on the deck steps, arms wrapped around my knees drinking in the color... the change.

It begins with that first brave crocus and the Mt. Fuji Spiraea looking like a massive, dainty white explosion and the Sweet Breath of Spring sends wafts of mild honeysuckle fragrance out into the world and then, and then, and then we are in spring, holding our breathes, hoping that indeed it is real, because we have had the most mixed up winter yet and Chloe comes in with a full blown tick on her lip and you ask, I scream, "HOW Could This Be?"



In the Garden

by Ginny Gregory

It is the yin/yang of it all that I am totally open to each moment of the day. It is always there for us to ponder. The chickweed is thriving while my topiary Blue Owl Junipers (huge as they are) have lifted ever so distinctly out of the ground and have listed down hill, as gravity tends to have a way with things. Both are so easy to approach but with such different energy. I will struggle to save the junipers as they have won my heart. Their forms evolved due a lack of understanding on my part that wanted to actually be blue owls that spread their wings to fly. I have limbed them up in an effort to allow them their place in the garden. I use their blue toned needles for every winter

wreath I make and give. Thus this love affair will lure me into the garden to stake them and encourage them to re-root again.

The chickweed... well, they are the devil dressed in soft fluffy tendrils. They tip toe in and after you have sneezed your spring round of sneezes they have expanded to take hold everywhere there is not a plant and up the trunks of the existing shrubs.

Moral to this story: Get planting! Time is a wasting. The strong arm of heat will be with us before we turn our heads to sneeze again. As we wipe our drippy eyes, it will be too hot to plant, so get on it. Get those hardy geraniums into the ground now along with the hardy lilies and dahlias. Be brilliant and approach your garden with gusto because in the end it will sustain you and certainly keep you out of trouble because you'll be too worn out to even lift your toenail.

Souls need attention. They need song tones in the wind, in the rain... the sounds

of the garden... the frogs' croak that sends you/me into another zone of pure tranquility. The change from the crisp stillness of winter into the soft fluid swish of spring is the meaning of everything around us. We are souls who thrive on change, evolution, scents that help us travel back to our childhood when we played outside hiding behind sweet osmantus.

My junipers have reminded me that regardless of how old and large I am I thrive only when strongly rooted. I am always adapting to the current now and setting roots right here where I am, in my Blue Moon garden, with my puppies, Jackson and Chloe and my chain saw loving Liz. Life is so very rich. I am so very blessed and the garden still calls my name. The garden soil is the soothing that my soul needs. What do you need to enjoy this one precious life of yours?

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

ANIMAL

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The employee turnover rate in most shelters reflects this. How many of us could do what they do day after day without quickly burning out?

I decided to write this month's column after a conversation last week with Chatham's Animal Services Director, Leigh Anne Garrard. At the start of that week, 42 dogs came into the facility in three days. One of them was pregnant and delivered puppies almost immediately upon arrival. The 20 dog runs already had occupants. No doubt, some hard decisions were made.

For years the average live release rate at shelters that euthanize in the United States has been well below 20 percent. These are the lucky animals who are adopted or reclaimed by their owners. Last year the Chatham County Animal Shelter had an amazing survival rate of 46 percent! This impressive number is largely due to excellent efforts



Snaggletooth, Maddi, Lucas and Vaughan

by the shelter staff in working with a large number of animal rescue groups. These groups give the animals the extra time and TLC needed to find a new home.

Intake numbers at the Chatham Animal Shelter have been dropping over the last several years. This is a direct correlation to low cost spay/neuter programs offered by the shelter and Chatham Animal Rescue and Education. As the number of spayed and neutered animals in the county increases,

then the number of animals entering to the shelter decreases.

On October 30, 2014, Director of Animal Services, Leigh Anne Garrard, and Health Department Director, Layton Long, facilitated a public meeting to present ideas and ask for feedback on proposed improvements to the shelter. Even though this meeting was well publicized, only about ten people attended.

Garrard and Long also hold quarterly Stakeholders Meetings open to the public.

At these meetings the latest statistics for all Animal Services are reviewed and a topic of interest is presented about policies, upcoming events, etc.

It takes people to make changes to help animals. I hope more people will attend these meetings. The next Animal Services Stakeholders Meeting is scheduled for April 30 from 6-8 p.m. in the Conference Room at the Community Library in Pittsboro.

Greater connectivity, lesser cohesion

by Jeff Davidson

Imagine a world in which 3 billion out of 7.2 billion people are online. That is the state of Internet use today, in 2015. A decade ago less than one billion people were connected, and a decade before that, less than 30 million people.

While Internet patronage has exploded, and the sharing and dissemination of information is unprecedented in human history, humankind is no closer to achieving what anyone would call cohesion. In many respects, we are heading in the opposite direction: splintering. How can this be so in an era where virtually anyone can access the Internet and make a thorough exploration on any topic or issue?

One answer is that on any major topic the information explosion is too much for anyone to sift through. Add in the inherent bias of the news reporting and how little time you might have to thoroughly read, ingest, and fathom what you've read, and you have the keys to less agreement, unity of purpose, and social harmony than ever before.

CONTROLLING THE NARRATIVE: People were not better off in previous eras when there was a dearth of information. For most of recorded history, whoever did the recording, controlled the history. Today, with the plethora of news sources, in free societies no one has a monopoly on what is disseminated to the populace.

Still, it is possible to control the narrative, like it's done in the U.S. mainstream media — the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, NBC, CBS, ABC, CNN, and other purveyors of a like-minded, pre-determined agenda.

When every story, issue, and square inch of semantic space is politicized, one can expect exceedingly little agreement on any particular topic. Even events that happened within the last year, for which an abundance of reporting sources, video and audio recordings, eyewitnesses, and other documentation exist, major disagreement over what actually happened, let alone the implications, are likely. Why? What we ingest is filtered by our predispositions.

Spin is not merely a political phenomenon dispensed by PR handlers, it is a growing phenomenon that impacts every arena of human endeavor. Psychological processes such as selective attention, selective perception, and selective retention ensure that what one concludes on any particular issue is not necessarily rooted in hard scientific fact.

'TIL THE FACTS GET IN THE WAY: For decades people reported being abducted by Martians, until telescopes and surface probes conclusively showed no intelligent life on Mars, at least for the past millions of years. Facts can prove quite inconvenient. Those who claimed "Martian abduction" sauntered away only to be replaced by those who claimed "alien abduction" which opened up an array of abduction "possibilities."

What can we expect in the future? Within a few years, half the planet will have access to the Internet, and eventually nearly everyone will. Yet a high level connectivity does not ensure that the facts of vital and emerging issues are ingested sufficiently around the globe. When six out of seven billion people have online connectivity, given the human propensity to color and distort even the most basic of phenomena, expect an even greater level of Babel-like misunderstandings and missed connections.

SIDEBAR: Currently, the U.S. leads the world in Internet use with 85 out of every 100 people having access to the web. Europe and Australia at above 60 percent hold down second place, and South America approaching 50 percent is in fourth. Surprisingly, the Middle East at nearly 45 percent is in fifth place, while the giant landmass consisting of Russia, India, China, and smaller nations trail at 32 percent. Africa brings up the rear at under 20 percent. For connection speed, the U.S. actually trails South Korea, Latvia, and the Czech Republic.

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