

POLICE REPORTS

Listing of Incidents and Arrests in Mebane and Orange County.

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WHAT'S GOING ON

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THE NEWS of ORANGE COUNTY

SERVING ORANGE COUNTY AND MEBANE, NORTH CAROLINA

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Land conservancy files suit against Union Grove Farm

STAFF REPORTS

Triangle Land Conservancy, TLC, has filed a complaint in Orange County Superior Court to force Union Grove Farm to comply with the terms of a conservation easement put in place in perpetuity by the former owners of what was then called Maple View Farm. TLC has

held a Conservation Easement over a portion of the property since 1998 for the express purpose of “forever conserving the open space character, agricultural productivity and scenic qualities” of the property. “We have been in protracted good-faith conversations with the owners of Union Grove Farm, but to no avail,” said Sandy Sweitzer, executive

director at the Triangle Land Conservancy. “Their continued construction of three prohibited roads through hard-wood forests and their plans for a prohibited 2500-seat amphitheater clearly violate the terms of the easement. They have been notified of the violations on multiple occasions and have been given more than the required time to remediate these

violations. So, as an accredited land trust, the next step in the easement violation process is for TLC to sue. We have no choice.” Specifically, TLC’s lawsuit asks the Court to order remediation of the prohibited roads and declare that the 2,500-seat amphitheater is an ease-

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FEASTING ON THE JOB



Unsightly thicket of kudzu no match for team of goats

DALE EDWARDS  
MANAGING EDITOR/NEWS OF ORANGE

Hunter Beattie had a kudzu problem and Stephen Paul had 120 goats. Problem solved. To be more specific, an area of about three-quarters of an acre between Endswell Funeral Home and Joe Van Gogh Coffee had been getting out of control, and despite the efforts of humans with pesticides, the invasive plant had grown cocky with intent, spreading from a field and into a parking lot.

“We’ve been dealing with the apocalyptic kudzu since we bought the building,” said Beattie, who with his wife, Veronica, own Endswell Funeral Home in Hillsborough. “Kudzu started growing into the vehicles.” Not to mention Kudzu beetles, small squarish-shaped insects that were getting into their building and decimating plants. Beattie decided to go a different, less-conventional route, but one that would be more in line with his

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Mebane City Beat: Protecting underground cities

APWA UNIFORM COLOR CODE  
FOR MARKING UNDERGROUND UTILITY LINES



- PROPOSED EXCAVATION
- TEMPORARY SURVEY MARKINGS
- ELECTRIC POWER LINES, CABLES, CONDUIT AND LIGHTING CABLES
- GAS, OIL, STEAM, PETROLEUM OR GASEOUS MATERIALS
- COMMUNICATION, ALARM OR SIGNAL LINES, CABLES OR CONDUIT
- POTABLE WATER
- RECLAIMED WATER, IRRIGATION, AND SLURRY LINES
- SEWERS AND DRAIN LINES

For all locate requests, call 811 or 1-800-632-4949 Need the status of a locate? 1-877-632-5050

BY KELLY HUNTER  
SPECIAL TO THE NEWS OF ORANGE

Have you ever wondered how utility services such as water, sewer, or gas reach your home or surrounding properties? These services are available through a conduit or set of lines called utility lines that carry essential services like electricity, gas, water, or telecommunications to and from buildings or other structures. Utility lines can be located above or below the surface and are critical for providing essential services to homes and businesses. So, who is responsible for maintaining these utility lines should a disruption or problem occur?

Before we dive into the difference between public and private utility lines, it is important to understand the history behind these services within the City of Mebane. The first utility lines were installed in Mebane in the early 1900s and consisted of water, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer lines. These lines were comprised of copper, clay, cast iron, concrete, and galvanized iron materials. Orangeburg pipe, a bituminous fiber pipe made from layers of wood pulp impregnated with coal tar pitch, was used to install sewer lines during and after World War II due to metal shortages. While Orangeburg

see MEBANE CITY BEAT, page 3

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WEEKEND WEATHER

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
79/65	79/65	79/65
Partly cloudy	Partly cloudy	Partly cloudy

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## GOATS

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company’s eco-friendly branding: Goats. Along the way, he reached out to the folks at Joe Van Gogh Coffee, headquartered on the opposite side of the kudzu lagoon, and the company agreed to share in the expense for having the livestock landscaping crew chew its way to a job well-done.

Eatswell meets Joe Van Goats? Supplying the munchers on a mission is Stephen Paul, who owns and operates Goats on the Go out of the Raleigh/Durham area. “We’re an affiliate network around the country,” said Paul. “I’m the only one in North Carolina.”

His establishment, along with his 120 goats, is part of a community of “goat-scapers” that support each other and gather once a year for a conference, share information and best practices. “These are all my goats, but other goat-scapers might choose to rent goats instead of owning,” Paul continued. “But I like to own my goats because I want to develop a good breeding stock, good genetics, so that I can be confident in what I’m producing year after year. That’s why I spent a lot of money on this buck, Valentino.”

He points to an area down the hill and into the trees where a large, red-colored animal with the longest horns of the group. Valentino — likely named for the 1920s sex symbol and silent film star Rudolph Valentino — is bigger than the rest and wanders around with a posse of females, obviously the G.O.A.T. of the goats.

The area of kudzu is surrounded by a flexible barrier that is electrified and deters goats from wandering out, and keeps other animals from getting in to the work site. For this particular project, Goats on the Go provided 35 goats, each equipped with a collar that is synced with a tracking app that allows Paul to monitor the goats’ current location, as well as their location from previous days. The technology enables him to know if there is an issue with the barrier, such as when there was a power outage last weekend because of a fire on Churton



DALE EDWARDS/NEWS OF ORANGE

**Stephen Paul, who owns and operates Goats on the Go, changes out a collar on one of his goats at a worksite in Hillsborough.**

Street in Hillsborough. Paul said the project in Hillsborough should take about a week for the goats to complete. From the moment the animals are released onto the site, they’re filling their bellies, eating vines and leaves. Kudzu is a pain, but it’s packed with protein, so there is no need for supplementing the goats’ diet on the job. Also, the animals are mostly unfazed by rain, meaning they will stay where they’re working without shelter. Beattie said the cost of hiring Goats on the Go was less than that of hiring a crew of people to cut the vines and spray the area with pesticide. Another advantage is that seeds from the kudzu are no longer viable once they have passed through the goat’s digestive system, meaning the usually persistent plant is less likely to

return than it would by way of typical removal. “The amount of time with projects that are less than an acre, we typically charge a fixed rate and a flat fee,” Paul said. “For certain other projects, we might charge by the day, depending on how the customer works and whether they want to just get it done and finished. Because it can be really hard on large projects to determine how long it’s going to take, maybe because of rain, then the project can get really delayed. But on small projects, we like to charge just fixed prices, and then no matter how long it takes, we just don’t charge anymore.”

Paul has been in business for about two and a half years, and is seeing demand gradually increase. One of his company’s biggest jobs, so far, was a project at Dorothea Dix Park in Raleigh. Thanks to the marketing team at Joe Van Gogh, Goats on the Go might soon be on the go a lot more. A video created by the coffee maker that showed the goats feasting on the kudzu was set to the tune of Dolly Parton’s “Working 9-5.” That video has received more than 8 million views on social media.

The impact of the work done by the 35 goats is impressive. While there are limits to the goats’ reach, much of what is higher up will eventually die out since the goats have severed many of the vines at a lower level. Nearly all kudzu leaves they can reach will be devoured. And just because you might find a group of the goats laying around, they’re often still chewing away at the plant.

Beattie said people driving by on Meadowlands Drive do double-takes when they see the goats. The unexpected sight of farm animals has even brought smiles to the faces of clients of the funeral home. “We’re gonna miss having them here,” Beattie said. “It brightens up your day, you pull in, or you take a lunch break, and you just go out and admire the goats eating the kudzu.” For more information about Goats on the Go, go to [www.goatsonthego.com/raleighdurham](http://www.goatsonthego.com/raleighdurham), or call (984) 227-8191. The Joe Van Gogh video of the Goats on the Go can be viewed on Instagram @joevangogh.

## MEBANE CITY BEAT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

pipe was widely used during residential construction at this time, later research identified that the Orangeburg pipe tends to deteriorate due to moisture and the breakdown of coal tar pitch, which is why nearly all Orangeburg and galvanized pipes have been removed from service in recent years. The utility lines, comprised of copper, clay, cast iron, and concrete, are still in service today. Plumbing systems within Mebane have been modernized and switched out with newer water and sewer materials such as polyvinyl chloride, known as PVC, high-density polyethylene, referred to as HDPE, and ductile iron lines. These new materials are commonly used today due to their durability, affordability, and resistance to corrosion. Utility service lines play a vital role in everyday life by ensuring citizens maintain a good quality of life, where their daily routines are not disrupted, meaning you can flush a toilet, receive clean water, use gas for cooking or hot showers, etc. Utility service lines also make public health possible by carrying wastewater from homes to treatment plants, protecting public health and the environment from illnesses and diseases. So, what do you do if you accidentally hit a service line or dig one up in your backyard? According to the North Carolina Underground Utility Safety and Damage Prevention Act, passed by the North Carolina General Assembly and enacted in 2013, North Carolina law requires anyone planning an excavation or wishing to plant a tree or install a fence to call NC 811 to have underground utilities located. North Carolina 811 is a non-profit organization funded by utility owners and operators to notify potentially affected utilities of proposed excavations. These underground utilities

include gas, water, sewer, electric, and telecommunication. Calling NC 811 is a free service that does not cost the caller anything. When you call 811, the operator will take down detailed information about your proposed project and communicate it to the utilities. The NC811 organization will then notify utility owners in the excavation site area. Utility locators will then come out and use maps and specialized equipment to determine the location of underground utilities and paint or flag the underground utilities within three working days of the 811 call. To help the utility locators, the planned excavation site should be marked with white paint or white flags. Locate marks typically go to the meter locations (gas, electric, or water) or the termination point. Utility locators do not locate private lines beyond the meter, such as gas, water, sewer, and electric. Public and private utility lines, how can you tell which is which? The most significant difference between public and private utility lines is the ownership and responsibility of the lines. Public utility lines like water mains and power lines are installed, owned, and maintained by the utility companies. They run from the main lines in the street up to the service meter or connection point on your property. Private utility lines are installed and owned by the property owner. They are found beyond the utility’s meter or connection point and include sprinkler systems, water services from the meter to the home, gas lines to an outdoor grill or fire pit, or power lines to detached garages. Private utilities are not registered with NC 811. Private locating services are available to locate privately owned utilities before digging, but these lines are the property owner’s responsibility. If citizens or contractors hit a utility service line, they should call 811 to report the damage.

They should also contact the respective utility damage number on the 811 locate ticket you received when the locate request was called in. If the power or gas line is damaged, maintain a safe distance and call 911. The North Carolina minimum depth for underground public water mains is 30 inches of cover, where the service line is 12 inches. These regulations can change depending on the utility type, size, and location. They can also vary depending on the municipality or utility owner. In the City of Mebane, the public water mains are three feet below the surface, where the service line is 18 inches long. The minimum depth for public sewer lines is three feet of cover unless ductile iron is used, in which case there is no minimum depth. Sewer line services are four inches, and longitudinal electric power primary lines are three feet of cover. Longitudinal electric power secondary and trenched communication lines are two feet of cover. Plowed in utility lines are 18 inches of cover. While there are requirements for underground utility depths, as mentioned, they can vary depending on the municipality and type, so utility locators utilize a few different types of specialized equipment to locate these lines. One type of equipment called a pipe and cable locator uses a transmitter to send an electronic signal through the pipe or wire, and a receiver then detects the signal, allowing for tracing the line’s path and depth. Another type of equipment is ground penetrating radar (GPR). GPR detects anomalies underground, where the skilled operator can then determine the type of underground utility based on the size and difference in the anomaly and the surrounding soil. Once a utility locator finds the different service lines within the excavation site, they use the American Public Works Associa-

tion (APWA) Uniform Color Code to mark the underground utility lines with paint, flags, or stakes. The following color codes indicate the type of underground utility: Red for electric power lines, cables, conduit, and lighting cables; Yellow for gas, oil, steam, petroleum, or gaseous materials; Orange for communication, alarm or signal lines, cables, or conduit; Blue for potable (drinking) water; Green for sewers and drain lines; Purple for reclaimed water, irrigation, and slurry lines; Pink for temporary survey markings; and White for the proposed excavation (where digging is planned). Having underground utility lines is beneficial as they improve safety, aesthetics, and reliability. Underground utility lines are also less susceptible to damage from weather, animals, and accidents. However, some of the challenges of underground utility lines include not knowing the exact location and depth of the utility line. Locating underground utilities is not an exact science, and even with record drawings and locate equipment, the locate technician can still be off when trying to locate underground utilities. Other challenges can include the potential for accidental damage during excavation activities, difficulties in maintenance and repair, and high installation costs. That is why the City of Mebane highly encourages all residents interested in digging or installing something on their property to utilize the free NC 811 service. Public Utilities Director Kyle Smith stated, “Anytime you plan on digging or performing an excavation, please call 811. Calling 811 is not only the law, but it could save you and the utility company a lot of money, and most importantly, your life.” Kelly Hunter is the public information officer with the City of Mebane.