

FRIDAY
0% Chance of Precip
63/36 °F

SATURDAY
20% Chance of Precip
63/45 °F

SUNDAY
30% Chance of Precip
56/31 °F

C THE CARRBORO CITIZEN



The unmistakable bark of loblolly pine (right) contrasts with the rough grey bark of the elm on the left.

PHOTO BY KEN MOORE

FLORA BY KEN MOORE

Winter tree watch

I hope some of you joined in on the Eno River Association New Year's Day Hike. That annual tradition began more than 40 years ago.

More recently, 20 years ago, the Blue Hill Reservation, a state park in Milton, Mass., initiated First Day hikes for the American State Parks system. This year for the first time, state parks in all 50 states sponsored First Day hikes. We can be proud that 27 of North Carolina's state parks joined the Eno River Association in conducting a New Year's Day hike.

Now don't stop with that "first hike." Resolve to take a walk at least once a week. If you need encouragement, make note that the Eno River Association has scheduled Sunday walks (enoriver.org) from now through spring.

I think the winter season is the best time to be outside, when the bareness and sparseness of nature reveals the essence and beauty of it all. There's so much to see and absorb in the winter landscape that it can be overwhelming. I enjoy focusing on the trees. Think of it as a winter tree watch.

Walk some distance into the forest and pause. Look all around; unless you're in a stand of evergreen pines, you may feel a slight panic, lost in a wilderness of grey monotony. Close your eyes and slowly open them to take a closer look all around.

Trees reveal all kinds of interesting traits when they are leafless. For this particular walk, just focus on bark, the protective skin of the trees. Some, like the pines, are easy to detect; we'll take time to distinguish between

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Deer feeding reactions

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Human Rights Center finds home

BY SUSAN DICKSON
Staff Writer

Things are looking up for the Chapel Hill and Carrboro Human Rights Center.

Following a decision last month by the Abbey Court Condominiums homeowners' association to force the HRC to leave the complex, the non-profit center has likely found a new home – one that the HRC plans to use

to offer expanded services, including a long-awaited day-laborer center.

Judith Blau, director of the HRC, said the center is under contract to purchase a house at 107 Barnes St., with closing expected very soon.

"It's a perfect location for us," she said, noting the house's proximity to the center's previous location, as well as to Carolina Apartments, where a number of Latino and Karen families live.

"Before, [Carolina Apartments residents] would have to go under a fence."

The center has been located in two Abbey Court apartments since 2009. Though the complex is zoned residential, the center received a home occupation permit from the town because someone lives in one of the two apartments. However, Abbey Court

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EMS workgroup seeks members

BY ROSE LAUDICINA
Staff Writer

Two seats are open on the Orange County Emergency Services Workgroup, and the county is looking to residents to fill them.

The workgroup was formed to allow major stakeholders such as fire and police chiefs to have input on what improvements and changes are made to the county's emergency services.

At its last meeting, on Dec. 13, the Orange County Board of Commissioners voted to add four seats to the workgroup, which had originally been proposed to consist of eight members.

Two of the seats added were immediately filled by Commissioner Earl McKee and county medical director Jane Brice. The additional vacant seats are to be filled by Orange County residents.

Residents selected will serve alongside two appointees from the fire chief's association, a municipal fire chief, an appointee from the South Orange Rescue Squad, two municipal police chiefs and the emergency services director.

"Everyone that is [presently] a part of the workgroup is involved in some type of emergency management services ... and general public safety in some capacity," Michael Talbert, assistant county manager, said. "The citizens can take an objective look at the issues and say, 'Hmmm, does this make sense or not?'"

While some commissioners were initially hesitant to allow residents to serve on the workgroup because of the potentially technical nature of discussions, McKee argued that their input as beneficiaries of the services was important.

"The citizens appointed will bring the perspective of a possible user standpoint as well as a taxpayer's standpoint," he said.

Commissioners also expressed interest in having the two resident representatives be from different parts of the county, perhaps one from a municipality and one from the rural areas. However, since the commissioners did not vote on this criterion, it's not clear if this will be a determining factor when selecting residents.

The workgroup will be looking into ways to improve emergency services in the county, including fixing the Voice Interoperability Plan for Emergency Responders system (VIPER), which has multiple dead spots throughout the county that can cause safety issues for firefighters and police responding to emergency calls.

Interested residents must submit an application to the county by Jan. 13. The application deadline was initially set for Jan. 4, but because of the holidays and a lack of applicants, the county decided to extend it.

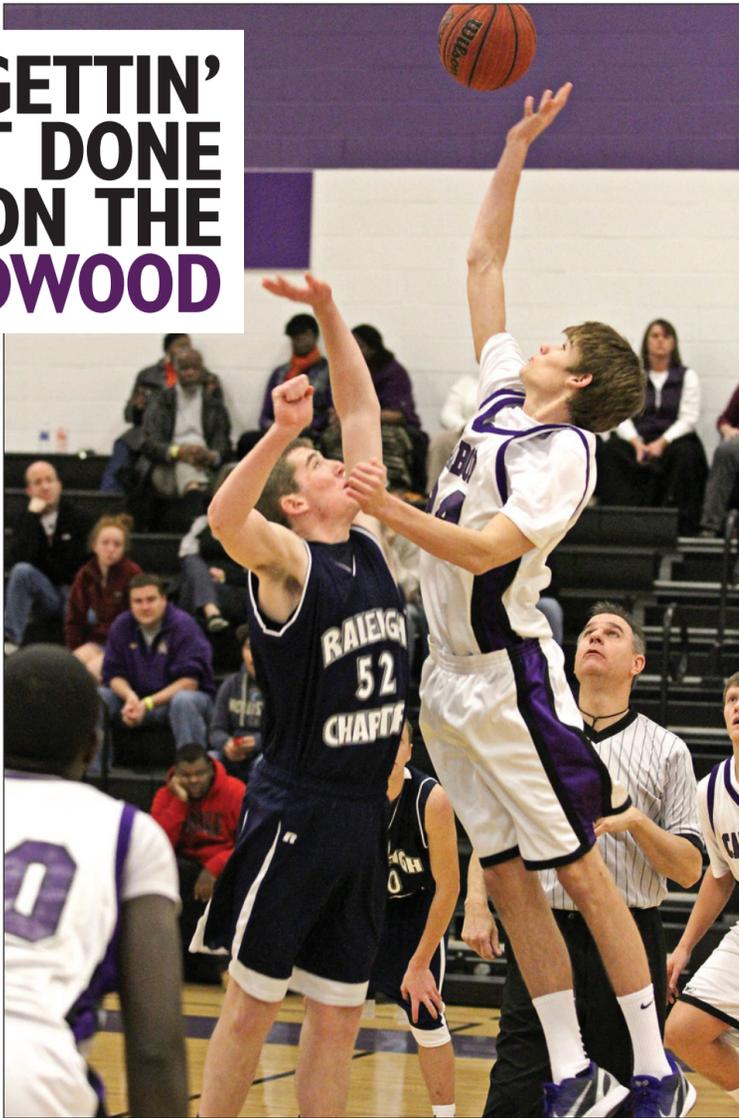
The two residents selected will be appointed at the commissioners' Jan.

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GETTIN' IT DONE ON THE HARDWOOD

Carrboro High School's Keenan Van Name controls the tip-off in a game against Raleigh Charter High School in which the Jaguars dominated on both offense and defense. The Jaguars continue to demonstrate that they're a force to be reckoned with in Carolina 12 Conference basketball. See page 2 for more on Tuesday night's game.

PHOTO BY TED SPAULDING



Pets to take home at a bargain price

BY ROSE LAUDICINA
Staff Writer

Everybody likes a good deal, especially in this economy – and while most holiday sales are over, the Orange County Animal Shelter's still has a couple of days left.

Although most shoppers wouldn't think to look to the animal shelter for a discount, during the Home for the Holidays event animal lovers in search of a new four-legged best friend can adopt cats and dogs for about half the usual cost.

The normal adoption fee for cats is \$95, while for dogs it's \$115. During Home for the Holidays, cats can be taken home for \$50 and dogs for \$60. "The fee discount is great," animal

shelter manager Jess Allison said.

"It costs a lot to process each animal, so this is certainly a deal," she added, explaining that when any animal comes through their doors they pay to spay or neuter it, deworm it and check it for any health concerns or diseases, treating any found.

The shelter has been hosting the holiday event since 2005, striving to get word out about the large number of pets at the shelter that would like to get the gift of a family for the holidays. But this is the first year it's been able to offer discounts. With a recent decision by the Orange County Board of Commissioners, the shelter is now allowed to offer fee reductions on certain animals during special events and occasions throughout the year.

Allison said that while the phrasing of the promotion says "select" animals, the majority of animals at the shelter are available for a reduced price. The only animals not included are young kittens and puppies, as they are typically easy to find homes for.

"It's mostly adult dogs and cats," Allison said. "We wait till they've been here for a week or two" before adding them to the adoption list.

Since the program started on Dec. 1, the shelter has seen 112 total adoptions for the month of December. Allison said she believes the reduced fees have led to an increase in adoptions.

"It is a deal for folks, and they get excited about it, and we do too," she said.

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Chapel of the Cross maps major renovation

BY SUSAN DICKSON
Staff Writer

The Chapel Hill Town Council could make a decision on a major expansion for The Chapel of the Cross on Monday, possibly opening the door for one of the largest renovations in the church's more than 160-year history.

As planned, the expansion would add 29,500 square feet, doubling the space available for community outreach, education and fellowship. In addition, the project would include a 33 percent increase in the Episcopal Campus Ministry space and a new terrace and entrance facing the arborium on the UNC campus.

The property's main church building and chapel – which was built in

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A rendering of the project

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE CHAPEL OF THE CROSS