




This Weekend



Friday
Rain
37/35



Saturday
50% Chance
of Precipitation
47/35



Sunday
Partly Cloudy
45/42

THE CARRBORO CITIZEN

Schools

Culbreth
Honor Rolls



PHOTO BY KEN MOORE
Pendulous male catkins of American Hazelnut

Hazelnuts and wind

FLORA

By Ken Moore

Be on the lookout for a multi-stemmed shrub that appears to be decorated with pendulous, 4-to-6-inch strips of yellow yarn. If you examine these streamers closely, gently tap several of them. You’ll be surprised by the clouds of pollen. The streamers are staminate catkins, which are pendulous clusters of petalless male flowers providing pollen for the much-less-obvious petal-less female flowers.

The challenge of this botany lesson is to find the female flowers. You’ll have to look closely to find tiny swollen buds with clusters of rosy red threads protruding from the bud tips. These short red threads are the stigmas of the hidden female flowers. The exposed stigmas catch the passing pollen that is required for those flowers to produce hazelnuts.

Yep, you’ve guessed it, that shrub is American Hazelnut, *Corylus Americana*, and yes, they are quite tasty, but the wild critters usually beat us to the feast. We must rely on the orchards of Eurasian hazelnut species for the tasty nuts we purchase in stores.

Hazelnut is a common large woodland shrub in our forests, but it is most noticeable growing along woodland edges and sewer and power-line rights-of-way where the additional sunlight promotes heavy flower and nut production.

Another common shrub, similar in appearance to the hazelnut, is Tag Alder, *Alnus serrulata*. You will commonly find it along stream banks and pond edges. It likes to have its feet in the water. Tag Alder catkins are not quite as long as those of hazelnuts. The easiest way to distinguish between the two shrubs

SEE **FLORA** PAGE 10

Transfer tax OK’d for May ballot

by Susan Dickson
Staff Writer

The Board of County Commissioners voted unanimously on Tuesday to put a land transfer tax on the May ballot.

Voters will decide whether property sellers will pay a 0.4 percent land transfer tax. If the measure passes, the county could begin collecting funds during the 2008-09 fiscal year.

In this year’s state budget, the Legislature gave counties the option of a 0.4 percent land transfer tax or a quarter-cent sales tax increase to help compensate for

money taken away from counties in a deal to turn responsibility for paying Medicaid over to the state.

As a result of the budget deal, counties lost state-supplied school construction money this year and will lose some sales tax revenue in coming years.

According to county budget director Donna Coffey, the land transfer tax would yield a little more than \$4 million in annual revenue, while the sales tax increase would yield just over \$3 million.

Commissioners said they preferred the land transfer tax

to the sales tax because of the regressive nature of a sales tax.

“I certainly think there are pros and cons in terms of impact, regardless of which one of these new taxes that we pursue, and there’s no way that we can completely insulate all of the people we care about in this county from this tax,” Commissioner Moses Carey said.

“While a lot of people think that sales tax is fairer, and that it’s going to touch everyone, and everyone is going to pay, I think that asking people to pay every day from current income, when they have no current income or



when they have no increase in income ... is a bit much.”

Realtors have come out against the land transfer tax, saying it unfairly burdens a small population during a slow real estate market. Several

county residents spoke against the land transfer tax, holding signs and wearing buttons opposing it.

SEE **TAX** PAGE 7



PHOTO BY ISAAC SANDLIN
Carrboro Elementary School students Will Atkinson, Caroline Baker and Rick Davis dance at a ‘50s sock hop to celebrate the school’s 50th anniversary. See our story on Page 8.

FEMA grant to help with fire department growth

by Kirk Ross
Staff Writer

Carrboro is not quite midway through an effort to add 15 firefighters, a move necessary to fully staff its new northern fire station. It’s been a costly effort and six new positions added in the past two years constituted a major portion of the town’s personnel cost increases.

This year, that effort continues, but thanks to a \$314,262 SAFER grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency the cost to the town of bringing on the next batch of hires will drop. For

the first year, the grant will pick up 90 percent of the cost of hiring three new firefighters.

The town received official notice last Friday of the grant, which it had applied for in the past but never won, said Carrboro Fire Chief Travis Crabtree. With the opening of the new station and the need to hire and train new personnel, the town had a strong case.

The grant extends over four years and will help the department spread out the cost of building up the staff. The department is anticipating moving a combination of experienced and

newer officers and drivers to the Homestead Road station late in 2009. Before being assigned a shift, new firefighters must be trained in emergency medical care, rescue, fire prevention and fire suppression.

With six firefighters of the 15 required already hired, the chief said the town’s lone fire station is starting to get crowded. “It’s getting kind of tight. We put in new lockers already. We planned ahead,” Crabtree said, “but there’s not enough room at the kitchen table.”

SEE **GRANT** PAGE 10

Get your tickets for the Community Dinner

by Susan Dickson
Staff Writer

On March 2, nearly 600 people from Orange County are expected to gather for the 11th annual Community Dinner.

The event – which was started in 1998 as a celebration of Black History Month – draws county residents young and old, black and white and rich and poor.

“What we’re hoping to do is really to eradicate the lines in the sand that divide our community,” said Nerys Levy, one of the founders of the event and chair of the Community Dinner Committee. “It’s an inclusive event across the board.”

Levy started the event with the help of the Carrboro Branch Library, the Cultural Arts Group and Mildred Council.

Council – more commonly known as Mama Dip – has always prepared the main dishes for the event.

“Over the past few years, we’ve incorporated more main-dish cooks,” said Community Dinner Committee member Jackie Helvey.

This year, main courses will be provided by Mama Dip’s, Bon’s Home

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Judicial race is now a three-way contest

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Give me two a’s with an e on the end

RECENTLY . . .

By Valarie Schwartz

Besides the story of how they met, my favorite story about my parents is the one where they named me while sitting on the pale yellow “glider” that now sits on my front porch. During a visit in 2002, my mother told my partner, John, and I the story while we repainted the bench (the glider part disappeared years ago).

Mama was two weeks away from delivering me on July 22, 1953, when my father came home from work and found her sitting on the glider in the backyard of their home in Dallas, Texas. She had just finished reading the Dallas Times Herald, an afternoon daily, which had a front-page story about golf legend Ben Hogan of Ft. Worth, who, with his wife, “Valarie,” had been treated to a ticker-tape parade upon arrival in New

York City after he had won the British Open. It was the only time the Texas native would play in that venerable tournament, but it was the third major that he had won that year, creating the Hogan-Slam, because nobody else had ever won three majors in a year (nor would anyone again until Tiger Woods in 2000).

Hogan’s triumph was even more dramatic given that he had almost died in a car accident on Feb. 1, 1949, when, returning home to Ft. Worth, his car collided head-on into a bus on a desert road 110 miles west of El Paso. His life was saved when he flung his body across the seat to protect his beloved wife, who, even after he had gone broke twice while trying to make a golf career, had been the one who believed that the quiet, small-framed, south-pawed Hogan could be successful.

She was unharmed.

Ben survived because he had dived — the steering column had stabbed through the driver’s seat — but he suffered injuries that had doctors telling him at age 37 that he’d never walk again, much less golf competitively.

Eleven months later he came in second in a tournament and five months after that, won the U.S. Open.

After reading about the Hogans, Mama decided that if this third child was a girl, she wanted to name her Valarie, and spell it the same way as Mrs. Hogan — with two a’s.

When Daddy sat down next to her on the glider, she offered up the name, which he liked, saying that “Kay” would sound nice as a middle name.

On Aug. 5, I was born and named Valarie Kay Wise.

SEE **RECENTLY** PAGE 4