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College students travel to study the culture of barbecue

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

Four college students from Alabama studying barbecue in the South could not resist the reputation of Greenville’s B’s Barbecue.

Art Richey, Will Foster, Jeff Vaughn and Matt Lee, students at Birmingham-Southern College, are in the middle of a 17-day trip across the South tasting barbecue in its many forms.

“When we are studying barbecue, this is the kind of place that we are looking for,” Richey, the idea man behind the tour of barbecue joints across the South, said of B’s.

“The vinegar-based sauce is warm to the palate but you can taste the pork. Overall, I would give it an A.”

Richey and his cohorts are not just on a trip. They are actually getting college credit for their travels.

At Birmingham-Southern College the school has a January term, where students take only one class for the month and can create their own class, pending approval. The Southern BBQ Boys, as they call themselves, developed the idea of traveling the South, tasting barbecue, keeping a blog and Web site and writing a paper on the culture of barbecue.

Barbecue has strong ties to culture, Richey said, and people take pride in the style featured in their area.

“I don’t know if any other food where people insist that you go to their favorite place,” he said. “We have had a few people actually get upset with us because we can’t visit their favorite barbecue place.”

The group visited B’s on the eighth day of a 17-day trip. But they aren’t eating barbecue for every meal. In fact, only three members of the group made it to B’s. Lee was not feeling well Wednesday morning when the group arrived before 11 a.m. to make sure to get a plate before the eatery closed.

The Southern BBQ Boys started in Alabama and will visit Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia on the trip. In North Carolina, they ate at Lexington BBQ in Lexington and The Pit in Raleigh.

Richey said they found out about B’s by researching barbecue joints in North Carolina, and they kept seeing the name appear on lists of the best places to get barbecue. But they wouldn’t say what place has been their favorite.

“We are reviewing the restaurants and we don’t want to pick a favorite,” he said.

For Foster the whole thing is a learning experience.

“We are not food experts,” he said. “We are just trying to learn as much as we can. I don’t think I will ever eat the same again, because every bite I take, I am analyzing.”

But the trip is not strictly about food.

“It’s also about the culture,” Foster said. “Like this place is a microcosm of Greenville. It represents all kinds of people who live and eat here.”

The group is already planning a second trip later in the year to go out West and try the beef brisket.
TRAVEL

Continued from C1

sion II school frequently asks the athletes to pay for flights themselves.

"It's the strangest, most confused state I've ever seen in travel in my career," said University of Texas travel manager Kevin Maguire.

Juanita Sheely, who oversees travel for the NCAA, said the organization's transportation costs increased 25 percent — about $8 million — in the 2007-08 school year and were headed for a $10 million increase this year.

Shorter road trips would be an obvious solution, but the expansion of conferences to increase television revenue has schools locked into laborious excursions. Louisiana Tech is in the same conference as Hawaii (Western Athletic), and the Atlantic Coast Conference — in which nearly every trip used to be a reasonable bus ride — now spans the seaboard from Boston College to Miami.

Penn State's membership in the Big 10 forces its teams into spending a lot of time in the Midwest, but assistant athletic director Jan Bortner said the natiest competition is worth it — even though the school's travel budget is expected to increase by 15 percent this year.

"It's raised the bar for our teams," Bortner said. "Yeah, we need to do more travel, but we're traveling to play great teams."

Bortner said the school is opting for charter buses instead of planes for some trips, and that more nonconference games are being scheduled against schools closer to home.

Terry Holland has more radical solutions. The East Carolina athletic director feels that, in the current environment, sports departments have "an overarching moral and patriotic obligation to reduce the consumption of oil and other limited resources."

"If intercollegiate athletics sends a message of 'business as usual' while American citizens are losing their jobs, homes and even more precious possessions, then we will deserve any dire consequences that are visited upon us," Holland, who is not attending the convention, wrote in an e-mail to The Associated Press.

Holland, whose school has to play teams from as far away as Texas in Conference USA, supports having all competitions, except those within a 100-mile radius, scheduled for Saturdays and Sundays. Sports in which teams play twice in a season would play both competitions at the same site over one weekend, with the home team alternating every year.

The plan would slash travel costs as well as substantially reduce the number of classes missed by students, but Holland realizes it's a tough sell.

"My feeling is that if you are afraid of change," Holland wrote, "then you are in the wrong business."
Perdue asks Congress for money

BY BARBARA BARRETT
WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT

WASHINGTON — Not a week into her tenure, Gov. Beverly Perdue flew to Washington to tell North Carolina’s congressional delegation she needs $18 billion to kick-start the economy — on top of another unspecified amount to fill the state’s budget hole.

Perdue insisted Wednesday that state government have the flexibility to spend as it sees fit, but she also offered a list of the types of projects that she said could have “shovels in the ground” in 60 days. The list ranged from $5.1 billion for highway projects to $24 million for parks facilities.

“I don’t believe it’s a handout,” Perdue said of her request. “It’s not just coming up here and saying, ‘Bail me out.’”

Perdue received a mixed response from North Carolina’s congressional delegation. Some members said they would support her projects while others talked about

SEE PERDUE, PAGE 8A
PERDUE
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

the struggle to shape legislation that meets the country's needs. Still others don't want to give states payments at all.

"Only if they're in the form of a loan," said Sen. Richard Burr, a Winston-Salem Republican. "But I'm not interested in substituting the usual appropriations process and fulfilling states' shortfalls with emergency money just because the states aren't making tough decisions they need to make."

Perdue's trip comes as Congress is debating how to goose a swooning economy. President-elect Barack Obama is speeding to write his version of an economic stimulus package, and a wide variety of special interests are pulling at congressional members.

Perdue also met with members of Obama's transition team to discuss North Carolina's needs. She said she received a better reception from the incoming administration than she did from members of Congress. She insisted that Congress act quickly, avoiding long deliberations and its habit of developing bureaucracies to dole out money.

"The federal government doesn't have time to do it the usual way," she said. "Don't put up any more roadblocks."

A long list of projects

Perdue's first delegation meeting on Capitol Hill was a rare assembly of all but one of the state's 13 House members. Perdue later met individually with many of the House members, along with Burr and Sen. Kay Hagan, a Greensboro Democrat.

Perdue asked Congress for two separate pots of money: One, at about $18 billion, would pay for new infrastructure. The projects include work on airports, highways, schools, clean water systems and public and private colleges.

The second pot of money, an unspecified amount, would be used to fill North Carolina's budget shortfall for next fiscal year.

Perdue has said the state is about $2 billion in the hole, and that while she can find some savings, she can't find enough. And a day after declaring a budget emergency in Raleigh, Perdue also disputed the idea that any shortfall is the fault of the state.

"It is a crisis caused not by bad stewardship on the part of North Carolinians, but because of a global meltdown," she said.

Perdue faces tough obstacles from members of Congress reluctant to yield control of money they send to the states.

"If it was just North Carolina's governor, that would be fine," said U.S. Rep. Mel Watt, a Charlotte Democrat. "But you've got some governors who are not supportive of what we're trying to do."

THE "SHOVEL-READY" PROJECTS

Gov. Beverly Perdue gave members of Congress a list of projects that could benefit from federal aid. They include:

- Highways - $5.1 billion
- County government projects - $3.5 billion
- Municipal government projects - $2.8 billion
- Clean Water - $1.25 billion
- Public schools - $1.1 billion
- Transit - $373.9 million
- UNC System repair and renovation needs - $363 million
- Airports - $315 million
- Rural development/water and sewer - $310 million
- Rail - $256.2 million
- Green technologies - $250 million
- State government repair and renovation needs - $239 million
- UNC system medical and research - $222 million
- Private colleges and universities - $214 million
- Health care information technology upgrades - $180 million
- Drinking water - $124.8 million
- Other state government (prisons and ports) - $116 million
- Military communities, to accommodate growth - $103 million
- Flood control - $62.5 million
- Floodplain mapping - $60 million
- Broadband access - $29 million
- Parks facilities - $24 million

Watt said he also doubted whether a stimulus package would truly stimulate the economy.

"If it's just a substitute for an add-on, it doesn't have the same benefits," he said. "These aren't criticisms. Just challenges."

Burr sounds dubious

Burr was harsher, saying it isn't necessarily Congress' job to make up for the state's budget shortfall. "They didn't wake up six days ago and realize they have a deficit," he said.

Rep. Mike McIntyre, a Lumberton Democrat and member of the fiscally conservative Blue Dogs coalition, praised Perdue's infrastructure list. He said projects in rural areas, especially on water and sewer lines, could ensure that rural regions aren't left out of any stimulus package.

And Hagan, a former state senator, said she wants to ensure that local governments don't get left out of a stimulus plan. Hagan added, though, that she wants to see Congress retain some control of how the money gets spent.

Hagan held out hope that North Carolina could get funding from the federal government. In 2003, she recalled, North Carolina received $500 million to fill a budget gap. "It was like manna from heaven," Hagan said.

Perdue said she would continue her effort to push Congress for help — and that she would take any political heat on their behalf.

"It's me here, hat in hand, asking for help," she said.
Paying for college gets even harder

Families ask for help, but universities are hammered by state budget cuts

JUSTIN POPE, The Associated Press
Comment on this story

Most high school seniors and their families have not made final college plans for next fall. But they know this: It's probably going to cost more than they had planned.

Even in good economic times, states and colleges have largely failed to hold tuition increases in line with inflation. Now, as the slumping economy forces states to slash spending, students can expect the sharpest increases in years.

Families are calling on colleges to absorb as much of the burden as possible instead of passing the extra costs on to students.

"In my business, my customers are asking me for price concessions," said John Schock of Raleigh, who works in sales for a company in the automotive industry and whose son is looking at colleges. He said colleges "have an obligation as well."

Final prices will not be set until state budgets are finished in the coming months, but the trend is clear. In California, the governor's proposed budget would raise university fees about 10 percent. Florida's governor is trying to give several state schools more power to raise prices. And universities in both states plan to cut enrollment slots.

Other states could not wait until fall and have passed unusual midyear increases, including a whopping 14 percent increase in New York.

In previous recessions, state-supported institutions have raised tuition between 8 percent and 10 percent annually for several years running, said Nick Johnson of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities in Washington.

"This recession is worse. This state fiscal crisis is worse than last time, so we would expect state tuition increases to be larger than in past years," Johnson said.

Students could see some relief at private universities, which may have less room to raise prices without losing business or looking greedy. Augustana and Princeton are among schools that have already announced their lowest tuition increases in at least 25 years. Merrimack College and Benedictine University have announced freezes for next year.

But four out of five U.S. college students attend public schools.

Many colleges are making budget cuts, but that's hardly good news for students. It means larger classes and, in states like California, fewer admission slots in the state system.

Jim Boyle, president of the membership and advocacy group College Parents of America, said next year will be especially painful because so many families have lost college savings in the
stock market or can no longer tap home equity loans because of the real estate crash.

State and college officials insist they know families are hurting.

"We're going to run into access and affordability issues, which we're already seeing hints of," said John Hayek, interim vice president of finance for Kentucky's Council on Postsecondary Education. He predicted Kentucky would hold increases below last year's figures: about 5 percent at community colleges and 7 to 10 percent at universities.

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PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE

In the current academic year, the average list price for tuition and fees at four-year public colleges rose 6.4 percent to $6,585, according to the College Board. At private colleges, prices rose 5.9 percent, to $25,143, though financial aid can reduce net costs substantially -- to about $14,900 on average at private schools.

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Ex-lacrosse coach’s case argued

Pressler claims right to sue Duke

SARAH OVASKA AND ANNE BLYTHE, Staff Writers
Comment on this story

A state appeals court will decide whether Duke University's former lacrosse coach had the right to sue the university for slander after a former spokesman made comments about him.

Justices heard arguments Wednesday in a case brought by fired lacrosse coach Mike Pressler.

Duke lawyers are appealing Superior Court Judge Howard Manning's decision that opened the door for Pressler to pursue his slander case.

Duke lawyers have argued that the case should go to arbitration first because Pressler would have been required to go to arbitration when he was employed with the university.

Pressler's lawyers disagree, and argued that the settlement made after Pressler was filed didn't require arbitration.

"They were looking for a scapegoat, and Mike Pressler was it," said Don Strickland, one of the two attorneys representing Pressler.

"It's clear it was a nasty situation," John Simpson, a lawyer representing Duke, said about Pressler's and Duke University's relationship.

Pressler led the Duke lacrosse team in 2006 when an escort service dancer hired to perform at a party alleged falsely that she had been raped by three players. Those allegations were later dismissed by the state attorney general and declared to be false.

Duke canceled the lacrosse season and fired Pressler, a nationally recognized coach, from a job he had held for more than 15 years.
Duke and Pressler settled in March 2007, each agreeing not to make disparaging comments about the other publicly.

But Pressler sued the university more than a year ago alleging that John Burness, a former spokesman, made slanderous comments to the media, a violation of the settlement.

According to the documents filed last January, an article April 9, 2007, in the New York newspaper Newsday quoted Burness as saying the difference between Pressler and current lacrosse coach John Danowski was "night and day."

The second comment came in June 2007, when Burness reportedly told The Associated Press, "It was essential for the team to have a change of leadership in order to move forward."

Pressler now coaches in Rhode Island. He was not at the hearings Wednesday.

It could be weeks or months before the appellate judges rule in the case.

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This Hero's Costume Is a Cap and Gown

By Story and Photographs by Mark Gail \textcopyright\ The Washington Post
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Superwoman.

That's what many were calling Bowie State University's Tanisha Carmichael at the winter commencement ceremony just before the holidays.

The moniker seemed to fit the mid-20s summa cum laude graduate who had a 4.0 grade-point average while finishing a degree in broadcast journalism. In addition to working full time as she pursued her studies, Carmichael is married and the mother of two. Her second child was born just three weeks before Carmichael crossed the commencement stage last month to a standing ovation from her classmates.

Carmichael transferred from East Carolina University in Greenville, N.C., when her husband, Kenneth, a captain in the Air Force, took an assignment in the area. While taking 18 credits each semester for the past two years, she worked as the program director for the campus radio station, WBSU (90.5 FM).

"Time management was very important. It came naturally because there was no other options," said the Odenton resident.

It was a balancing act between school and home, she said. Her evenings included making home-cooked meals for her son, Elijah, 2, and reading to him every night before bed. After that she hit the books until about midnight and then started the cycle again by 5 a.m. the next day.

Late last summer, another test of her time management skills came into play when her husband was deployed to Iraq. On her own during her final semester of college, Carmichael gave birth in late November to a girl -- named Maliah, after President-elect Barack Obama's older daughter.

Carmichael was one of 265 graduates who received undergraduate, master's and doctoral degrees at Bowie State's winter commencement Dec. 20. D.C. congressional Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D) was the commencement speaker. This was the second year for the winter commencement, which was reinstituted under President Mickey L. Burnim in 2007 after a seven-year lapse.

E-mail suggestions for Maryland Moments topics to gaim@washpost.com.

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UNC-CH offers admission to 4,885

FROM STAFF REPORTS

CHAPEL HILL - UNC-Chapel Hill offered admission to 4,885 students this afternoon out of a record pool of 13,692 applicants.

The students admitted include 3,476 North Carolinians and 1,409 students from around the nation and world.

This year, Carolina plans to enroll 3,943 first-year students, 82 percent of whom will be North Carolina residents, according to a press release from UNC-Chapel Hill.

The average SAT Reasoning score (Critical Reading and Math combined) for admitted students is 1,345, an increase of nine points over last year. The group includes 885 North Carolinians scoring 1400 or higher, an increase of 6 percent over last year.

The group also includes 421 students who rank first in their high school class, an increase of 13 percent over last year. Fifty-three percent rank first through 10th, and 87 percent rank in the top 10 percent.

Nine percent of the students admitted identified themselves as African-American; 6 percent as Hispanic, Latino, or Latina; and 1 percent as American Indian. Students identifying themselves as Asian or Asian American comprise 10 percent of the group.
Duke applications increase nearly 17 percent

Duke University received more than 23,750 applications for admission to the Class of 2013, the largest number in school history and an increase of nearly 17 percent over the old record set last year. This year's jump of 3,400 applicants over last year is the largest increase on record for Duke. Last year, 20,352 students sought admission to Duke. The year before that, 19,206 applications were received, the second-highest total in school history at the time.

Dean of Undergraduate Admissions Christoph Guttentag attributed the increase to a number of factors, including a new financial aid program to make Duke more affordable.

Duke is one of a limited number of schools where all qualified U.S. applicants are accepted regardless of their ability to pay for college, according to a news release from Duke.

Duke guarantees that it will meet 100 percent of demonstrated financial need. In December 2007, Duke announced significant enhancements to its financial aid program to provide access to a Duke education for lower- and middle-income families.

The percentage of students applying for financial aid was essentially unchanged from last year, the release said.