



**FRIDAY**  
50% Chance of Snow  
38/25



**SATURDAY**  
70% Chance of Snow  
27/16



**SUNDAY**  
Clear  
36/20

# C THE CARRBORO CITIZEN



Common catbriers occasionally display remarkable colors.  
PHOTO BY GILES BLUNDEN

## FLORA BY KEN MOORE

### Behold the catbriers

Local architect Giles Blunden has a passion for photographing mushrooms. When asked to verify the identity of his mushroom images, I refer him to recently retired botany librarian and local historian Bill Burk, who really knows his mushrooms. When Giles focuses on other plants, I'm on firmer ground. Last summer, when he asked, "Ken, what's this?" showing me a remarkable image among his mushrooms, I recognized a common native vine.

"Where did you find that catbrier?" I asked, and he replied, "While photographing mushrooms in the mountains near Asheville." When accused of computer enhancement, he declared that his image was exactly what he saw. And indeed, I recollect seeing that unbelievable turquoise-blue color on stems of catbriers from time to time, even here in our local area.

From mountaintops to sea-coasts, the vegetation of our state seems to be held in place by one or more of several species of catbrier, *Smilax spp.* Descriptive common names include sawbrier, greenbrier and bamboo-vine.

A few weeks ago, while walking the Springer's Point Preserve on Ocracoke Island, I encountered brilliant-red leaves on some of the catbriers there. With evergreen entangling vines above and strong tuberous root systems below, catbriers are effectively securing dunes and shorelines against wind and surf action. You may remember discovering knobby, potato-like roots washing up on seashores and sound sides. Those are remnants of the tough storage roots of catbriers.

SEE **FLORA** PAGE 8

## Three years in, Carrboro High hits a winning stride



Carrboro High School athletes representing cross country, basketball, football, swimming, soccer, track, tennis, golf and volleyball teams.  
PHOTO BY AVA BARLOW

BY BETH MECHUM  
Staff Writer

An atmosphere of success has taken hold on the Carrboro High School campus.

The field hockey team now plays more competitively with both East Chapel Hill and Chapel Hill, the women's golf team helped start a high school women's golf league in the area and the men's soccer team beat conference rival Cedar Ridge for the first time ever.

Students, teachers and parents walked the halls and fields of Carrboro High School three years ago not knowing what was ahead. It was tough going in the beginning, and it's still no easy ride. But with cohesion, camaraderie and a sense of community from all, things just keep getting better.

Three years ago, in the school's first year of operation, the football team couldn't as much as sniff a win, even when at home on its brand-new field. Fortunately, there weren't many people in the stands to witness those weekly beatings. A full women's golf team was just a pie-in-the-sky dream for the few golf enthusiasts on campus. There was no senior leadership on any team, because there were no seniors. Kids were thrust into starting positions in sports they'd never before played because they didn't have the opportunity to earn their reps on junior varsity teams, because, well, there were none of those either.

SEE **JAGS** PAGE 5

## Town council wary of library costs

BY KIRK ROSS  
Staff Writer

**CHAPEL HILL** — Town leaders will take a hard look at library funding and the consequences of a proposed expansion of the Chapel Hill Public Library at the Town Council's retreat this weekend.

After looking at the impact of the project during its regular meeting Monday night at Town Hall, council members said that while they support the project, the long-term costs and their effect on the town budget warrant more conversation.

Council member Gene Pease said he supports the expansion project, which would be financed through bonds approved by voters in 2003. But

Pease said he is concerned that Chapel Hill taxpayers would likely shoulder the bulk of the cost of staffing, operating and maintaining the addition.

In a presentation to the council, Town Manager Roger Stancil and Finance Director Ken Pennoyer outlined a plan for moving forward on the \$16.3 million expansion, which would double the size of the building.

Stancil said favorable financing conditions and the town's Triple A bond rating would allow for the construction of the building to be completed without raising taxes.

But after the building opens, staff and operating costs would add an estimated \$774,799 annually to the town budget. If paid for with a tax increase, that would add 1.13 cents to

the town's tax rate.

Stancil said phasing in the use of the new building and working with library management to find other savings could reduce some of the impact.

Library costs have been the subject of a long-simmering dispute between town and county officials. At Monday's meeting, council member Penny Rich said the county's share of the cost has not kept up while the library's budget has increased. The county contributes \$250,000 annually to help cover library operating expenses, an amount that has not changed since 1995.

Library officials estimate that patrons from outside Chapel Hill account for about 40 percent of the library's circulation.

Mayor Mark Kleinschmidt said

that given the county's budget woes, he does not expect to see a major increase from the commissioners this year, but would like to see a commitment to increase the county's share in years ahead.

During last year's budget discussions, the council looked at charging a fee to use the library, which is free for all residents of Orange County.

The council also received a status report on the 140 West Project. According to the report, Ram Properties reports 33 new condominium contracts and expects to have a proposed budget ready for town review in April.

SEE **LIBRARY** PAGE 3

## A homemade treat goes big time

RECENTLY ...  
BY VALARIE SCHWARTZ

The cellophane packages look innocent enough with their little Carolina blue ribbons. First-time buyers naively pluck them from shelves and take them home with no inkling of the pleasures to be elicited while eating them; or the pangs when they're depleted.

This is the story of how a mother and son working together turned the "Southern part of heaven" into the home of Chapel Hill Toffee — to die for.

In 2008, Chapel Hill native and UNC graduate (class of 2003) Mark Graves, 28, found himself out of work after a short career in banking. While her two sons (Scott is two years older than Mark) were growing up, Karen Graves, a stay-at-home mom, worked in clay and created a niche selling ceramic angels with stringy yarn-like hair at Womancraft Fine Handcrafted Gifts. Then she read the newspaper one day in 2002 and learned about A Southern Season's constant quest for locally created items to sell — especially candy.

Karen, a native of Maine, has, for as long as she can remember, made toffee "with a recipe I've had forever and ever and ever." Karen found her way to Chapel Hill the way most people do — as a student (class of '74) — where she met and fell in love with Griffin Graves (class of '72). They married and moved for a short while to Winston-Salem until Griff received his law degree, then returned to Chapel Hill, where he clerked and launched his career. So, since the mid-1970s, Karen has



Mark Graves and his mother, Karen Graves, make Chapel Hill Toffee in the kitchen of their home in Chapel Hill.  
PHOTO BY AVA BARLOW

made her toffee in their Chapel Hill home, refining her recipe and learning it was a favorite whenever she served it.

Eager to take it further, she obtained her LLC license (KLG Candies), had her kitchen inspected, and right before Easter 2003 took some toffee to A Southern Season, where it was well-received. A bin was pro-

vided at the candy counter for her to keep filled.

"Toffee was faster and easier than working with clay," Karen said recently while sitting at her kitchen table. "I never thought it would go beyond that."

SEE **TREAT** PAGE 7

## Prime rate foreclosures surge in NC

BY RICH FOWLER  
Staff Writer

Warmer weather may be on the horizon, but don't expect that to translate into a hot housing market. Uncertainty about the economy is one reason the market is tepid. Another is that the number of foreclosures continues to be high and new data on the types of filings points to a rise among traditionally safer borrowers.

Total mortgage foreclosure filings were up more than 17 percent statewide from 2008 to 2009, according to data from the N.C. Administrative Office of the Courts. The office tracks both commercial and residential filings in North Carolina, which, combined, rose from 53,960 in 2008 to 63,341 in 2009.

To make matters worse, two-thirds of current foreclosure filings are on prime loans, which are supposed to be much less risky for lenders than the subprime loans that started the foreclosure crisis, according to Chief Deputy Commissioner of Banks Mark Pearce.

Prime borrowers with fixed-rate mortgages are the highest-growth segment of foreclosures, according to, Roberto Quercia, director of the UNC Center for Community Capital.

"They have nothing to do with subprime [loans]," Quercia said. "They have nothing to do with people in unstable employment or with poor credit."

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#### Carrboro board looks at lighting standards

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