

## **PEOPLE&PLACES**



Shaffer: Have you seen this Raleigh kickball team's missing porcelain mascot? Page 3M

Mom2Mom: Illyse Lane tells how her son's sickness can be a surprise blessing. Page 3M

# THE NEWSOBSERVER Midtown **Jews**

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**Expansion:** Living Arts College plans to add a dorm, classes, bachelor's degree. Page 5M

**P.R. gaffe:** A teachers' leader says she regrets insulting new Wake board members. Page 5M

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blazing fast football player. Page 6M

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Take in astronomy, Christmas trees, or a race. Page 6M

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## Losing a great talent

his newspaper's readers have lost a loyal friend and a smart, hardworking reporter in Sarah Lindenfeld Hall, who has left us to tend to her growing family.

Now she'll have only one full-time job, instead of two. Sarah, 35, made the hard decision to

leave after

the recent birth of her

second child.

N&O offering employee

buyouts amid

the prospect

of reassignments, Sarah

concluded

she couldn't

Raleigh

News and

The North

say no.

With the shrinking

**EDITOR** 



Matthew



Midtown Raleigh News Lindenfeld have lost a great deal of talent these past two years: editor Dan Holly, assistant editor Michelle Valenzuela, and

whose absences we feel. Losing Sarah is a gut punch. Like me, she eschewed a power career in investigative reporting. And I doubt that she loved covering Raleigh City Hall several years back.

reporters Sam LaGrone and Kinea White Epps — all of

But Sarah was simply a superb community journalist.

As an editor, I could always count on Sarah to be diligent, thorough and fair in her reporting, and conscientious in her writing. Her aim was to give readers the best possible information about their community, and she succeeded.

"I've sat through more City Council, Planning Commission and committee meetings than I care to remember," Sarah told me. "I know way more than I ever expected to about wastewater treatment.'

Her article most popular among readers was about dog walkers who refuse to scoop their pooches' poop. That's community news for you.

Sarah cared about the people she covered, and she had a friendly manner with them.

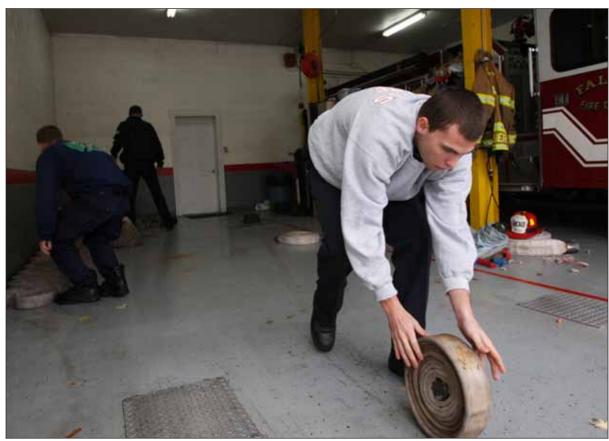
Fans of the TriangleMom 2Mom blog Sarah launched and managed have enjoyed her commitment to informing fellow parents about subjects and events vital to them.

For the first time since her teen years in Syracuse, N.Y., Sarah isn't a newswoman.

I'm sure she misses it. I'm even surer that newspapers will miss her. I know I will. Γhank you, Sarah.

If you'd like to drop Sarah a note, you can send an e-mail to slindenfeldhall@gmail.com.

matthew.eisley@newsobserver.com or 919-829-4538



Volunteer firefighter Jeremy Strickland, right, gets the equipment ready last week at Falls Fire Department, which has served North Raleigh and rural Wake County for almost four decades.

# After fighting fires 39 years, Falls station might close

County looks to trim costs, shift coverage to town fire crews

STAFF WRITER

**RALEIGH - Wake County** could extinguish a volunteer fire station that has battled blazes in northern Wake for almost 40 years.

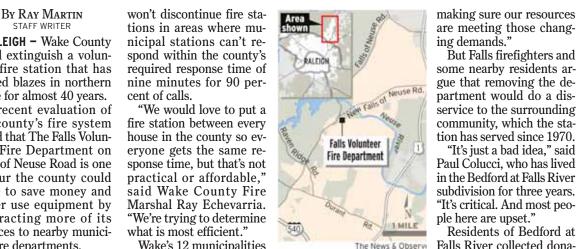
A recent evaluation of the county's fire system found that The Falls Volunteer Fire Department on Falls of Neuse Road is one of four the county could close to save money and better use equipment by contracting more of its services to nearby municipal fire departments.

County officials say population growth and increasing departmental operating costs sparked the evaluation. The county

tions in areas where municipal stations can't respond within the county's required response time of nine minutes for 90 percent of calls.

"We would love to put a fire station between every house in the county so everyone gets the same response time, but that's not practical or affordable," said Wake County Fire Marshal Ray Echevarria. "We're trying to determine what is most efficient."

Wake's 12 municipalities have annexed more than 74 square miles in the last decade. As the towns grow, they add fire stations, and county coverage areas



need to be re-evaluated,

'The demand changes over time," he said. "We're

Echevarria said.

are meeting those changing demands. But Falls firefighters and some nearby residents argue that removing the de-

community, which the station has served since 1970. "It's just a bad idea," said Paul Colucci, who has lived in the Bedford at Falls River subdivision for three years.

partment would do a dis-

service to the surrounding

"It's critical. And most people here are upset." Residents of Bedford at Falls River collected dona-

tions for the fire department two weeks ago at a neighborhood fall festival.

SEE FIRE, PAGE 4M

# Can Wake's best endure?

Magnet schools could suffer in the push for neighborhood schools.

By Thomas Goldsmith Staff Writer

RALEIGH - Advanced instruction at popular public magnet schools such as Ligon Middle and Hunter Elementary draws students across Wake County.

At the same time, some students from neighborhoods not far from the schools climb aboard daily buses that take them nine or 10 miles to West Cary Middle, where about 100 downtown teens help balance the school's wealthier base population.

School board member Keith Sutton, who represents East Raleigh's District 4, hears from parents across the county who want their child's downtown magnet school to remain the same and irom district residents wno won der why theirs go so far away.

"Many of them live in public housing and use public transportation to get around," Sutton said. "Many of their students are bused out to Green Hope or West Cary Middle or even Apex. And they get a call from school, if their child is sick, to come get him. They're saying, 'I would like to go to Ligon, or Washington, because that's walking distance from my house.'

SEE MAGNETS, PAGE 5M

## **TALK TO US**

Do you think Wake can have magnet and neighborhood schools? How? Send an e-mail with your name, address and phone number to

MidtownNews@newsobserver.com or NRNews@newsobserver.com

## WF growth votes prove costly

By Ray Martin

WAKE FOREST - Three companies that were denied special-use building permits have sued the town of Wake Forest, which has racked up more than \$140,000 in legal fees in the process.

About a year ago the town's planning board recommended that the town Board of Commissioners approve permits for a car wash and two shopping centers. The board rejected the permits, one unanimously, because they didn't meet the town's standards.

"They were making a decision that they thought was

consistent with the proper growth of the town," Town Manager Mark Williams said of the board.

Two of the lawsuits were recently settled, and those companies were granted the permits with a few additional conditions.

The third lawsuit, which involves a shopping center that would go on Capital Boulevard, is pending. The board rejected it unanimously because of traffic concerns on Capital Boulevard.

The legal fees have irked some in Wake Forest, including the three challengers who ran unsuccessfully for two board seats Nov. 3.

The fees led William "Watt" Jones, who received the fewest votes of the five candidates, to start a Facebook Group to gather support for the Wake Forest Civic Association, which will oppose wasteful spending and fiscal irresponsibility.

Williams, however, says the fees haven't strained the town's budget. Though fighting three lawsuits at once is uncommon, he said, occasional lawsuits are a necessary cost of trying to manage growth. "It's part of the game," he said.

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## **Deluge nearly** floods Crabtree

By Ray Martin

**RALEIGH** – Creek levels reached the flood mark at several Midtown Raleigh locations last week, causing businesses to take precautions in what the National Weather Service deemed the city's most significant rain in "quite some time."

Crabtree Valley Mall officials closed a parking lot behind the mall, and car dealerships along Wake Forest Road took their cars off the lots during several days of

continuous rain that ended Thursday night.

Officials say about 4 or 5 inches of rain soaked most of Raleigh. In areas surrounding Crabtree Creek which runs from western Wake County to the Neuse River in east Raleigh, and through many of Raleigh's most developed areas that much rain in a two-day

period is cause for concern. 'With so much development, the water runs into the

SEE CREEK, PAGE 4M

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