



**FRIDAY**  
50% chance of Rain  
76/63



**SATURDAY**  
40% chance of Rain  
76/51



**SUNDAY**  
40% chance of Rain  
74/59

# C THE CARRBORO CITIZEN



**Big City**  
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The penstemons (beardtongues) are beginning to flower at Mason Farm.  
PHOTO BY KEN MOORE

## FLORA BY KEN MOORE

### A spectacular Piedmont wildflower display

Hey there folks, this is advance notice that the penstemons at Mason Farm are beginning to flower!!

Last week, a few early-flowering stems were evident. A “closer look” brought into focus hundreds upon hundreds of plants that will be coming into full, peak, flowering during the next two weeks.

Folks who enjoy walking the trail around Mason Farm’s Big Oak Woods during all the seasons may recall the charred, blackened appearance of some of the fields back in February and March. It’s unbelievable that spectacular masses of white flowers appear in those fields just two months after the N.C. Botanical Garden’s “fire crew” burned them.

The penstemon flowering will be more spectacular this year than last. Members of the garden’s fire crew said that prescribed burning (carefully planned and supervised fire used as a vegetation management tool) helps increase the diversity and flowering of plants in the fields. Fire also helps control some of the unwanted exotic invasives.

You’ll want to take a close look inside the snapdragon-like flowers to discover why they are called beardtongue. To avoid the poison ivy and ticks in the fields, I like to have binoculars handy for viewing flowers up close for surprising details. Those fields of wildflowers and grasses also attract all kinds of colorful pollinators, and binoculars help bring them in for close inspection.

SEE **FLORA** PAGE 8

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### Reusing, Crook’s win Beard awards

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## Men’s shelter plans approved

BY SUSAN DICKSON  
Staff Writer

After months of presentations, hearings and deliberations, the Chapel Hill Town Council voted 6-2 to approve plans for the Inter-Faith Council for Social Service’s proposed Community House Men’s Shelter.

Approved plans for the project call for a two-story, 16,250-square-foot shelter with 52 beds, 17 emergency cots for use on “white-flag” nights during inclement weather, 16 parking spaces, offices and

clinic space. UNC is providing the 1.8-acre property for the project – located at 1315 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., near the intersection of Homestead Road – at virtually no cost.

Prior to the decision to approve the plans, the council continued a March 21 public hearing regarding the proposal. Supporters and opponents of the plan packed the Chapel Hill Town Hall council chambers, with fire marshals turning others away as the room reached capacity, and public comments and discussion continued until after midnight.

Most of those in attendance were in support of the IFC’s plans.

Council members Matt Czajkowski and Laurin Easthom voted against the plan. Czajkowski had proposed an alternate resolution that would have approved the special-use permit for the project, but without the 17 emergency cots. He urged the council to postpone approving the emergency beds while the IFC and others in the community looked for alternative solutions.

SEE **SHELTER** PAGE 3



Sadie Rapp completed a mural on the side of Balanced Movement Studio to benefit the Painted Walls Project for her eighth-grade project at the Duke School. PHOTO BY SUSAN DICKSON

BY SUSAN DICKSON  
Staff Writer

When Duke School eighth-grader Sadie Rapp was presented with the challenge of creating a project that would give back to the community, she wasn’t sure where it would take her, though she knew it would have something to do with art.

She’d been toying with the visual aesthetic for as long as she could remember, so art was the first thing she thought of when she was assigned the project.

“I’ve always kind of been interested in murals,” she said. “The process is really interesting to me.”

So Sadie did some online research and came across an article about the Painted Walls Project, an effort by the Chapel Hill Preservation Society and the community to

restore and preserve Chapel Hill’s downtown murals.

“All the murals around Chapel Hill mean a lot to me,” she said, so her own mural would be the perfect way for Sadie to give back.

Since February, Sadie has been painting a mural on the side of Balanced Movement Studio on Weaver Street, which she hopes to complete this week. The design of the mural was based on a painting she did about a year ago, after one of her teachers commissioned her to paint a small piece, with the caveat that it had to have something to do with dogs.

With three family dogs at home, Sadie had a good handle on her subject. But the more lifelike she painted the dogs, the less fun the project felt, so she began to focus on bright colors and almost cartoon-like shapes.

“I decided to go with a more Keith

Haring-style,” she said. The finished product is a collage of 35 brightly colored dogs tumbling around a lost cat.

The dogs can be “adopted” for a \$50 donation to the Preservation Society; the cat has already been auctioned off to one of Sadie’s classmates.

Thus far, Sadie has raised more than \$700 through adoptions, and all the money Sadie’s project raises will go toward restoring the enormous sea turtle mural on Rosemary Street.

The public is invited to an opening for the mural at Balanced Movement at 4 p.m. on Sunday.

Sadie plans to continue raising money for the Preservation Society until all the dogs are, in spirit, adopted. To adopt a dog, email Sadie at [sadie.rapp@dukeschool.org](mailto:sadie.rapp@dukeschool.org) and for more information about the Painted Walls Project, visit [chapelhillpreservation.com](http://chapelhillpreservation.com)

## County addresses EMS

BY WILL BRYANT  
Staff Writer

Though it was only a work session for the Orange County Board of Commissioners, members of Orange County’s emergency services and fire departments packed the small room at the Link Government Services Center in Hillsborough on Tuesday night to hear the results of the first phase of a study assessing the performance of emergency crews in the county.

The board and those in attendance came expecting to hear feedback on EMS and fire department performance, but most left the meeting without a clear understanding of

the study’s results and implications. Attendees were particularly interested in the study because of a March 2010 EMS report that county EMS was failing to meet performance goals and would remain unable to do so unless additional resources were allocated to the department.

Average response times and other data were missing from fire departments in northern Orange County, a fact that raised concerns with some members of the board.

“There are parts of Orange County that you don’t have data for, and that needs to be reconciled,” said Commissioner Alice Gordon. “They are getting money from us, so we need that data.”

MMA Consulting Group Inc., hired by Orange County to carry out the study, said there were gaps in the data from departments in Mebane and elsewhere in the northern county, and didn’t want to risk compromising the accuracy of the study.

Board Chair Bernadette Pelissier said that the missing data brings the study to a halt.

“It’s not just an issue of unusable data,” said Pelissier. “It’s an issue of missing data. We have some of the data, but we can’t really use it.”

Other commissioners also expressed concerns about the validity of the study.

SEE **COMMISSION** PAGE 3

## A home, a community

RECENTLY . . .  
BY VALARIE SCHWARTZ

Persecution, destruction, flight, fear, capture, escape, refugee – these words can be used to tell the story of some of our neighbors: the Karen people of Burma (now called Myanmar). It’s a cruel, malicious and little-known history of a growing segment of our population in Orange County.

But the bright side to their harsh past is that they are building a community here, aided greatly by the benevolence of those whose lives they touch – the churches they attend and the University of North Carolina, where many of them work as housekeepers on campus or at UNC Health Care. From these sources, the once impossible dream of a home of their own has come true through partnership with Habitat for Humanity.

On May 7, the five members of the Krit Heh Htoo and Say Ray Htoo family stood

before their new home and thanked the many new friends who made this dream a reality in the Phoenix Place subdivision off Rogers Road in Chapel Hill. One does not come to live in a Habitat for Humanity home without making new friends.

“Bringing people and resources together to help families build and own quality affordable homes” is how Habitat for Humanity of Orange County has always operated, said executive director Susan Levy.

The Htoo family was sponsored by their church, First Baptist of Hillsborough, but three other Karen families moved into homes this year in the same neighborhood through sponsorship of the United Church of Chapel Hill. Flicka Bateman, a member of United Church and a Habitat board member, has become an ambassador for the Karen community, even learning the difficult language

SEE **RECENTLY** PAGE 2



The family of Krit Heh and Say Ray Htoo were welcomed to their new home at a Habitat for Humanity dedication on May 7. Daughter Dah Eh spoke for the family, which includes sisters, Tee See and Gay Doh. PHOTO BY VALARIE SCHWARTZ

## Chapel Hill manager’s budget includes no tax increase

BY SUSAN DICKSON  
Staff Writer

Chapel Hill Town Manager Roger Stancil presented a budget to the town council on Monday recommending no tax increase and no layoffs for town employees.

The \$50.5 million budget holds the property-tax rate at 49.4 cents per \$100 of valuation, or \$988 on a \$200,000 home, the same rate that applied in 2009-10 and 2010-11. The budget also maintains the downtown service district tax rate of 7.1 cents per \$100 of valuation.

Stancil’s proposed budget includes a 4 percent decrease in general fund expenditures, which he said he achieved with a \$740,500 reduction in capital projects funding, replacing \$661,000 in street paving funding with bond funds and finding \$584,346 in miscellaneous budget cuts.

Other cuts include the elimination of the town’s Fourth of July fireworks display, for about \$37,000 in savings; the elimination of Project Turn Around, for \$76,844 in savings; the use of bond funds for library transition costs, saving \$229,700; and a \$247,669 reduction in matching funds for the fire grant.

“The recession has been a very challenging time,” Stancil said. “I think that we’ve weathered it well. We need for the economy to begin to grow.”

The only new item in the budget, Stancil said, is the town’s comprehensive plan, which represents a \$250,000 increase. Budget increases include a \$520,250 increase in health insurance costs and a \$128,620 increase in employer contributions to the state retirement system.

The budget also includes a one-time \$800 payment for employees to help them with rising fuel and health care costs.

To balance the budget, Stancil used about \$1 million from the available fund balance, which, though less than the amount taken from fund balance in recent years, lowers the town’s undesignated fund balance from 19 percent to about 12 percent – below average for those with triple A bond ratings.

“We’re one of the smallest towns in the country to have a triple A bond rating,” Stancil said, adding that maintaining the fund balance and consequently the triple A bond rating is important for the town’s ability to borrow money at favorable interest rates.

The council will hold a public hearing and a work session on Stancil’s proposed budget on Monday at 7 p.m. at the Chapel Hill Town Hall.

## Transit

On Tuesday, the council heard from transportation director Steve Spade in a work session regarding the 2011-12 Chapel Hill Transit budget, which includes about \$900,000 in potential savings through the elimination of service for certain trips and routes. The savings could help close a \$2.3 million budget gap for CHT.

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