

Club swaps news, tall tales over coffee

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wards, who had a ready answer. "Well, Joe Harris has a key to the store," he said. "You can still meet here if he's willing to come open the door."

Good friend Joe Harris was willing to do better than that. He volunteered wife Trudy's biscuit-making skills so they could have biscuits with their coffee. Pals Wilson Knott and James Powers also donated venison sausage and country ham biscuits, respectively.

So at 6 a.m. on the designated morning, Joe Harris unlocked the door and set out the donation cup and the first of the groups began to file in. Donation cup? "Yeah," says Joe, "so everyone could pay for whatever they got. They just got as close as they could to the correct amount...usually a bit over. The gossip is free. You know, most of the men joke about their wives gossiping, but I don't think they have anything over on us. I can't think of a better gossip session than around the coffee table at Edwards Grocery."

The groups that meet at Edwards have an intriguing structure. There are groups within a group among the Edwards customers. Titles and responsibilities are assumed or assigned according to each individu-

al's personality or order of arrival every morning.

First is the group who forgets that Edwards isn't home because they've been hanging out there since they were teenagers and worked there themselves. It seems that Wilson Harris, known as Blue Ox, is president of the group and likes to make distinctions between the old-timers and newcomers, and according to some, wants to make sure that newcomers know their place.

According to Bryan Edwards, about half the teenagers of Carpenter have worked in the store at one time or another since his father opened it in 1958.

Joe Harris was one of those teenagers and fondly remembers that Bryan's father, Troy Edwards, would give each person who came to work there a good pair of shoes to help cushion their feet against the wear and tear of days spent walking on cement floors.

Then there is the bunch who wear caps sporting the slogan, "Lyn' Outlaws of Carpenter, N.C." This group is known as the hunting bunch.

Finally, there is the C.B.S.C., alias the Carpenter's Liars Club. Lest you think this is not a committed bunch, consider the dutiful

nature of these men to their self-assigned roles:

The first customer to arrive every morning is William McLamb. He is therefore the designated coffee chairman and is responsible for "putting the pot on."

Next to arrive is usually Charles Cone who is considered by at least one of the other men as the hardest working of the group. He keeps his own cup at the store because he doesn't like drinking from a styrofoam cup. He then sits at the table and reads the sports page so he'll be prepared to do his sports reporting when the rest of the group begins to arrive. It is said that he seems to especially enjoy reporting about fishing at the coast.

"Anchorman" Bryan Edwards reads the business page so he can give his reports throughout the day on how the stocks are doing.

As weatherman, Lester Goodwin keeps everyone informed on what to expect from day to day.

Bill Schooler is the crossword puzzle champ. His friends claim he can complete a crossword puzzle in three to five minutes.

Wilson Harris and Cone are acknowledged as the best barbecue chefs. But according to Cone, James Powers talks most knowledgeably about cooking. Says an-

other, "Yeah, back in the trail-riding days the cook was referred to as a cook, so I guess that should be his title...but James is a pretty big guy so I don't guess I'll let you quote me on that!"

Incidentally, while Cone is also considered the best fisherman by most of the C.B.S.C., he jests that the last time it rained he caught a nine-pound bass in a rabbit box, and a four-pound bearm with a two-pound cricket.

There seems to be a tossup on who the best practical joker is. Some say that title should belong to Arthur Lee who, among other antics once tied a set of antlers to the grill of Johnny Howard's pickup truck. Others say it should go to Johnny Howard, who as a child spied his older brother on the roof of the barn. He slipped quietly over and laid the ladder on the ground so it would appear to have fallen, then hid and watched as his barefoot brother hopped around on the ceiling, shouting for help. Says Howard, "It was too high for him to jump, and too hot to stay put!"

If there is some question about the practical joker title, the hands-down title of president of the Liars Club goes to Johnny Howard. He first earned this title when as a boy



ON THE SIDELINES—Leon Booth, a regular at the Liar's Club, listens to the chatter Saturday morning while he finishes a snack.

he went into the fields and as a joke told his dad that his mom had her hand hung up in the wringer of the washing machine. Before he could tell his dad that he was teasing him, his dad jumped down from the tractor and took off on foot, running the substantial distance home to help his wife, who was, of course, bewildered.

When Howard walked into Edwards on biscuit morning, he was regaled with requests for his best lie. He replied that he couldn't tell a lie until he'd had a biscuit. Joe Harris then asked him why he was late. Johnny replied, "I had business to take care of at home." The other men chuckled, and Joe Harris said, "See, that's a lie right there!"

Real estate prices soar as businesses compete for sites close to RTP

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which they've done, to maintain a quality of lift and still maintain a tax base."

Meeting called to name successor

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had him this long. He's done a lot for us."

Mark Silver-Smith cited Cobey's work in negotiating a water and sewer contract with the Town of Cary. "You put together a good deal for us," he told Cobey. "I wish you good luck."

Said Mayor Broadwell: "I wish the very best for you from the bottom of my heart. I appreciate all the guidance and assistance, and your good image. You've been a lot of help to us."

Cobey is no stranger to the political scene. He was the Fourth District Representative in Congress from 1985 to 1987 and state secretary of Environment, Health and Natural Resources from 1989-92. He also served as athletics director at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from 1976 to 1980.

When Cobey was a Congressman, his district included Randolph County, where race car legend Petty served as a county commissioner for 16 years. Petty supported Cobey in his Congressional campaign.

"He campaigned for me, and now is the time for me to answer the call and help him," said Cobey. "He is a great citizen of North Carolina and has been a wonderful public servant."

If Petty is successful in his bid to fill the seat being vacated by Rufus Edmisten, he would become the first Republican to be elected Secretary of State in this century.

"I'm very much interested in Republicans holding on to the House of Representatives, gaining the Senate and having a Republican Secretary of State," said Cobey.

Cobey will co-chair the campaign with James Trotter, a Raleigh attorney and former senior legal counsel to Jim Martin during Martin's two terms as governor.

On the north side of Morrisville-Carpenter Road with 1,000 foot frontage is a wooded tract of some 43 acres zoned commercially. It's on the market for \$48,000 an acre through Drukker & Falk of Raleigh. Broker David Peoples says the property has been offered for about a year.

"The move by Morrisville to bring in water and sewer is a major step," he says. "It should double sales. The town is ideally situated near RTP and the airport and its development has historically been held back by the lack of sewer facilities and water."

"This land, in particular, is ideally situated near the intersection with Davis Drive and lends itself to a long-term project," Peoples explained. "There are actually three pieces of land offered by different owners that are contiguous. One is an 8-acre parcel on Davis Drive, the 43 acres we have with 1,000 foot frontage on Morrisville-Carpenter, and 100 acres to the

rear. I believe the asking price for the latter is \$50,000 an acre."

The 8-acre parcel on the corner has just recently been made available, according to Roy Mashburn, an agent with the broker handling the property, Goodman Segar Hogan and Hoffer of Chapel Hill and Raleigh. "So recent," Mashburn said, "that we haven't yet established a price. We're doing that now."

He agrees that a combination of properties would be ideal. "It ranks as one of the prime intersections in Morrisville, just north of Preston and south of RTP. It's in a mixed-use zone which means it can handle office, multi-family, shopping. Another 65 acres are available on the southeast corner," he noted.

Mashburn agrees that Morrisville is primed for major development. "The town has been steering toward commercial use, but the biggest move by far has been the agreement with Cary to supply water and sewer."

The long-term deal with Cary will double Morrisville's water and sewer capacity and also put an end to the ban on apartment construction that has lasted more than a year. It is expected Morrisville commissioners will lift the ban once the water begins to flow from Cary—as much as 1 million gallons as opposed to the daily 500,000 gallons it now moves.

Drukker & Falk, meanwhile, is also developing a major apartment complex at the south end of Morrisville along Morrisville Parkway and opposite Morrisville Elementary School. In 1986, the company bought some 60 acres for one-, two-, and three-bedroom upscale apartments. One-bedroom units rent for \$650 a month, two-bedroom units \$750, and three-bedrooms \$950. The development advanced with limited sewer facilities.

"Now we're planning to start another 86 units for a total of 130 apartments," said broker David

Rutledge. Rutledge says although the town is business-oriented, it has been comfortable with residential usage. "We've found the town officials very cooperative, and there is the

benefit of dealing with a small town," Rutledge said, adding, "you can call them today and they will inspect tomorrow. That's something you don't find in larger municipalities."

Commercial real estate auction draws crowd

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the three offered at the auction, and that the purchase was strictly for speculative purposes. He owns several hundred acres in the area, and considers Morrisville's future in land values to be extremely bright. "I plan to sell in the future, but if you speculate in today's market, and plan to sell in six months, you shouldn't be in it. It may take a couple, five or 10 years," he said.

Referring to the land being auctioned, he said it was going to be a great area. He said it has an industrial overlay, meaning it can have a variety of uses such as for offices or flex warehouses. "Water and sewer facilities will make a big difference," he explained.

Stevens refused comment on his purchase, but Rogers said the Raleigh speculator has been in the business for years and owns a large amount of property.

Dick Shapiro, a licensed engineer and developer attending the auction, said he considered one of the

drawbacks to be what is called the 10-day upset bid. "It can hold up the actual ownership for months," he said.

Rogers explained that the 10-day rule means anyone can, within 10 days, file a higher bid for the property, providing it meets a figure 5 percent higher than the winning bid. "Then, if that bid is met by yet another bid 5 percent still higher, another 10-day period begins. Purchase becomes final when 10 days pass without a higher figure being considered," Rogers said.

Morrisville Chamber of Commerce President Raymond Lech said the auction was the first he was aware of in Morrisville and was enthusiastic about the turnout of about 30 people. Asked about the price per acre, he commented: "I was surprised, considering the figures for other land on the market. The buyers got a pretty good price."

Lech said Morrisville is a growing community and that all three parcels of land are in a prime loca-

tion, adding, "and as they say about land, 'they're not making any more.'"

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