

A vet celebrates the repeal of 'don't ask, don't tell'

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Little chickadee takes a turn at a tree-cavity watering hole. PHOTO BY KEN MOORE

FLORA BY KEN MOORE

Birding and botanizing

There are birders and there are botanizers. Birders are not necessarily ornithologists and botanizers are not necessarily botanists. Most of them, however, are passionate in their observational pursuits. Some botanizers, like many birders, keep life lists of their sightings.

I've begun many times to keep a life list of birds, wildflowers and trees. But making notes of what, when and where for each observation is simply beyond my powers to remain focused. "Oh, what is that bird up in that tree? Wow, let's go gather some of those ripe persimmons. I'll try to remember which blue aster that is when we return."

Keeping a life list is an enviable discipline, but it's not for me. I am too easily excited about making the same observations over and over again. Each time I see or hear a common bird, like a red-bellied woodpecker, I respond as if it's a first-time discovery. Similarly, every time I stop to admire a common tree, like the American beech, it's a really, really special moment.

The Citizen's December MILL included descriptions of several local birding resources and "hot spots." Hopefully, that will be followed in the not-too-distant future by a description of botanizing hot spots. I've saved a copy of the birding hot spots for future reference, though for me a birding hot spot is wherever I manage to sight or hear a bird. Memorable experiences are those least anticipated.

I had such an experience recently while exploring the short Winmore neighborhood nature trail. I heard the busy chattering of what I thought was a wren. When I looked up, I was surprised to see

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Planning Board approves new shelter proposal

BY KIRK ROSS
Staff Writer

CHAPEL HILL — With just a short discussion of stipulations and a few tweaks requested, the Chapel Hill Planning Board on Tuesday night unanimously approved a request by the Inter-Faith Council for Social Service for a special-use permit for Community House, a transitional shelter for homeless men.

The board, at a meeting at Town Hall, heard presentations on plans

for the two-story 16,250-square-foot building, proposed for a 1.8-acre university-owned parcel near the intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Homestead Road. The university has provided the town with a 50-year lease on the property at virtually no cost.

The plans for Community House include a dormitory with beds for 20 residents and smaller rooms to be shared by either two or four men, with a total of 32 beds.

The IFC also is requesting that a downstairs meeting area be useable for emergency shelter for up to 17 men.

At the meeting, IFC executive director Chris Moran repeatedly stressed the differences between the existing shelter and kitchen in the old town municipal building at 100 West Rosemary St. and the new location. The IFC is working on a separate proposal to relocate all of its kitchen and food programs in a new building in downtown Carrboro.

"The whole idea of this project is to end homelessness 52 people at a time," Moran told the board.

The program, he said, is based on IFC's Project Homestart, a 14-year-old program for homeless women and families in a cluster of housing on Homestead Road near the Southern Human Services Center. The program requires increasing levels of responsibility on the part of the participants.

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Grounds for justice



Local NAACP chapter president Michelle Laws visits Pritchard Avenue Extension, where her social activism began to take shape. PHOTO BY ALEX MANESS

BY TAYLOR SISK
Staff Writer

The playground is in many respects a microcosm of the real world. There are rules to be observed and hierarchies to reckon; infrastructure (bats and balls and slides and swings) is required.

It was on such grounds that Michelle Cotton Laws became an activist.

Born in Chapel Hill to a young, single mother who was sent north by her family to college, Laws was raised by her grandmother, Annie Freeman (later Annie Freeman Peay), in Pritchard Avenue Extension public housing.

Ms. Annie was one of a group of women, including Mildred Pierce and Carrie Farrington, who served on the public-housing residence council. "These women were fierce," Laws admiringly recalls, in seeking justice.

A few moments with Michelle Laws...

Young Michelle was totted along to meetings, one of which involved playground equipment.

"The merry-go-round was wobbly, the sliding board was coming loose and all this stuff," Laws says.

"So I got up and made an appeal. I was, like, in the fourth grade. And I made an appeal about how we too in the public-housing communities deserved good playground equipment.

"I do remember them being so proud of me. And that was when I first got recognition from the community. I remember Miss Carrie telling my grandma, 'That child can talk. She sure can talk.' They just loved to hear me talk."

"So I decided then that anytime times would come where I could speak on behalf of our community, I would."

And she has.

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Rocky flop for Volunteers

BY EDDY LANDRETH
Staff Writer

The 2010 Music City Bowl between North Carolina and Tennessee was not just another bowl game — not by a long shot.

This football game so far exceeded what we ordinarily call exciting on an ordinary day as to exist within a different realm.

A fifth-year senior quarterback saved the day by throwing the ball onto the ground to preserve one precious second, a singular second Carolina then used to force overtime and eventually stage the most improbable victory in this bowl season and in UNC history. This one will live alongside eight points in 17 seconds in basketball.

One has to weave through all the games played since the Stanford band took the field and aided and abetted a win against California to find a similarly amazing moment in college football.

No victory could better epitomize a team, from every coach to the last walk-on, and the way it overcame a punishing number of injuries and offenses by players who shamed a school known for conducting its sports programs in the so-called right way. The manner in which Carolina defeated Tennessee in double-overtime should make it all the sweeter for the players, coaches and fans, who know that card-carrying members of the



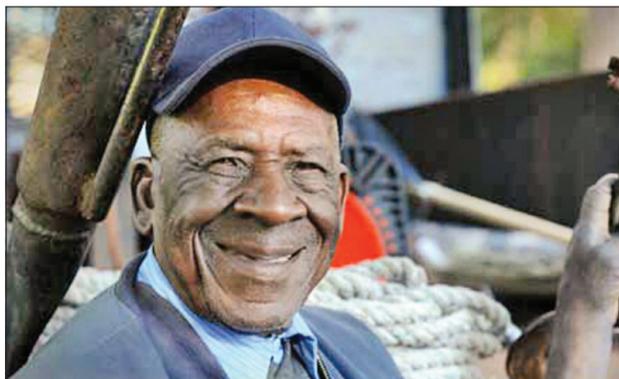
ABC (Anybody But Carolina) Club were probably vomiting in the nearest toilet after the game.

This is the year in which Carolina haters expected to see the school and its football program ruined and coaches and players showed how deeply the talent runs and how fierce the determination now exists in Carolina football.

This game led to individual redemption as well. Shaun Draughn found himself watching from the sideline as Johnny White and

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There's no stopping this Bus



Bus Hubbard PHOTO BY ***

UNC News Services

At the center of McCorkle Place stands the Davie Poplar, the massive tree scarred by lightning and hurricanes.

The Davie Poplar marks the spot where a delegation from Raleigh in 1792 chose to start what would become the nation's first public university. Davie Poplar Jr., grown from a cutting planted in 1918, and Davie Poplar III, grown from the original tree's seed, are planted nearby.

For a half-century, another fixture on this campus has been Bus Hubbard.

The last of seven children, Hubbard was born March 9, 1934 on the family

farm in northern Chatham County, in a community of wood-frame houses, dusty roads, tobacco patches and gospel churches where amens on Sunday mornings echoed through the surrounding pines. His first day on the job was in March 1953 — and even now, at the age of 76, he is not quite ready to consider when his last day might be.

Fifty-eight years is a long time to do anything, especially a job that entails climbing the tallest trees on campus to cut out dead limbs and broken branches. And for as long as anyone can remember, it's been his job alone.

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