

CHATHAM
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passed declining participation in the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) 287(g) program. The program is formally called the Agreements of Cooperation in Communities to Enhance Safety and Security (ICE AC-CESS) and provides money to local law-enforcement agencies to help identify illegal immigrants and process them for deportation.

The commissioners' resolution is nonbinding — Sheriff Richard Webster could still choose to participate. He's remained quiet on the issue. But the county isn't presently qualified to participate in 287(g). It would first require a larger jail.

If Monday night's commissioners' meeting is the measure, the majority of Chatham County residents supports the resolution against participation, and applauds the commissioners' courage in passing it. Of the 35 or so citizens who spoke, four were in opposition to the resolution (two spoke on other issues). In the course of these comments, the words of Shakespeare, Twain, Lincoln, Jesus, God, Shirley Chisholm and an anonymous radio comedian were invoked. Words from the inscription on the Statue of Liberty ("Give me your tired, your poor/Your huddled masses ...") were twice spoken. Speakers on both sides of the issue were articulate and almost unfailingly polite.

As Pittsboro resident Pam Cash-Roper described her opposition — questioning whether there had been reports from Latinos of abuse by local law enforcement and whether families had been separated by 287(g) — several voices from the gallery responded that yes, in fact, there had been. Cash-Roper paused in her comments, requested that she be allowed to say her piece; commission chair George Lucier asked for order and no further outbursts ensued.

Cash-Roper — a lifelong Republican who spoke at the Democratic National Convention, telling of the crippling medical costs she and her husband have encountered, then enthusiastically endorsing Barack Obama — said that while she opposed 287(g), she also opposed the resolution.

"If we do not even qualify for 287(g), then why do we have this resolution?" she asked.

Cash-Roper said that comprehensive immigration reform is what is needed, "not

a resolution that divides this county." She said that she believed more citizens should have been allowed to provide input before the resolution was passed.

Hate mail

A larger contingent of those who oppose the resolution had been expected at Monday night's meeting. Commissioners had reported receiving hate mail.

According to an email sent out by Esther Coleman, director of the county's Human Relations Commission: "I have very good reason to believe that several groups identified by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) as hate groups

sure, that population will almost certainly continue to grow, and, under current immigration policy, not all will arrive legally.

"When your bellies are growling and your children are crying," said Tim Keim of Pittsboro, "a line on a map means nothing."

Paul Cuadros is a professor of journalism at UNC and author of the book *A Home on the Field: How One Championship Team Inspires Hope for the Revival of Small Town America* about his experience coaching Jordan-Matthews High School's Latino men's soccer team to a state championship. He called upon students and graduates of the high school in the audience to stand.

These included a young man who's a Morehead-Cain Scholarship finalist and a young woman at North Carolina A&T who plans to become an FBI agent.

"This is the future of our county," said Cuadros.

"I'm so proud of Chatham County and so proud of the people gathered here tonight," Phillips said. "Ms. Roper," he added, turning to Cash-Roper, who'd spoken against the resolution, "I'm proud of you too — proud of your strength and your openness."

After all speakers had been heard, Lucier read a list of nine reasons the commission had adopted the resolution, first among them being that since joining would require a new jail, participation would be costly.

"We'd rather build schools than jails," Lucier said.

Additional reasons cited by Lucier were that joining would take resources away from other anti-crime measures that have proved effective, such as anti-gang programs; that evidence suggests that participation increases the incidence of racial profiling; and that the county must "honor" its diversity.

Phillips later called Lucier's comments — which were read on behalf of all commissioners — "a very brave statement."

In a Tuesday interview, Lucier reinforced the role that the encouragement of diversity played in the commission's decision: "It's important to embrace that diversity and not be afraid of it. One reason why we passed this resolution was to reflect this reality."

Gary Phillips recalls that day in 2006 when the invisible became visible:

"Now I see more and more people [in Chatham County] becoming more visible."

*"We'd rather
build schools
than jails,"*

— George Lucier
Commision Chair

are fueling some of the communications that the Commissioners are receiving."

In response, emails were circulating across Chatham County in the days leading up to the meeting, calling on those who support the resolution to turn out in numbers.

They did. The resonance of applause for the more passionate speakers confirmed a clearly pro-resolution crowd.

Several speakers had arrived with statistics to back their claims.

Marty Rosenbluth of the Durham-based Southern Coalition for Social Justice said that 287(g) fails to do what it purports to do: apprehend and deport felons. According to Rosenbluth's comments, and information posted on the coalition's website, between January and September 2008 some 3,000 people went through removal proceedings. Of those, 56 percent were charged with vehicle violations.

Del Turner of Gulf said that ICE was appropriately named for its "cold treatment" of immigrants.

ICE, which is an agency of the Department of Homeland Security, has "itself assumed the role of a terrorist organization," Turner said, in that it targets immigrants and breaks apart families.

Implicit in the comments of many was recognition of the inevitable. Chatham County today has one of the largest Latino populations in the state. Despite any mea-

and she wanted to know everyone, too," he said. "She made the world a better place, and so when she died ... everyone sort of decided that we need to up our game. We need to do something to make up for the huge hole that is left by her passing."

While at UNC as an undergraduate, Desai was a member of the Clef Hangers, a popular all-male a cappella group. Clef Hanger members and alumni, as well as other UNC students, have started Facebook groups

and organized Idol watching parties in support of Desai.

Scott Morgan, a Clef Hanger alumnus, said when he first saw Desai perform as a freshman, he immediately noticed his "natural stage presence and amazing solo voice."

"The cool thing is that you could see the impact he had on the group," Morgan said. "Sort of like a rising tide lifts all boats type of thing.... It seemed like the whole group got a bit better when he was out front."

RECENTLY
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The \$12-million project far exceeds imaginings held by Coker or Bell, but like them White and the current staff continue the search for dream-supporting money.

"It is a privately fund-raised building," White said. "There are no public dollars in this building. We've raised \$10 million and we're looking for the last \$2 million."

Naming opportunities that help create a legacy are one of the ways money is raised and, "We have some really neat spaces to inspire donors," White said.

The 29,696-square-foot Education Center includes three buildings connected by breezeways — the classroom building, public service building and (the only named building thus far) Reeves Auditorium, where one can visualize many enchanting gatherings in coming years. Tables and cabinets from the renovation of the chancellor's house will be brought in but more money is required for furniture



PHOTO BY VALARIE SCHWARTZ
Ken Moore (center), the first employee of the N.C. Botanical Garden rests his hands on the two men who served as his boss while shouldering the responsibilities of director, Dr. Peter White and his predecessor, Dr. Ritchie Bell.

and landscaping, which will take years to properly cultivate — with native plants of course.

Economically speaking, the path is thorny.

"Our major gifts are down," said Charlotte Jones-Roe, associate director for development. "The number of large gifts dropped precipitously a year ago. The world has changed."

Even if your gift won't support

the naming of a room, a green elevator or a cistern, any measure of giving will help toward realizing this goal. And who knows — maybe you'll make it into the next chapter of history!

Learn more at ncbg.unc.edu.

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ANOOP
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Results were announced as *The Citizen* went to press Wednesday night; check carrborocitizen.com for results.

In an "American Idol" interview, Desai explained how the death of a friend — Eve Carson — encouraged him to pursue his dreams.

"She was one of those people that everyone wanted to know,

Rites of Spring
A GARDEN TAB

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