




This Weekend



FRIDAY
20% chance of storm
94/68



SATURDAY
clear
94/70



SUNDAY
20% chance of storm
95/74

THE CARRBORO CITIZEN

Inside —
Our monthly
arts and music
publication,
MILL.



PHOTO BY KEN MOORE
Face to face with the common dayflower

FLORA By Ken Moore

A flower that makes you smile

Every time I walk by one of these little flowers, I feel a smile inside and my instinct is to pause long enough to say: “Hi, how you doin’?”

Early this week, I took one of these little flowers to Padgett Station, one of my Carrboro coffee spots, and set it in front of Jami and Logan, who were working behind the counter.

“What is your response to this little flower?” I asked without any preliminaries.

Jami studied it intently for just a few seconds before a smile lit up her face and she responded, “It looks like a little old man with a beret!”

Logan’s instant response: “It looks like Stitch from *Lilo and Stitch*!” He then had to explain to me that Stitch is a character in a Disney film. So I’m not alone in having animated responses to the common or Asiatic dayflower, *Commelina communis*. I frequently think of a blue-eared Minnie Mouse when I see it.

There are several species of dayflowers. The common name is appropriate since each flower blooms for only one day. The one we are most likely to encounter, the Asiatic dayflower, is an annual from China. It is likely quickly snatched from well-tended gardens before it is ever allowed to express its cheerful flowers, but in my yard it’s allowed to wander about from year to year. Frequenters of Weaver Street Market in Carrboro may spot it reaching over the brick wall above the patio where it freely moves about among the perennials. Nearby there is a vigorous population, looking like a deliberately planted groundcover, on the edge of the market’s paved delivery area.

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INSIDE

Town approaches bicycle plan

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Abbey Court ownership says towing policy eased

by Susan Dickson
Staff Writer

The homeowners’ association for Abbey Court Apartments announced on Tuesday that they had relaxed the complex’s towing policy and asked residents who had been denied parking permits due to vehicle appearance to reapply.

“We would ask that anyone who has been denied a parking permit due to a vehicle appearance issue revisit the office at Abbey Court,” said Ken Lucas, president and CEO of the Tar Heel Companies and owner of the majority of Abbey Court’s units, in a press release. “We will be reassessing any vehicle that has been previously denied due to an appearance issue. The policy regarding the need for vehicles to be properly registered to residents remains unchanged.”

According to the press release from the homeowners’ association, dated July 29, the association decided to relax the rules regarding the appearance of vehicles more than a week ago.

Earlier this month, Abbey Court began towing vehicles that were parked in the apartment complex’s lot without permits. However, many

residents were denied parking permits because their cars have dents, need paint or have a cracked windshield. Residents are also required to present documentation that they are a leaseholder or authorized occupant as well as vehicle registration information.

According to Brad Chandler of Chandler’s Towing, the company contracted to tow vehicles illegally parked in the lot, the company has towed 29 cars from Abbey Court’s parking lot since July 17.

Accusations of discrimination

Residents of Abbey Court have said management unfairly discriminates against Latino residents, many of whom are working class and cannot afford to fix their cars.

Ricardo Lazaro, a resident for 12 years, said he had never had a problem with management at Abbey Court until now.

“We cannot buy new cars,” he said



PHOTO BY KIRK ROSS
Abbey Court residents voice their opinions at Town Hall on Sunday.

in Spanish. “We are working people.”

Last week, Carrboro Mayor Mark Chilton asked Lucas to stop towing residents’ cars, but Lucas refused. According to Chilton, Lucas said he was concerned that some people were parking there illegally to catch the bus to downtown Carrboro. In addition, according to Chilton, Lucas said he

SEE **ABBEY COURT** PAGE 5

UNC surgeon leads West Bank initiative

by Rich Fowler
Staff Writer

Thabet Thabet hospital sits atop a large hill in the West Bank town of Tulkarem, and on a clear day from the rooftop you can see the Mediterranean Sea only 30 miles away. But the hospital has to function without computers, microscopes, saws, drills and a lot of other equipment you would ordinarily find in hospitals in the U.S.

That hospital is where John van Aalst’s mother was born.

For about 10 days every May and December, van Aalst brings a small team of medical professionals from the U.S. to Tulkarem to operate on children with cleft palates and to teach Palestinian doctors how to treat them. Van Aalst, a plastic surgeon at UNC Hospitals, has treated over 250 Palestinian children since he first came to the region in 2005. His wife, Cindy, a registered nurse who also works at UNC Hospitals, comes and assists him on his trips to the West Bank.

This May, Bilal Saib, a Chapel Hill dentist; Lindsay Butler, a dental hygienist; and Austin Rose, an ear, nose and throat surgeon at UNC Hospitals also came with van Aalst to Tulkarem. They will all take part in a presentation about their most recent trip to the West Bank at Grace Church on Sage Road in Chapel Hill this Sunday at 2:30 p.m.

“We’re operating on kids who’ve got no money,” van Aalst said.

“They have nothing,” Saib said of the people who live in the refugee



PHOTO BY LINDSAY BUTLER
Doctor Austin Rose with a young patient.

camp. “Even by Palestinian standards, they’re considered second-class citizens.”

Van Aalst and Saib took donated equipment to the hospital in order to perform the surgeries. Van Aalst brought thousands of dollars of medical equipment donated by medical equipment manufacturers and Saib raised several more thousand to buy dental equipment to take over.

“I literally built a small operating room and dental facility there,” Saib said.

Rose said he and his colleagues performed about five to seven surgeries a day for about six days, from eight in the morning until as late as eight at night, followed by a big dinner.

“Everybody was extremely nice to us, and incredibly hospitable. It was amazing. Every night we were hosted at someone’s house for dinner, and you

really got to know people,” he said.

“There are plenty of kids that really do need surgery that we can’t operate on in a given trip, and the only thing we can tell them is, ‘Next time,’” van Aalst said. “It’s a difficult decision. But it’s a little easier knowing that we are going back.”

Rose said he learned a lot from the local doctors. He worked with one doctor who had converted the driver’s seat of an old Subaru into an examination chair. “People actually get pretty ingenious when they don’t have everything that we have,” he said.

Van Aalst is emphatic about involving local doctors and wants to put himself out of a job in the West Bank.

“The goal really is that we don’t

SEE **WEST BANK** PAGE 3

UNC studies Carrboro rail siding

by Kirk Ross
Staff Writer

After recently closing the deal for an 8 1/2-acre parcel off Merritt Mill Road on the Chapel Hill-Carrboro border, university officials OK’ed plans to start studying the site for a new rail siding.

At its meeting last week, the UNC-Chapel Hill Board of Trustees approved a recommendation to enlist Raleigh design firm Moffatt & Nichol to study the site, most of which is in Carrboro.

Bruce Runberg, vice chancellor of Facilities Planning and Construction, said Wednesday that the firm will be asked to do a site analysis on the parcel, which is located at 130 Merritt Mill Rd. and situated behind Hunt Electric at the corner of Cameron Avenue and Merritt Mill Road and south of the Ready Mixed Concrete plant.

Runberg said he expects the preliminary study of how to use the property to take about six months. One key goal, he said, is to develop a rail spur that will allow greater ease in shifting coal and limestone rail cars for the university’s nearby co-generation plant. Runberg said given the size of the parcel, there could be additional uses.

“Eight and a half acres is a fair amount of property,” he said, adding that the process of developing a plan

SEE **RAILROAD** PAGE 3

Standing still does not move this Carrboroite

RECENTLY . . .

By Valarie Schwartz

With wide-open mind, heart, arms and face, Joy Williams has returned this week to Mali, the West African nation she first visited in 2002, where she learned the dances of her ancestors. During this trip, she will participate in The Bloodline Project, striving to fight Mali’s number-one killer of children — malaria — killing one child every 30 seconds. The problem is compounded by the 70 percent illiteracy rate in this country we Americans may best know as the land of Timbuktu.

A native of western Orange County, Williams, 27, is the fourth of seven children born to Mahlon and Veronica Williams. Mahlon is retired from the Carrboro Police Department.

“My parents met at N.C. Central, then married and moved to Carrboro,” she said. She credits both of them for the love of the arts that she and her siblings all share. “They both reinforced it,” with her father insisting that all of them learn to play an instrument. With a roll of her expressive eyes, she says she learned to play the bass clarinet, “just to fulfill the obligation.”

She needs no instrument — music speaks through her body. While talking on the Weaver Street Market lawn, her hands subconsciously started “dancing” in time to the loud music in someone’s passing car as she used them to punctuate her words.

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PHOTO BY VALARIE SCHWARTZ
Joy Williams of Carrboro left Wednesday for a six-week trip to Mali.