



FRIDAY
Partly Cloudy
61/38



SATURDAY
60% Chance of Rain
49/32



SUNDAY
Partly Cloudy
52/29

C THE CARRBORO CITIZEN



Synchronized skaters
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PHOTO BY KEN MOORE

The bud of the umbrella magnolia looks like a spear.

FLORA BY KEN MOORE

There's still time for winter botany

I tagged along with a friend last weekend in his search to re-discover a favorite very early spring wildflower. Along the way, he came to an abrupt halt, admiring a single long, smooth bud, appearing like a spear tip. He immediately recognized it as the deciduous umbrella magnolia, *Magnolia tripetala*. You may spot it down along your favor creek or river path. Remember its location, because you will want to go back in the middle of spring to admire the large leaves clustered at the ends of the branches like an umbrella. The flowers are often missed because of the freshly emerged foliage of other trees all around.

So, in spite of early signs of spring, we still have several weeks to practice winter botany.

I have a favorite memory of a summer botanical survey in the early 1970s. I was assisted by a young couple who had taken a basic plant identification class. I noticed the young woman was carefully pulling all the leaves from a twig in her hand. Her response to my obvious inquiry was: "I have to get rid of all these confusing leaves because I learned to identify plants in the winter." She was serious and, furthermore, once she had the twig in hand, bare of leaves, she was able to identify it.

And so it is that plants can often be easily identified in the winter.

Striking contrasts of bark and shapes of trees are obvious identifying features. Less often appreciated are the buds.

SEE **FLORA** PAGE 10

Board calls for public comment on anti-lingering ordinance

BY SUSAN DICKSON
Staff Writer

CARRBORO — Following passionate pleas from several residents, the Carrboro Board of Aldermen voted on Tuesday to schedule a public hearing regarding the anti-lingering ordinance for the intersection of Davie and Jones Ferry roads.

The board approved an anti-lingering ordinance for the intersection in November 2007 after residents of the surrounding neighborhood complained of public consumption, public urination and garbage in the areas around the intersection.

"It doesn't encroach on civil liberties – it's a preemptive strike on civil liberties."

— STEPHEN DEAR

Day laborers, many of them Latino, often gather at the intersection in hopes that contractors will come by and offer them work. The ordinance prohibits waiting at the intersection from 11 a.m. until 5 a.m.

Carrboro Police Chief Carolyn

Hutchison said police had not arrested anyone for disobeying the ordinance since it was put into place and recommended that the board keep the ordinance on the books.

"It seems that people who previously lingered respect this law and comply with this law," Hutchison said. "Police officers find themselves in fewer adversarial situations."

However, residents have said people continue to gather at the intersection and cause problems. Others argue that the ordinance infringes on civil liberties.

Emily Scarborough, a resident

of Davie Road, said she had seen people urinate in her yard and also has had to clean up human feces from the yard.

"We just want our property to be protected. We want to feel safe," she said. "I find it really reprehensible that we have to deal with this."

Board member Randee Haven-O'Donnell said she has driven by the intersection several times recently and seen people loitering in the area in the late afternoon.

SEE **ORDINANCE** PAGE 3



PHOTO BY AVA BARLOW

Brian T. Rice, a barista at Caffè Driade, measures out organic India Elkhill Estate coffee beans. Though Starbucks recently attributed declines in revenue customers' changing buying patterns. But local coffee purveyors disagree, saying sales of joe and whole beans are steady. See Land & Table on page 9.

Ellis resignation concerns community

BY SUSAN DICKSON
Staff Writer



The recent resignation of Chapel Hill High School Principal Jackie Ellis has sparked concern and speculation among some community members that the demands of the job prevent the school from maintaining a single principal for more than a couple of years.

Ellis announced her resignation in late January, and will continue as principal until March 20, after which she will serve as assistant superintendent

for human resources in Durham Public Schools. She has served as principal since 2007, and said that while she will miss Chapel Hill High, the job prevented her from spending time with her family.

"It's probably one of the most difficult decisions, and yet at the same time one of the easiest decisions ... of course because it's going to be much better for my family," Ellis said. "I get my life back, and my family gets me back."

SEE **ELLIS** PAGE 8

Harrington navigates recession, sees mortgage lending increase

BY MARGOT C. LESTER
Staff Writer

CHAPEL HILL — With banks still sputtering after last year's huge federal bail-out – including three bank failures already this year – it would be easy to think that all financial institutions are on the ropes. But one local lender is beating the odds with high reserves and a new branch on the way. To get the scoop, *The Citizen* spoke with Larry Loeser, president and CEO of Chapel Hill-based Harrington Bank, recently named 2008 Large Business of the Year by the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce.

Q: You're on the record as saying the bank is healthy and lending. How are you able to do that when so many others are being more guarded?

A: Part of it is we're in a great community. Chapel Hill-Carrboro is unique. I don't expect we'll have any problems here because it's such an economically strong and pretty diverse, economically speaking, community. The university and hospital provide strong anchors for employees and the school system is a major contributor to the economic strength of the community. We will have problems – there's no way we can be immune in an historic recession, but we won't see them as much.

Q: You've mentioned expanding into Cary. Is that still happening and if so, when?

A: Yes; at Hwy. 55 at High House Rd. But it's gone slower than we would have liked because of zoning approvals. But we're working with a developer partner who's going as fast as they can. We could probably get that branch

open early in 2010. That timing is fine with us since we opened two last year. We're using the extra time to stabilize those new branches at MLK Boulevard in Chapel Hill, and in north Raleigh in Falls River Towne Center, north of 540.

Q: Has your mortgage business slowed with the economy?

A: No. In our mortgage activity, we've seen a huge uptick because of declining rates. We're busier than we've ever been, with 30-year mortgages under 5 percent.

Q: How many foreclosures did the bank have in 2007 and 2008?

A: We're in the secondary market and never participated in subprime mortgages of any sort. Our mortgages are to good, solid borrowers. Foreclosures have not been an issue and won't be for us.

Q: What's your loan-loss reserve?

A: All banks have a loan-loss reserve. We started from scratch and are fairly new, so we reserve very heavily since we don't have any loss experience to base on. We're conservative. Our loss reserve by industry standards is extremely high – 1.65 percent of total loans. Any losses we have, we're well reserved for. Historically, we have very few losses.

Q: Last month, BB&T announced decreased profits attributed to defaults by homebuilders and developers. How is Harrington faring?

A: We do lend to homebuilders and have some who are "on the ropes" because home sales have been slow for a good year and a half. Builders' basic business model is to build and

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Citizen wins six NC press awards

The Carrboro Citizen won six awards including two first-place awards in the 2008 North Carolina Press Association's News, Editorial and Photojournalism contest.

The awards are to be presented tonight at the press association banquet in Cary.

Contributing editor Taylor Sisk won first place for "A few moments with Beulah," which profiled longtime Carrboro resident Beulah Hackney. Sisk also won first place in the News Enterprise reporting category for a series on environmental justice issues that focused on the Rogers Road neighborhood. He won second place in News Enterprise Reporting for the *Breakdown* series, which examined the local effects of the state's mental health care crisis.

In photojournalism, Isaac Sandlin won second place in the General News Photography category for his photograph of the candle-light vigil on campus following the death of Eve Carson.

Citizen editor Kirk Ross received a third-place award for the paper's editorial page and shared a third-place award for General Excellence In Newspaper Web Sites with Michelle Langston, Lucy Butcher and Jack Carley.

Citizen publisher Robert Dickson said he was pleased to see the paper recognized for its journalism.

"Our staff has worked hard to bring high-quality journalism to our community. It's great to see them rewarded for their efforts," he said.

Founded in 2007 and accepted into the press association a year later, this is the first year the newspaper was eligible to enter the contest.

— Staff Reports

