



Greenhouse eyes expansion for orchid 'recycling' service

By Beth Landl

"Fifteen years ago the only way to buy orchids in the Triangle area was through mail order," Nathan Carson said from the porch of his office at 402 Church St.

The owner of Bloomin' Orchids, known to most as Nat, took a moment during a recent rainy morning to reflect on the growth of the family business begun 13 years ago.

"Orchids are nature's largest and most extravagant family of plants," he remarked. "And I thought it was ridiculous that many people in this area didn't know much about the plants."

Carson, who lives in Cary with his wife Marian, had been growing orchids in his home for nearly 20 years when he decided it was time to introduce the plants to others in the area. And apparently they were ready for the introduction. Bloomin' Orchids has steadily

grown since it was started in a backyard greenhouse in 1982. And now Carson wants to purchase the adjacent property at 410 Church St. to expand the business for the fourth time.

The Morrisville Board of Commissioners has set a public hearing for Oct. 9 to consider rezoning that property from Low Density Residential to Village Core. Carson plans to retain the two-story house on the property and add four to five greenhouses behind it.

"We'll start with one or two greenhouses," Carson said. "But if the rezoning goes through we're looking at late winter or early spring before anything significant can happen there."

Carson said he doesn't anticipate any problem with the rezoning. There were no objections to a similar request when he moved the business to Morrisville in 1989.

The current operation includes a one-story house used as an office and four 30-by-96-foot greenhouses.

"Morrisville has been a good experience for us," he said. "And I think we've been good for the town. I've got 6,000 customers and they come in several times a year. They'd be much less likely to pay [Morrisville] a visit if we weren't here, if they didn't have plants here."

"Having plants there" is one reason the business has been so successful. Customers who buy orchids from Bloomin' Orchids not only take home colorful additions to their homes, they also know they can take advantage of a unique service. For a minimal fee, customers may return their orchids to the company once the flowers have faded and the staff at Bloomin' Or-

See GREENHOUSE, page 2

READY TO GO HOME — Nat Carson and his daughter, Carolyn Schudt, study a customer's flowering dendrobium orchid. Patrons of their

business, Bloomin' Orchids, may bring their plants back when they stop flowering and the staff will care for them until they flower again.

Old houses make good neighbors

By Roxanne Powers

In Preston Crossing, residents of the upscale neighborhood keep one foot in the past simply by waking up every morning...to the sound of roosters crowing, that is, and peacocks, turkeys, guinea hens, chickens...well, you get the picture.

If residents of Preston Crossing want to add to their nostalgic feelings about the land behind their homes, they can ask neighbor Koren Brickley. "It's just like being at home," she says. "That's one reason we picked this lot."

Neighbor Bill Kraus agrees. "I think it's wonderful back there...the old and the new. It's nice, and hopefully it's not going away."

Kraus likely will get his wish. According to Mrs. Annie Barbee, who owns the land and fowl behind him, she and her heirs have no intention of abandoning this parcel of land.

In addition to hearing sounds of the farm in 1995, one can imagine what it was like in the early part of the century. Back then, snatches of conversations flew from behind fluttering hand-held hand fans faster than the small breezes they were intended to generate.

"Well I never! You'd think it'd be enough to copy each other's hats and furniture! That Lilla and Myrtle will stop at nothin'!"

The castigating sounds of ladies' voices seem to echo and reverberate as they ride decades-old airwaves to hover over the approximately 120 acres of what was originally a tobacco farm occupied by several generations of the Edwards family.

Edwards family lore has it that

See OLD, page 2



HOW IT IS TODAY—Blanche Buffaloe Edwards, a retired school teacher and the widow of Willie Lee Edwards, lives in the two-story house on

Davis Drive that was once part of a sprawling 260 acre tobacco farm. A smaller farm continues to operate around the house.

Mansion-like offices posed for Preston

By Ron Page

Seven more buildings, each designed with stylishly Southern exteriors, are planned for a 12-acre tract in Preston off Summer Lakes Drive and High House Road. The site is to the rear of First Citizens Bank and Jaspers Restaurant.

The area is a part of a 44-acre parcel of land that encompasses Preston Corners—where High House Road intersects with Cary Parkway—and which already includes the new Preston Village Shopping Center, banks and other business enterprises.

The location for the proposed buildings abuts The Highlands golf course of Prestonwood Country Club but is buffered from the course by a 50- to 70-foot-wide swath of dense woodlands. Other access roads to the building sites will be available off Cary Parkway, north of High House and opposite the Deerwood at Preston apartment complex.

"The buildings have been designed as Southern mansions," says Woody Byrd, broker with The Properties Group, Inc., which is negotiating leases for several of the two-story buildings. A series of connecting parking lots will tie the overall office complex together, he explains.

Site plans for two of the buildings, prepared by Withers & Ravenel Engineering and Surveying, Inc. of Cary, were submitted recently to the Town of Cary. They show one building with 15,572 square feet and the other with 15,400 square feet of space.

Cary Administrative Planner Bob Benfield explains that since the project covers less than 10 acres (1.7 acres comprise the site for the two buildings), the site plans can remain with the staff and can be approved without going to the Planning Board if all conditions are addressed.

To be known as Preston Executive Center, the two buildings would be owned by Preston Corners Liability Inc., and would be located at a site zoned Residential-30 PUD (planned unit development).

Five to seven tenants are expected to be served by each structure. The architect is Robert Wakeham of Raleigh.

"Special care has been given to the exteriors to give the appearance of large residential mansions. Stucco and brick will be used," says Byrd. "While the buffer of woods is dense, the architectural committee which governs all of the development at Preston wanted to be certain that the buildings would blend in with the neighborhood, that they would project an appearance of elegance when viewed from the golf course and homes along the course."

One building plan shows two sweeping exterior stairways for access to the second floor from the golf course side.

Byrd said six of the seven planned structures will abut the buffer area to the golf course. The one farthest north is to be a medical facility, and will be operated as a

See MANSION, page 2



AND THE WINNERS ARE — Scott Johnson and Laura Ferguson, currently the most romantic kissers in the country, pose from the back of the pickup truck they won in a national kissing contest.

Kissing couple clinches national competition

By Beth Landl

Morrisville may be known for many things, but romance is not usually among them.

Yet, residing in the Treybrooke apartment community off Church Street is half of the couple named this year's most romantic kissers in the country.

"All the publicity said we were from Raleigh," says Laura Ferguson who, with her boyfriend Scott Johnson, won the title in April. "But I live in Morrisville."

The publicity began when the two won a kissing contest at The Long-branch nightclub in Raleigh, sponsored by the Kix 96.1 radio station.

"I really didn't want to go... to be in some old kissing contest," recalls Johnson, a construction contractor who lives in Raleigh.

"But when we got up there and kissed and hugged, it just seemed natural. It was Valentine's night and love was in the air."

The two competed against three other couples; each had to kiss for one minute. And when it was all over, Ferguson and Johnson had won the chance to represent the Raleigh area in a national contest.

From there it was on to Branson, Mo. Sponsored by TV's A Current Affair, the national competition pitted 19 couples from across the country against each other in a nationally televised contest. Judges included members of the Branson Chamber of Commerce.

"I knew we were going to win that contest," Ferguson says. She recounts the signs that reinforced her conviction; they were the 13th couple in the contest; their hotel room was No. 213. And when Ferguson picked up a small book in a gift shop, she casually flipped to a page with this verse: If an angel were to tell us anything of his philosophy, I believe many propositions would sound like two times two equals 13."

"I knew these had to be good omens," she recalls.

The good omens may have helped them win the contest, but the fact that Johnson proposed dur-

ing their time on stage might have been the deciding factor for the judges.

"I wasn't expecting that at all,"

See KISSING, page 2

BULK RATE
POSTAGE PAID
MORRISVILLE, N.C.
PERMIT #23

Delivered expressly
to the residents of
Morrisville and Preston