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ECU student athlete shot

By Import User | Tuesday, January 19, 2010 - 13:08

An East Carolina University student athlete was shot in the abdomen by her boyfriend Monday night and is recovering from surgery near her home in Smithfield, a Johnston County Sheriff’s Office spokesperson said. The shooting was described as accidental and the incident continues to be investigated.

Jessica Gail Swanson, 22, a fifth-year senior and member of the ECU women’s soccer team, was at her boyfriend’s home in Clayton when the incident occurred, according to a deputy’s report.

William Hamilton, 21, was reportedly cleaning a handgun and apparently was unaware there was a bullet chambered. The gun then discharged, the bullet passing through Hamilton’s hand and into Swanson’s abdomen, the sheriff’s spokesperson said. The bullet also went through Swanson’s arm and broke her elbow before it entered her abdomen, according to Hamilton’s father, Jeff.

Swanson was transported to Wake Medical Center where she underwent surgery. The injury did not appear to be life threatening, the sheriff’s spokesperson said. Swanson was listed in fair condition at Wake Med, an official there said. Hamilton was treated for his hand injury and released.

Hamilton’s father said his son went back to the hospital Tuesday to be at Swanson’s side in the intensive care unit.

“He’s doing fine physically, but is very shaken emotionally by what happened. He wouldn’t hurt that girl for nothing,” Hamilton’s father said.

Swanson is majoring in interior design at ECU, with a minor in business administration.

She was listed in Who’s Who Among America’s High School Students and was a four-time all-conference player out of West Johnston High School. At East Carolina, Swanson played in all 20 of the Pirates’ games as a freshman and tied for fourth on the team in scoring while playing in all 22 contests in her junior year.

Contact Michael Abramowitz at mabramowitz@reflector.com or (252) 329-9571.
MTSU coach says no to ECU

Middle Tennessee football coach Rick Stockstill has withdrawn as a candidate for East Carolina's job.

The announcement was made today on the MTSU athletics Web site. Stockstill, a former assistant for the Pirates, led his team to a 10-3 record in 2009.

"I am very humbled and appreciative of the interest East Carolina University has shown in me about their head coaching position," Stockstill said in a statement posted online. "ECU is an outstanding university, community, and its football program has a great tradition and has been very successful throughout the years.

"The timing is never good for a coach to change jobs. However, the timing of this opportunity came at a critical time in recruiting with both universities and to the fault of neither MTSU nor ECU.

"I have decided I will remove my name from consideration at ECU. I could not look in the eyes of these recruits and their families and tell them the things I believe in and what I want them to believe in and then leave Middle Tennessee with only two weeks left in the recruiting process."

With Stockstill out, ECU athletic director Terry Holland is still believed to be interested in Temple's Al Golden and Bowling Green's Dave Clawson, among others.
From Stockstill to standstill: ECU search continues
By Nathan Summers
The Daily Reflector
Tuesday, January 19, 2010
East Carolina football got stuck at square one again Tuesday when the
leading man to become the Pirates’ next head coach withdrew his name from
the running.
Middle Tennessee State head coach Rick Stockstill said he was no longer
considering the ECU position, citing his new recruits and his returning
players as his reason for choosing to remain at the Murfreesboro, Tenn.,
school.
That means the search has reopened to find a replacement for Skip Holtz,
who left the Pirates last week to become the new head coach at the
University of South Florida.
Potentially leading the list of candidates now are Bowling Green head coach
Dave Clawson, Liberty head man Danny Rocco and Grambling head coach
Rob Broadway, but many names have been attached to the job.
ECU Athletics Director Terry Holland reportedly interviewed Stockstill, the
only coach believed to have interviewed so far, on Sunday, and made an
offer to the MTSU coach afterward.
Stockstill, on a recruiting trip Tuesday, said he was “humbled and
appreciative” of the attention he received from ECU, but said the timing
simply was not right.
“I could not look in the eyes of these recruits and their families and tell them
the things I believe in and what I want them to believe in and then leave
Middle Tennessee with only two weeks left in the recruiting process,”
Stockstill said.
“Also, I have so much respect and admiration for our current players that
they were ultimately the reason I could not pursue this any further.”
Holtz stepped down after five seasons at ECU to become the new head
coach at USF.
Other possible candidates might include Temple head coach Al Golden,
Virginia Tech defensive coordinator Bud Foster, former Clemson head
coch Tommy Bowden, North Alabama head coach Terry Bowden, former
Boston College head coach and ECU staffer Jeff Jagodzinski, former Texas
Tech defensive coordinator and ECU alum Ruffin McNeil, Oklahoma
offensive coordinator and Wilson native Kevin Wilson, Navy defensive
coordinator and Charlotte native Buddy Green and former Texas Tech head
coch Mike Leach.
Contact Nathan Summers at nsummers@reflector.com or (252) 329-9595.
A tuition hike with a new focus

RALEIGH -- When the General Assembly imposed an across-the-board 8 percent tuition hike (or a $200 boost, whichever was less) on all students in the UNC system last year to help balance the budget, UNC President Erskine Bowles had several options.

As a longtime supporter of low tuition at public universities to help students of modest means go to college, Bowles could have gone nuclear, choosing the confrontational route of former UNC President C.D. Spangler.

After all, with the proceeds of the legislature's tuition increase slated to go into the state's General Fund, it would have been easy for Bowles to describe it as a tax on students and their hard-working parents. Or an assault on the state constitution's requirement to keep the costs of attending the university as low as is practicable. That's not his way. "I'm not much into demagoguery," he said.

Bowles and Spangler have a number of things in common: Both are Charlotte businessmen who made fortunes before turning to public service. Both grew up in affluence, attending prep schools in Virginia before graduating from UNC and doing graduate work in the Ivy League.

But each has distinctly different ways of doing things. When then-Gov. Jim Hunt proposed a big tuition increase 14 years ago, Spangler dropped public bombs on Hunt, at one point sharply criticizing the proposal at an N.C. Press Association event while Hunt sat behind him. Spangler was ticked off that with a $1 billion surplus, Hunt wanted to raise tuition. Spangler seemed to relish the fight.

Bowles' approach was more like that of former UNC President Bill Friday, who shunned public confrontations and relied on the personal touch and the power of logic and persistence to successfully lobby the legislature.

It's similar to what Bowles learned long ago. When Bowles was chief of staff in the Clinton administration, he was known for working with lawmakers from both sides of the political aisle to get things done. That was one reason we enjoyed a balanced budget and even surpluses for a while.

So instead of picking a fight with the legislature, Bowles has worked with his staff and the UNC Board of Governors to develop an alternative he wants lawmakers to consider when they return to Raleigh for a budget session in May and adopt before the 2010-11 academic year.

It's not that Bowles wants no tuition hike. But he points out that the state university system has already made significant cuts, without complaint, to comply with appropriations cuts mandated by the Great Recession of the past few years. Those cuts have come in student aid and in administrative costs as well - amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars, including $296 million most recently. The university also is complying with a 5 percent holdback in spending in case of a further revenue downturn.

These cuts have come at a time when the demand of need-based financial aid is way up, both in the number of students eligible and the sums they're eligible to receive if funds were available.
So UNC is proposing as an alternative that the General Assembly approve a maximum 6.5 percent increase, as allowed under current tuition policy, with an average increase of 5.2 percent. Bowles recommends that instead of the across-the-board increase, the legislature impose a lesser rate hike on in-state students and a greater increase on out-of-state students.

And he wants the increase to stay with the university system - half of it for need-based aid and the other half to boost graduation rates and other campus needs. His plan would raise nearly as much money as the legislature's plan, more than $34 million, but it would help N.C. students stay in school more.

That's appropriate. "North Carolinians have paid taxes to the state and worked hard to support these institutions ever since their founding," he said. "They built the buildings and brought in the professors. Out-of-state students haven't had to do that, and I think the burden ought to fall more on out-of-state students."

Bowles is counting on UNC's good standing in Raleigh to help carry the argument. He understands why legislators do what they do, and hopes they'll understand UNC's position too.

What are the chances of success? It's hard to know as state revenues continue to trail needs. But if Bowles can persuade lawmakers the university is doing its part, he'll have a chance. "The reality," he says, "is these are really tough times. We have to do our part and that means sucking it up and holding down our costs....We've got to make sure every kid can afford to go to the university."

That is, after all, why the University of North Carolina exists.

Jack Betts is a Raleigh-based columnist and associate editor for The Charlotte Observer.
**Brain tumor discovery hailed**

The most common and deadly form of brain tumor is not one disease, but at least four subtypes, scientists at UNC-Chapel Hill and other institutions reported Tuesday.

Each type of tumor, called a glioblastoma, has distinct molecular features that possibly arise from different causes. Knowing that should help scientists develop targeted treatments.

Currently, glioblastomas are nearly always fatal, and the average survival after diagnosis is about a year. It is the form of brain cancer that killed Sen. Edward Kennedy last year, despite aggressive treatment that included surgery at Duke University Medical Center.

The UNC-CH team - participating in a National Institutes of Health effort to map the genetic structure of 20 cancer types - scoured a vast database to compare healthy human DNA against glioblastoma.

A surprising pattern emerged. While the brain tumors looked the same under a microscope, they showed remarkable differences when examined more closely at the molecular level. Some were missing parts of chromosomes; others had extra parts.

'A new era'  

"This is really a quantum step," said Dr. David Neil Hayes, lead author and researcher at UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center. "With genomics technology, we are really looking at a time and progress in science that's equivalent to some of the major advances such as the microscope. This is the dawn of a new era in the study of human disease."

The new frontier has been touted for years as personalized medicine - disease diagnoses and treatments gauged to a patient's unique genetic makeup. Already, doctors are making treatment decisions for some breast and other cancers based on the molecular construction of the tumors.

With glioblastomas, Hayes said, a similar approach is not far off, and he said new drugs in the pipeline have the potential to target one or another of the four tumor subtypes.

Patient groups welcomed the findings, which were published Tuesday in the journal Cancer Cell.

"This is a wonderful discovery," said Dianne Traynor, president of the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation in Asheville, which funds research and provides advocacy to patients and families. "This is very important, because it can be sparing to patients when we know the differences."

Traynor said some patients may opt to forgo treatment if they know it's ineffective on their type of tumor. Additionally, less medicine may work on tumors that do respond, sparing patients from toxic side effects.

The findings could also spur research into new drugs.
"This study will be highly relevant to patients in speeding up development of appropriate new therapies for their particular tumors," said David R. Hurwitz, chief science officer of the National Brain Tumor Society.

Hayes, the UNC-CH researcher, said the mapping effort for glioblastoma is just the start of a five-year mission to decode the molecular structures of cancer tumors. The program, called The Cancer Genome Atlas, involves dozens of research institutions, with UNC-CH working to decipher how the genes are expressed.

"TCGA is mobilizing the entire cancer community to find new strategies in detecting and treating cancer faster," NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins said in a prepared statement. "These findings are just a hint of what we expect to result from the comprehensive data generated by TCGA over the next few years."

Findings about ovarian cancer are expected to be reported next, Hayes said.

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The 200 block of Jarvis Street in 1958.


Photos from Joyner Library's digital collection. The A&P on 10th Street in 1965, where Lindy Carman worked for 44 years.
Photos from Joyner Library's digital collection: The original Hardee's on 14th Street, 1962.

The Little Mint stand in 1964.


More in News
- ECU athlete recovering after accidental shooting
- From Stockstill to standstill: ECU search continues
- Local Carol West witnesses Haitian earthquake
- One-stop voting site suggestions sought by board
Facebook group helps brings Greenville natives together
By Kristin Day
The Daily Reflector
Tuesday, January 19, 2010
It's like a big, virtual high school reunion, but anyone is invited.
Anyone, that is, who grew up in Greenville.
In the last month, a Facebook group titled “You Know You Grew Up In
Greenville, NC If ...” has had a surge in new members, climbing toward
2,000 people by press time.
“It was sort of random,” creator John Heath said about starting the group. “I
had seen similar groups for Asheville, Chapel Hill and Greensboro — some
of the same type of thing.”
Heath, who lives in Chapel Hill and works in public education, moved to
Greenville when he was in first grade and stayed to attend ECU before
leaving for UNC-Chapel Hill. In the late summer or early fall 2009, he says,
he created the Facebook group for Greenville natives and invited a few high
school friends to join. He started a list of things only people who grew up in
the area would remember, like: “You went to Jerry’s Sweet Shop at Pitt
Plaza while your mom shopped” or “You remember Arlington Boulevard
before it went all the way to Bells Fork” or “You went to see Dr. Lewis as a
child, and remember having the choice of chocolate or butterscotch
fluoride.”
For months, not much happened. Then during the holidays, he noticed a
jump in the number of group members.
“A day or two after Christmas, I started getting e-mail messages from folks I
didn’t know saying I ought to add things (to the list), and it (the group) was
growing hundreds of people by the day. ... Maybe it’s a combination that
during the holidays people have more time and maybe they get nostalgic.”
Keith Branton, 45, was one of the first contributors to the group’s pictures,
which he pulled from The Daily Reflector’s online archive via ECU’s Joyner
Library’s digital collection, and continues to put up photos illustrating
Greenville’s history: the hospital, the schools, the 1984 tornadoes, Hurricane
Floyd and the theaters. Now living in Manteo, Branton said there probably
were about 50 members when he joined the group after Christmas.
“I think a friend of mine asked me to join the group,” Branton said. “And
when I got to the group, there really weren’t any pictures. ... So I put the
pictures up there for people to look at, and that’s what I remember growing
up what Greenville looked like.”
Branton said people have been most responsive to pictures of landmarks like
the first Hardee’s restaurant, the State Bank, Little Mint, West End Circle
and the department stores that have come and gone. People have been so responsive, in fact, that for the first couple of weeks, Branton was receiving 100-200 e-mails a day from Facebook, notifying him that someone had left a comment.

Many of those e-mails were announcing another message from Miranda Pearce, 56, who moved to New Hanover County almost 23 years ago. Pearce, who just set up a computer in her house three months ago, was about to delete her Facebook account when she saw the Greenville group. She joined and invited her Greenville friends. Throughout that day, she noticed all of her friends joining and started looking at the photographs, and commenting. When people responded to her comments, she’d receive notification e-mails from Facebook and go back to the group page. Her e-mail inbox became so full that at one point her iPhone crashed.

“It just went crazy, and I stayed up all night the first night,” Pearce said. “I was on that thing nonstop from probably 11 that morning until I think 2:35 on Monday morning.”

But to Pearce, who remembers well the year Greenville segregated its public schools, the group has not only become a virtual venue where she can catch up with old friends; it’s also become a way for people in her generation to socialize in a way they couldn’t before.

“One thing that I’ve thought is really cool with this group,” Pearce said, “is all those old classmates of different races are interacting in a way that was either frowned upon or wasn’t done (in the 1960s).”

Pearce said the group also has served as a means for members to show their appreciation for people throughout the community.

For example, when Branton posted a picture of the old A&P on 10th Street, members started discussing how much one of its employees, Lindy Carman, meant to them. Lindy’s daughter, Mary, stumbled upon the comments by accident and was able to thank them for their kind words.

“Mary probably never knew how much her father impacted ‘white Greenville,’” Pearce said. “?EUR? and I didn’t even know Mary until this group.”

Mary, who still lives in Greenville and works as a substance abuse counselor, says she doesn’t think Lindy would understand if she told him about the Facebook comments — he’s no computer buff — but he smiles when she tells him someone spoke fondly of him.

“I think when I first saw it (the comments wall), it was just affirmation, again, the impact he had on people’s lives,” Mary said. “I’m amazed by some of the stories I hear, and that’s just walking around Greenville. I was really amazed at what I saw on Facebook.”
But much of the time, members of the Greenville group are simply looking back on all of the things they miss.

“All of it,” Pearce said. “The Book Barn, Globe Hardware, the traffic not being so horrible, people knowing each other, going to the drug store and saying ‘charge it on my daddy’ in downtown; kids used to ride their bikes everywhere ... and the smell. ... All of Greenville smelled like pure tobacco until September.”


“It’s just because everything was simple then,” Burton said. “Looking at these pictures and being in this group, I wish I could do it all again. I miss it so much, and it’s all gone now. State Bank, Pitt Movie Theater, the Hardee’s — my dad used to carry me to the first Hardee’s.”

Talks of a reunion of Greenville natives have sparked among several of the group members, although for now it’s just an idea. Still, the fact that one simple group could bring so many people together continues to surprise Heath.

“I don’t think I’ve done much of anything,” Heath said, “but I guess it’s one of those things. I guess there was a need for people to connect that way. Because Greenville’s changed a lot.”

Join “You Know You Grew Up In Greenville, NC If ...” by searching its name under “Groups.” To see more pictures from Seeds of Change: The Daily Reflector Image Collection, visit http://digital.lib.ecu.edu/reflector/. Contact Kristin Day at kday@reflector.com or (252) 329-9579.
The Washington Post

Virginia college group describes surviving Haiti earthquake

by Michael Alison Chandler
Washington Post Staff Writer
Wednesday, January 20, 2010; B01

WEYERS CAVE, VA. -- Two students from Blue Ridge Community College were driving down a rutted road in southern Haiti last Tuesday afternoon with two faculty advisers when they heard a giant clap of rocks and their van began to rock.

"Women were ripping off their shirts; they thought it was the Apocalypse. They were running, screaming," said Rebecca Evans, an accounting professor and faculty adviser for the trip. "Buildings were just crumbling down. There were clouds of dust in the distance."

For Michael Aronoff, 21, of Vienna and Megan Samples, 19, of Dumfries, the trip began as an idealistic venture to help build a rabbit-farming cooperative in the village of Signeau, south of Port-au-Prince. It turned into a disaster relief mission and finally a narrow escape from a desperate crowd at the Haitian capital's airport.

The students, along with Evans and the other adviser, Gail Foley, a Blue Ridge veterinary technician, held a news conference Tuesday at their school, south of Harrisonburg, to describe how they survived the Haitian earthquake and made it home. As they talked, images of collapsed buildings and bloodied bodies flashed on a screen behind them.

The group arrived in Port-au-Prince early the day before the earthquake. They drove past street vendors and crowded slums to Riviere Froide, a mountain village about 20 miles away that would be their base for the week. They settled into a convent guesthouse and had a meal of beans, goat and fried plantains. Then they spent the afternoon at a neighboring school, visiting classes and meeting the students, who sang songs, played games with the visitors and taught them bits of Creole.

"Haiti is an extremely beautiful place," Samples wrote in a blog entry after their first day in Haiti. She described the landscape and the afternoon with the children: "It was a privilege to be able to meet them."

Early the next day, they left for Signeau, about an hour away, where they built rabbit cages to help families start small businesses. On the way home, they stopped at several markets in search of sugar cane for a treat after a satisfying day of work. They were less than a mile from the school when the earthquake struck.

As they approached the school on foot, children, dusty and bleeding, ran down the mountain toward them. The school had collapsed; the guesthouse was destroyed.

Through the night, fathers clawed through the rubble for their children. Bodies were placed in a mass grave; the living were treated for their wounds and covered with blankets.
The volunteers from Virginia made bandages and offered comfort to the survivors -- a hand to hold, a lap in which to cradle their heads.

We were "trying to do what we could to keep people from dying," Aronoff said in an interview with The Washington Post before the news conference.

They watched as mothers searched for their children, peering under each blanket. They listened for hours to the mournful chants from nearby villages, interrupted only by aftershocks. They estimated that at least half of the more than 400 children who were in the school that afternoon died.

The next morning, Aronoff climbed inside the precarious guesthouse and crawled over a wall to retrieve Evans's suitcase. Many of their belongings, including a laptop, shoes and makeup, had been looted during the night, but Aronoff found the satchel containing their passports and cash.

For the next two days, they focused on getting out of Haiti. The group left the school site Wednesday and found a Sri Lankan officer at a United Nations outpost near Signeau who helped them contact their families online.

Early Thursday, they hired someone to take them to the Port-au-Prince airport.

There, they said, they joined a panicked mob of Haitian Americans and American volunteers trying to flee.

For at least 12 hours, they received no water or food and virtually no communication from the U.S. Embassy's consul general, who they said occasionally stepped outside but offered no help.

Some people were passing out in the 90-degree heat but received no medical care.

Aronoff said that only after a man standing next to him suffered a seizure was he able to get a guard's attention and be admitted inside.

He eventually managed to get treatment for the stranger and permission to admit the rest of his group. By this slim chance, he said, they were able to catch a plane to the Dominican Republic that night and fly home Saturday afternoon.

The group was somber Tuesday but adamant about wanting to return to Haiti to help.

"If anything, this experience has strengthened my goal" of working abroad in the Peace Corps or another international aid organization, said Samples, a nursing major.

Aronoff, a business management major, wants to return but said the experience had broken his faith in emergency services. "If something happens, you can't rely on someone to help you out," he said.

The Students in Free Enterprise club at Blue Ridge is raising money to return to Riviere Froide and rebuild the school.

Staff writer William Branigan contributed to this report.

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College aid form a bit less grueling

BY DAVE CARPENTER
The Associated Press

Filling out the form for federal college aid used to be regarded as the equivalent of a root canal.

Thanks to some much-needed steps toward simplification, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid is a bit less grueling for online applicants this year — perhaps just a routine cavity filling.

Worthy of dread or not, the FAFSA remains an essential step toward getting help paying for college. It is commonly used by colleges and states to set grant and loan amounts, and those seeking aid for the fall semester should submit it as early in the year as possible.

Here are some common questions and answers about the application.

Q: What has changed about the FAFSA this year?
A: The U.S. Department of Education is still in the early stages of its effort to make the FAFSA less complex. It has shortened the online application for aid in the 2010-11 school year by up to 22 questions, using improved “skip logic” to allow students or, more likely, their parents to bypass those that don’t apply to them.

The most time-consuming questions remain, however.

Q: How long does it take to complete?
A: The FAFSA Web site (www.fafsa.ed.gov) estimates that first-time users should be able to finish in less than an hour. That may be a best-case scenario. It assumes you have gathered the key information in advance: end-of-year pay stubs if you haven’t done your tax returns yet, Social Security numbers of student and parents, driver’s license number, investment records, recent bank statements.

Mark Kantrowitz, an expert on financial aid who runs FinAid.org, says most people he talks to say the FAFSA takes them two or three hours.

Q: Our income is probably too high to get any financial aid. Why should I apply?
A: Applying for aid is almost essential if you plan to borrow any money for college. Filing the FAFSA is a prerequisite for getting a federal Stafford loan, the most common and one of the lowest-cost ways to pay for school. All students are eligible for a Stafford loan, regardless of income or need.

You want to be protected in case something unexpected happens, said Lynn O'Shaughnessy, a college expert who writes for Thecollegeolutionblog.com. If you lose your job and suddenly need financial aid from the school or the government, you've already done the required paperwork.

Kantrowitz said most people who think they won't qualify for aid are mistaken.

Even if you apply and don't get aid this year, remember that having a second child in college in a year or two could alter the picture. The amount you are expected to contribute before being eligible for need-based aid is divided by the number of kids in college, so aid could then be available for both.