

Sustaining your local community newspaper

By Julian Sereno

Ten years ago January, Chatham Crossroads – the first incarnation of Chatham County Line – rolled off the printing press and started circulating in Chatham County. The headline at the top of page 1, volume 1, issue 1, reads “It’s a love of the soil,” and the article is about farming in Chatham County.

It’s mere happenstance that we’re focusing on agriculture ten years later; agriculture remains vital to Chatham County’s existence, as it has been since Colonial times. While agriculture certainly has changed over the years, it remains constant. It’s alive, growing and central to the life of Chatham County.

That’s sustainability.

That first issue also has an article describing the mission of the newspaper headlined “Where All Voices Are Heard,” which remains our motto. When Chatham Crossroads became Chatham County Line in December 2002, we included in our mission statement – and on our mast in each subsequent issue – that “Our commitment is to create the best-written, best-edited, most stylish community newspaper anywhere.”

I believe we are meeting that commitment. My experiences this past autumn affirmed that belief. When we discontinued direct mail to northeast Chatham last fall, the management at the Preserve asked us to drop newspapers off at the real estate office across from the clubhouse. Of 200 papers dropped off in October, only about 20 remained when I returned in November for the next delivery. At the Greater Chatham Chamber of Commerce Business Expo in October, all the passersby who saw our newspaper booth stopped by to sing our praises. When I deliver the paper, people pull issues from the stack in my arms before I can even put them down.

The business community recognizes this.

Whoever advertises with us is assured that their ad is seen far and wide. Advertising is the big change from

the first issue 10 years ago; that issue had two advertisements in the entire newspaper, this issue has 35.

That’s sustainability.

We offer our most sincere thanks to those 35 advertisers because they provide our sustenance; the revenue from their advertising keeps us going.

They are offering us support in these most dire economic times by letting us get the word out about their businesses, and they are insuring that their businesses remain in the public’s consciousness.

Those 35 ads are about 20 fewer than in most of our recent issues and half as many as in some past issues. But it’s hardly news anymore to report when a publication’s ad count is down. These days, 35 ads are good news.

The bad news is that the drop in our ad count is a reflection of the hard times that many in our business community are facing.

These are friends and neighbors giving a local face to the dreary tableau of a tanking world economy. These are diligent, hard working people fighting against a torrent that they had no part in unleashing.

In a world with less money, everyone is going to have to get by on less. When we spend, we need to watch where the money is going because that will decide the endeavors that endure.

If you enjoy reading this newspaper and appreciate its contribution to Chatham’s civic life, then support those who advertise in it. Let them know that you saw their ad here. And if you are part of a larger institution or organization, ask them to buy an ad to support this paper.

This newspaper has provided a forum for Chatham County to address its most urgent and important issues for 10 years. As long as the community is willing to support us, there is no reason that this paper and its website www.chathamcountyline.org, won’t continue to inform Chatham for the next 10 years.

Julian Sereno is editor and publisher of Chatham County Line.



STOCKYARD

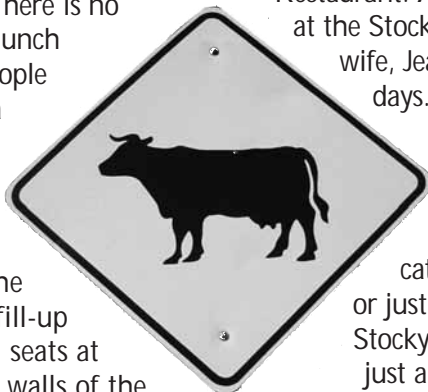
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above the slender, single-occupancy pens that house the large bulls. The bulls, frequently weighing more than a ton, inspire awe with their size and presence.

With all the things to see and do, sellers, buyers and visitors work up an appetite. There is no need to leave the Stockyard when lunch time rolls around. In fact, many people visit the Stockyard specifically for a bite to eat.

The Carolina Restaurant has been serving hungry diners since 1972. The Restaurant has a loyal following. A line stretches from the counter into the lobby. As tables fill-up in the dining area, customers find seats at the long tables that line the block walls of the lobby.

The block-wall décor and informal ambiance may not qualify as five-star, but the food does. A fresh burger between a toasted bun with a thick slice of Velveeta cheese paired with an order of hand-cut french fries rivals any restaurant’s offerings.



As visitors indulge in the simple goodness of the food they also swap stories with friends and coworkers. The network of diners is close and the conversation is lively. Whether it’s the dairy farmer down the road, the local tractor salesman or the banker out to lunch, everybody has a story to tell.

Members of the Horney family still frequent the Restaurant. After years of around-the-clock work at the Stockyard, Harry Lee Horney and his wife, Jean, assume a more relaxed role these days. The two often stop by for lunch.

“That’s why we come and eat now,” Jean said. “We didn’t get to do that then.”

Whether you leave with a load of cattle, a check for the sheep you raised or just a full belly, a visit to the Carolina Stockyards Company is much more than just a business transaction. It’s a timeless, unforgettable experience.

Leah Hughes grew up on a family farm in Randolph County. She is a junior in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Trying to see around rose-colored lenses

My God what a relief!

A whole year of campaigning financed by million and millions of dollars is now silent. I feel as if I have been released from an asylum and America is surely exhausted by 24-hour days of politics, real and phony.

Media Meditations

by R.L. Taylor



I realized on October 15 there was no way an innocent like John McCain could overcome George Bush’s image. The liberal press—and that means about 98.6 of “newsmen”—skewered Bush every hour on the hour and Bush did not have the wit or the leadership to tell them to buzz off. Those of us who voted for Bush to keep Al Gore and that other guy out of the White House realized Bush was a hard guy to support. In their minds, Americans voted against George Bush instead of for John McCain.

The battle was endless, on and on, day and night, week after week, month after month for an entire year. I am quite glad it is over. And at this writing President Obama has done nothing to astonish or frighten me. He is simply another Kennedy, a junior U. S. Senator weak in foreign affairs and national defense. The press said Kennedy made it work.

Through the mist and dust and fog and twisted lens of television cameras, we do know that our system of government simply broke down. For two years, Democrats who blamed Republicans for all ills never budged to fix anything in the House or the Senate. They merely whined.

Obama admits the system is not working and everybody, liberals, conservatives, Democrats and Republicans want him to fix it. I pray that he does.

Everything about news today is positive. It is good not to have Bush in every editor’s cross-hairs. I am familiar also with that feeling. The American press’s adoration for John Kennedy and his family is well known and far too frequent to list here.

We must learn to take all the good news we can find and even if it is not good news, let’s assume it is not necessarily bad news because Obama was right because the press found nothing but bad news in the past year.

There will be two little problems. First, with all the support by the press, those “journalists” are not anxious to admit mistakes. And right now, Obama could make Osama Bin Laden Secretary of Defense and the American press would compliment him on the choice.

As usual, the public must be vigilant.

Secondly, how will America take care of Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton now that there is nothing for them to rail about? One other small thing: Now that we have a black president can we cancel Black History Month four years and replace it with Italian-American Month?

R.L. Taylor is a regular contributor to Chatham County Line. He has been a newspaperman for more than 50 years, working as a reporter, editor and publisher. He has also been an advisor to newspapers in Slovakia, Romania and Russia.

Make your VOICE heard!

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