



**FRIDAY**  
Partly Cloudy  
41/25



**SATURDAY**  
Partly Cloudy  
40/20



**SUNDAY**  
Partly Cloudy  
43/25

# C THE CARRBORO CITIZEN



The Eater looks at fancy dining  
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PHOTO BY KEN MOORE  
A witch's broom lurks in a scrub pine along Estes Drive Extension.

## FLORA BY KEN MOORE

### Spotting witch's brooms

Over the years, I've enjoyed collecting witch's brooms. Well, now, I haven't actually collected them; I've merely spotted them, and revisit them often, quite often, since most obvious ones are along roadsides.

They are like old friends, and I smile inside every time I pass one. My favorite witch's broom is a fine specimen perched midway up a scrub pine, *Pinus virginiana*, along Estes Drive Extension between Chapel Hill and Carrboro.

Just before the holidays, I spotted one midway up a loblolly pine, *Pinus taeda*, along the ramp from Smith Level Road onto the U.S. 15-501 bypass. Can't believe I had never noticed it; guess I've been paying more attention to vehicles on the road — not a bad thing. "Witch's broom spotting" should not become a cell phone-like distraction while driving.

Last week, I spotted another one in a loblolly pine while walking through the pine forest of Carrboro's Adams Tract.

A witch's broom is an abnormal growth in a tree, usually caused by a virus or fungus. The growth is a dense mass of shoots growing from a single point, resembling an old-timey broom or strange-looking bird's nest. There is not a lot of information on what is really going on with this plant-growth curiosity. I suspect there is simply not enough interest or concern for any young botanist to pursue a doctoral study.

I share my witch's broom sightings with botanical garden nursery manager Matt Gocke, who is hoping to propagate some interesting-looking trees from some of the brooms. One way of producing plants with the compact, dwarf characteristics of witch's brooms is to make grafts of the broom branches, or "scions," onto the stems, or "stocks," of normal-growing plants of the same species.

SEE FLORA PAGE 10

## Council seeks more information on library fees

*Carrboro board cool to the idea of contributing funds*

BY BETH MECHUM  
Staff Writer

CHAPEL HILL — With concerns about library funding still front-and-center, members of the Chapel Hill Town Council want a closer look at the various options for charging for the use of the Chapel Hill Public Library along with the possible consequences of such a decision.

Council members Laurin Easthom and Gene Pease petitioned the council for a review of the funding and fee options at Monday night's council meeting at Town Hall.

The council has indicated its support for a proposed expansion of the Chapel Hill Public Library, but members worry about the consequences, including the long-term costs of additional personnel and maintenance, once the \$16 million addition is completed.

Town Manager Roger Stancil has said that the town stands to get a good deal on financing

if it opts to proceed with the project. Bonds for the construction were approved by Chapel Hill voters in 2003.

"We would like to petition the staff to research different funding scenarios for the operational costs of the Chapel Hill Public Library that would involve a fee for use for non-residents of Chapel Hill — i.e., library card fees — if the council elects to not select the current or proposed level of annual Orange County funding," Easthom said.

The county contributes \$250,000 annually to help cover library operating expenses, an amount that hasn't changed since 1995. Library officials estimate that patrons from outside Chapel Hill account for about 40 percent of the library's circulation. The county's share of the funding is equal to about 11 percent of the library's annual budget.

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PHOTO BY AVA BARLOW  
Chapel Hill Public Library employee Jon Hill arranges the magazine shelf at the library.



PHOTO BY KIRK ROSS  
Meghan Rosensweet of The Chocolate Door, which recently opened on West Franklin Street, spent part of Wednesday working on butterscotch, honey and pomegranate truffles in preparation for Valentine's Day.

## Don't you just heart it?

This is supposed to be simple — even educated fleas, for goodness sake.

But it's not. There's a lot of pressure that goes with the holiday of love — some of it self-inflicted, but quite a bit from the obsequiousness of the meme.

Citizen contributor Margot Lester, who is a nationally recognized advice columnist and a bit of an expert in writing about matters of the heart, offered the following on why Valentine's Day gets under our skin:

*If I were cynical, I'd say it was because we don't feel like we do a very good job showing our love the other 364 days, so we try to make up for it on this one day. But I don't really think that's true.*

*Originally, the Valentine religious observance (remember, the dude was a saint) coincided with a pagan fertility ritual. Now, that's something to get excited about. And who's to say the*

*continuation of the species isn't a big deal?*

*But the modern Valentine's Day hullabaloo probably has more to do*

*and — as we got older — all manner of baubles and sexy undergarments.*

*In short, we feel obligated to do something special, to be romantic, to be hooked up at all, because this humble holiday has been turned into a marketing juggernaut.*

If you're looking for a unique way to interface successfully with that juggernaut, you may want to consider swinging by Roulette Vintage Clothing on Friday for its Valentine's Day Fashion Party featuring the looks of local designers Andrea Iacobucci, River Takada-Capel and Sarah McLane as well as vintage valentines and other goodies.

If you're planning to dine out, you may want to check out The Eater's column on page 5.

And tune in to our MILL blog (carrborocitizen.com/MILL) for suggestions on local sweets and treats as well as our picks for wining and dining.

*with business than getting busy. This year, economists expect we'll spend more than \$14 billion on V-Day paraphernalia. I reckon that's in no large part because over the years (when did Valentine's pressure start? Second grade?) we've been told this is a big hairy deal replete with candy, flowers*

Originally, the Valentine religious observance (remember, the dude was a saint) coincided with a pagan fertility ritual.

## Newcomers, familiar faces file for office

BY KIRK ROSS  
Staff Writer

Filing for county offices and state and federal legislative races opened this week with several newcomers joining incumbents in preparations for the May 5 primary and school board election.

This cycle will complete the transition of the Orange County Board of Commissioners to a mix of at-large and district representation.

Two years ago, the board expanded from five to seven members and the first round of district races was held. Incumbents in this cycle had to decide whether to run again as at-large candidates or in the districts in which they reside.

In the primary election, only residents of a district can vote for the candidate from their district. All residents can vote in the at-large primaries. Voters must be registered as either Democrat or Republican to vote in their party's primaries.

Filing in the races opened Monday at noon.

Commissioner Alice Gordon, who has served on the board since 1990, filed to run in the District 1 Democratic primary.

District 1 roughly mirrors the boundaries of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro school district.

In her filing announcement, Gordon stressed her support for schools, environmental advocacy and work on transportation issues. She said she will focus on increasing public transit, improving older schools and supporting sustainable development.

Gordon was joined by Earl McKee, a farmer from Rougemont. "I have been concerned for years about the continued tax increases," McKee said. The county, he said, needs to rein in spending and concentrate on its core services of law enforcement, schools, public health and trash collection.

McKee, who raises crops and cattle and sells hay to local horse farms, said he's spent the past year attending more than 60 commissioner meetings and work sessions in preparation for running. "I really wanted to get an idea of what it was like and what would be required of me," he said.

McKee, a Democrat, filed to run in the District 2 primary.

Also announcing that he would seek re-election this week was three-term incumbent Barry Jacobs, who will run in the at-large Democratic primary.

In his announcement, Jacobs cited his experience as a key strength. The county, he said, faces "an unsettled economic landscape and a period of significant transition within Orange County government."

In addition to improving schools, environmental stewardship and shoring up the social services safety net, Jacobs said he would work to make the county government more cost-effective and customer-friendly.

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### Kinnaird's case for Costco

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## Local Heroes

PHOTO BY JIM FINK

Giuseppe Polcaro, Wilson Fink, Taylor Campbell and Kerry Hagner were Orange County's representatives for the 2010 Special Olympics Alpine Skiing and Snowboarding event for North Carolina in early January. Polcaro participated in the snowboarding competition, earning a gold medal while the others all placed in their skiing heats as well. The state competition takes place at Appalachian Ski Mountain and is accompanied by a banquet for the athletes. Pictured left to right: Taylor Campbell and Giuseppe Polcaro

