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Rash of car break-ins hits area near ECU

More than a half dozen vehicles have been targeted between Jan. 21 and Tuesday near campus.

BY MICHAEL ABRAMOWITZ
The Daily Reflector

A series of car break-ins and attempted break-ins continued this week on and near the East Carolina University campus, according to ECU and Greenville police. Another rash of five break-ins in three days occurred on Spring Forest Road, reports showed.

More than a half dozen vehicles have been targeted between Jan. 21 and Tuesday near campus. The crimes have been reported in parking areas adjoining Reade Street, on College Hill Drive and on Willow Street in the Tar River district, according to reports from both agencies.

In some instances, windows have been broken to gain entry into vehicles, while in other cases, convertible tops have been cut open in attempts to gain access, the reports stated.

No one has been identified by the police and no arrests have been made in connection with any of the incidents.

Surveillance cameras used in the areas captured video of suspicious activity in the areas, but the images were of poor quality and could not identify individuals committing the crimes, assistant chief Dawn Tevepaugh said.

BREAK-INS

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"Unfortunately, the cameras there are a bit older and the images are not that clear for nighttime details," she said.

Patrol details are being arranged to bring more of a police presence to the parking areas when possible, Tevepaugh said.

"We’ve recently added a supplement of officers to work with Greenville police in the downtown district with our officers at night from Sunday through Thursday, in addition to our regular Friday and Saturday patrols there," Tevepaugh said.

"When activities are light in the downtown district, we send officers to patrol those parking areas on foot, in addition to added vehicle patrols," she said.

Students on campus have been alerted about the break-ins on media screens situated in the Mendenhall Student Center. A police representative also met with resident assistants to share the information with students who park there, Tevepaugh said.

Stolen items included GPS units, cell phones, a flashlight, cash and coins and various types of stereo equipment and speakers.

The incidents have occurred in parking lots at the following locations:
- College Hill Drive, between 10:30 p.m. Jan. 21 and noon on Jan. 22; an unknown person attempted to remove a car cover from a BMW.
- 701 College Hill Drive, between 2 a.m. Jan. 23 and 4:25 p.m. Jan. 24; a GPS unit and flashlight stolen from a student’s Mazda.

At Reade and East Fifth streets, 1 p.m. on Jan. 23 and 11:34 a.m. Jan. 28 an unknown person attempted to tear a canvas top from a Jeep Wrangler.

At Reade and Fourth, at about 5:38 p.m. on Jan. 28 someone broke a driver's side window to attempt entry into a Honda Civic and a Chevy Trailblazer.

At Reade Street Lot 3, between 9 p.m. Jan. 27 and 3 p.m. Jan. 28 someone broke a driver's window into an ECU employee’s car and stole loose currency.

In the 1400 block of Willow Street, between 8 p.m. Monday and 12:15 p.m. Tuesday someone broke into a Ford Bronco and stole stereo equipment valued at $425.

In the 1300 block of Willow between 11:45 p.m. Monday and 7:50 p.m. Tuesday someone broke a window of a student’s Toyota Camry and stole a set of speakers valued at $120.

Five more break-ins occurred from Monday-Wednesday, between the 500 block and 800 block of Spring Forest Road, between Stanstonsburg Road and Dickinson Avenue. They were reported by city police Thursday. The reports did not indicate how the cars were broken into or items stolen from the vehicles.

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Sylvia Martha Iwanowski English joined the staff at PCMH in 1986 as a Master's prepared Clinical Nurse Specialist. During her tenure at PCMH through 2004, she served with a distinguished group of advanced practice nurses and other professional colleagues dedicated to impacting the lives of the diabetic population. During this time she became certified as a diabetic educator and served as an adjunct faculty member of the ECU School of Nursing. Sylvia knew that making changes in the lives of eastern North Carolinians would require a broad effort of hospital and community resources. She became active in national, state, and local diabetes education associations, serving on the board and officer level. Her focus on clinical practice and teaching was enhanced by her connections to community services which touched the lives of diabetics throughout our region. During many summers, Sylvia enjoyed being a team member with staff at Camp Needles in the Pines, working with children with diabetes. She went on the road to neighboring hospitals and organizations to share her knowledge and instill her commitment to improved health.

Sylvia had a thirst for lifelong learning. She was an avid reader, enjoying participating in local book clubs. As a diabetes educator, she knew that reaching others with information they could use to change their health and everyday lives, required that they be able to read. She was a long time participant and volunteer in Literacy Volunteers. Sylvia was an excellent writer and reviewer, serving as the first editor of the PCMH journal Perspectives in Patient Care and reviewer of the Clinical Nurse Specialist and Diabetes Educator.

Perhaps one of Sylvia’s greatest gifts was that she led by example. She embraced a personal lifestyle of healthy eating and exercise that was an inspiration to her coworkers, patients, friends, and family. In retirement and as often as she could in recent months, Sylvia taught aquatics arthritis classes at the Viquet Center. She was always on the go, and encouraged others to stay active.

Since January 2007, Sylvia served as the Chair of Pitt Partners for Health, a community coalition of healthcare professionals and community leaders for the improvement of Pitt County residence. A member since 1995, she never missed an opportunity to share her knowledge with others and encouraged everyone to make improvements in order to better their health. Through her positive attitude and welcoming spirit she assisted in the recruitment of new members into the partnership. Sylvia believed that one person could inspire another to make a difference and she truly believed in PPH’s collaboration as a group and the strides it is making in Pitt County.

Sylvia received numerous awards and recognitions during her nursing career. She was inducted into Sigma Theta Tau honorary society, and was a member of the local Beta Nu chapter.

She was the North Carolina Nurses Association CNS of the Year in 1992. In 1994, she was selected for recognition as a North Carolina Great 100 nurse. These awards recognized how she positively impacted the image of Nursing, and made a difference in our community through nursing excellence.

She believed strongly in bringing together people of various beliefs, creeds, orientations and outlooks. To this end she was active in her church, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Greenville, and she was a strong advocate, supporter and participant in the activities of Interfaith Prayers for Peace, an interdenominational group organized after Sept. 11, 2001, to bring the faith communities of our area together.

Cards and emails are welcome. The family will not be receiving at home. A public memorial service will be held later. Though their hues are gay, The blossoms flutter down. And so in this world of ours Who may live forever. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial gifts be made to support scholarship for overweight children to attend ECU’s Take-4-Health camp (make checks payable to ECU Medical and Health Sciences foundation at 525 Moye Blvd, Greenville, NC 27834 and specify the ECU Pediatric Healthy Weight Research and Treatment Center in the memo line), the Pitt Memorial Foundation (www.pmhf.org), Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (www.jdrf.org) or that a memorial tree be planted through ReLeaf (www.releaf.us).
Katie Jerdee, a soccer player for Northeastern University who suffered a stroke at age 20 and a year later returned to her team and ran in the Boston Marathon a year after that, will share her story of recovery to raise awareness of strokes today at East Carolina University.

Jerde will speak at the ECU Wear Red for Women health education event from noon to 1 p.m. at the East Carolina Heart Institute, 115 Heart Drive on the ECU health sciences campus.

The annual Wear Red for Women event raises awareness among women of the importance of heart and vascular health as well as to teach the warning signs of stroke and heart attack. Heart disease is the leading killer of women in America, according to the American Heart Association.
Perdue tells agencies to meet workers' reps

The Associated Press

RALEIGH — Business and conservative groups are protesting a move by Gov. Beverly Perdue they see as a step toward unions for public employees.

Perdue signed an executive order last month widening the lines of communication between state agencies and employee groups beyond that of her predecessor, Mike Easley. Perdue recognized as many as five unions or organizations to represent workers in discussions on workplace conditions every quarter, instead of annually.

Perdue’s order also raises the bureaucratic ranking of the meetings, meaning she and some agency heads will meet with representatives of the worker groups, including the 55,000-member State Employees Association of North Carolina. The lobbying group for state workers is an affiliate of the Service Employees International Union, the nation’s largest public employee union.

“I don’t think talking to employees is bad policy,” said Francis De Luca, president of the Civitas Institute, a conservative think tank in Raleigh. “I think talking to a union is bad public policy. That is exactly what this is.”

U.S. Labor Department figures show North Carolina is the least unionized state in the country. The News & Observer of Raleigh reported Thursday. The state bans all collective bargaining by public employees.

“We feel that this is a camel’s nose under the tent,” said Gregg Thompson, the state director of the National Federation of Independent Business.
Duke specialists heading to Haiti

DURHAM -- A team of specialized doctors and nurses from Duke University Medical Center leaves today for a hospital in Haiti, where they will spend up to two weeks treating earthquake victims as well as patients who have been fighting tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS since before last month's disaster.

The team will live and work at a hospital operated by Partners in Health, co-founded by Duke graduate Paul Farmer, in the village of Cange, about two hours northwest of Port-au-Prince. The hospital was undamaged by the quake and has been inundated with patients from Port-au-Prince.

Dr. Ian Greenwald, Duke's chief medical officer and a member of the hospital's disaster response team, said Duke went to work immediately after the quake to figure out where it could do the most good without getting in the way. The Duke team will replace specialists from the University of Pennsylvania hospitals who have been helping in Cange.

As they prepared to leave, gathering donated medical supplies and getting briefed by a nurse who had just returned from Haiti, some said they were worried only that they wouldn't be able to do enough during their stay.

"At the end of two weeks, you're coming home, and things aren't finished," said Dr. Cameron Wolfe, an infectious disease specialist.

Haiti will need intense outside help caring for its injured for months to come, doctors say.

The team going in today will find patients whose injuries may have healed some since they first crawled or were rescued from the rubble.

April Perry, a nurse clinician from Duke who returned last Friday from a 10-day stint with the N.C. Baptist Men's relief effort in Haiti, told the team to expect to see many patients recovering from crush wounds, bone and skull fractures, amputations and spinal injuries. Since their initial injuries, Perry said, many patients have developed secondary problems such as infections from wounds that were not adequately tended.

For his part, Cameron said he had been refreshing his knowledge of how to treat malaria, typhoid and dengue fever - tropical diseases rarely seen in patients at hospitals such as Duke.

Team members were told that though the 125-bed Partners in Health hospital - now housing more than 200 patients - is well equipped by Haitian standards, doctors and nurses still will be working in an austere medical environment.

"We can't just go down and take first-world medicine to a developing country and expect it will work," Greenwald said, in part because follow-up care may not be available.

The Duke team expects to stay in Haiti through Feb. 14.

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Leader of nation's biggest campus wants to change rules that govern granting of tenure

ANDREW WELSH-HUGGINS

Associated Press Writer

3:59 PM PST, February 4, 2010

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — The leader of the country's largest university thinks it's time to re-examine how professors are awarded tenure, a type of job-for-life protection virtually unknown outside academia.

Ohio State University President Gordon Gee says the traditional formula that rewards publishing in scholarly journals over excellence in teaching and other contributions is outdated and too often favors the quantity of a professor's output over quality.

"Someone should gain recognition at the university for writing the great American novel or for discovering the cure for cancer," he told The Associated Press. "In a very complex world, you can no longer expect everyone to be great at everything."

Plenty of people have raised the issue over the years, but Gee is one of the few American college presidents with the reputation and political prowess — not to mention the golden touch at fundraising — who might be able to begin the transformation.

Still, some professors are already skeptical.

"The idea of awarding tenure based on teaching makes me anxious," said Jennifer Higginbotham, an English professor at Ohio State who's up for tenure in three years. By then, she will need to publish a book she's writing about conceptions of girlhood in the Middle Ages to have any chance at the promotion.

"There's a feeling, I think, that good teachers are a dime a dozen," said Higginbotham, 32. "I'm not sure what you'd have to do to distinguish yourself enough as a teacher to get tenure."
Tenure, which makes firing and other discipline difficult if not impossible, can seem ridiculously generous to outsiders. But the job protection gives professors the freedom to express ideas and conduct studies without fear of reprisal.

Tenure review, which took its current form in the 1940s, typically emphasizes publications over teaching and sometimes weighs whether a professor brings in research grants. Besides job protection, tenure also figures into salaries. A full professor with tenure at Ohio State earns about $126,000 annually.

The late Ernest Boyer, a former chancellor of New York's state university system, raised some of same issues in his groundbreaking 1990 book, "Reconsidering Scholarship."

A few universities have taken steps towards Boyer's model, including Portland State University and Western Carolina University.

At California State University at Monterey Bay, professors are graded on their teaching, research, service to the community and service to the university. Their teaching must be rated at least "commendable" — the second highest rating.

"We're asking faculty to look at their teaching really as an area of scholarship, just like they would their research," said Marsha Moroh, dean of the school's college of science, media arts and technology.

Gee is not yet giving specific examples of how a reformed tenure system would work. In order to make sweeping changes, he would need cooperation from faculty and administrators across the university system.

Taking on tenure will be the third big academic undertaking for Gee, who was hired away from Vanderbilt University in 2007 for his second stint at Ohio State after a term in the 1990s. Time magazine last year named him the country's best college president.

The 65-year-old is seemingly omnipresent on campus, striding from event to event in his trademark bow tie and horn-rimmed glasses at a pace that exhausts younger aides. He's up daily at 4:30 a.m. to exercise and stays busy into the evenings, popping into student parties or attending athletic events.

Gee earlier reorganized Ohio State's arts-and-sciences division and switched the school from a calendar based on quarters to one arranged by semester. Both changes ruffled plenty of feathers.

He raised a record $1.2 billion at Vanderbilt and is aiming for a record $2.5 billion at Ohio State.

Then there's the little matter of keeping tabs on one of the nation's biggest athletic departments and its outsized football program at a school with a total statewide enrollment of more than 63,000.

Gee said a new approach to tenure is needed to ensure the university stays relevant to students and the
outside world. The recession has helped highlight the importance of higher education to the economy, he said, so now is the right time to make big changes.

"The universities of the 21st century are going to be the smokestacks of the century," Gee said, referring to the heavy industry that once dominated the American economy. "The notion of the large, massive public university that can exist in isolated splendor is dead."

One challenge is the complexity of big universities, which have numerous divisions accustomed to doing things their own way. Ohio State has more than 100 academic units capable of granting tenure.

"In effect, there are a hundred different sets of criteria for granting promotion or evaluating an individual faculty member's case," said Tim Gerber, a longtime music professor and chairman of the university's faculty council.

The pressure to get tenure is also greater as universities rely more on part-time faculty and non-tenure track professors. While the number of tenure track positions grew by 7 percent between 1975 and 2007, the number of non-tenure track jobs more than tripled, according to the American Association of University Professors.

"There are many ways faculty members spend their time that may have been very important five years ago but may not be as important now," said Molly Corbett Broad, president of the American Council on Education. "Maybe we need to free them up so their time can be directed in ways that have an impact on students."

Gee is the country's highest-paid public university president with an annual income of more than $1.5 million, including salary, retirement and deferred compensation.

His office is crammed with Ohio State memorabilia that includes a Gordon Gee bobblehead toy, but the first thing that grabs a visitor's attention is the framed poster of John Belushi from the 1978 college party film "Animal House."

The next poster to grab the eye is a quotation: "If you don't like change, you're going to like irrelevance even less."

(This version CORRECTS professor's last name to Gerber, not Weber.)

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Industry Lobbying Imperils Overhaul of Student Loans

By ERIC LICHTBLAU

WASHINGTON — Four months ago, it appeared all but certain that the White House and Democrats in Congress would succeed in overhauling the student loan business and ending government subsidies to private lenders.

President Obama called the idea a “no-brainer” last fall, predicting it would take billions of dollars from the profits of private lenders and give it directly to students, and many colleges were already moving to get loans directly from the federal government in anticipation of the next move by Congress.

But an aggressive lobbying campaign by the nation’s biggest student lenders has now put one of the White House’s signature plans in peril, with lenders using sit-downs with lawmakers, town-hall-style meetings and petition drives to plead their case and stay in business.

House and Senate aides say that the administration’s plan faces a far tougher fight than it did last fall, when the House passed its version. The fierce attacks from the lending industry, the Massachusetts election that cost the Democrats their filibuster-proof majority in the Senate and the fight over a health care bill have all damaged the chances for the student loan measure, said the aides, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly.

But they said the administration had recognized the threat and was beginning to push back in an effort to get the plan approved.

Sallie Mae, a publicly traded company that is the nation’s biggest student lender with $22 billion in loans originated last year, led the field in spending $8 million on lobbying in 2009, more than double the year before, and other lenders spent millions of dollars more, according to an analysis prepared for The New York Times by the Center for Responsive Politics.

Political action committees for the lenders and company employees made $2.1 million in political contributions last year, with the money split evenly among Democrat and Republican candidates, the data showed. Sallie Mae’s PAC alone made $194,000 in donations.

Some 10 million students got loans last year to help pay for their educations, and there is disagreement about whether having the federal government take over virtually the entire lending program would help or hurt them. Private lenders warn that students may default on their loans more often because they will get less counseling; the Obama administration says students will benefit from more grants and expanded educational programs.
A defeat for the White House at the hands of the industry could become further evidence of the administration’s sagging political fortunes. The unexpected loss of the Massachusetts Senate seat has given opponents of the lending plan an opportunity that seemed unlikely last September, when the House approved legislation to move to a federally-sponsored loan program.

The student loan industry, which would be forced out of the loan origination business if the proposal became law, is seeking to cast the administration’s plan as an ill-conceived government takeover that could put thousands of people out of work at private lending centers around the country at a time when unemployment is hovering around 10 percent.

“We anticipated this,” Arne Duncan, the education secretary, said of the lending industry’s lobbying efforts. “They’ve had a sweet deal. They’ve had this phenomenal deal that taxpayers have subsidized, and that’s a hard thing to give up.”

Private lenders get a cut of the federally backed loans that they originate and service, with little risk of their own. At Sallie Mae, lobbyists for the firm are focusing on senators regarded as fiscal conservatives, as well as those in states that are home to lending centers with jobs at stake, including Florida, Illinois, Nebraska, New York and Pennsylvania, said John F. Remondi, chief financial officer for the company.

Student loan lenders employ about 35,000 people around the country, although estimates differ as to how many jobs would be eliminated if the federal government took over all direct lending on student loans.

“We haven’t left any stone unturned — we’ll meet with anyone who will meet us,” Mr. Remondi said in an interview. “We’re trying to identify at least 12 senators who would be helpful in this process.”

At the same time, Sallie Mae and other lenders have staged a series of town-hall-style meetings at their job centers around the country to help mobilize opposition to the White House plan and collect thousands of signatures for a petition drive in support of their own plan.

“I would think that the White House would prefer not to make senators vote for something that is going to be very unpopular in their states — and for good reason,” said Jamie Gorelick, a former Clinton administration official who is now lobbying for the lending industry.

Mr. Obama defended his plan last week in his State of the Union address.

“To make college more affordable, this bill will finally end the unwarranted taxpayer subsidies that go to banks for student loans” and use the savings to finance other educational programs, he said to cheers from Democrats. “In the United States of America,” Mr. Obama said, “no one should go broke because they chose to go to college.”

The money that would be saved by cutting out the private-industry middlemen — about $80 billion over the next decade, according to a Congressional Budget Office analysis — could instead go toward expanding direct Pell Grants to students, establishing $10,000 tax credits for families with loans, and forgiving debts eventually for students who go into public service, administration officials say.

The bill would also shift tens of billions of dollars in expected savings to early learning programs,
community colleges and the modernization of public school facilities.

Representative George Miller, the California Democrat who has led the fight for the lending overhaul as chairman of the House Education Committee, predicted in an interview that the plan would ultimately pass.

“If people want to lose $80 billion on the taxpayer’s dime for the very narrow interests of Sallie Mae, I guess they can decide that, but it makes no economic sense to me,” he said. “They had a great ride for years.”

If Congress backs Mr. Obama’s proposal, opponents say that students will forfeit the individualized service that private lenders are better able to offer: a one-on-one meeting in a high school gym, a range of loan options to pick from, or an 11th-hour meeting to avoid a default. The lenders have offered an alternative proposal to retain a more active role in originating loans, which they say would generate significant federal savings — $67 billion in the next decade, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

Some financial-aid administrators at colleges around the country say they are worried that the political uncertainty over the loan proposal and the one-size-fits-all approach of the White House’s approach could hurt colleges and students.

“We’re caught in a political struggle,” Caesar Storlazzi, the chief financial aid officer at Yale, said in an interview. Like a wave of other colleges in recent months, Yale decided in November to switch from private-sector loans to the federal government’s direct-lending program.

But with passage of the White House plan now appearing “less inevitable,” Mr. Storlazzi wonders whether keeping the private lenders in business is better for students.

“It really felt like the administration was just shoving this down our throats,” he said. “It feels a bit like a federal takeover.” With competition among lenders, he said, “We get better prices and services.”

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