

A JOINT WITHOUT JOE



DTH/SARAH SHAW

Ivan Renteria, Eduardo Velez’s nephew, has been working at Joe’s Joint for nearly six months and his uncle “Joe” is now selling the establishment.

Eduardo Velez sells Franklin Street staple Joe’s Joint

By Will Parker
Staff Writer

Those who know Joe’s Joint for its delicious greasy burgers and cheap late-night food might notice something missing from the cozy Franklin Street restaurant.

Eduardo Velez — the man many know as Joe — has decided to sell Joe’s after years of owning the classic diner.

Velez could not be reached for comment after multiple calls.

Ivan Renteria, a nephew of Velez, said his uncle is selling Joe’s for personal reasons.

“He was tired of working here, so he was trying to sell it, and somebody else came and bought it,” Renteria said.

The new owner of Joe’s is Jake Beatley, Renteria said.

But Renteria will be in charge of Joe’s

under the new ownership, and the restaurant will mostly stay the same — only a few additions to the menu will be brought in.

“They’re going to add some more stuff to it, like hot dogs, and try to make them different ways,” he said. “Other than that they want to keep it the same stuff.”

John Woodard, pharmacist and owner at Sutton’s Drug Store, said running a business in downtown Chapel Hill can be very difficult.

“We’ve got too many handicaps — primarily the high pricing of parking on Franklin Street as well as in the deck,” he said. “I learned that when I first came here.”

Velez had everything he needed for continued success at Joe’s, Woodard said, but he dealt with health issues personally and in his family.

“It wasn’t that he didn’t have a good product, it was just the personal problems he had health-wise,” Woodard said. “He had the

work ethic.”

And Woodard said Velez’s health issues gave him little choice but to sell the restaurant.

“He had no choice but to make a move,” he said. “He couldn’t continue to work himself to death.”

Karly Brooks, a senior at UNC, said she had not heard of the change of ownership at Joe’s, but she remembers eating solid fare there.

She said she appreciated the lower profile of Joe’s compared to other late-night Franklin Street destinations.

“There has only been like one time when I’ve been there when the line’s been out the door,” Brooks said. “It’s good when you are out late on Franklin and you need somewhere you can just walk in.”

city@dailytarheel.com

Safety officials eye Va. Tech case

A court ruled the school didn’t have to send an alert in the shooting.

By Sarah Moseley
Staff Writer

After years of legal battles, a court has ruled that Virginia Tech University was not negligent in the 2007 shooting that claimed 32 lives and sparked campus safety change nationwide — including UNC’s Alert Carolina system.

But some safety groups are concerned that the Virginia Supreme Court ruling could open a window for more lax security measures on campuses.

The lawsuit against Virginia Tech was filed by the families of two students killed in the 2007 massacre, alleging that university officials were negligent and slow to issue a campus warning about the shooting.

UNC administrators say while campus safety measures will likely not be affected by the ruling, Alert Carolina is continuing to change and faces challenges and criti-

cism.

Winston Crisp, vice chancellor for student affairs, said the process of trying to maintain a safe campus is one that’s ongoing.

“Aside from the human tragedy, the massacre provided a launching point for people’s expectations for campus safety,” he said. “We tweak things as we gain experience.”

Crisp said one ongoing issue is how Alert Carolina competes with emergency reporting on social media. He said people have the ability to post videos and pictures of emergencies immediately without including the facts or full perspective.

“There’s more and more pressure on us to be swift to avoid people relying on information that’s not very reliable. The challenge is, often it takes time to get the right information,” Crisp said.

The UNC safety system and others across the nation underwent significant changes directly after the shooting, such as the development of Alert Carolina in 2008, said Director of Public Safety Jeff McCracken.

The University hired an emer-

gency management coordinator, instituted an outdoor siren system, emergency exercises and a more effective emergency notification system in the aftermath of the shootings, McCracken said.

Randy Young, spokesman for UNC’s Department of Public Safety, said the ruling doesn’t have many implications on campus.

He said every university has a different population and different resources to deal with, and much has changed in the way of campus safety since the Virginia Tech shootings.

But as campus safety industry standards and technology advance, McCracken said the system will continue to change.

Tyler Jacon, chairman of the safety and security committee for Student Congress, said he and administrators want to have as many avenues as possible to communicate vital information.

The committee is working with Alert Carolina to add an alert notification system to campus televisions and computers, Jacon said. If implemented, notifications about threats to campus safety would pop up on campus

computers and televisions in residence halls and other buildings across campus.

He said there’s also a discussion of creating a placeholder notification, which would provide students with broad information that would ensure safety in situations where all the details cannot be disclosed or is unavailable.

“It would be used very rarely,” Jacon said. “But it has the benefit of alerting students faster.”

Daniel Carter, director of the 32 National Campus Safety Initiative with the VTV Family Outreach Foundation — an organization founded by survivors of the Virginia Tech shooting, said he is impressed with the way things have improved since the 2007 massacre.

“Students, employees and families have a clear expectation that there will be a much faster alert issued,” Carter said.

“Campus safety has come a long way because of the lessons learned from the April 16, 2007 shootings, and there’s no turning back from that.”

university@dailytarheel.com

Senate bids begin

Several Republicans have voiced an interest in Hagan’s seat.

By Kelly Anderson
Staff Writer

Five Republican candidates are now officially in the running to unseat Democratic U.S. Sen. Kay Hagan next year — and more GOP hopefuls could join the crowded primary field in the near future.

Currently in the race for Hagan’s Senate seat are Republicans Thom Tillis, Mark Harris, Greg Brannon, Bill Flynn and Heather Grant.

A new poll by left-leaning Public Policy Polling found that Hagan is basically tied with her Republican competitors — with the exception of Flynn, who recently entered the race and wasn’t included in the polling data.

Hagan has a two- or three-point edge on most of the candidates and trails Brannon by a point, the poll found. Her approval rating stands at 44 percent.

James Cain, former U.S. ambassador to Denmark who works at a Raleigh law firm, and Lynn Wheeler, former Charlotte City Council member, could also potentially join the race, said Mitch Kokai, spokesman for the John Locke Foundation, in an email.

Kokai said Tillis enjoys an automatic advantage because of the name recognition associated with his position as speaker of the N.C. House of Representatives.

“That means he will be the one candidate to enjoy the benefits associated with being an incumbent officeholder who has dealt with potential supporters and donors from across the state,” he said.

Tillis is now leading the growing Republican primary, Public Policy Polling found.

And despite Tillis’ lack of experience running a statewide campaign, his political leadership role will allow him to secure funds crucial to a long-term campaign, Kokai said.

Brannon, a gynecologist from Cary, and Flynn, a Winston-Salem-based radio host who entered the race last weekend, are both branding themselves as tea party members to appeal to the most conservative faction of the GOP.

Harris, a Baptist pastor in Charlotte, is going to focus on the evangelical Christian base and socially conservative themes.

Grant, the lone female GOP hopeful, worked for four years in the Army Military Corps.

The election is becoming a competition between Tillis and candidates who are branding themselves as “anti-Tillis,” Kokai said.

He added that it will work to Tillis’ advantage if more candidates enter the race.

“If he can secure more than 40 percent of the primary vote while the other candidates split 60 percent of the vote, he’ll be the Republican nominee,” Kokai said.

The N.C. Democratic Party’s overall strategy is to emphasize to voters why decisions made by Republican state legislators on education, health care and taxes are contrary to the state’s values, said party spokesman Ben Ray.

Ray said the party plans to focus on job creation for the middle class and building support for the Student Loan Reform Act and Hire a Hero program — issues Hagan has been involved in during her time in the Senate.

But the N.C. Republican Party has found grounds for criticizing Hagan for her support on the Affordable Care Act, which has been publicly scrutinized in the past few weeks.

Peter McClelland, chairman of the UNC College Republicans, said in an email that Hagan continues to support the health care law despite evidence that many North Carolinians will lose insurance plans.

“Obamacare has hurt the American people, and Sen. Hagan has been an ardent supporter of it from the beginning,” he said.

Kokai said if Republicans manage to unseat Democratic incumbents, they could use their majority to block President Barack Obama’s remaining legislative agenda.

“The GOP almost certainly needs to win in North Carolina to have any kind of shot of taking over the Senate.”

state@dailytarheel.com

Strategists ponder Kleinschmidt’s political future

Some think the mayor could seek higher office.

By Kelsey Weekman
Staff Writer

When Chapel Hill’s Mayor Mark Kleinschmidt was re-elected for his third term last week, Vice President Joe Biden personally called to congratulate him.

And now there is speculation about Kleinschmidt’s next move — and his potential to run for a higher office.

Rob Schofield, policy director at the left-leaning think tank N.C. Policy Watch, said he would be shocked if Kleinschmidt did not aspire to higher office.

“He’s smart, well-spoken and telegenic,” he said. “But like other progressive politicians from Chapel Hill, he clearly faces some challenges reaching out to a broader constituency.”

Ferrel Guillory, a UNC journalism professor and an expert

on Southern politics, said recent political activity at the nation’s Capitol has refocused attention on local politicians who are more engaged with their constituency.

“In light of the stalemate in Washington, D.C., there has been renewed attention on governors and mayors who can get things done,” Guillory said.

“This mayor does not have to contend with as much opposition as others, but both political parties will be looking toward emerging leaders on the local level.”

Gary Pearce, a Democratic state political consultant, said he’s not sure if North Carolina is prepared to elect an openly gay man like Kleinschmidt to a higher position.

“In time, it will not be difficult for someone openly gay to be elected to statewide office,” Pearce said.

“Times are changing fast, but there is still prejudice.”

Guillory also said it would be difficult for Kleinschmidt

to hold a position in the state Capitol, such as state senator or state representative, because the legislature is currently majority Republican.

But Kleinschmidt said he could not imagine having a higher position than being the mayor of Chapel Hill.

“It’s such a gift that I’ve been given,” he said. “I love this town so much. I’m so honored to continue to be here for at least a couple more years.”

Kleinschmidt was one of 10 mayors in the nation to receive calls from Biden on election night.

Kleinschmidt said Biden’s call showed the significance of local politics in upcoming national elections.

“He talked about how important cities are and how they move our country forward,” Kleinschmidt said. “He said he knew this is where the rubber hits the road as far as policies go.”

Pearce said he was not

surprised by Biden’s call to Kleinschmidt.

“The vice president is obviously courting elected officials around the country so that he can run for president,” he said. “North Carolina is a key primary state, and that’s why he made the call.”

For now, Kleinschmidt said he wants to continue emphasizing how local politics can shape the lives of all residents.

He said he is spending the beginning of his new term focusing on local projects, specifically an initiative focused on improving youth services called Chapel Hill 4 YOUth , and completing the design of the Ephesus Church area to inspire quality redevelopment.

“I don’t know if there will be a remarkable change in my life,” he said.

“All kinds of things can happen, but I just look forward to being the mayor of Chapel Hill again.”

city@dailytarheel.com



DTH FILE/SARAH SHAW

Chapel Hill Mayor Mark Kleinschmidt speaks at Vimala’s Curryblossom Cafe after his re-election. Some are speculating about his political future.