

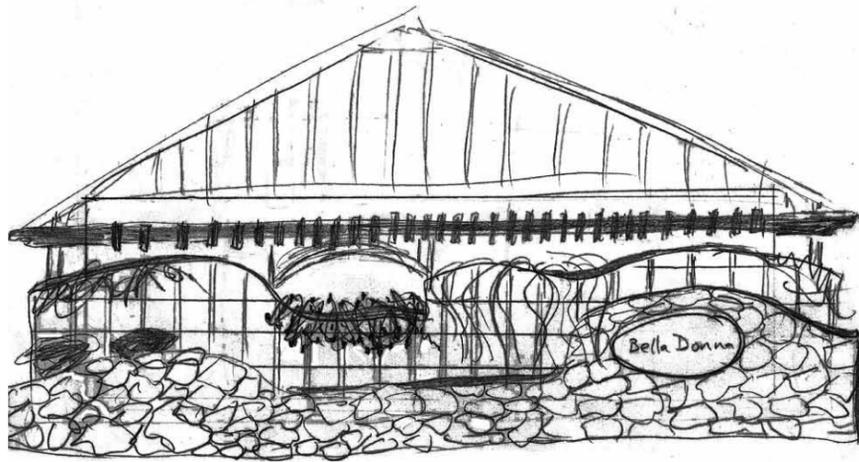
MOVE

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to back the project for a percentage of the business and co-sign the loan for me. The building would be mine but he would own part of the business.

Excitement rose up again and we met with my bank and attorney and worked out some of the details. He came to Bella Donna with his wife to try the food and was very impressed. Wonderful! A week later I received a phone call from him and he just found out he has kidney disease and will be on dialysis before the year is out. There was great sadness for him, and he is on my prayer list but it was another low spot in my quest to obtain the Hut. As this process was unfolding I kept thinking that if God is pulling the plug on something that seemed so wonderful, what he has in store for me will be even greater because I knew I could do wonderful things, not only for myself and my family but the community. The next day a friend of ours approached me and offered to co-sign the loan for me and did not want a piece of the business. How wonderful was that! At the same time my husband approached a friend/client of his that he has known for 15 years and he offered to loan us the funds for the up-fit! WOW! Things were coming together. The bank loved my cosigner, the up-fit money was there, now all I had to do was come up with \$39,000 down payment. Hey, \$39,000 was a lot less than the original price of the building plus up-fit.

Then Carol Hewitt approached me about Slow Money and friends in Chatham County were there to help us. Mini-loans of \$1,000-\$5,000 were coming through from long-time customers and friends who believed in me. Many other customers



A sketch of Bella Donna's new space — the old Pizza Hut.

purchased gift certificates, and to thank them I have been adding 10 percent to their value (which are still available by the way). I didn't get the full \$39,000 from Slow Money but we cut back with labor by doing most of the work ourselves.

Chathamites are helping get this project off the ground. So many people came to help me move out of Thompson Street and now people have been stopping by to volunteer by helping us paint, tile, install white cedar on the ceiling, clean floors and equipment, loaning their trailers to pickup or deliver equipment, the list is endless. Residents of Chatham from restaurant professionals and consultants to chefs and retired Chatham County school officials have lent their hands in helping me interview, develop kitchen designs, menus and more...it's been utterly amazing.

We will be hiring an executive chef to take over the kitchen responsibilities,

including making my dishes the way they always have been made, as well as coming up with new dishes. We will be bringing in fresh seafood and having our local meats and vegetables running throughout all of our dishes. Working with local small farms has been our focus for the past seven years and it will continue. The price won't change much although we will have some higher end options to choose from. Our drive-up window will make it easier for customers to pick up their food to take home. And let's not forget about our breakfast fare. It's not going to be complicated, it will be drive-through only, with coffee, espresso, cappuccino, and fresh made doughnuts and bagels with a schmear, all made in-house. There are many new additions to the kitchen, including another deck pizza oven, and a free standing pasta cooker which I am so excited about. No more moving large pots

of boiling water on and off the stove. One thing that will change however is the level of service, as we are committed to making your experience as relaxed and pampered as possible.

Our interior designs will be as beautiful as the food we will be presenting. Beautiful artwork and furniture design by local artists will catch your eye and make you feel cozy and comfortable. Black granite table tops will show off our beautiful food. The building exterior will be finished with stone and tiles designed by my husband, Robert. He is very excited about the bar he is designing which will utilize another local artist using concrete designs. The restaurant will be so beautiful, inside and out, and you won't be disappointed.

We have been interviewing for chefs, waiters, managers, dishwashers and more and it has been more than a learning experience, it has been a movement into the next phase of our lives, and very exciting. How many times have I used the word exciting in this piece? I couldn't use it enough. My husband and I come to the building every day and are having an absolute blast. As I go to the grocery store, or to pick up supplies at Lowes, people stop me and ask me when we think we will open because they miss my food. I tell them as soon as possible, maybe two or three weeks. The other day my husband said, "I'm dying for a pizza." I said, "You're not the only one."

Thank you, Chatham County, for the support. This is truly a community who takes care of their own.

Donna Bianco is the owner and culinary virtuosa of Bella Donna's Restaurant Italian Restaurant & Pizzeria.

BRIEFS

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involved in poverty and highlight ways social service agencies, non-profits, employers and individuals can work together to help families acquire the skills they need to transition out of poverty.

The free afternoon COPE (Cost of Poverty Experience) simulation will provide a glimpse into the harsh realities of daily survival for individuals and families who are living on the margins. You'll assume the role of someone in crisis as that person seeks food, shelter and other basic necessities. As you interact with social service agencies, utilities, police, schools and other resource providers, you'll deal with the benefits and challenges those encounters produce.

The workshops will provide a fuller understanding of poverty if taken together, but they may be taken separately. Both will be at Pittsboro United Methodist Church, 71 West St., just west of the circle in downtown Pittsboro.

Bridges Out of Poverty training, led by nationally certified trainer Annette Snider, will be from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The registration fee is \$20 per individual or organization and includes one copy of the "Bridges Out of Poverty" book.

The poverty simulation will be from 2 to 4:30 p.m., and is offered at no cost. A minimum of 40 participants is required for the simulation.

To register or to get more information, visit www.onechatham.org or call 919.533.9550. The registration deadline is Feb. 25.

OneChatham, the lead agency for Circles@Chatham, works to enhance the quality of life for people in Chatham County through collaborative community engagement.

Last Call for "Through Their Lens: Chatham County" Photo Exhibit

Chatham Conservation Partnership's (CCP) photo exhibit "Through Their Lens: Chatham

County" is on display through the end of April at the Siler City campus of Central Carolina Community College (CCCC) located at 400 Progress Boulevard. The exhibit is open to the public Mon-Thurs 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Fri 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Don't miss this last chance to view the exhibit, which includes 60 photos of landscapes, rivers, plants, and wildlife. More information available at <http://chathamconservation.wikispaces.com/Announcements>.

The 23rd Annual Haw River Clean-Up

The Haw River Assembly's 23rd annual trash cleanup of our waters will be held on Saturday **March 16**. Teams of volunteers will clean up trash along the Haw riverbanks and creeks, bridges and islands, and the shoreline of Jordan Lake — removing ugly, polluting trash that's dangerous to wildlife and water quality. For 22 years, hundreds of volunteers have worked to make the 110 miles of the river a cleaner place for all of us to enjoy.

Local businesses sponsor this event—the funds raised help us continue our many educational programs about the river for schools and the public.

Since 1991, 3,578 volunteers have removed 6,567 bags, 1,268 tires, plus, tons of appliances, car parts, construction and highway materials, furniture, and other stuff too big for bags. Each year teams also nominate the weirdest trash they have found along the river. Past finds include: a birdcage, kitchen sink, Caspar the Ghost decoration, plastic cactus, rubber shark, a 1905 NJ birth certificate and a 1907 grammar book. We are amazed at the number of balls we find from every imaginable sport!

Join Us! Help us keep our waters clean—and volunteer for this annual March river clean-up, or as a business sponsor. To volunteer or to get more information about the 2013 Haw River Clean-Up-A-Thon, email info@hawriver.org.

See you on the river.

Chatham County Line: where all voices are heard

Thanks to these fine merchants, you can pick up a copy at the following locations:

BEAR CREEK

- Elois Restaurant

BONLEE

- Old Place Restaurant

CARRBORO

- IFC
- Open Eye Café
- Cliff's Meat Market
- Neal's Deli
- Weaver Street Market
- Weaver Street Realty
- Carrboro Family Medicine
- Carrboro Family Pharmacy
- Elmo's Diner
- N.C. Crafts Gallery
- Harris Teeter
- Chapel Hill Christian Church, Bim St.
- Akai Hana
- Jade Palace
- Johnny's
- Carrboro Post Office
- Food Lion Carrboro Plaza
- Food Lion Willowcreek Plaza
- Carrboro Plaza Veterinary Clinic
- Looking Glass Cafe
- UPS Store Carrboro Plaza
- Vespertine

CHAPEL HILL

- Whole Foods
- Internationalist Books
- Davis Library-UNC
- Undergraduate Library-UNC
- Wilson Library So. Collection, UNC
- Journalism School-UNC
- Weaver Street Market, Southern Village
- Harrington Bank — Southern Village and Martin Luther King Blvd.
- Chapel Hill Children's Clinic — Southern Village
- Vita Dolce
- UNC Endoscopy Clinic at Meadowmont

COLE PARK/CHATHAM CROSSING

- Lowes Foods
- Harris Teeter at Chatham Downs
- First Citizens Bank
- Briar Chapel Information Center
- Frosty's Trading Post (Hamlet Chapel/Jones Ferry)
- Janet Resnik Gallery

FEARRINGTON

- The Belted Goat
- Galloway Ridge

GOLDSTON

- Goldston Public Library

GULF

- J.R. Moore and Sons Country Store

JORDAN LAKE

- Seagrove Minimart on 751
- Craig's General Store on 751
- Governors Club (Owner's Building)
- Carolina Meadows Center
- Food Lion, Governors Village
- Bean & Barrel, Governors Village
- Farrell's Store (Lystra/Fearrington)
- Jordan Lake Business Park
- Cruizers (U.S. 64, Wilsonville)
- Wilsonville General Store/Exxon (U.S. 64)
- Donna's Grill
- Fiddle Stix (U.S 64/Mt. Gilead)
- The Preserve

MONCURE

- Moncure Post Office

PITTSBORO

- Abundance Foundation
- Al's Diner
- Carolina Brewery
- BB&T
- Bella Donna's Restaurant

SILER CITY

- First Citizen's Bank
- Cooper Gas Station 15-501 North
- Chatham Marketplace
- Piggly Wiggly
- Chatham Community Library
- Ronnie's Quick Stop
- Central Carolina Community College
- Virlie's Grill
- Senior Center
- S&T Soda Shoppe
- Second Bloom
- New Horizons Trading Company
- Pittsboro Discount Drugs
- Angelina's Kitchen
- French Connections
- Greek Kouzina
- Pittsboro Toys
- Joyful Jewel
- Liquid Amber
- Reclamation Home Furnishings

SAXAPAHAW

- Saxapahaw General Store

SILER CITY

- Courtyard Coffee and Soda
- Raleigh Street Gallery
- Central Carolina Community College
- City Barber Shop
- El Vinculo Latino/Hispanic Liaison
- Farmers' Alliance Store
- Food Lion (U.S. 64 Siler Crossing)
- Sir Pizza
- Best Foods Cafeteria
- Piggly Wiggly
- Tienda Diana
- Wren Library
- Paperbacks Plus
- Chatham Hospital
- Senior Center
- Siler City Country Club
- Stillpoint Acupuncture

SILK HOPE

- Silk Hope Service
- Good Times Cafe