



FRIDAY
Partly Cloudy
34/18



SATURDAY
Clear
32/16



SUNDAY
Clear
34/18

C THE CARRBORO CITIZEN

Tar Heel
Temps
Closing
See Page 3



PHOTO BY KEN MOORE
Wayne Poole displays some of his collection of broomstraw brooms.

FLORA BY KEN MOORE

A clean sweep for the new year

Local storyteller Wayne Poole is passionate about brooms. I mean, he is really into showing and talking about old-timey brooms. I can listen for hours to the stories Wayne spins about wild nature and our local culture. A couple of weeks ago, I joined him on a local jaunt to find some materials to make brooms.

Now, Wayne is as opposite in disposition to me as one could imagine. I am fast-paced, easily distracted and boisterous, bordering on the obnoxious. Wayne is quietly centered, easy-going and deliberate in his movements. We have worked very successfully together at Schoolhouse of Wonder, so I know that opposites can move to a single drummer from time to time.

So I had already determined that I was going to experience broom-making at Wayne's speed. It was a truly memorable experience of slowing down to "smell the roses," except the fragrances in this case were the subtle aromas of tawny-colored broomstraw.

Wayne began my introduction to sedge brooms by bringing out his collection of various-sized brooms, some a decade or two old. He explained that over the years of gathering broomstraw, or sedge, as some folks prefer, he noticed that "there's more than one kind of broom out in those fields." I acknowledged that, yes indeed, there are several different species, and he had a keen eye to detect their differences.

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INSIDE

It's time to fix the State Employees Health Plan
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Keep your pipes working in the cold

BY BETH MECHUM
Staff Writer

As the Carrboro-Chapel Hill area buckles in for one of the coldest stretches in recent memory, homeowners and renters have worries beyond their own frozen extremities. Frozen pipes would sure make those necessary hot showers harder to take and those mugs of hot chocolate harder to make.

Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA) offers suggestions on how to make winter water issues easier to handle.

The first objective is to keep pipes from freezing in the first place.

Keeping water moving through cold-water faucets by letting them drip slowly could keep the pipes from bursting. Insulating pipes in unheated areas, such as in an attic or crawl space, also is prudent. Another way to keep those pipes in unheated areas safe is by wrapping them in electrical heating tape.

Terry Sparrow of Sparrow & Sons Plumbing in Carrboro said he's had a flood of calls due to the cold weather. He estimated most problems occur during a long, severe cold event of below 25 degrees for at least four hours.

SEE **PIPES** PAGE 5



Smoking ban clears the air at some establishments while hurting others

BY BETH MECHUM
Staff Writer

The North Carolina smoking ban, which outlaws lighting up in most bars and restaurants, went into effect Jan. 2.

Given North Carolina's ties to tobacco, passage of the law took many by surprise, and could have a significant impact on many businesses. But in Carrboro and surrounding towns, it wasn't a huge step.

Even before the law went into effect, you were more likely to find an establishment in Carrboro that didn't allow smoking than one that did. And some places, like the Orange County Social Club and the Reservoir, chose to prepare their customers early.

Reservoir went smoke-free in November. "We figured we've got to do it in January anyway, might as well do a pre-emptive strike and get everybody prepared," Lyle Collins, a bartender at Reservoir, said.

Collins said he hadn't heard many complaints from patrons, and after the first couple of days



PHOTO BY KIRK ROSS
Garrett Lagan readies another turn at a backgammon game at Hookah Bliss.

with no ash trays and a multitude of "no smoking" signs, people got used to the routine of heading outside to light up.

Keith Allen of Allen & Son Bar-B-Q said his restaurant has been non-smoking for years, though he doesn't necessarily agree with what he considers interference with the rights of smokers.

"[I]f you don't smoke, you don't want someone sitting beside you that does smoke," he said. "But you have a right to leave just like you have a right to smoke. What you have to have is mutual consideration from both sides."

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Kinnaird to seek another term

BY KIRK ROSS
Staff Writer



Saying she wants to see through some of the efforts she began at the start of the last session, state Sen. Ellie Kinnaird announced Wednesday that she will run again for re-election.

"This last term has been a challenge for the state budget, just like it has for families throughout the state, but I have been able to provide the leadership to write and guide legislation benefiting every person in the district and in the state," Kinnaird said in an announcement emailed on Wednesday morning.

Kinnaird, who is serving her seventh term in the Senate, saw her seniority rise over the past couple of months.

Sen. Tony Rand, the powerful majority leader who with Senate President Pro Tem Mark Basnight has led the body for more than two decades, announced last fall he would step down.

Also leaving the Senate are David Hoyle, a conservative Democrat from Gaston County, and R.C. Soles from Columbus County, who faces a criminal investigation.

Hoyle, who has held onto an increasingly Republican district, often sparred with Kinnaird over economic issues. Although the legislature has no formal rules on seniority, during last year's session Kinnaird ranked 11th in overall seniority and eighth among her fellow Democrats. The departures of Hoyle, Rand and Soles moves her three notches up the list.

SEE **KINNAIRD** PAGE 7

Pride, no prejudice, Orange County-style

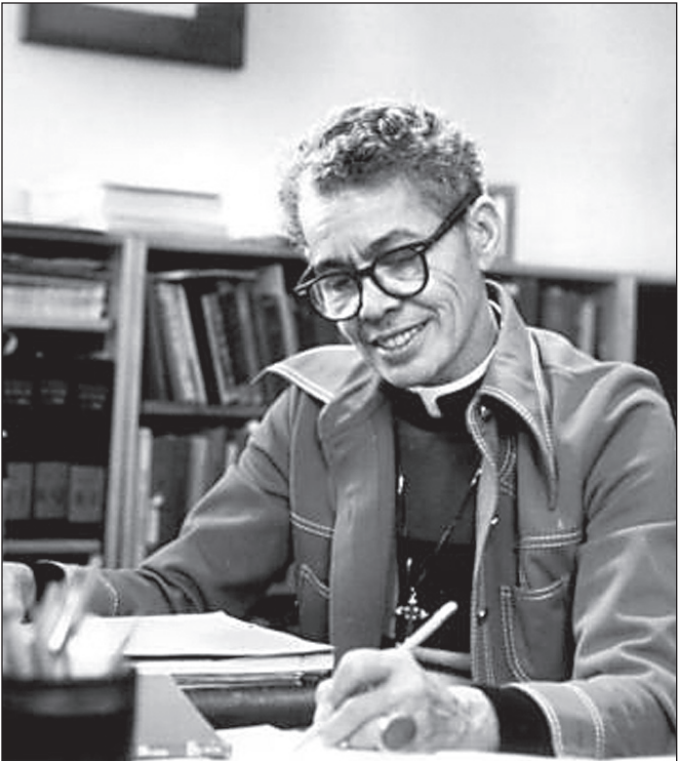
RECENTLY ...
BY VALARIE SCHWARTZ

Pauli Murray didn't spend much time in Orange County. She visited the plantation house on Smith Level Road named after her kin who had been among the largest land- and slave owners in the county; and I expect she visited the family home in Hillsborough, the site of the rapes of her great-grandmother, a slave bought for the Smith daughter.

Murray recounts the story in her third book, *Proud Shoes: The Story of an American Family*, published in 1956.

Mary Ruffin Smith was the eldest of three children. When she turned 18, her father, Dr. James S. Smith, bought her a slave, beautiful 15-year-old Harriet. When Mary's brothers, Francis (a doctor) and Sidney (a lawyer), returned home to Hillsborough after studying in Chapel Hill, they became obsessed with Harriet, even though by then she had married and given birth to a son. Dogging her every move, the brothers snarled at each other and together beat and ran off her husband.

SEE **RECENTLY** PAGE 5



Pauli Murray
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NORTH CAROLINA COLLECTION

Local, national chambers of commerce square off

BY KIRK ROSS
Staff Writer

Anyone can start a chamber of commerce. And as Aaron Nelson, president and CEO of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce, points out, many people have – there are about 30 of them in the Triangle alone.

But it's not a local group that concerns Nelson and others; it's the Washington, D.C.-based U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the biggest chamber of them all and a lobbying behemoth that has gone toe-to-toe with the Obama administration over climate change, health care reform and other issues.

"Lately, [the U.S. chamber] has more often frustrated than pleased us,"

Nelson said in a recent interview.

The Chapel Hill-Carrboro chamber is a dues-paying member of the U.S. chamber, a long-running relationship that Nelson says allows access to the national chamber's professional development programs. He emphasized that those dues do not go to support the lobbying and policy programs of the national group.

Tita Freeman, the U.S. chamber's vice president of communication, said she couldn't confirm that's the case. It would depend, she said, on whether the dues go directly to the professional development foundation.

Although not familiar with the specifics of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro chamber's concerns, Freeman said they are similar to those of other

chambers around the country that have objected to some of the organization's stands.

Chambers in San Francisco and Seattle recently distanced themselves from the national chamber, and several companies, including Apple and Pacific Gas and Electric, withdrew their membership over a dispute over the chamber's stand on greenhouse gas emissions.

"The chamber works on hundreds of issues," Freeman said. "We're never going to have 100 percent of our members agreeing on everything."

The U.S. chamber works through consensus, she said, and any member organization is welcome to weigh in on the issues. The U.S. chamber, she said, also has been targeted by groups such as Moveon.org.

"There's a lot of misinformation out there about our positions," Freeman said. She said the organization supports controlling greenhouse emissions but not through the means spelled out recently in legislation passed by the U.S. House of Representatives.

Nelson said concerns about the relationship between the two chambers were raised two years ago after the U.S. chamber sponsored robo-calls in this area in support of the candidacy of Republican Elizabeth Dole in her race for U.S. Senate against Democrat Kay Hagan. Hagan won heavily Democratic Orange County with 70 percent of the vote. The robo-calls prompted a slew of email complaints to the local chamber.

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