Blind photographer sees the big picture

By **Eve Greene** Carrboro Commons Photo Editor

Georg Gordon's personal goal is to photograph every home basketball game this season at Carrboro High School. This may not seem like a remarkably ambitious goal — except that Gordon is legally blind.

After multiple surgeries to correct developing macular holes, cataracts and the loss of pigment in his retinas, Gordon's impairment forced him to retire from his career as writer, photographer and editor. Fortunately, for the town of Carrboro, even the loss of his sight couldn't stop him from doing what he loves.

"Digital [photography] has saved my life," said Gordon. He knows the range of his camera and with help from the bold lines running the length of the court, he knows where to expect action.

Kirk Ross, editor of The Carrboro Citizen, for which Gordon freelances, said "the joy of autofocus" has kept Gordon in the field. "He really gets some great shots," said Ross.

In August of last year, Gordon moved to Carrboro, to just down the street from Carrboro High School. Needing something to fill his free time, he began to attend the home basketball games and take pictures. That's when The Carrboro Citizen entered the picture.

Ross said Gordon just wanted to help, and offered his services to The Carrboro Citizen for free. When Gordon sent him some pictures in an email, Ross wrote, "I was really happy to see someone interested in regularly documenting the teams' first seasons."

Journalism isn't about the money, Gordon explained. "When I have a kid come up to me, just totally overjoyed that his picture is in the paper, I mean, that just warms my heart."

Gordon has had to adapt as his eyesight continues to slip away. Using a magnifying glass, he can still edit pictures from his computer. Although he can take simple notes of jersey numbers, he often uses a tape recorder to keep more detailed records. Gordon is able to walk to and from the school for games, but parents and Ross often willingly offer rides when they see him along the road.

After years of building his portfolio by writing and photographing as a freelancer — "with emphasis on the free," said Gordon with a smile — he offered his services to a small newspaper in Thomasville, Ala., in 1996, beginning his third career. Born in Canada, Gordon was an office machine mechanic and an overthe-road truck driver before he was drawn to journalism.

Soon, he was providing 90 percent of the material for the weekly newspaper. After four months, the editor left and Gordon was offered the vacant position. The Thomasville News quickly consumed Gordon's life.

Gordon successfully ran the paper for more than nine years and became so involved that he was often forced to spend the night on a cot in the office. "My address where I was registered to vote was the newspaper office," Gordon chuckled.

Throughout the years he spent editing stories for the paper, he constantly sought out intriguing stories. He was once threatened with jail time for requesting public records and engaged in a political campaign, challenging the incumbent mayor.

In competing with The Thomasville Times, the established paper in the area, Gordon proved his determination by covering not only Thomasville but the surrounding counties as well. When funding dried up within the town because of pressure from the mayor, The Thomasville News found advertisers from outside the town.

"I knew nobody else was going to do what I could do," said Gordon of his paper's coverage of the broad area.

Even now, with the chronic decline of his eyesight, Gordon continues to write for three newspapers in Alabama. He writes on anything and everything, remaining hard-hitting and dedicated to the improvement of the towns his articles reach. "A fellow newsman told me," Gordon said, "the duty of a newspaper man is to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comforted."

Gordon says he is even using his journalism experience here to help those at home. He hopes to take his work back and prove to the state of Alabama that even blindness can't keep him from his photography and reporting. Gordon will be using his pictures and articles to push for improvements in vocational rehabilitation programs.

Ross wrote in an email, "I'd never thought about the fact that a person with his knack and experience might through the aid of technology be able to continue doing what he loves doing."

When Gordon does return to Alabama in February, it's not just the pictures that the town will miss. It's the khaki-vested gentleman moving along the baseline with his camera and press pass proving that he can't be slowed down, even by blindness.

Eve Greene is a UNC-CH student writing for the Carrboro Commons, the bi-weekly online lab newspaper for Carrboro produced by Jock Lauterer's Community Journalism class at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

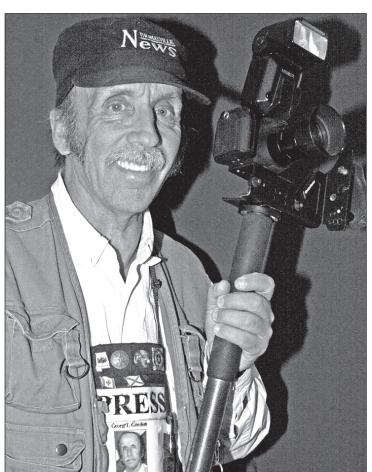


Photo by Eve Greene

Photographer Georg Gordon stands ready with his camera during a triple-header on Jan. 25 at Carrboro High School. Walking the baseline, the experienced photographer is keeping his goal of shooting every home basketball game for the Jaguars. You can see his work weekly in The Carrboro Citizen.

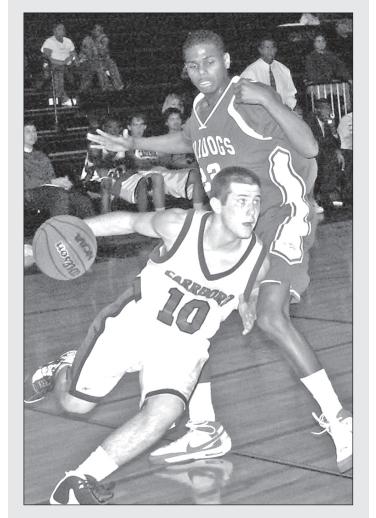


PHOTO BY GEORG T. GORDON

Brad Dimac (10) of the Carrboro Jaguar varsity drives through the defense of the Durham School of the Arts during the Wednesday, Jan. 30 game in Carrboro.

Coaches' * Reports

Carrboro High Swimming and Diving

(via Carrboro High website)

Our Swimmers & Divers competed in the 1A/2A state meet this past weekend. The competition was tough, with over 700 student-athletes representing 76 of the 89 1A/2A schools in North Carolina. Our Jaguar Swimmers & Divers stepped up to the competition and finished our first season with a bang. Both the men's and women's swim teams placed 3rd over all. The men scored a total of 168 points and the women finished with 151 points.

We had a number of incred-

ible races in both individual

Congratulations to Emily Tysinger and Ken Ryan who each received special awards from the NCHSAA.

Emily Tysinger: 2007/2008 Mid-State Conference Women's Swimmer of the Year

Ken Ryan: 2007/2008 State Meet Men's MVP

were outstanding. Carrboro Diving results below:

place: Hayden Stults, 5th place: JJ Strosnider, 6th place: MacKenzie Price.

and relay events. In the Prelims session, there were 26 new best times and we had 16 swimmers qualify for Finals.

Results for Cougar Divers

Men's results (diving): 3rd place: Colby Isabel, 4th

Women's results (diving): 3rd place: Sarah Hubbard, 4th place: Emily Johnston.



PHOTO BY GEORG T. GORDON

Liz Holman (10) of the Carrboro Lady Jaguars varsity ignores a horde of Lady Bulldogs and takes her shot during the Wednesday, Jan. 30 game against the Durham School of the Arts.

Scoreboard

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Friday, January 30

for the Jaguars.

Brandon

American

designer

76 Scandinavian

sugar

80 Muir or

82 Nobelist

Miniver

81 By means

Wiesel

Wilson

deg. 90 Concept 92 Pointless

96 Adult insect

American

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106 Whip, for

one 108 Family

105 Ornamental

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19 Lavished

22 Meyerbeer

23 West Indian

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25 Mideasterr

27 Aquatic

animal

28 Appraise 30 Compass pt. 31 Vacation

sensation 34 Citrus fruit

35 Brand or

38 Thames

town 41 Son of Noah

43 Touch down

('58 hit)

46 Opening 47 — acid

customer 51 Gambols

east Asia?

members

49 One —

59 Church

61 Hold up

masterpiece

show tune?

21 Waggle

121 Self-

123 Biblical

kingdom 127 Caribbean

entree?

CARRBORO HIGH

(via Georg T. Gordon) Car. 16 17 18 17 = 68 DSA: $11 \ 8 \ 20 \ 22 = 61$ David Brooks topped the scoring for Carrboro with 25 points. Brad Dimac contributed 17 points, including two 3-point baskets,

CARRBORO HIGH WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Friday, January 30 (via Georg T. Gordon) Car: $7 \ 8 \ 9 \ 21 = 45$ Layne Mishoe led the Carrboro scoring with 12 points on two 3-point buckets and three 2-point baskets. Kelly Brown had eight points. Omni Lester contributed six points on two 2-point baskets and two free throws.

Next games for the UNC Tar Heels: Men: Vs Clemson at home. Feb 10, 6:30 p.m. (On FSN) Women: Vs Clemson at home. Feb 7, 7 p.m.

ADVERTISING INDEX

The ArtsCenter, 7 Aussie Pet Mobile, 10 The Beehive, 5 Blunden Studio, 10 Carrboro Family Vision, 5 Carrboro Recreation & Parks, 7 Cat's Cradle, 2 Cliff's Meat Market, 8 Community Dinner, 3 Duke Center for Nicotine & Smoking Cessation Research, 4 Epting & Hackney, 7 Franklin Street Auto, 3 Glass Half Full, 5 Hillsborough Yarn Shop, 3 Cliff Larsen, 7 Lantern, 5 Laskody Law Office, 5 Pat Neagle, 8 Orange Community Housing & Land Trust, 8 Peck and Artisans, 3 Mark Rhoades, 7 Dan Ryon, 5 Southern Rail, 3 3 Cups, 75 Three Treasure Acupuncture, 7 Triangle Swing Dance, 10 True Craftsmen, 8 The UPS Store, 3 WCOM, 4 Walker Brown, 4 Weaver Street Realty, 2

Weekly **SUDOKU**

by Linda Thistle

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DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: * * *

★ Moderate ★★ Challenging * * * HOO BOY! © 2008 King Features Synd., Inc.

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12 Let up 13 Anderson's "High —"

16 Musical of

15 Raze

58 Starts a

66 Gun the

engine 67 Out on

69 Stage

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117 Enticed

120 Sailboat.

e.g. 122 — -Ball

125 Some

126 Snake

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Nachtmusik

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128 Bond rating

showcase

game) 124 Mozart's "-

119 Timber

113 Endorse,

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139 Aunt or 36 Sacred cows 37 Paul of "The 140 Bestow Burning Bed" ('94 film) 38 "Heavens to Betsy!' DOWN 39 "Little Man 1 Narcissus'

('91 film) 40 Fall 2 Big kid? 3 Fail to birthstone 42 Irritate mention 44 Mrs. David 4 Glossy Copperfield 47 "Blue cloth ('77 hit) 48 It's walked 5 Garment part 6 — Paulo,

ends it 80 Med. test 83 Taylor or Trotta 86 "F Troop" corporal 87 Edna Ferber

comedy 131 Support 91 Spirited steed 132 Sgt. or cpl. 93 Baudelaire's 133 Cornfield buddies 94 Church 95 "Orinoco

singer

