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COLORFUL DISPLAY—Along the sidewalk fronting Charlie Dreher's home on High House Road are memorials to wars, flags

and signs. A cannon he fires at the football games at Apex High are among the items one might see in his yard.

He's a character

Self-reliant, opinionated, Charlie Dreher determined to live life his own way

By Ron Page

During the past 10 years, Cary police, sheriff's deputies and firefighters have made 33 visits to Charlie Dreher's property on High House Road.

"They've been here on complaints about everything from allegedly operating a commercial wood business to a dog barking, to firing a cannon," Dreher admits.

"Firing a cannon? Where did that come from?"

"It's a long story," Dreher says. "The barrel came from a barn in Arkansas, cost me \$25. I offered the man \$20, but I would have paid \$100. And yes, I do fire it now and then but only on times like the

Fourth of July, New Year's Day and other holidays."

Visitors who set foot on his well-stocked (some would say cluttered) acre of property quickly learn that Dreher doesn't beat around the bush, although there are dozens of bushes everywhere, from potted tobacco plants on the outside walk to a PawPaw tree which he says bears fruit that tastes "like a mix of bananas and apples." He'll tell you he believes in telling it as it is, or at least the way he sees it.

A retired 65-year-old federal poultry inspector, Dreher is a former U.S. Marine and Korean War veteran. The son of an Indiana butcher, he grew up in Terre Haute

and attended Indiana State University. He recalls disputing one professor's observation of historical events so often that the professor told him that he didn't function like a normal individual. "He said he'd give me a B-plus in the class if I'd do us both a favor and not show up anymore. I took the B-plus," Dreher says.

But history has always sparked his thoughts. He read about the Civil War extensively in his college years and it was one of the attractions which eventually led him to North Carolina. Dreher recently presented several artifacts of the Civil War to the Town of Morrisville. His discoveries include a

sword and pistol he uncovered buried in a battlefield off Morrisville-Carpenter Road. He has a number of other "findings" at his home, a simple brick ranch hidden behind a wall of personal artifacts that draw the attention of passersby just east of Bond Park.

This became his home in 1966 after a five-year stay in a nearby trailer park. "High House was called Green Level Road in those days, and the only other thing around besides my house were the woods. The road consisted of two 10-foot strips, which were widened to 12 feet a couple of years later. The woods were so thick you

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Morrisville encouraging conservation

Residents undaunted by town's request to limit water usage

By Ron Page

I only run the washer with a full load and I don't have a dishwasher," says Mrs. W.E. Culler of Watkins Road when she was told Morrisville commissioners are asking residents and businesses alike to save on using water whenever they can. She says she's been frugal for the 32 years she's lived in town and she neither sprinkles the lawn nor wash the car.

"I believe in saving water...and anything else," she says.

It's the same with Dot Hoover and Roslyn Keith, both residents of Huntington Drive. Both agree with the idea. "I'm already careful about using water," Hoover claims, while Keith points out it's also a practice in her family. "We used to water the garden, but the weeds got it this year so that's not going to be a problem," she relates.

Current estimates are that by 1997 there will be nearly 90,000 people in the four towns served by Cary's water system - Cary, Apex, Morrisville and Holly Springs - and by 2020 there could be more than 300,000. Morrisville is expected to have its present population of more than 2,000 rise to 7,500 by that time.

Morrisville officials feel it's time to voluntarily conserve on the use of what one of them referred to as "a priceless commodity."

The need for more water is already a matter of record. Morrisville commissioners have announced a raise in water rates in town, effective the first of July, from \$2.87 to \$3.23 per 1,000 gallons to match an increase by the town of Cary last month. The hike comes as a result of an agreement signed late last year for Cary to sell water and sewer services to Morrisville and

for Morrisville to charge at least as much as Cary does for the services.

The average Morrisville household, which uses 6,000 gallons of water a month, will pay \$25.92 more a year under the new rate.

Commissioners also voted to ask the state to allocate 4.5 million gallons a day of raw water capacity from Jordan Lake to meet what the town expects will be its need for the next quarter of a century. The request, according to Town Manager David Hodgkins is part of a joint effort by the four towns from the lake to expand the Cary-Apex Water Treatment Plant.

In the meantime, Hodgkins suggested the voluntary conservation plan for residents and businesses. He said it was important to let residents know water is "limited and valuable" and to limit excessive use, to which Commissioner Leavy Barbee noted will become even more critical in the future. "We know sooner or later the water will run out," said Barbee. "If we're making a mockery of it and asking Cary for water, we need to put in some strong rules for conservation."

The town is asking to limit when possible the sprinkling of lawns during late morning or late afternoon to minimize loss through evaporation. Other requests center on ensuring irrigation system heads are aimed at landscaping and not streets, running dishwashers and washing machines only with full loads, limiting use of baths in favor of showers because less water is used, and installing in-ground irrigation meters instead of hose meters because they are easier to

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New class helping kids cope with loss

By Ron Page

There are four keys to helping children come to terms with loss: information, emotional expression, tenderness and reminiscing.

—Charles Smith
"Wonder to Wisdom"

Nine-year-old Ashley Barber and her sister, 11-year-old Christie, remember how much their father loved his Harley-Davidson motorcycle, how he and their mother used to take rides, how much he enjoyed everything.

When they look at the 82 baseball caps he had collected and hung on a wall in their Morrisville home, they'll tell you how much he also loved to wear colorful bandannas, how he always wore bluejeans, how great a mechanic he was, and how they can still feel how strong his arms felt when he hugged them.

On Feb. 24, 1995, their father, Mark, was killed in a motorcycle accident on Blue Ridge Road in Raleigh. The loss was devastating, but today Ashley and Christie, and their mother, Sharon, are classic

examples of how a family comes to understand death and can cope with the grief they felt and see in others. During the months that followed they became exposed to Reflections, a caring program for children operated by Hospice of Wake Inc. and its children's coordinator, Toni James-Manus.

Reflections is a program which provides pediatric hospice care to young people 21 years of age and younger and grief counseling/support groups to any child in Wake County who has lost a family member to death. Last year, Reflections provided care to 79 children.

"When children lose a parent, a brother or sister, or a close friend, they need help to understand death and to cope with the grief they feel and see in others," James-Manus explained. "Frequently, parents are so emotionally drained by their own grief that finding words and actions to comfort a child is difficult. Many parents remain silent in an effort to protect children - yet the children sense even un-

spoken pain. Clear and honest explanations help children accept emotional distress and develop an understanding of death, loss and grief."

The Reflections program was launched in mid-1993. Hospice of Wake County has always taken care of children and their families as an integral part of patient services. However, the needs of children are so special and the stresses on families so severe that a specialized program was needed to provide the best help and care.

When Ashley and Christie returned to school after their father's death, classmates attempted to console them. "Everybody kept saying they were sorry," explained Ashley, who was in the fourth grade. "It made me think about it (her father's death) all the time." As a sixth grader, Christie met the same situation.

"The teachers were wonderful and the counselors at Morrisville Elementary School tried to keep the

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REMEMBERING DAD—Christie and Ashley Barber keep a memory box of items belonging to their father who was killed in a motorcycle accident last year.

Summertime hectic, fulfilling for Preston's competitive swim team members, families

By Tammy Hayes

More than 200 swimmers, and their parents and coaches, crowd the area surrounding Prestonwood Country Club's pool. Parents sit in lounge chairs that hug the water and swimmers lay on towels stretched across the grass. Burgers sizzle on a grill as swimmers splash into the water, racing competitors in one of the last meets of the season.

The Prestonwood Piranhas take the meet late into the night and sometime after 9 p.m., the crowd shuffles out of the pool area and out of the parking lot. But the

Piranhas families will be back the next day for practice.

Being on any swim team is tough. With three to four hour swimming meets and 45 minutes of practice on every weekday there isn't a meet, being on the team is not only tiring for the athletes.

Piranha parent Jan Baric has a six-year-old daughter, Sarah, on the team. But she also has two other younger children. Baric has to find a place to leave them during Sarah's meets.

"It is a little hard," Baric said of having a child on the swimming team. "You have to keep to a

schedule and plan your day around it. She (Sarah) wanted to be on the team, so we worked it in. But it's fun."

"It's great," said Tom Manger of having a child on the Piranhas. "It gives the kids something to do."

Manger's six-year-old son, Burt, is new to the area but has already made a lot of friends on the team.

"There's nothing worse than being a kid in the summer hanging around the TV and having only a tin can to kick around in the yard. Something like this helps challenge him, uses his energy, and helps him make friends," Manger said.



Manger Sands

"It's time-consuming but fun," Piranha parent Sharon Sands said. Her daughter, Caitlin, age four, is with the Piranhas for her first season.

"It's a long night for a four-year-

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