

## FOR THE RECORD

## A note from the editor

Saying goodbye to Rebecca Clark will not be easy. She was a larger than life figure, determined and sharp, with an infectious smile to the end of her days. The last time I spoke to her was on Nov. 5, the day after the election of the first black president. I asked her how Wednesday was treating her. Her reply, "Best day I've had in a long time," became the headline for our lead story. She felt good. She should have. She earned it.

Even at 93, she was registering people and making sure they voted. She was thrilled to see so many young people get involved this time around, and she recalled a particularly poignant moment registering a man who'd been convicted of a felony many years back and, though he served his time, thought he could no longer vote. Ms. Clark, as nearly everyone called her, understood that connection between the personal and the political, and she was a force at both levels.

My guess is that another best day would have come in a couple of weeks, when the new president puts his hand on a bible last used by Abraham Lincoln and takes the oath of office. It would have been a fine thing to listen to how her day went.

As people gather to remember Ms. Clark, we're sure to hear more about this extraordinary woman's life in the days ahead.

Following are a few comments we've collected so far:

*"Rebecca Clark was a friend and mentor over many years. I admired tremendously ... her personal strength and her persistence in using the political process to mobilize the community and advance the cause of social justice. I and many others will continue to be inspired and challenged by her memory."*

—U.S. REP. DAVID PRICE

*"No doubt about it, she was a pillar of our community, not only in terms of her involvement, but she was very compassionate for all people in the community. She was never too big in terms of image to greet the smallest people."*

—FRED BATTLE  
Former president,  
Chapel Hill-Carrboro Branch of the NAACP

*"I admired her. She was an amazing woman and did the kind of things I can only aspire to do and hope to do."*

—DELORES BAILEY  
Community organizer, director of Empowerment, Inc.

*"[Her death] will be a real loss to this community. We will miss her energy, her caring and her concern for the people in this community."*

—MOSES CAREY  
Chairman, Employment Security Commission  
of North Carolina

*"Rebecca Clark was one of the giants of our community. She led the fight for fair governmental treatment and justice for all. Her work led to dramatic changes both locally and in the larger society. We have few of those giants in our midst anymore, and Rebecca will be greatly missed."*

—ELLIE KINNAIRD  
State Senator

Please check out website  
for more updates  
and condolences.

THE CARRBORO  
CITIZEN

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## Projects could harm Bolin efforts

SHARON COOK

The Carrboro Board of Aldermen will soon be voting on a project that could negate countless hours of work by the Friends of Bolin Creek, along with wasting thousands of dollars of Carrboro taxpayer money that has already been spent on staff hours used to help identify conservation areas in the Upper Bolin Creek Watershed.

In addition to the 1,000-acre Carolina North site bequeathed to UNC, about 62 acres north of Homestead Road and traversed diagonally by Bolin Creek were given to the University by Horace Williams. The tract is surrounded on all sides by developed or soon-to-be developed neighborhoods, including Lake Hogan Farms, Winmore, Camden, Highlands, Fox Meadow and Colleton Crossing, which together will support over 1,500 homes.

The university plans to build 166 faculty and staff homes on about 40 acres in the southwest portion of the parcel on the west side of Bolin Creek adjacent to Lake Hogan Farms and Winmore. Providing affordable housing for entry-level faculty and staff is a good thing. But why are we building it just far enough from the main Carolina North campus to assure that the new residents will be dependent upon vehicle transportation? With a thousand acres available on the main Carolina North campus, why aren't we building the initial staff and faculty homes there, where residents will be able to walk to work, shops and schools, and have convenient access to reliable public transit?

If approved as recommended by Carrboro town planners, the project will cost taxpayers hundreds of thousands of additional dollars by forcing UNC to

build a road on the east side of Bolin Creek that the university has repeatedly stated it does not want to build. That road will literally pave the way for the Colleton Crossing developers to double their density. In doing so, the Carrboro plan will destroy one of the last remaining old-growth natural preserves along our community's Bolin Creek corridor north of Homestead Road. UNC would like to preserve as much of the natural area along Bolin Creek as possible while maximizing pedestrian and bicycle access.

The Bolin Creek corridor north of Homestead provides safe, walkable access to the creek from multiple neighborhoods, much like the access to Bolin Creek from Carrboro neighborhoods near Pathway Drive. It's an area that the Friends of Bolin Creek have worked tirelessly for years to preserve for future generations. Will the same board of aldermen who spent over a million dollars to purchase and improve the Adams tract in central Carrboro now spend at least that much local and state taxpayer money on unwanted road connections and improvements only to destroy a similar natural preserve in northern Carrboro?

The public hearing continues on Tuesday, Jan. 27 at 7:30 p.m. in Carrboro Town Hall. If you care about stopping wasteful government spending at the local level, preserving the Bolin Creek corridor and maintaining pedestrian and bike-friendly connections throughout Carrboro, please let your elected leaders know via the town clerk at townclerk@ci.carrboro.nc.us.

Sharon Cook is a resident of the Highlands neighborhood in northern Carrboro.

*The Bolin Creek corridor provides safe, walkable access to the creek from multiple neighborhoods*

## LETTERS

## Story needed facts

I am very distressed about the portrayal of some of the events at Carrboro High School outlined in your piece "A hard year for the schools." Although Mr. Thomas was ousted from Carrboro High School, it shouldn't be overlooked that Mr. Thomas worked diligently for Carrboro High. While there were areas in which Mr. Thomas needed to amend in order to build a more cohesive and positive environment, I know he was willing to make those changes. Unfortunately, he wasn't given the opportunity to learn from those mistakes and to develop a new set of skills.

However, we should not dismiss the staggering amount of time and effort Mr. Thomas dedicated to the school.

Secondly, in your summary about "Racial slurs used at CHS" there was a glossing over of an essential fact surrounding this event. There is no doubt that racism and racist language is repugnant and debasing. However, the act of violence that occurred subsequently has been dismissed, even lauded as an appropriate act of retaliation.

Neither act of aggression should be tolerated and to continue to only point out only one side of a wrong serves to deepen the divide in our society.

M. L. E. ARANT  
Chapel Hill

## Lab expansion wrong

UNC is expanding its animal research labs and storage facilities. This is as backwards as ignoring solar energy to build more coal-burning power plants, since medical advances have rendered most animal research outdated. In 2008 *Medical News Today* reported advancements in human

brain imaging were proving better at devising pain management for conditions like osteoarthritis than decades of animal research. Cancer research projects using complex 3D human cell cultures and mathematical modeling are also proving superior to animal experiments. In 2008 CNN Health ran the headline "Scientist: Stem cells could end animal testing," citing the superiority of human stem cell research to animal research. Using human cell tissue to develop

but wasn't used until 1939 because its failure to cure infected rabbits had convinced researchers it was worthless. There are hundreds of similar examples.

So UNC's expansion of its animal research and storage facilities gives us the following: outdated medical research; needless animal suffering (ever wonder why there's not more discussion on this?); air pollution from incinerators used to burn the dead bodies of hundreds of animals; and potential harm to our environment and possibly humans due to the spraying of the treated (but not treated to drinking level safety) animal research waste water into our forests.

Why does our government continue doling out grants (your tax dollars) for outdated animal research? The Medical Research Modernization Committee has suggested part of the problem is resistance to change (like we've seen in the energy sector). But maybe a bigger question is why aren't local activist groups devising a plan of action to lobby legislators in Raleigh on this issue?

ROBIN CUTSON  
Chapel Hill

*Why does our government continue doling out grants (your tax dollars) for outdated animal research?*

vaccines is also considered safer than using animals, since undetected animal viruses may jump the species barrier (think SARS). In 2007 the US National Academy of Sciences recommended less reliance on animals in toxicology studies and more focus on in vitro methods using cells "preferably of human origin" in order to generate "more relevant data." In 2004 the *British Medical Journal* published an article [titled] "Where is the evidence that animal research benefits humans?," stating animal research had inherent flaws and that funding for animal research was holding back clinical research and medical innovations.

The fact is, animal research doesn't carry over well to humans. For example, the arthritis drug Vioxx tested safe and even beneficial to the heart in animal tests but was pulled from the market after causing an estimated 320,000 cases of heart attacks and strokes in humans. And sometimes it goes the other way. For example, penicillin was discovered in 1929

## Not so much change yet

CHRIS FITZSIMON

The economy was center stage in Raleigh Monday, as Governor-elect Beverly Perdue announced the appointment of what she called her economic team and addressed state business leaders at the annual Economic Forecast Forum held by the North Carolina Chamber and the North Carolina Bankers Association.

Perdue's remarks come as statistics from the court system show that there were 53,995 foreclosure filings in the state in 2008, up from 2007's all-time high of 49,695. Perdue told the crowd that she was lobbying hard for the state's share of a federal stimulus package and said the \$700 million worth of building projects the Council of State will approve Tuesday morning will create 23,000 jobs.

She promised to "root out redundancy" as she tries to balance the state budget, which faces a shortfall of \$3 billion next year. Conspicuously absent from her remarks were any specifics about how she plans to do that, though she did pledge to consider targeted tax breaks for business.

That won't help the shortfall and goes further in the wrong direction than her earlier statements that seemed to rule out any tax increase, meaning she apparently supports cutting state spending as much as 15 percent at a time when more people need state services to survive.

Perdue wants to transform state government into a "well-tuned machine." It is the year of change, after all, though you wouldn't know it by her cabinet appointments, many of whom are longtime Raleigh insiders.

One bright spot was Perdue's announcement that she would sign an executive order Monday to begin to transform the State Board of Transportation into an advisory board instead of one that makes decisions about highway projects. Board seats have traditionally been awarded to political donors and fundraisers, leading to inevitable scandals and ethical lapses.

Perdue appointed Gene Conti as the new DOT secretary. Conti has worked at the department and the U.S. Department of Transportation, and his appointment marks a welcome change from the backgrounds of previous DOT chiefs. Most have been major political donors and fundraisers, and Perdue picked Conti over prominent Democratic moneyman Lanny Wilson, who was the choice of Senate President Pro Tem Marc Basnight.

The rest of Perdue's economic-development team announced Monday is Randolph County textile executive Keith Crisco as secretary of Commerce, Greensboro businesswoman Linda Carlisle as secretary of Cultural Resources and Orange County health care administrator Moses Carey as head of the Employment Security Commission.

Last week, Perdue appointed Reuben Young, currently counsel to Gov. Mike Easley, as secretary of Crime Control and Public Safety and Linda Hayes, chair of the Governor's Crime Commission, as secretary of Juvenile Justice. She also appointed former assistant attorney general Alvin Keller to run the Department of Correction.

All of the appointees seem qualified, but they almost all share something else too: a history in Raleigh, a closeness to the Democratic machine, donating or raising money for campaigns. Until recently, Carlisle served on the lottery commission, for example, and Hayes was a prominent fundraiser for Easley.

None of that means the appointees won't do a good job, but collectively they don't seem to represent the dramatic departure from business as usual that Perdue has promised, and promised again Monday.

With the exception of her commitment to reduce the power of the DOT board, her transition has yet to match the boldness of her rhetoric about a new day in Raleigh. She has plenty of more chances, and not just in her appointments.

Saturday, she will deliver her inaugural address, and let's hope for a renewed commitment to a new direction for the state that includes some specifics. She could start by rethinking her apparent aversion to considering new revenue to balance the budget.

Perdue herself identified a vital part of the budget problem during the campaign in an answer to a questionnaire from the same North Carolina Chamber she addressed Monday. Perdue said much of the state tax structure was "archaic, overly complex, or unfair," and that she was committed to a "massive review and overhaul of the tax system."

Let the overhauling and the real change, begin.

Chris Fitzsimon is executive director of N.C. Policy Watch.

## LETTERS POLICY

Letters should be no more than 425 words in length and must be accompanied by the author's name, address and contact information.

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