



FRIDAY
Partly Cloudy
85/65



SATURDAY
40% Chance of rain
90/67



SUNDAY
40% Chance of rain
88/63

C THE CARRBORO CITIZEN

Inside: **MILL**

Our June arts and music magazine features summer delights



PHOTO BY KEN MOORE

One of thousands of tall beardtongues in Mason Farm fields

FLORA By Ken Moore

Penstemon Fields

Last week, I described my delight in finding a snakeroot with two flowers. This past weekend, my gardening friend, Sally, was downright apologetic in inviting me over to see several snakeroots growing in her wild garden. They were not only taller than ones I have seen, but at the base of one clump we counted as many as a dozen little flowers in various stages, from bud to fruit. Sally and I share a wonderful competition as wild gardeners.

Having no snakeroots of my own, I went back over to the Botanical Garden's Mason Farm Biological Reserve to show a friend the flowers of snakeroot. On this visit, we found even more plants, some with flowers fully open and some with buds yet to mature. But I never found a plant with more than two flowers. Sally wins this one!

However, the real highlight of the walk around Mason Farm on Memorial Day was discovering the "keeper of the farm," Johnny Randall, with his younger son, Max. Johnny, the Botanical Garden's associate director for conservation, was visiting the farm to check on some rare plants and to enjoy a walk along the open fields and around the Big Oak woods with Max.

Exactly a year ago, I described the Mason Farm penstemon fields here in *The Citizen*. I thought the fields were spectacular then. Guess what? This year, the fields are even more spectacular.

Since Johnny and Max are always willing to brave the poison ivy and ticks to take a closer look

SEE FLORA PAGE 7

Carrboro readies for vote on budget

by Kirk Ross
Staff Writer

After a short public hearing at Town Hall Tuesday night on the proposed 2009-2009 budget, the Carrboro Board of Aldermen asked for a small rewrite and indicated they are likely to approve the proposal at the next meeting on June 3.

The main change as a result of the hearing was an addition of \$4,000 to the amount the town will send to the Orange County Land Trust.

Robert Dowling, the Land Trust's executive director, said his budget is increasing because of a considerable

rise in the number of homes the organization handles.

The Land Trust wants to hire a marketing manager and improve its ability to move homes. The organization has requested an additional \$8,000 from Carrboro this year, bringing the town's total contribution to the Land Trust to \$34,000.

Dowling reminded board members that the Land Trust is enacting public policy and must grow to keep up with what local governments are asking of it. "There's no real choice," he said. The trust expects to sell about 27 homes this year, he said. "Next year, potentially 70 homes; in 2010,

potentially 100 homes."

The organization's original request was trimmed in half in Town Manager Steve Stewart's proposed budget. Stewart said other local governments had made similar changes in their budgets.

But several board members said they'd like to see the original \$8,000 request approved. In a vote on the question, Dan Coleman, Jacquie Gist and John Herrera approved the change. Mayor Mark Chilton and aldermen Joal Hall Broun and Lydia Lavelle voted against it. Rande Haver O'Donnell did not vote. The tie vote meant that the measure passed

and Stewart was asked to adjust the budget accordingly.

At the hearing, the board heard from Zach Ward of DSI Comedy Theater and Michael Mahler of Wootini Gallery on behalf of the town's arts committee. They encouraged the town to find a more unified approach to promoting the arts. Ward suggested the town advertise more and consider taking out a full-page ad in the *Independent Weekly* to promote local arts events.

Also offering her comments at the hearing was Marty Mandell, who

SEE TOWN PAGE 3



PHOTO BY KIRK ROSS

Steve Scroggs retires this year from his post as assistant superintendent of Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools. Scroggs' teaching career began as a Peace Corps volunteer and he has spent the last 35 years in North Carolina public schools.

Scroggs calls it a day

Educator retires after 35 years

by Susan Dickson
Staff Writer

When Steve Scroggs began his first day as assistant superintendent for Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools, he sat outside his office and cried. After nearly 30 years working directly with children, Scroggs had made the transition to school administration, and found himself a little lonely.

"It was the first time there wasn't a child to say, 'Good morning, Mr. Scroggs,'" he said. He got through the day by going to the nearby pre-kindergarten to find a child to give him a hug and say good morning.

Scroggs has spent the past eight years serving as assistant superintendent for support services for Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools and the

Residents weigh in at subdued county budget meet

by Susan Dickson
Staff Writer

Several county residents spoke against the proposed tax increase while others spoke in favor of funding programs and services at an unusually short public hearing on the proposed county budget Tuesday night.

"I'm a little disappointed," said Ben Lloyd, a longtime county resident and former county commissioner. "Last year there was so much jumping up and down and hollering."

School and county officials changed the budget process this year

after hundreds of people spoke at public hearings last year in favor of increasing school funding. Commissioners increased school funding in the final budget, but both officials and residents expressed concern regarding the budget process.

School officials presented their projected funding needs to the board in the fall, rather than this spring, so that commissioners would have that information when setting their budget goals.

Orange County Manager Laura Blackmon last week recommended an 8.8-cent increase on the ad valorem

tax rate in her proposed 2008-09 fiscal year county budget.

The increase would raise the ad valorem tax rate to \$1.038 per \$100 of property valuation, representing a 9 percent increase over the current 95-cent rate. The recommended \$188.3 million budget is an 8.4 percent increase over last year's approved budget.

Blackmon also recommended increasing the Chapel Hill-Carrboro special district tax by 2.65 cents, to 23 cents per \$100 of property valuation.

Under the proposed budget, nearly half of the general fund budget would

fund the Chapel Hill-Carrboro and Orange County school districts. Blackmon's recommendation funds 98.5 percent of the two school districts' requested budgets.

Several county residents said the proposed tax increases were too high, especially for residents on fixed incomes.

"Please do not raise our taxes as much as it has been suggested. There's no way we can pay it," said Betsy Tiley, a county resident for 69 years. "People are leaving Orange County

SEE COUNTY PAGE 3

Seymour Center takes the "senior" out of aging

RECENTLY . . .

By Valerie Schwartz

It's already been a year since the Chapel Hill Senior Center on Elliott Road closed and the Robert and Pearl Seymour Center opened on Homestead Road. Not only did it move, the name has stuck — the seniors who use it have dropped "senior" from their vernacular when they refer to their center — it's the Seymour Center (period).

The folks who delight in the activities there have planned several celebrations to honor the occasion, including the MayTime Merriment Gala Friday and Saturday.

The Prime Time Players, a group of about 20 talented participants at the Seymour Center, will knock some socks off with their displays in two shows, featuring performances of classical music and show tunes either sung or performed on instruments, a vaudeville number, poetry reading, performed skit written by Carol Burnette, storyteller and performances by the Taptattlers and the Village Review.

The Prime Time Players is a theater troupe, ages 55 and over, started four years ago as a committee of the



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Joyce Weiser and Mary Ann Freedman rehearse for MayTime Merriment.

Friends of the Seymour Center (formerly Friends of the Senior Center).

Bobbi Lubker chairs the committee and has been involved with it since it started.

"Janice Tyler was always interested in having a theater group," Lubker said of Tyler, the Orange County Senior Centers Administrator. "The Friends appointed a committee to look into developing a group," because there were a lot of talented people around

needing an outlet. Besides providing emoting time, their annual performances raise funds for the Friends, which provide support to the Seymour Center staff in bringing programs and activities to Orange County seniors.

"Our seniors have a myriad of interests and we try to cover all of them," said Lee Pavao, chairman of the Friends.

Since the senior center started on Elliott Road, the Friends have kept

MayTime Merriment Gala

7:30 p.m. Friday, May 30
2 p.m. Saturday, May 31

Robert and Pearl Seymour Center
2551 Homestead Road

Tickets \$5 at the door

it going by covering expenses beyond the county budget. Pavao said their current needs include enhanced audio equipment, solar shades for the great room to cut down on glare, better lighting and "additional things that don't come into the realm of programming."

This will be the third show the Prime Time Players has presented and the first in the Seymour Center, capping off a month of activities recognizing May as Older Americans Month. Anniversary cake will be served at intermission in celebration of one year at the Seymour Center.

"This will be my last effort as chairman," Lubker said of her

SEE RECENTLY PAGE 2

INSIDE

Erica Eisdorfer on "dog lit"

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RECENTLY
FROM PAGE 1

year at the helm of the committee.

With the host of talented people interested in performing, the effort has been rather large. Choosing the slate of performers after four hours of auditions and creating a timed program from it can be trickier than arranging the numbers of a Sudoku, but these variety shows require less time commitment and scheduling than performing a play or musical.

"We started with very ambitious thinking and decided on the galas as a way to get a lot of people involved without the stress of producing (a written show)," Lubker said.

Not only will it be an entertaining show, it's a great opportunity for experiencing the Seymour Center and getting a taste of what one can aspire to do given enough age.

For more information, call 968-2070.

Contact Valarie Schwartz at valariekeys@mac.com or 923-3746.

Civic Club awards scholarship



PHOTO COURTESY CARRBORO CIVIC CLUB
Settle Womble of the Carrboro Civic Club awarded a \$300 scholarship to East Chapel Hill High senior Shen Chen for his outstanding volunteer work. His service work includes Habitat for Humanity, coaching Special Olympics and YMCA sports teams, volunteering at the Veterans Affairs Hospital and more. The annual scholarship recognizes students from area high schools who dedicate time to service.

Engagement

Roush to wed Norwood

Mr. and Mrs. Michael L. Norwood of Chapel Hill announce the engagement of their daughter Amy to Donald Irwin Roush of Raleigh, son of Donald and Marilyn Roush of Chapel Hill.

The bride-elect is a graduate of Chapel Hill High School, a graduate of UNC-Wilmington with a B.A. degree in elementary education and a graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill with a B.S. degree in nursing. She is employed by the N.C. Children's Hospital as a Newborn Critical Care nurse.

The groom-elect is a graduate of the University of California-Riverside where he earned a B.A. with a double major in history and political science. He moved from California to North Carolina in 2004 and is employed as a home inspector with Accurate Home Inspections. The wedding will take place



Amy Norwood and Donald Roush

in Chapel Hill at University Presbyterian Church on August 23, 2008. A reception will follow at the Carolina Inn.

Community Calendar

Special Events

Computer classes — free computer classes: Internet, Email, Word, Excel, Powerpoint, NC Live. Registration required. Wednesdays, Jun. 4 through Aug. 6, 7:00pm, Carrboro Cybrary, 100 N. Greensboro St., Carrboro, 918-7387, cybrary@co.orange.nc.us, www.co.orange.nc.us/library/cybrary

First Sunday — monthly celebration on historic Hillsboro Street in downtown Pittsboro. June 1st 12-4pm. Music by Rootsie 1-3pm. Arts and craft vendors will line the streets selling their work, local galleries and shops will be open. 919-260-9725 or pittsboroshops.com

Faith

Vacation Bible School — Mon. June 23 - Fri. June 27. Ages 5-14. 5:30-8pm, dinner included. Registration deadline June 15. Suggested donation of \$20 to cover materials).

Buddhism — Buddhist teachings, discussion and meditation with Gen Tilopa, resident teacher of the Kosala Buddhist Center, from 7-8:30pm every Wednesday

evening. The June series will focus on "The Kadampa Buddhist way of Life." \$10. Newcomer's first class is free. Located at 711 West Rosemary Street in Carrboro (above Carrburritos). www.meditationinchapelhill.org, 967-1861.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Niche Gardens guided garden walks — Saturdays through June, 10am. Spring planting, garden maintenance, design & gardening for wildlife with bird and butterfly gardens. Free. Niche Gardens, 1111 Dawson Rd, Chapel Hill. 967-0078 or www.nichegardens.com

Guided Tours — of the N.C. Botanical Garden's Plant Collections, every Saturday at 10am. Led by trained volunteer tour guides and Botanical Garden curators. Free.

Digital Camera Workshop — lecture and photo sessions at the N.C. Botanical Gardens. Free, Fridays from 12:30-4pm.

Birdwatching Kayak Trip — for teens and adults. Visit a blue heron nesting area and see beaver lodges,

herons, osprey and more. Jordan Lake. Saturday, May 24, 2-5pm, \$30. Instruction, equipment and guide included. 929-3805 kayakadventuresnc.com

KIDS

Toddler Time — at the Carrboro Branch Library. Every Thursday at 4pm. 969-3006

Preschool Story Time — at the Carrboro Branch Library. Every Saturday at 10:30am.

Express Yourself! — art program for ages 3-8 & their caregivers. Weekly art projects for children & adults to explore their own creative paths. Saturdays, 10:45-11:15 & 11:30am-noon. \$2. Kidzu Children's Museum, 105 E Franklin St, 933-1455, www.kidzuchildrensmuseum.org

Nature Tales: Storytime in the Garden — N.C. Botanical Garden. Thursdays, 10-11am. Children 3-5 years old are invited to attend a storytime in the garden. Children must be accompanied by an adult. \$5/family.

VOLUNTEERS

RSVP 55+ Volunteer Program — seeks volunteers to match other volunteers with opportunities for public service. 968-2056

Meals on Wheels — seeks volunteers to deliver meals and/or bake simple desserts for recipients in the Chapel Hill/Carrboro area. 942-2948

English as a Second Language Conversation Club — seeks volunteers to talk with groups of international students Fridays from 11:30am-1:30pm. University Methodist Church on Franklin St. 967-1448, harwellja@bellsouth.net

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Living with Advanced/Metastatic Cancer — a bi-weekly support group. Meets 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 3:30-5pm. Drop-in, no charge. Cornucopia House Cancer Support Center. 401-9333, cornucopiahouse.org

The Compassionate Friends: Self-help support after the death of a child — free and open to all adults grieving the loss of a child or sibling. Third Mondays, 7-8:30pm. Evergreen United Methodist Church. 967-3221. chapelhillctf.org

Peer Connections — will have its next meeting at the Carrboro Town Hall on Thursday, May 29th from 5:30-7pm. The topic will be

dental health. Contact Ellen Perry at 942-5602 or peerconnections@gmail.com

MUSEUMS

Planetarium & Digital Theater Shows — science LIVE Demos. Ongoing. Morehead Planetarium, 250 E Franklin St, Chapel Hill. Info hotline 549-6863, office 962-1236, tickets 843-7997. Thu-Sat 10am-5pm, 6:30-9:15pm. moreheadplanetarium.org

DANCE

Havana Nights — Cuban Salsa. 1st and 3rd Thursdays, 10pm. Mansion 462, 462 W Franklin St, 967-7913, www.mansion462.net

Salsa/Mambo — 3rd Saturdays, lesson 8pm, dance 8:30-11pm. \$7, 358-4201, salsa_4u2@yahoo.com. Fred Astaire Dance Studio, 4702 Garrett Rd, Durham.

Ballroom — 4th & 5th Thursdays, 7-9:30pm, \$2. 933-8982. Seymour Senior Center, 2551 Homestead Rd, Chapel Hill, 968-2070

Carrboro DanceJam — free-style dance to an eclectic mix of music. First Fridays. Balanced Movement Studio. 304 W Weaver St, upstairs. Smoke & alcohol free. Call 968-8776 for more info.

LECTURES, DISCUSSIONS & OPEN MICS

Open Mic — poetry, music & short fiction. Tuesdays, 7pm, Market

Street Books & Maps, Southern Village. 933-5111, www.marketstreet-books.com

LITERARY

Not a Drop to Drink: America's Water Crisis (And What You Can Do) — by Ken Midkiff. Join a discussion with panelists from the Sierra Club, OWASA and UNC. Mon., June 2, 7pm. Century Center.

The Alchemist — by Paulo Coelho. On Friday, May 30 at 7pm, the Contemporary Fiction Book Club. Carrboro Cybrary.

Then She Found Me — Thursday, June 5 at 7pm, the Movie/Book Club meets to discuss the film and book by Elinor Lipman on which it was based. Carrboro Cybrary.

Middlesex — on Thursday, June 26 at 7:00pm, the Contemporary Fiction Book Club meets to discuss *Middlesex* by Jeffrey Eugenides. We always welcome new participants. Carrboro Cybrary, 100 N. Greensboro St., Carrboro, 918-7387, cybrary@co.orange.nc.us, www.co.orange.nc.us/library/cybrary

FILM

De Florida a Coahuila — a film telling the story of the Masco people. Directed by Rafael Rebollar. Sunday, June 1 at 5pm. Free and open to the public. CHICLE, 101 E Weaver St, 3rd floor. 933-0398, chi-cle.com

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PETS OF THE WEEK

APS OF ORANGE COUNTY — Hi, I'm **Nutmeg!** I'm an eight-year-old quiet cat whose owner passed away and no one would take me. I get along with other cats and do not seem to mind dogs. I love to sit in your lap while you read a book. Come see me at Animal Protection Society of Orange County, 6311 Nicks Road, Mebane, or call 304-2300. You can also go online at www.animal-protectionsociety.org



ORANGE COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES — Come meet **Sonya!** This 2-month-old cutie is here with her siblings and is full of playfulness and puppy love! She loves to cuddle and give kisses! Come visit her and her brothers and sisters today! Stop by Orange County's Animal Shelter, 1081 MLK Jr. Blvd, Chapel Hill or call 919-967-7383. You can also see her and other adoptable animals online at www.co.orange.nc.us/animalservices/adoption.asp

News Briefs

Animal shelter benefit cookout

Orange County's Animal Services Department will hold its first annual Spring Cookout on Saturday from 12 to 4 p.m. at the Orange County Animal Shelter.

The event will feature a scavenger hunt, adoptable animals and free hot dogs and drinks. In addition, local musicians will perform.

The event is free and open to the public. For more information, visit www.co.orange.nc.us/animalservices/events.asp or contact Sarah Fallin, program coordinator, at 967-7383. The shelter is located at 1081 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. in Chapel Hill.

Women's workshops

The Women's Center will hold a series of financial workshops in June.

Workshops will be held four Thursdays, starting June 5, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Women's Center and will focus on a different financial topic each week. Topics include budget management and credit repair, investing, bankruptcy and foreclosure prevention, and money management.

For more information or to register, call the Women's Center at 968-4610.

Dry dog wash

On Saturday, May 31 Whole Foods in Chapel Hill will host a dry dog wash with volunteers for the Animal Protection Society. For a donation, they will "dry bathe" your dog while you have a bite to eat for \$5 per plate. The event includes raffles and contests and fun activities for dogs, including dog massages and portraits. An OWASA representative will speak on water conservation and raffle off a water barrel. All proceeds benefit the Animal Protection Society of Orange County.

Emergency prep fair

The N.C. Children's Hospital will host an Emergency Preparedness fair from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Thursday, May 29 and Friday, May 30 in the lobby. The fair provides information on severe weather and other emergency preparedness from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the National Weather Service and other organizations. Two prizes will be given away, a weather radio and a Red Cross disaster kit. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

Town OKs new type of zoning on Center Street

by Kirk Ross
Staff Writer

The Carrboro Board of Aldermen approved a new type of zoning and shortly afterward approved the first property to receive it in a meeting Tuesday night at Town Hall.

The town's new conditional zoning rules were approved after a discussion about how the new rules would affect mainly downtown areas. Conditional zoning extends the town's ability to limit uses for a property beyond what a typical conditional-use permit

would.

The rules were drafted specifically to solve a quandary about a proposed zoning change at 102 Center St. The owners of the property, Center Street Preservation, wanted to expand the commercial uses of the property, which was zoned residential.

Despite assurances by the owners that they would maintain the integrity of the small, residential street, in recent discussions several board members have said they were uncomfortable granting the property a business zoning because a future

owner of the building could then expand its commercial use even more.

To resolve the issue, town planners drafted new conditional zoning rules that create a mechanism for reaching agreement on types of uses. On Tuesday, the board of aldermen agreed to allow conditional zoning, but only for properties applying for B-2 zoning, which is focused in the transitional areas between residential and commercial regions of downtown.

Under the rules adopted for the Center Street property, it can

only be used for an office serving clients on premises; an office attracting little or no client traffic; a bed and breakfast; a home-occupation business; or a residence. At Tuesday's hearing, the board and the property owners also agreed to language that would prevent them from destroying or removing the mill house on the lot.

Board member Joal Hall Broun also urged that the town look into allowing conditional zoning for other types of zones, saying the added flexibility would be helpful.

OWASA ends water restrictions, adds year-round rules

The drought is officially over, but the Orange Water and Sewer Authority has implemented new year-round rules. OWASA directors voted last Thursday to end water-shortage restrictions and surcharges now that the reservoirs are approaching full. As of Wednesday, University Lake, the Cane Creek Reservoir and the Quarry Reservoir contain about three billion gallons of water, which is about 85 percent of capacity or enough for about 15 months.

OWASA says that with higher levels and reduced demand (from conservation), there is little risk of the reservoirs falling to critically low levels.

But don't go leaving on the hose. The OWASA year-round conservation requirements are:

- Spray irrigation is limited to a maximum of three days per week (even-numbered addresses on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday; odd-numbered addresses on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday) and is allowed before 9 a.m. and

after 8 p.m. Irrigation is limited to one inch per week.

- Automatic controllers and rain or moisture sensors are required on spray irrigation systems.
- Shut-off nozzles are required on hoses.

- Water waste, such as runoff, to other properties or street right-of-ways, is prohibited.
- Leaks must be repaired by the customer within 10 days of a notice by OWASA.

- Restaurants shall serve water only on request.
- Hotels shall change bed linens only on request or every five days for long-term customers.
- Use of reclaimed water and rainwater is strongly encouraged.
- Dishwashers and clothes washers should be operated with full loads only.
- Use of water saving fixtures is strongly encouraged.

More information is available at owasa.org. —Jack Carley

COUNTY FROM PAGE 1

now ... because they can't afford to live here."

Tilley's husband, Wayne Tilley, echoed her concerns.

"We just cannot afford to keep funding everything everybody thinks we need or want," he said. "Consider people like myself that have fixed income and would like to live in Orange County, but we're feeling the pinch, and I don't see any relief in sight."

Lloyd criticized the commissioners for the county's lack of economic development.

"You have had the door closed to economic growth for 30 years that would have pro-

vided jobs for Orange County and dollars for Orange County's needs," he said.

According to Blackmon, homeowners pay about 70 percent of the county's general fund revenue.

Several residents spoke in favor of fully funding a volunteer coordinator position for the county's Certified Emergency Response Team, while a few others mentioned the schools.

Karl Knapp urged the commissioners not to decrease the manager's proposed allocation for the schools.

"It is providing a reasonable funding increase for education in our county," he said. "I would be more thrilled about this if the increase were not

funded by a fairly large tax increase ... [but] let us remember that the increase is not in there for extravagant spending."

Commissioners have indicated they think the proposed tax increase is too high. Blackmon said she is looking at different programs and services to cut in order to minimize the tax increase and will provide options to the Board of County Commissioners on June 5.

The board will hold a second public hearing on the proposed budget tonight (Thursday) at 7:30 at the Southern Human Services Center on Homestead Road. The board is scheduled to approve the budget on June 24.

TOWN FROM PAGE 1

told the board she did not want to see taxes raised, because the slowing economy has already placed a burden on many residents.

"I think these are very somber times," she said, "and people are hurting." Raising taxes under such circumstances, she said, was unconscionable.

Stewart is recommending that the town raise property taxes 3.23 cents, putting the total tax rate at 68.60 cents per \$100 of assessed value. For the owner of a \$200,000 home, the increase would be about \$65. The additional \$4,000 would raise the rate by about an additional .03 cents.

THE CARRBORO CITIZEN

HOW TO REACH US

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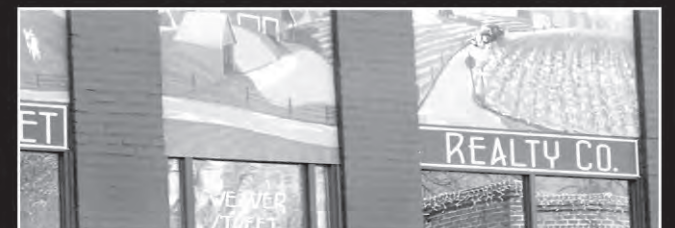
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SCROGGS FROM PAGE 1

past 35 years working in North Carolina public schools. This Friday, Scroggs will step down from his post to retire, and he will surely be missed.

"He loves people, he loves kids, and to me he's probably the most gifted person, the most talented person I've ever worked with," Superintendent Neil Pedersen said.

Scroggs enthusiasm for education, Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools in particular, is undeniable. Each day, donning a bowtie and a smile, he's led the district through a period of massive growth, overseeing the construction of five schools over eight years.

He's worked late into the night on redistricting maps, transportation plans and school sites.

Scroggs is emotional when he talks about his work in education.

"I've had a good run," he said. "I tell people, not jokingly, I'm a pretty good assistant superintendent and I was a hell of a principal."

He knew early on that he wanted to go into education, deciding as a high school student that he wanted to be a teacher.

Education runs in Scroggs' family. His mother was long-time Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools school board member Mary Scroggs, for whom Mary Scroggs Elementary is named.

"Education was king in our house,"

he said. Scroggs' mother is known for her work toward desegregation as well as for the construction of several schools at a time when schools were extremely overcrowded.

Scroggs got his start in education as a teacher in the Peace Corps in Mauritania.

"I honestly think the Peace Corps set me up beautifully in my career," he said,

considered for the award. After 24 years in Lenoir County Schools, Scroggs started thinking about Chapel Hill again.

"I got interested in coming home," he said.

Scroggs returned to Chapel Hill to serve as principal of McDougle Elementary School and later was appointed assistant superintendent of support services.

"What matters is what you've done to make kids' lives better."

— Steve Scroggs,
Retiring Assistant Superintendent,
Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools

adding that his experience taught him that he didn't need materials to teach.

"What matters is what you've done to make kids' lives better," Scroggs said.

Scroggs took his experience back to North Carolina, where he served as a teacher, assistant principal and principal in the Lenoir County Schools. While Scroggs was principal of Teachers Memorial School in Kinston, his school won the state's Entrepreneurial Award, which is given to schools that take risks. Scroggs first met Pedersen at the award ceremony, because McDougle Middle School was also being con-

Although he no longer worked directly with kids, Scroggs said he loved his job because what he did helped to make school better for children.

"I can see the differences we've made for kids," he said. "We have been able to do good things for kids."

"What we do does make a difference. It's the only reason we're really in the business."

Scroggs said he has especially enjoyed working with his support staff and Pedersen.

"I don't think people realize how lucky we are to have Neil," he said.

Although Scroggs had thought about retiring before, it never seemed like the right time. In February, he found himself with a window between projects.

"All these things kind of fell into place," he said. "I think it's time to look out for Steve for a little bit."

Although he believes the district is headed in the right direction, Scroggs said Chapel Hill-Carrboro still faces several challenges as it grows.

"I think the biggest challenge in this district is eliminating the achievement gap," he said. "I believe very strongly, 'all' means 'all.'"

After retiring, Scroggs said he wants to take a break to spend time with his wife, Rita, cooking and gardening, but would like to come back to work part-time on particular school projects.

"I still have things to contribute to a school district," he said. His two sons are continuing the family work in education as well — one works at Smith Middle School and the other is a student in UNC's School of Education.

On Sunday, Scroggs spent the day packing up his office.

"I knew it was going to be a bad day, and it was," he said. Just as on his first day as assistant superintendent, Scroggs broke down and cried.

"I love [my job] with a passion," he said.

"I hope people realized we were trying to do what's best for kids," he continued. "I've never had anybody tell me any different."

NOTICIAS EN BREVE

Película

De Florida a Coahuila (2002) Dirigido por Rafael Rebollar, esta película es un documental sobre la historia de los Mascogo en la comunidad del Nacimiento de los Negros en México. Los Mascogo son un grupo de nativo americanos negros quienes viven en México, cerca de la frontera con Texas. El domingo, 1 de junio, 5pm. CHI-CLE, 101 E. Weaver Street, Suite G1 (3er piso). 933-0398

"Last Fridays" en Hillsborough

Escuche a música, vea al grupo de danza, haga unas artesanías y camine por las calles mirando el arte. El viernes, el 30 de mayo, 6-9pm. El centro de Hillsborough (Churton Street).

Padres, ¡No se olviden!

Aunque sea el verano y no haya escuela no se olviden inmunizar a los niños quienes van a entrar en la escuela en agosto. Se dan la mayoría de las inmunizaciones necesarias por el sistema escolar de Chapel Hill-Carrboro y del condado de Orange gratis en el departamento de salud del condado de Orange. Debe de llamar para más información y para fijar un horario para la cita. Chapel Hill: 968-2022; Hillsborough: 245-2022; 644-3350, línea en español (deje un recado). Departamento de salud del condado de Orange: Southern Human Services Center, 2501 Homestead Road, Chapel Hill 27516; Richard L. Whitted Human Services Center, 300 W. Tryon Street, Hillsborough 27278

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Dog Man and other animal tales, books to dog-ear

BOOKS

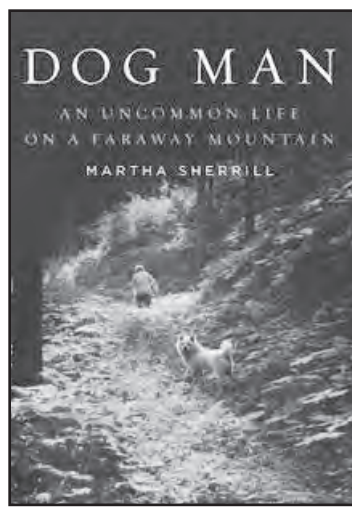
By Erica Eisdorfer

Our good old dog Corncake died a year and a half ago. Corncake had been, to put it politely, of a mixed variety. That was fine with us. We loved her and mourned her passing. After a while, we began to hanker for a dog again. One day I got a call at work from my mother. There was a man with a box of puppies in front of Weaver Street Market; my 11-year-old daughter had fallen in love; should they bring a puppy home? I said yes and it's a good thing I did, for later Charlotte confided the following: "When I saw another kid pick up the puppy I wanted, I felt faint."

The pup, whom we named Pumblehook after the unctuous uncle in *Great Expectations*, was, it seemed, less mixed than was Corncake. Still mixed, only less so. Who knew what she was? Who cared?

Then we took Pumble to Grandma's for Christmas. There we saw many relatives, including my brother in law, Naoto

Kobayashi. He took one look at Pumble and said, "Ah, Akita" (he pronounced it "ahhh-kee-tah-ahhh"). The Akita is the grand old dog of Japan, a breed thousands of years old: dignified, loyal, proud and almost wiped off the face of the earth at the end of WWII: Its meat was used for food and its fur, thick and lush, was used to line the jackets of Japanese fighter pilots. According to Martha Sherrill in *Dog Man: An Uncommon Life on a Faraway Mountain*, the dog, once Japan's beloved, had dwindled to fewer than a dozen by the time Morie Sawataishi decided to move himself and his city-bred wife, Kitako, to Japan's snow country and singlehandedly save the breed from extinction. You don't have to be an Akita-lover to become immersed in *Dog Man*. It's a picture of a remarkable life in a remarkable place. Sherrill's writing is fine: The snow country is palpably rough and gorgeous, Sawataishi's quirky personality is complicated, the character of each dog — Three Good Lucks, Goromaru, Victory Princess — is described the way *The New Yorker* describes a novelist or a politi-



Dog Man, by Martha Sherrill
256 pages; Penguin Group

cian. I found *Dog Man* to be one of those books which you have no reason to read (unless you own a part Akita, and even then) but which transports you and that you think about for days.

Shortly after having finished *Dog Man*, I took Charlotte to the

McDougle Elementary School book fair. We browsed. One book jumped out at me: *Hachiko Waits* by Leslea Newman. This is the true story of Japan's favorite dog-friend (a faithful Akita), who waited for his master, Professor Ueno, at the train every day. One day the professor did not get off the train, but Hachi waited still — for nine years. There's a statue at the Shibuya train station of a waiting Akita — ears erect, eyes alert, tail curled. It's a favorite meeting spot as well as a good spot to propose marriage — under a statue that means faithfulness.

At the book fair, longtime McDougle School librarian Nancy Margolin showed me a book called *Faithful Elephants: A True Story of Animals, People and War* by Yukio Tsuchiya. This is the story of the elephants at the Ueno (the same name as Hachiko's master) Zoo in Tokyo

during WWII. During bombings, big zoo animals can present a danger to people and must often be put down. The Ueno Zoo elephants, too smart to eat the poison that was fed to the lions and tigers, could only be starved, though it broke their keepers' hearts. This book is a manifesto for peace if there ever was one; a clear view of the collateral damage that these days we are so easily able to forget. Elephants, they say, remember for a long time.

Our dog Pumble is what they call a "shepherd mix." Which makes me think. German Shepherd and Japanese Akita — the axis of evil not so long ago, and now our great allies, embodied in my frisky pup. Why not just skip the war part next time and act with dignity and intelligence and loyalty — to all the living beings of the world?

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FOR THE RECORD

In our trust

A very salient point was made at the recent public hearing on the town budget. The discussion was over whether or not to fully fund the Orange County Land Trust's request. To the town, the difference was more symbolic in terms of impact, for it was meant to reflect what other governments likewise encumbered by a flagging economy were doing.

The point brought up has been often repeated at such times: The Land Trust is unique to other non-profits in that it is an entity set up to administer public policy. It is backed, to paraphrase one official, by all of the governments and, by extension, the people.

Like anyone involved in real estate right now, the Land Trust faces a tight lending market and a slow-down in home sales.

This at a time when the actions of public bodies and the carrying out of public policy calls on the organization to handle a rapidly growing number of properties.

As the mayor pointed out Tuesday night, it seems the smaller the amount of money, the more discussion ensues. Ultimately, in a close vote, the \$4,000 in question was put in the budget.

Yes, this is a tight year, but the tide that makes this community a little less affordable each day keeps rising nonetheless. This is not the time to show the Land Trust anything less than the full faith and credit of the community that created it.

Big potential

Forget repealing the gas tax. This state has a much simpler way to put millions of dollars back into the hands of North Carolinians. At the same time, the move will help streamline state government, eliminate unnecessary government bureaucracy and prevent the siphoning off of millions to out-of-state enterprises. Furthermore, the result of this innovation will be a much more progressive distribution of the cost of paying for local school construction.

So what's the big innovation? Eliminate the lottery.

This year, North Carolinians (and some of our lottery-frenzied neighbors who travel across the borders) will spend about \$1.26 billion on the NC Education Lottery, which is predicted to show a "profit" of \$385 million. That may sound like a win, but when you consider that a fair-sized chunk of the take goes to the companies that operate the games and that the money that is being returned to our local communities comes disproportionately from low- and moderate-income individuals, well, the deal doesn't sound so swell.

Then there's that bureaucracy, the one that recently announced another year of disappointing earnings as well as an effort to start selling the games at Wal-Mart and other big retailers. Heading up that bureaucracy is lottery director Tom Shaheen, who recently suggested that if state workers don't like the fact that his employees were getting far higher raises than others in government, they should apply at the lottery commission. People skills, apparently, not required.

Expensive commute

That cracking sound you may have heard just before the Memorial Day weekend was gas prices around here breaking the \$4 mark.

Right on the heels of that is news via *Forbes* that Raleigh commuters (we presume that means those of us who commute to and fro) face the second-worst commute in the country among small cities. To make matters worse, it compares things here to Atlanta and Dallas.

"Drivers spend 35 hours a year in traffic, yet only 11% carpool and just 2% use public transit or walk. This makes for an efficiency rating not far off from congested - and larger - Dallas."

Don't y'all who keep fighting public transit pull a muscle patting yourselves on the back.



Human evidence of the need for justice

CHRIS FITZSIMON

It's too bad that every single member of the General Assembly who stands in front of television cameras clamoring for the state to resume executions wasn't in the press room at the Legislative Building Tuesday afternoon.

Three men recently freed from North Carolina's death row after spending a combined 36 years awaiting their executions for crimes they did not commit appeared with Darryl Hunt, who spent 19 years behind bars until he was finally declared innocent and freed from his life sentence just a few years ago.

The four unjustly incarcerated men have something else in common too. They are all African-American males and race played a role in the miscarriages of justice that robbed each of them of a significant portion of their lives.

They came to the Legislative Building as part of an effort to convince the Senate to pass the Racial Justice Act, legislation that sets up a procedure for a defendant to challenge his conviction or death sentence by showing that race played an improper role in the decision.

The House passed the Racial Justice Act last year with Democrats and Republicans supporting it, acknowledging that race does influence verdicts and sentences in death penalty cases.

A 2001 study by researchers at UNC-Chapel Hill found that the odds of a defendant receiving the death penalty in North Carolina increase if the victim of the murder is white. Critics have tried to dismiss the findings but have never produced any data to discredit it.

Executions remain on hold in North Carolina pending a resolution of questions about the state's lethal injection procedure and the role that doctors and medical personnel play in putting someone to death.

Senate Minority Leader Phil Berger and House Minority Leader Paul Stam have repeatedly called for the General Assembly to pass legislation to resume executions as soon as possible.

That is a troubling enough suggestion considering that state courts are still considering North Carolina's execution protocol. Death row inmates aren't going anywhere.

But considering cranking up the execution machine at Central Prison when the fundamental flaws in the system are right before lawmakers' eyes in the

"[C]ranking up the execution machine at Central Prison when the fundamental flaws in the system are right before lawmakers' eyes . . . is simply offensive."

persons of Jonathan Hoffman, Glen Edward Chapman, Levon Jones and Darryl Hunt is simply offensive.

Many of Berger and Stam's Republican colleagues in the House believe there are problems too, or they wouldn't have supported the Racial Justice Act last session. Sen. Vernon Malone opened the news conference Tuesday, saying that it is unfortunate that "we live in a society where the Racial Justice Act is needed." And how unfortunate that our criminal justice system continues to wrongly convict people and steal their freedom for years.

NAACP President Rev. William Barber told reporters that it was past time state leaders faced the fact that the criminal justice system discriminates against black men.

The dozen legislators standing behind the podium came to show their support for legislation that would recognize that bias and at least give defendants an opportunity to present it if it is present in their individual case.

Malone is right that it is a sad commentary on our state that we need a Racial Justice Act. But we do. Lawmakers have made some improvements in the capital punishment system in recent years, but not nearly enough. Race still plays a role and the Senate ought to do something about it by passing the Racial Justice Act this summer.

Chris Fitzsimon is the director of N.C. Policy Watch.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR, KIRK ROSS

Life by the gallon

Water and gasoline don't mix, but the conservation of each merged over the winter as both liquids got scarce. Like a lot of people, I found myself more and more measuring myself by the gallon. A shorter shower saved this. A trip by bike or on foot saved that.

Thanks to recent rains, the worries about water have eased a bit. It's part supply and part demand. Water-conservation rules may no longer be as strict, but conservation is still all the rage as evidenced by OWASA's rate increase due to an expected long-range drop in water use. The same thing happened after the drought of 2002.

As for supply, one question I get a lot is why it's taking so long for Cane Creek Reservoir to refill, when University Lake and pretty much all of the local reservoirs are spilling their banks. The answer is in the design of the lake itself. To keep the watershed completely in Orange County, Cane Creek has a watershed of roughly 60 square miles, the same size as University Lake's, which is seven times smaller.

I get an email every morning from Dusty Martin (whose name seemed more appropriate during the drought), OWASA's chief plant operator, charting water use and supply. This month we passed three billion gallons in the reservoirs — a 15-month supply.

The gas crisis won't end so easily.

Well grounded

Chancellor-elect Holden Thorp checked in the other day via email. I'd inquired how he felt about having to pack up the family and move from Carrboro to the chancellor's quarters on Raleigh Road. (Nice place, by the way, with a swell pool.)

The chancellor said he had mixed feelings about the move, especially since his band is a regular on the Weaver Street Lawn and his son loves Little



PHOTO BY DEBBY HUSSEY

Suzanne Stevens

League here.

One thing that strikes me among the many positives of Thorp's selection is his more intimate knowledge of the towns. Having experienced life here as a resident gives him a perspective that is hard to come by quickly and even more difficult to attain if one starts at the top rather than among the ranks.

A few corrections

- You'd think we'd at least get the name of the mascot of Carrboro High School right. Most times, we do. Last week, we didn't. Go, Jaguars.

- The fellow helping Scotty Mclean in a front-page photo of the capture of the Century Center bees is Leo Gaev.

- We missed a photo caption a couple of weeks back for the picture above. That's Suzanne Stevens, the manager of Chatham Habitat for Humanity's home stores. She took the day off recently to join with others for the organization's Women Build 2008 event.

Contrary to the hype, NC business taxes are low

ELAINE MEJIA

Those pesky researchers at business-friendly Ernst & Young and the Council on State Taxation have done it again. They simply refuse to develop a methodology for ranking state business tax burdens in such a way that North Carolina's ranking will come out where the anti-tax zealots like to claim that they are.

The latest version of the "State Business Tax Burden Study" was released last month. The study tries to determine how much of the total taxes collected in each state are paid by businesses as opposed to individuals. The study found that businesses pay 36.9 percent of all state and local taxes in North Carolina. Moreover, the study found that 3.9 percent of North Carolina's gross state product is consumed by business taxes. According to the study, the percentage of the gross state product consumed by business taxes in North Carolina is the third-lowest in the nation. According to this measure, only two states, Delaware and Oregon, have lower business taxes than North Carolina.

This study is not without its flaws. Its main objective is to show that businesses are paying too great a share of state and local taxes in all states. In reality, even when businesses write the checks to Uncle Sam those costs are often passed on to consumers in the form of higher prices and even to workers via lower wages. Nevertheless, the study clearly reinforces a basic fact about analyzing state and local taxes - focusing simply on nominal tax rates does not provide an accurate assessment of North Carolina's tax levels relative to other states.

To illustrate this point, consider the following scenarios. In the first scenario, a taxpayer earning \$100,000 per year is charged a 3 percent income tax resulting in a \$3,000 tax bill. In the second scenario, a taxpayer earns the same \$100,000 per year, is charged a 5 percent income tax, but only on half of their income. In this case, the taxpayer pays \$2,500 in taxes. What's important about these scenarios is that if the tax rates by themselves are compared, one would conclude that the 3 percent tax rate is lower than the 5 percent rate. In fact, the effective tax rate was actually lower under the 5 percent tax-rate scenario because the rate is applied to a smaller "base."

This is how business taxes often work in North Carolina. While the state's top income tax rates and its corporate income tax rate are relatively high, the effective tax rates are lower. According to the latest data from the US Census Bureau, the only reliable source for making comparisons among states, North Carolina ranks 35th in total taxes as a share of total personal income and 33rd in taxes per capita. Those numbers hardly qualify the Old North State as "high tax."

So the next time you're pondering this issue or discussing it with friends, don't buy into the hype about North Carolina's taxes. Lawmakers returning to Raleigh now face a weaker revenue picture than they have faced in the last few years and several important issues that need to be addressed. One thing they do not need to do is cut taxes on businesses in the name of competing with the two states that rank lower in business taxes.

Elaine Mejia is the director of the N.C. Budget and Tax Center.

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Recipe of the week

SWEET PEAS WITH RADISHES AND SESAME

Recipe by local farmer Elise Margoles and Elysian Farm

- 1/2 lb. sweet peas
- 1 1/2 T sesame seeds
- 1 1/2 T peanut oil
- 2 T dry sherry
- 1/2 cup thin sliced radishes
- 1/4 t sugar
- Hot pepper and salt to taste

Heat sesame seeds until lightly toasted, about two minutes over low heat. Raise heat to high, add sweet peas and cook about 3 minutes. Add sherry, cook another few minutes. Add remaining ingredients and cook just to heat through. Serve immediately.

FLORA FROM PAGE 1

at anything, we ventured into a penstemon field. This particular beard-tongue is *Penstemon laevigatus*, Eastern Beardtongue. Get close enough to peer inside one of those snap-dragon-like flowers and see if you can determine why it's commonly called beardtongue.

The whole field is active with all kinds of bees and butterflies and other pollinating insects. It's safer and easier to view the flowers and those pollinators with binoculars from the trail. I use binoculars for wildflower watching a lot. When the birds are elusive, there is always something of botanical interest to enjoy. The plants don't move about so quickly.

I quizzed Johnny about the increase in the penstemon display this year. He reasoned that a combination of select mowing and prescribed burning (i.e., carefully planned and supervised fire management) simulating some of nature's management techniques are increasing the wildflower displays as well as the natural diversity in the fields. Such management strategies are also effective in controlling unwanted exotic species.

It's nice that we don't have to travel great distances to the coast or mountains to find such beautiful natural displays as we have in our own community. You can easily get a Mason Farm permit from the garden's Totten



PHOTO BY KEN MOORE

Johnny Randall and son Max taking a closer look at beardtongues in Mason Farm Field

Center so you can have access when the security gate is closed. The reserve is open sunup to sundown. Don't miss it this year! For obvious reasons, dogs are not allowed, but certainly do take along some young people. They will help you see a great deal more than you will see on your own.

L&T Briefs

BURRITO BASH

The Pittsboro General Store Café will host a Burrito Bash from 6 to 9 p.m. on Monday, June 9 to benefit ChathamArts and the Chatham Artists Guild. The Shelbys provide live music for dancing. A live auction includes works by local artists. Tickets are \$15 at the door or \$12 if bought early from the ChathamArts Gallery or at Bluebirds and Hol-

lyhocks in Fearington Village. For more information, call 542-0394.

PASTURE POTLUCK

Ayrshire Farm will be the site of a party and potluck on Sunday, June 29. "Potluck in a Pasture," organized by ChathamArts, will bring visitors and their favorite dishes, made with all local ingredients, to the oldest certified organic farm in the state for dining, music and community. Call 219-9840 for details or directions.



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