



FRIDAY
60% Chance of Rain
67/49

SATURDAY
60% Chance of Rain
52/36

SUNDAY
40% Chance of Rain
45/27

C THE CARRBORO CITIZEN



PHOTO BY KEN MOORE

The dimpled trout lilies are visible for a very few weeks.

FLORA BY KEN MOORE

Springtime panic

It's here again, that time I year I dread most: springtime! Terra cotta tints of elm trees and red hues of red maples announced the arrival of spring weeks ago. The tiny flowers of these native trees depend on wind currents for pollination because it's too cold for flying insects to be effective. Bolin Creek walker Dave Otto reported seeing trout lilies in flower on Valentine's Day. Some folks call them dog-toothed violets, adder's tongues or fawn lilies. Taking "a closer look" will give you some hints about these common names. For me, the onslaught of springtime is symbolized by the first appearance of the speckled-patterned leaves of the trout lily, and every year that sends me into a panic. During the springtime, too much happens too quickly. I can't keep up with it all! I remember past years when I allowed myself to seem too busy to get out along the forest trails to catch the trout lilies. Within just a few short weeks, those beautiful little wildflowers were gone for another whole year; I had missed them again! Being natural opportunists, some of our woodland plants emerge in the late winter to take advantage of the sunlight before the leafy canopy shades the forest floor. They grow, flower, make seed and return to dormancy in just a few short weeks. This year, I'm going to make certain that I catch the trout lilies. They are really special, and perhaps one of the most frequently photographed of all wildflowers. Consider William Blake's "To see a world in a grain of sand/And a heaven in a wildflower/Hold infinity in the palm of your hand/And eternity in an hour" when you behold a trout lily. You may have to practice some "belly botany" by lying on the ground to peer up into a trout lily flower to get a really good look.

SEE **FLORA** PAGE 8

Residents question connector road policy

BY SUSAN DICKSON
Staff Writer

CARRBORO — After hours of public comment regarding connector roads for two proposed developments, the Carrboro Board of Aldermen voted on Tuesday to postpone decisions on both Claremont Phases IV and V and Colleton Crossing. The plans for Claremont Phases IV and V, across Homestead Road from the development's first three phases, include 27 townhomes and 69 single-family homes. In accordance with the town's Connector Roads Policy, the development would connect to Wexford via Colfax Drive, providing access from

Homestead Road to Hillsborough Road. However, residents have argued that the policy mandates connector roads between new developments and neighborhoods that then bring increased traffic to roads that aren't designed to handle it. The board of aldermen approved the Connector Roads Policy in 1986 as development was initiated in the northern areas of town. The policy seeks "to ensure that old and new developments and businesses in town connect to each other, both to disperse newly generated traffic and to give a sense of connectivity and unity to the town as it grew."

According to the developer, Parker Louis, the development is expected to generate 58 vehicle trips per day through the Colfax Drive connection. While several residents spoke in favor of the connection from Wexford to Claremont IV and V, the majority of speakers opposed the connection. Scott Christie, president of the Williams Woods Homeowners' Association, spoke on behalf of the presidents of the Wexford, Cates Farm and Cobblestone homeowners' associations in opposition to the proposed connector road. "This plan will not disperse traf-

fic, but instead focus and funnel it through narrow streets never intended to carry a high volume of traffic," he said. "The only way unity will be created is to allow pedestrian traffic like cyclists [and] joggers, which we do support." Mortimer Alzoma, president of the Wexford Homeowners' Association, encouraged board members to walk through the neighborhoods to get a feel for the traffic. "More cars will be a problem," he said. "It will be a tragic problem for some unsuspecting kid, and it will destroy a parent."

SEE **ALDERMEN** PAGE 3

Revaluations squeeze home, business owners

BY RICH FOWLER AND
MARGOT C. LESTER
Staff Writers

It wasn't that long ago that seeing a rise in your property value indicated a good return on investment. But the challenging economy has turned that mentality on its head. "In our normal circumstances, people would be happy to see the value of their house go up," said Mark Zimmerman, owner of Re/Max Winning Edge in Chapel Hill. But almost as soon as Orange County's quadrennial property tax revaluations began arriving in the mail, there's been an ironic hue and cry from property owners who've seen their values rise dramatically. "It's an odd situation for people to say, 'Please say that my wealth hasn't increased as much as you say it has,' and that's because there's out-of-pocket consequences to it," he said. Those consequences arose primarily from two aspects of the revaluation process that produced some questionable results. First, sufficient market data was lacking for some areas that saw few or no sales during the revaluation period. In these cases, the assessment team uses a set of tables and formulas to make the valuation. The bulk of this year's issues occurred because the revaluations began two years ago, when the real estate market was up and property of all types was selling at high prices. Last August, be-



PHOTO BY AVA BARLOW

Marc Pons, president of Chapel Hill Tire Company, is appealing the tax assessment, which was raised this year by more than 80%, for his West Franklin Street location. "It's bad timing," he said. "I'm trying to deal with this economy that's in recession, and now this."

fore the local housing market really tanked, the average Orange County home sale price was \$344,000. By January of this year, it had plunged to \$291,000. Commercial property values also dropped over that period. And there's the rub: Many properties

are now valued far higher than the market — and owners' stretched wallets — will bear. That leaves many owners wondering if their revaluations are accurate. "My concern is that they're hitting the valuations at the peak of the market," says Marc Pons, owner of Chapel Hill Tire. The value of all three of his service

locations increased, some dramatically. "At this point, nobody knows what's going to happen. Everybody's suffering right now. It just doesn't seem like this is the right time to be doing it."

SEE **REVALUATIONS** PAGE 2

University chooses first Eve Carson Scholar

BY JASMINA NOGO
Staff Writer

Despite her busy schedule of endless campus meetings, late nights studying and early mornings of trail restoration, Elinor Benami has a calm and patient disposition and makes those around her feel like there's nowhere else in the world she'd rather be. "Even though I know she's one of the busiest and most active students on campus, she always has time to stop and talk, to ask how your day was, and she never rushes," said junior Bryce Koukopoulos, who knows Benami through UNC's student sustainability organization, FLO Food. As an outstanding student and an exemplary campus leader, Benami, a junior from Knoxville, Tenn., was named the first Eve Marie Carson Scholar for her dedication to environmental issues. The scholarship will fund a summer experience after her junior year as well as financial aid for her senior year. "I'm both incredibly honored and humbled to have been selected for the scholarship," Benami said. "And though I'd like to say I enjoy a good challenge, to be a very direct part of Eve's legacy is also quite a set of shoes to fill. "Being named the first Carson scholar is certainly a great privilege, and, as such, is also a great responsibility for me to uphold in service to the rest of the Carolina community and beyond." The Eve Marie Carson Scholarship Executive Committee, composed entirely of students, designed the scholarship program in honor of slain student body president Eve Carson to reward ambitious students who have shown strong involvement in a leadership role



PHOTO BY JASMINA NOGO

Elinor Benami

at Carolina. A separate selection committee of students and faculty chose Benami from among 138 qualified applicants. "Elinor was chosen for her breadth and depth of her passion," said senior Andy Woods, director of the scholarship's executive committee. "She has done a ton of work with the environment and she has demonstrated a commitment to leadership and service while still pursuing her passions," he said.

Benami is double-majoring in international studies and economics and plans to pursue a career that will allow her to use a diverse set of skills, she said. She is interested in service careers and research in sustainability policy. "I like interdisciplinary projects that allow the use of multidimensional skills," she said. She is currently co-chair of the Student Government Environmental Affairs Committee, which collaborates with students and faculty to promote key environmental principles, encourage sustainable lifestyles and facilitate cooperation between student environmental groups and the university. "It's been a long and evolutionary process," she said of her passion for environmental issues. "A lot of different things have begun and sustained my interest in environmental justice." She said it started with a love for food and quickly evolved into all of the issues concerning where our food comes from and how it's treated. "It has become a social justice issue for me more recently," Benami said. "One of the biggest roles we have is to connect sustainability groups on campus," she said of the Environmental Affairs Committee. The committee focuses on tangible projects as well as leadership development. Benami said she will step down from her position next year because she wants to leave room for other great leaders. She is currently exploring several options for the summer project that the scholarship funds. One of these is to work for a center in southeastern Israel that deals with local sustainability issues. "The undergirding philosophy appeals to me. No matter what the political situation is, we should still care about our earth," she said.

Another project she is considering is working with a scientific research group called Bridging the Rift on the border of Israel and Jordan that documents local biological species in an effort to develop scientific collaborations between scholars from the two nations. "Another way to look at research could be as a way to create new solutions," she said. She said she's particularly attracted to going to this part of the world because her father grew up in Israel. "It helps provide a sense of rootedness," she said of knowing where her family comes from. "It's a really important issue that I haven't addressed in my life," she said. Benami also is interning for the N.C. Botanical Garden in Battle Park on campus, doing trail maintenance, tours and other projects. "I love being there," she said. "There's so much campus history and an element of retreat and restoration." When asked how many hours of sleep she gets on average per night, she laughed and said anywhere between four and seven. She said she doesn't hesitate to take time out of sleep if it means knowing that she's done as much as she can. "To know I've spent my day doing something useful for other people is what matters," she said. And if that means long nights of committee meetings and early mornings of trail maintenance, she's eager to do it. UNC will hold a ceremony to remember Carson on March 5, the one-year anniversary of her death. The ceremony will be held at 4 p.m. in The Pit on campus, with music starting at 3:45 p.m.

INSIDE

Culbreth and Smith Honor Rolls page 5

INDEX

Community	2
News	3
Schools	5
Opinion	6
Classifieds	7
Almanac	8