THE DAILY CLIPS

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Snowball fight disrupts ECU campus

By Michael Abramowitz
The Daily Reflector

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Disruptive snowball fights on the ECU campus Tuesday resulted in some injuries, one arrest and an officer using pepper spray.

Campus police officers were called to the dormitory area on College Hill three times after 2 p.m. to control snowball fights that erupted among hundreds of students, according to police.

Officers responding to the incidents were pelted with snowballs, a report said. Students rushed police who were making an arrest, prompting one officer to use chemical spray on them.

Officers were called to control a crowd of 200-250 at the bottom of College Hill Drive in the marching band practice field, and similar crowds near Aycock and Jones halls.

They were called to help one student who was hit in the left eye. Other than a swollen eye, the snowball did not cause a serious injury and the student did not need treatment, police reported.

Students outside the dorm area on Wednesday recalled the fight.

"It was crazy. There was a bunch of people out there whaling on people with snowballs," said junior Matt Lunchick. "We got there about 3:30 p.m., but it was going on all day."

Students were running into the Galley food court area with snowballs, Lunchick said, and he caught one hard in the shoulder as he and his friends were walking from the area.

Junior Brandon Davis saw hundreds of people all over College Hill with snowballs.

"They were throwing them at everyone and anyone. I saw one guy crying after he got hit in the eye with a snowball over by the Galley. There were people helping him," Davis said. "It all started in good nature, but then people were throwing them as hard as they could at each other. They were everywhere."

The two students said they saw a girl hit in the face with a snowball thrown from 10 feet away.

"She went to the ground. I think she was all right," Lunchick said.

Officers asked for help from resident advisers and student coordinators to control students, a report said.

Coordinator Norman Cole told police he was the only one available because everyone else was out of town, the report said.

Students on Wednesday said track athletes and football players were throwing snowballs as well.

The officers reported that they left a voice message with Coach Skip Holtz about the behavior of the football players. They also contacted Cliff Snow, director of football operations, a report said.

Snow said Wednesday that the campus police were unsure whether football players were involved.

"It was just kids throwing snowballs on campus. The police contacted us to let us know that some of them might be football players. They just wanted us to let the kids know it was inappropriate and to avoid doing it because kids could get injured," Snow said.

Snow said he drove along College Hill briefly, but there were very few students out there when he drove by.
At one point, Lunchick said, the cops came over and told some students not to dump tubs of snow into cars.

"When the cop turned and walked away, someone hit him with snowballs. When he turned back, the next person he saw pick up a snowball, he tackled him and arrested him. Fair justice," Lunchick said.

Steven Rashad Bass, 18, 461 Jones Hall, was arrested and charged with assault on a government official and resisting, delaying and obstructing a law enforcement officer. Bass was held at the Pitt County Detention Center on $1,000 secured bond.

During his arrest, one officer deployed his pepper spray. No injuries were reported as a result.

There were no similar outbreaks reported in the area Wednesday, and students walked along College Hill Drive without incident at midday.

Contact Michael Abramowitz at mabramowitz@coxnc.com or (252) 329-9571.

sunny skies, low temps were the norm across the state. B1

GET INFORMATION on snow-related closings. A7
Grounded

Officials at UNC-Chapel Hill taxied out to the runway, noted a storm building to the west and prudently canceled the flight. Chancellor Holden Thorp recently said that a new Orange County airport, intended to serve the university and private pilots, won’t get off the ground, at least for now.

Good call by the first-year chancellor. This was a project, and a controversy, the university didn’t need.

Anti-airport signs posted in yards along N.C. 54 west from Chapel Hill/Carrboro hinted at widespread opposition. In meetings and comments, rural residents denounced the plan to replace university-run Horace Williams Airport in Chapel Hill.

That facility is to be closed — to neighbors’ cheers — when UNC builds its Carolina North project on the site. Yet replacing Horace Williams with a rural airport would likely eat up farmland and disrupt a peaceful part of the county. And a new airport would cost millions.

Then consider that UNC has already spent $3.5 million on a new hangar at RDU for the medical school doctors whose flights to outlying parts of the state are said to be the main reason for replacing the old airport. Sure, RDU is not as convenient as Horace Williams, or even as rural Orange County might be, but it’ll do. (Thorp praised the doctors’ dedication, suggesting that they’ll cope.)

It was galling that 2008 legislation authorizing the new airport 1) granted a newly created airport authority eminent domain powers and 2) gave UNC majority control of the board. In one swoop, the General Assembly, acting at the behest of airport enthusiasts, managed to anger property rights-oriented opponents of eminent domain and environmentalists and others with little love of private aviation.

Now the question is, is the new airport plan really dead, or is it only playing possum? If the plan ever does come back to life, certainly it should be through a far more open, wide-reaching process. Even then, fasten your seat belts.
Winfrey, Moeser among 7 to get Duke Ph.D.s

FROM STAFF REPORTS

DURHAM — Duke University plans to give honorary degrees to Oprah Winfrey and former UNC-Chapel Hill chancellor James Moeser in May, the university announced Wednesday.

According to the university, Moeser and Winfrey will be among seven recipients of honorary degrees at the commencement ceremony May 10. Winfrey will be the featured speaker.

The university decided to honor Moeser, who while presiding over commencement ceremonies in Chapel Hill during his eight years as chancellor, occasionally made light-hearted jabs at that private school down the road, for his work on the creation of the Carolina Covenant — a financial aid program for low-income students, as well as the expansion of genome research, and successful fundraising.

Other recipients are economist-educator Susan Athey; Nobel geneticists Michael Brown and Joseph Goldstein, a team who will receive one degree; Nobel chemist Mario Molina; business executive Indra Nooyi; and pianist Murray Perahia.