



**FRIDAY**  
Clear  
54/31

**SATURDAY**  
Clear  
65/36

**SUNDAY**  
Partly Cloudy  
65/38

# C THE CARRBORO CITIZEN



PHOTO BY KEN MOORE  
Noticeable clusters of long seed pods hang from the northern catalpa tree behind Weaver Street Market.

## FLORA BY KEN MOORE

Go outside and meet a tree

The best time to get a really good look at trees is now, while they are bare. The heavy, green leafy cover of the warmer months often obscures their real beauty.

Take a fresh eye with you on your next walk, whether in downtown Carrboro or along your favorite forest path.

Noticeable now along Weaver Street and right behind Weaver Street Market are northern catalpa, *Catalpa speciosa*, and southern catalpa, *C. bignonioides*, with those curious hanging clusters of long seed pods. Monkey cigar tree is my favorite common name for this tree, which sports big heart-shaped leaves in the summer.

Carrboro's urban landscape provides opportunities to observe the natural shapes of mature trees, such as the broad canopies of that big willow oak, *Quercus phellos*, and the old post oaks, *Quercus stellata*, on the open grounds of Weaver Street Market.

However, walking in the forests, free of urban distractions, it is easier to become more acutely aware of the character of trees, like the contrasting color and texture patterns of tree bark. Seeing a big loblolly pine, *Pinus taeda*, growing near a big American beech, *Fagus grandifolia*, is reason for a leisurely pause to take in the beauty of such dramatically different specimens.

Further along your forest pathway, you may see, in the far distance, the smooth snow-white beauty of the upper trunk and limbs of a sycamore, *Platanus occidentalis*. No other native tree stands out quite like this one in the winter landscape.

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## State workers worry about job cuts, health plan woes

BY KIRK ROSS  
Staff Writer

**STATE** — As legislators gathered in Raleigh for a gloomy set of economic briefings, university employees continue to worry about possible furloughs and job cuts and are seeking more information on how individual departments will trim budgets.

Last week, UNC system President Erskine Bowles said he is seeking authority to furlough workers to balance the system budget. On Tuesday and Wednesday of this week, legislators heard consecutive briefings on the

state's declining revenues and troubles with the state health care plan. In both instances, an already bleak outlook for state workers further dimmed.

Revenue projections for this year show a gap of \$2.1 billion between previous projections and reality by the end of the fiscal year in June. The recession will continue through much of 2009, analysts told legislators at a briefing Tuesday.

The health care plan news, delivered on Wednesday, was equally sobering. Without action, the plan will be out of funds by March 31 and unable to pay claims.

Mark Trogon of the Legislature's Fiscal Research Division told members of the General Assembly that increased costs and planning errors will leave a \$300 million gap in the state health plan by June 30 and a \$1.2 billion projected deficit over the next two years. Trogon called the situation dire and said bridging the gap will take a combination of premium increases, benefit cuts and additional administrative savings. Just relying on premiums, he said, would require a jump of more than 30 percent.

Sen. Ellie Kinnaird said she

wants to hold the line against state job cuts. "I do not want to see us layoff any state workers," she said. Legislators have to be willing to consider raising revenue. "We've got to raise alcohol and cigarette taxes," Kinnaird said. "It's time."

Dana Cope, executive director of the State Employees Association of North Carolina, said cutting state workers at a time when the need for services is increasing doesn't make sense. "We can't afford any layoffs or furloughs," he said.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL BAND  
Members of the newly re-formed Central High School band perform in the Hillsborough Holiday parade in December.

## Historically black high school celebrates a storied past

BY JASMINA NOGO  
Staff Writer

**HILLSBOROUGH** — "The school was everything for the black community," said Thomas Watson, an Orange County native and 1965 graduate of the historically black Central High School in Hillsborough.

The hub of the school was the gym, of which Watson says, "We used it for everything. We'd go to dances there."

In fact, rumor has it that Ike and Tina Turner once played in that gym, and that a street party was held in association with the event.

Watson confirms that rumor:

"Ike and Tina Turner indeed played there. Many other Motown artists as well."

Central High School closed its doors in 1968, but the spirit of the school will be revisited on Saturday, Feb. 28 from 7 to 9 p.m., when the Orange County Historical Museum will host a special event in honor of the school at Mt. Bright Baptist Church. A panel of speakers — including teachers, principals, coaches and students — will talk about their experiences at Central.

### 'Anchor of the community'

The school opened in 1938 and included first through 11th

grades. Twelfth grade wasn't added until 1945.

Central was a small, 12-room school. In 1958, the original school burned down, said Darcie Beecroft, director of the Orange County Historical Museum, and another school was built in the '60s. That building is now Hillsborough Elementary.

"The school was important to the African-American community. It was the only school that they could get an education," Beecroft said. "A lot of students had to walk for miles to get to school. They were bused from across the county."

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## Board focuses on recession at annual retreat

BY SUSAN DICKSON  
Staff Writer

**CARRBORO** — The Carrboro Board of Aldermen identified priorities for action throughout the recession on Monday at the board's annual retreat at the Seymour Senior Center.

The board also heard from town staff and several local groups regarding the recession's impact on the town budget, the local population and various organizations. Due to a communications glitch at Carrboro Town Hall, the media did not receive notice of the retreat and no members of the press were present.

To maintain growth and support residents during the economic downturn, board members brainstormed potential action items, including increasing aid to nonprofit agencies, controlling the tax rate, involving board members in a combined giving campaign and exploring options for local preferential purchasing.

Nancy Coston, director of the Orange County Department of Social Services, outlined the increase in demand for services since the economic downturn. According to DSS, the number of Food and Nutrition Program recipients increased from 6,554 to 7,274 over a six-month period ending December 2008. Medicaid recipients in the county increased from 7,679 to 7,903 over the same period.

"Requests for emergency assistance are definitely up," Mayor Mark Chilton said. "At the same time, county government departments are being asked to make a 10 percent cut.... With an increased caseload, they need to not have major cuts in staffing."

The board asked town staff to try to find a way to provide funding to organizations in the community that are providing assistance to those in need.

"It's a bit of a conundrum, given that we want to keep the budget low and keep taxes as low as we can," board member Dan Coleman said. "At the same time, there are nonprofits in the community that are providing critical services."

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## Happy to be here after great preparation

RECENTLY . . .  
By Valarie Schwartz

Rarely does a day pass in our community without police officers answering a domestic violence call. It happens in all neighborhoods to all kinds of people. Since 2001, the Family Violence Prevention Center of Orange County (FVPC) has sought ways to prevent and end family violence by providing a 24-hour hotline, counseling, emotional support and far more.

In December, the agency acquired a new resource with the hiring of Beverly Kennedy as executive director. It's hard to imagine someone better prepared for the work involved.

Not that she planned it that way — the Pittsburgh native attended Pennsylvania State University with the dream of being a magazine food editor. She left with a degree in journalism, having minored in home economics, and got a job at Wonder Bread in Boston. Her plan continued humming along until two co-workers were murdered and she felt drawn to law enforcement. The fact that women were not yet allowed to serve Boston as police officers proved no deterrent, it simply meant some extra steps.

"There was no gender equality yet — I was refused based on the fact that I was female," Kennedy said. So she filed a complaint and spent two years lobbying for women to be accepted. Poring over the city budget, she discovered that money had been allocated for female officers and found an ally in a city board member who insisted that the means meet the appropriate end.

Kennedy was in the first class of females, in 1972, one of 11 hired to a force of 2,500. She was a patrol officer for nine years; her favorite two were with the mounted unit. She spent evenings attending law school and passed the bar in 1977. After obtaining her detective rating, she became the assistant legal council to the Boston police commissioner.

"I just happened to be there, it was never planned," Kennedy said of her career. "I lived through school busing — it was humanity gone mad."

With more to accomplish, she practiced as a criminal defense attorney for 16 years before fragments from the broken society she served began to present a clear picture.

"I woke up one morning and said, 'I can't do this any more. Victims are underrepresented.' I realized I



PHOTO BY VALARIE SCHWARTZ  
Beverly Kennedy, new executive director of the Family Violence Prevention Center, has warmed the agency with her presence.

was further victimizing the victims," Kennedy said.

After two more years spent removing herself from it, she served five years as director of a suburban Boston battered women's program.

"I loved the work; it was great work," she said. "It was a young agency that was underfunded and understaffed."

But it gave her full perspective on family violence. As a police officer, "we used to call it family trouble and we'd say, 'why don't you just leave him?' Oh my God, it's so embarrassing, but we didn't know. We were slowly educated," she said.

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