

CHOWAN HERALD

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A publication of Cooke
Communications North Carolina, LLC

WANT TO VOICE YOUR
OPINION ON THE BREW PUB?

■ The town council will hold a public hearing about the brew pub at 6 p.m. Monday at the John A. Holmes High school auditorium.



Brew pub good for Chowan

Three years ago today I never imagined that my husband and I would soon leave our lives in Breckenridge, Colorado and trade it for life in Edenton. Being NC natives, we figured we'd eventually relocate closer to family, but we only considered Edenton after stumbling upon an online listing for our (now) home.

Envisioning our lives in a historic home just blocks from the water in such a charming town was enough to ease my trepidation over all the changes we were making, particularly the dramatic change from being a full-time child welfare attorney to staying at home to raise our young children. The only reason we could move to Edenton was because my husband works remotely and brings his job with us. Not many families have this option.

The only way small towns can survive, much less grow or thrive is if they attract new families to plant roots that will foster future generations. Edenton has an exciting opportunity to make itself much more appealing to current and potential residents: the chance to sell the Conger building to a developer with deep Edenton roots who will establish a waterfront brewery.

Edenton desperately needs growth and opportunity. We moved here thinking it would be a quaint, affordable place to spend a couple years while we determined where and what was next. What we did not expect, however, was to actually love our simple small-town lives. I had no idea what it felt like to have a mailman deliver homemade

baked goods he made for us; to host a delightful quartet on Valentine's Day who serenaded my family and donated their profits to local schools' music programs; to have a downtown shop owner insist that we take an item home without paying when she realized I left my wallet at home; to have a new friend leave coffee on my front porch because she knew what life looked like with a two year old and infant; to meet elderly friends along our walking route who spoil us with produce and hand-written letters; to experience an entire community coming together to celebrate Halloween by treating all children to a fun night that could only happen in small-town America; and to witness a town Christmas celebration with Santa, caroling, a tree-lighting and flotilla that would warm the heart of the grumpiest Scrooge.

Our community is a special place. The people here are truly different; we know one another, we care about each other, and we are lucky to call this little gem home. Edenton offers a charming life difficult to describe; mostly, it's felt. Unfortunately, objective considerations deter many young families and professionals from ever considering a life here.

Our population is both declining, and significantly older than North Carolina averages and our public schools are feeling the impacts. Just this year, our high school athletic designation dropped from 2A to 1A due to a decrease in our high school student population. This designation, combined with the fact that the NC Department of

Commerce identifies us as a Tier 1 County (one of the 40 poorest counties in NC), ultimately means our students receive fewer resources and opportunities. We cannot afford to continue losing our young population.

We are also an economically depressed area whose poverty is seen by our most vulnerable community members: our children. Almost 65 percent of our Chowan County students are eligible for free or reduced lunches and approximately 1 in every 4 of our children lives in poverty.

We lack services and opportunities that residents and tourists expect. We need to offer more jobs, industry, and reasons for people to visit and stay. I've lost count of the number of confused tourists who have stopped me to inquire of activities our town offers, most often where they can find our town's waterfront dining options.

Next Monday our Town Council will host a public hearing to listen to its citizens and again vote on whether to sell the Conger Building to have it developed into a brewery. This debate has incited a fury of heated arguments and impassioned conversations but here is the bottom line: we cannot afford to reject this opportunity.

Many investors would shy away from investing in our community, but we are fortunate that Mr. John Conger Glover has a deeply personal tie to this property and our town. His great grandfather built the Conger building as the Edenton Ice Company around 1900 and then his

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Comedy of errors

The whole scenario surrounding the sale of the Ice Plant/Conger building has been a comedy of errors from the very start. Most of the following information is available on the town's web site.

The Request for Proposal defines a 4,758 sq. ft. building which does not include the 688 sq. ft. "Sunfish" building. The proposed sale price of \$282,000 is based on an appraisal dated Nov. 21, 2014 (Pg. 3) which makes it three years old, not two years old as is sometimes reported. The appraisal is on a .27 acre site which basically includes only the foot print of the total building along with the paved area between the building and Dock Street (Pg. 9).

The problem arises from the fact that neither the town manager, mayor nor council knew what property was excluded from the property purchased with assistance from a 1979 "Land & Water Conservation Fund" ("LWCF") Grant for outdoor recreation.

The correct information came in an email from Pete Armstrong on Sept. 4, 2015 as a result of my investigation into the matter. This means that the appraisal value is invalid if the town intends to sell the whole .34 acre tract and total building (Pruden Survey, April & May, 2016).

The \$282,000 appraisal value is the average of the Sales Comparison Approach value (\$309,000) and the Income Approach value (\$255,000) (Pg.

26). As everyone knows, in real estate it's LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION. None of the four properties (Pg. 16-19) used in the Sales Comparison Approach have an unimpeded view of Edenton Bay and the Albemarle Sound or 94.51 feet of bulkheaded waterfront (Pruden Survey, April & May 2016), not to mention being surrounded by a park. The Sales Comparison Approach value did not even include the 688 sq. ft. "Sunfish" building in its calculation (Pg. 22). The net result is you have a three year old appraisal that is based on .27 acres, not .34 acres, and 4,758 sq. ft. of building, not 5,446 sq. ft. and is completely oblivious of its location and therefore grossly undervalued. Additionally the town would lose control of 18 parking spaces according to the appraisal (Pg. 1). In Mr. Glover's presentation at the last council meeting he addressed the screening and kitchen issues as well as an outdoor "beer garden". No you don't grow beer in the garden, you drink it in the garden. He never said where the garden would be located but talked about screening on the south side of the building facing the water. The problem is you only have 4-5 feet between the building and the property line. The drawing of the brew-pub showed the kitchen moved from the Sunfish building into the main building in response to citizen concerns about the future of that space which is currently used for the sailing program. He

did not address the yard in front of the building that is used for boat storage. He "hoped" when he "drilled down into the details" that the modified location of the kitchen would work. If the property is sold there is absolutely nothing to prohibit the moving of the kitchen back into the Sunfish building and utilizing the boat storage yard for other purposes.

The only way to guarantee the continued use of that property for the sailing program is to exclude it from the property that is sold. There is also nothing to prevent the removal of the current parking spaces in front of the main building and putting an outdoor beer garden there. You have to remember that once the property is sold the owner can do what he wants to do within the constraints of zoning and permitting rules.

If the entire .34 acres and total building are sold at the patently invalid appraisal value of \$282,000, what the council would be doing is giving away, absolutely free, 688 sq. ft. of building and .07 acres of waterfront land including 94.51 feet of bulkheaded waterfront.

The council would be acting fiscally irresponsibly, if not illegally, to sell such valuable property at such a low price based on the above information. At the very least the council should postpone the decision to sell the property until a valid appraisal of the property the town intends to sell is obtained.

Gil Burroughs
Edenton

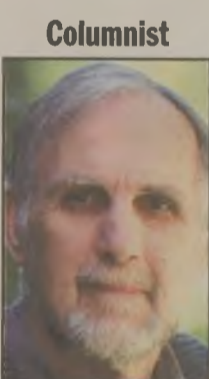
Is Thanksgiving Day a religious holiday?

Thanksgiving Day, a time of celebrating family and food, is a religious occasion only if time is taken to give thanks for the meal and those gathered at the table.

Food is sacred and, whether it's being shared with family, friends or those in need, should always be blessed.

At the food pantry every day is a religious occasion. Every day is Thanksgiving.

Here is not just a place where food is handed out to the poor. It is an extension of the church where families come once a month to receive the Eucharist.



Roger Coleman

"... for I was hungry and you gave me food" is often quoted when serving

The food we provide is no less than the very body of Christ.

Serving others is a sacrament, I believe, with our volunteers and supporters becoming priests of the highest order.

Matthew 25:30 "... for I was hungry and you gave

those in need.

A more appropriate image, especially on Thanksgiving Day, is found in Isaiah and throughout the New Testament where the Kingdom of God is compared to a great banquet with all invited to sit down together at the table of the Lord:

On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples — (Isaiah 25:6)

In many religious traditions there are a series of short prayers for things in life often taken for granted.

These are simple prayers — prayers for beginning and ending of each day,

prayers for the beauty of flowers, prayers for the very shoes on our feet.

Sometimes called "Beatitudes," these prayers usually begin with the words, "Thanks be O God" or "Blessed be to the Lord."

One person has said that to go through even a single day without a word of gratitude, without offering a blessing, is to be like a thief.

May this Thanksgiving Day and every day begin with a blessing — "Thanks be O God for the food we have received."

Roger Coleman is the director of the Edenton-Chowan Food Pantry.

Conservatives fight for freedom as tool for happier lives

RALEIGH — I'm a conservative without a conversion story. Plenty of others have such a tale — they read a certain book, had a certain teacher, or somehow became disenchanted with their previous, left-leaning views.

If the conversion happened to them as adults, after first being politically active as a progressive, socialist, or communist, they were called neoconservatives. One of the most prominent, Irving Kristol, famously defined a neoconservative as "a liberal who has been mugged by reality" and a neoliberal as "a liberal who got mugged by reality but has not pressed charges."

I only got mugged once, while working as a magazine reporter in Washington, and I was already a conservative. It was an attempted mugging, actually, because I hap-

pened to be carrying a synthesizer in a heavy case, it proved to be a handy weapon to swing, and the would-be mugger was either drunk or stoned out of his mind.

But Kristol wasn't really talking about crime as a political issue, of course, although the rise of criminality and social disorder during the 1960s, 1970s, and

JOHN HOOD
COLUMNIST



1980s was a factor that propelled some Americans into the modern conservative movement. What bound the disparate elements of that movement together was the existence of critically important and inescapable realities — such as what the free-market economist Thomas Sowell later described as the "constrained vision" of human nature, as distinguishable from the "unconstrained vision" of would-be social engineers.

Both here in North Carolina and around the country, the modern

conservative movement is an alliance of what used to be called traditionalism and what used to be called liberalism. Traditionalists believed there are fundamental truths and virtues, either revealed by God or confirmed by millennia of human history, that ought to guide human action.

Classical liberals didn't necessarily disagree with that premise, actually. But they elevated the principle of freedom to the top of the list — the right of individuals to make decisions for themselves above the power of the state to take their property and control their lives.

Traditionalists valued freedom, as well, but observed that individ-

uals aren't born as human atoms who later, voluntarily, form human molecules. We are born into families and communities, and thus into a thick and complex web of social obligations. Many traditionalists, then, defined freedom in communitarian terms, as "ordered liberty." Classical liberals emphasized the right of the individual to make decisions, even if the results damaged their neighbors or injured themselves.

When cultural critics, libertarians, and anti-communists forged the modern conservative movement in America during the 20th century, they were reacting to the

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