THE DAILY CLIPS

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iPods make class debut

The Daily Reflector

The mobility of the iPods, along with Logitech noise-canceling microphones, will allow students to record discussions outside of class.

"Spontaneous hallway and Waffle-House chats enhance academic discourse," said Finley. "Now we can encourage, guide, and document these informal reflections via the fashion accessory of the decade."

Project focuses on heart attacks

Doctors, nurses and other heart-attack experts will discuss eastern North Carolina's participation in a statewide effort to improve cardiac care on Tuesday at Pitt County Memorial Hospital in Greenville.

The consortium of caregivers is working to streamline response to victims of heart attacks, or acute myocardial infarctions, and provide potentially life-saving reperfusion therapies. The consortium calls its project RACE, short for Reperfusion of Acute M.I. in Carolina Emergency departments.

With organization and support from PCMH, cardiologists and emergency physicians at the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University, local private-practice cardiologists, and doctors and hospitals across eastern North Carolina hope the effort improves the survival rate of patients rushed to hospitals with heart attacks.

"We know from multiple sources that patients in North Carolina are not getting potentially life saving therapy often enough or soon enough," said Dr. Joseph Shiber, assistant clinical professor of emergency medicine at ECU.

Through the two-year project, RACE researchers will collect data on heart attack patients who receive treatment as well as those who would have been candidates for reperfusion therapy but did not receive it. The goal is to streamline patient evaluation and treatment.

Reperfusion therapies involve using either a clot-dissolving drug or angioplasty. While clot-dissolving, or thrombolytic, drugs are available at most hospitals and emergency rooms, angioplasty is not as widely available. Angioplasty has become the preferred therapy for opening blocked coronary arteries and is most effective if done within 90 minutes of a heart attack.

The project will help uncover duplication and unnecessary steps that add to the time between patients' arrival at emergency departments and their ultimate treatment, officials said.

"We have looked at the entire sequence of events when a patient is having a heart attack, from the time EMS is called until the blocked artery is opened up, in order to shorten the time and save more heart muscle and more lives," said

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The Country Doctor Museum partnership with the Country Doctor Museum in Bailey.

The Country Doctor Museum partnership will give students an opportunity to visit the site to photograph and research its holdings and create Podcasts. The Podcasts will focus on museum artifacts, comparisons of "then and now" health care protocols and biographical information about rural doctors and nurses from a bygone era.

"We are grateful to Rita Gonalsves, assistant vice chancellor of service learning, Harold Jacobson, director of the Country Doctor Museum, and Jennie Schindler, the program and event coordinator of the museum for supporting our work," Manner said.

In a separate iPod video project, members of Todd Finley's English education methods course will download 14 multimedia learning modules and Podcasts to their iPods, enabling them to study the instructor's lectures in either audio or multimedia format.
New digs help earn $26,000 for libraries

By Erin Rickert
The Daily Reflector

The annual book sale held by the Friends of Sheppard Memorial Library ended Sunday as the most profitable in the fund-raiser’s 15-year history, event staff said.

"Without question, this is the biggest sale we have ever had," said event co-chair Joanne Kollar, who has been with the group since 1990.

Early numbers indicate the four-day sale, held to raise money for equipment and services in area libraries, brought in about $26,000, exceeding last year’s $17,065.70, the highest on record before Sunday.

The move from East Carolina University’s Willis Building to the larger, more visible Greenville Convention Center was cited by event staff as a reason for the increase.

Visitors to two other exhibitions at the center dropped by the book sale as well, Kollar said, contributing to what is thought to be one of the largest crowds ever at the fund-raiser.

Sunday afternoon, fewer than 500 of the more than 15,000 books, magazines and CDs donated by community members remained at the sale, Kollar said.

Throughout the day, hundreds flowed through the doors, stuffing fiction books, classics, biographies, westerns, children’s literature, cookbooks and mysteries into paper bags, garbage cans and loading boxes on dollies.

Many arriving when the sale began at 1 p.m. discovered several rows of folding tables already picked over.

In the fiction E-K section, six people with bags in hand sifted through about 20 books scattered across the wooden surface of the table.

The $5-per-bag books brought out a steady stream of young and old for the remaining three hours of the sale. Shoppers during the first three days had greater selection, but paid between 50 cents and $5 per book.

For Greenville resident Tina James, Sunday’s trip was the second time she had been to the sale. Thursday night, the 46-year-old picked up several boxes of books on topics such as math, science, nature and foreign languages during a preview sale for members of the Friends group.

She plans to use the books to home-school her 7-year-old daughter, Charlotte.

“They had a good selection of EVERYTHING Thursday,” James said as she perused the psychology and self-help table on Sunday. “I was shocked at how many people were here today and how much was gone.”

As James crammed books into a large box by her feet, she said she probably purchased at least 100 books.

Across the room, Ann Jividen was rolling a 40-gallon trash can from table to table.

A Raleigh native, Jividen said for the past 10 years she has attended similar sales in Wake County, but Sunday was her first in Greenville.

An avid reader, gobbling up the words from the pages of more than 100 books a year, the trash can was a “hopeful attempt” at stocking up for 2006.

However, there wasn’t much left when she arrived about 2 p.m. Event staff members were already busy grabbing bookends and signs from the 25 tables lining the perimeter of the room and an additional seven rows of tables in the center.

Nearly 15 minutes into her dig, the 42-year-old had found close to 10 books she was taking home.

“The selection was limited," she said holding up books from her trash can. "(But) I did find some unusual reads.”

Book donations, which make up 90-95 percent of the product at the event, were cut off on Nov. 1.

As in years past, finding storage for the donated books posed a problem, Kollar said.

New storage options have given the group hope for a larger event next year, meaning the possibility of an even larger profit, she said.

While the group has not yet decided what specifics the money will offer the community in 2006, it will be used to provide resources and enhanced services not otherwise funded in the library budget, she said.

In the past, it has funded prizes for the libraries summer reading programs, equipment for Carver Library and furnishings for the Winterville Library.

Event staff said the book sale is expected to be held at the convention center next year.

Erin Rickert can be contacted at erickert@coxnc.com and 329-9566.
LBA Group donates wireless protection device to ECU

LBA Group Inc., a Greenville-based technology company, has donated a wireless protection device to East Carolina University.

The FarACage, which helps protect wireless networks by blocking signals, is worth about $5,000 and was donated to the department of technology systems in the college of technology and computer science.

LBA Technology is a distribution partner with Advanced Performance Materials to provide Flectron, a metallized fabric for shielding. LBA offers Flectron and other shielding materials as well as an integrated line of shielding components to provide a comprehensive shielding system.

LBA is major provider of architectural shielding solutions for buildings, laboratories and other spaces.
Valentine's Day Dinner Dance Soiree

The Daily Reflector


The French-themed evening will include cocktails, dinner, dessert, silent and live auctions, and dancing.

Decorations, designed by Alison Bennett-James and Peggy C. Taylor, were inspired by the elegance of Louis XIV. Tables will be dressed in hues of pink, cream, and champagne. Gilded vases with arrangements of alstromeria lilies and roses in shades of pink and cream will ornament the tables, and the centerpieces will be available for purchase after the gala.

The French-inspired dinner will be served with a complimentary glass of champagne. The 20-piece Emerald City Big Band will play a mix of swing, pop, jazz, big band and beach music.

Auctioneer Tommy Pressly will conduct a live auction, with items collected by Elizabeth Edwards and her committee.

Champagne glasses decorated by committee members may be purchased during the evening. The holder of the lucky glass will win a silver- and-gold diamond pendant donated by Lautares Jewelers.

Michael Weeks, general Manager of WITN-TV, will serve as emcee.

Linda Lynn Tripp is president of the FRIENDS board and Katherine Vinson is chairwoman of the Valentine's Soiree committee. Other committee members are Melba Tripp, Karen Barondes and Karen Tanenberg.

Money raised at the event will support East Carolina University's S. Rudolph Alexander Performing Arts Series, a professional arts series that for more than 40 years has brought world-class musicians, dancers and actors to eastern North Carolina. Money will be used to help defray artist fees and help keep ticket prices affordable.

Tickets are $65 per person and are available through the Central Ticket Office by calling 328-4788.
Podcasting lets students download complete lectures

Professors start using new technology to motivate work outside classroom

BY ANNE BLYTHE STAFF WRITER

College students who decide to keep snoozing rather than make a mad dash for a morning class might soon find it easier to hear what they missed — word for word.

A small but growing number of professors are turning class lectures into podcasts, free audio computer files that students can download to iPods or other portable MP3 players.

College instructors have posted written materials and slides online for years. It is only recently, though, that professors have started making the whole shebang — the lecture and subsequent give-and-take — available to their classes at the tap of a computer key.

"The general consensus here at Duke is it's going to change higher education, maybe ultimately very dramatically," said Richard Lucic, a professor of the practice of computer science at Duke University. "The basic thought is we probably don't even know all the ways it's going to change it yet."

This new technological twist in the delivery of higher education has sparked questions similar to those that arose when universities started offering online courses.

But then, skeptics wondered whether Internet chat rooms would become the college classrooms of this century. If courses could be taken online, they conjectured, students might miss a large part of the educational experience by rarely coming face to face with each other or their instructors.

"I don't like the online stuff, I'll be really frank, and I'm a technology guy," said Gary Wilcox, an advertising and marketing professor at the University of Texas at Austin.

But Wilcox is on the crest of the podcasting wave that's starting to make a splash on campuses.

He records his lectures for students in an entry-level advertising and marketing class in which students must do well if they plan to pursue an advertising degree. Then he posts his recordings online so students can download them.

"Students can store them on laptop and desktop computers. They can load them onto iPods and other sleek, pocket-size players and listen to their professors' words as they work out on a treadmill, rush from class to class or study with friends," Wilcox said.

"I just think of this as a tool," Wilson said.

The Texas professor noticed a spike in the downloading of lectures shortly before exams. He said he did not see a drop in classroom attendance.

Pick-A-Prof, a Texas-based company that has Web sites at which students can rate faculty, recently waded into the podcasting service. The company offered CourseCasting at the University of Texas and Texas A&M last fall.

At Texas, 44 lectures were posted by three professors, according to Pick-A-Prof literature. The lectures were downloaded more than 800 times and used by 145 students.

The company now offers the service to N.C. State University and UNC-Chapel Hill. But Karen Bragg, director of university relations at Pick-A-Prof, said last week that it was too soon to tell whether the podcasting arm of the service would be widely used on the North Carolina campuses.

At UNC-Chapel Hill, some professors in the business school are leery. Sridhar Balasubramanian, an associate professor of marketing, worries that podcasts make it too easy for students to listen to lectures on the run without giving the professor undivided attention.

"I don't see it as revolutionizing anything," Balasubramanian said.

At Duke, where the university issued free iPods to all its freshmen in 2004, Lucic is a big fan of podcasting and vodcast — adding video into the mix. To make sure students do not skip class because of the availability of the information outside the classroom, Lucic requires discussion in class for a passing grade.

Podcasts, Lucic said, enhance the class discussion. Students can revisit particularly complicated topics on their own and free up class time that professors might have used to go over the subject matter repeatedly.

"It's a very subversive way to get them to work on stuff after class hours," Lucic said.

In his class, he asks students to podcast papers — recording their papers on an audio file — which adds a new dimension to their work and to the people who see it.

"The real interesting thing is that the quality of the report is better than when it was only a written report," Lucic said. "Somehow I think they're putting more thought and research into it. Maybe it's because it's so novel."

Grading podcasts has presented new challenges for Lucic. But having his students podcast their papers gives him a different perspective of someone who might not speak up much in class.

Those who advocate podcasting lectures and class discussions see the technology as offering little different from the note-taking services or tape-recorded sessions that students used to rely on when they missed class.

But podcasting advocates acknowledge that there is still much to ponder about delivering higher education in such a fashion.

"This is still in the beta phase," Lucic said.

Staff writer Anne Blythe can be reached at 932-8741 or ablythe@newsobserver.com.
Faster toward degrees

Ah, the college years! Minimum responsibilities, expanding the intellect, plenty of food, high-quality or not. Such memories. Nelson Schwab III, chairman of the board of trustees at UNC-Chapel Hill, wants to put some limits on that, at least on the fifth and sixth years of what used to be a four-year college career. Schwab is on the right track, and other schools in the 16-campus University of North Carolina system ought to consider how to move students reasonably along.

There are legitimate reasons why students may need an extra semester or two to finish a degree, but that ought to be the exception. At Chapel Hill, only about 83 percent of freshmen who enrolled in 1997 graduated in six years. Some schools in UNC’s league — the University of Michigan, for instance, or the University of California at Berkeley — are more successful at moving students through their undergraduate careers. It can be done.

Other UNC system schools have even more slack to pick up. Less than two-thirds of N.C. State’s 1997 freshmen and about half of N.C. Central’s had graduated six years later. (Not all of them are lollygaggers. Some portion of a freshman class drops out, and some transfer to a different college. Some have to work to pay their expenses, which cuts down on their manageable course loads.)

Still, Schwab is right to be concerned. Part of a college education ought to be gaining an appreciation for academic discipline. Letting young adults take their sweet time graduating runs contrary to that goal. Clogging the graduation pipeline also puts an unnecessary strain on campus resources and facilities.

Universities can improve graduation rates through better counseling of students about course loads, financial aid and the like. Required courses must be made available. Generally, universities would do students and themselves a favor if they returned to the notion that a four-year degree should take four years to acquire.
Greenville has a long history of family medicine and health care

Drive by Pitt County Memorial Hospital and the ECU Brody School of Medicine and you’d think our community had been the leader in the health field since the nation began.

Perhaps in a sense it has been in that as far back as can be traced the county was noted for dedicated family physicians.

But there was no hospital until the 1920s. That’s when a group of private physicians joined together to form Pitt General Hospital. It was located at Johnson Street and Woodlawn Avenue and finally provided medical services that nearby towns already had. It was a hospital with full services to keep patients for several days and surgeons to do what everyone dreaded — operations.

The town was proud to have service such as that and no doubt it relieved the minds of many families that their loved ones could get the attention they needed at the facility.

For kids who grew up in the hospital’s era it was viewed with awe. It was known as a place where people were sick and couldn’t stay in their own homes. Few of the youngsters were actually born there. The practice then was for babies to be delivered at home with the family physician in attendance.

Along the streets passing the hospital were stern signs which commanded “Quiet. Hospital Zone.”

In those days of strict family discipline, young people knew to obey the signs and they quieted down when they they walked, or ran, past it. There was good reason for quiet since in those times there was no air conditioning. On hot summer days the windows were open and boisterous behavior could, indeed, disturb a sick patient confined to the hospital.

So street noise was muted out of respect for those who were confined there.

I used to pray that I would never need the hospital, but my time came. The tonsils had to come out and my parents checked me into Pitt General Hospital. I remember floating away from the effects of ether which was still used. When I awoke I had one major sore throat. My parents bundled me up to go home before the night rates kicked in. Money was scarce in those times.

The old hospital served well until the successful effort began to build a county hospital. It was done on West Fifth Street opening in 1950. Now it serves as a Pitt County office building.

A new hospital was begun in 1974 on property located along Mose Boulevarid. It would become affiliated with what is now the Brody School of Medicine and this amazing venture is there for all to appreciate. As for the old hospital on Johnson Street — the one that we kids of the time held in awe — it became a county office building and eventually was retired from use and demolished.

No doubt kids can make noise along the streets these days, but the old signs demanding “Quiet” disappeared long ago.

The few surgeons, family doctors and the Pitt General Hospital have evolved into medical care and education which serves all of the east in many ways. Most of the medical services available there now were virtually unknown when Pitt General Hospital existed. But such things are built one block at a time. And the old hospital played a vital role in building today’s outstanding health care.
Blue Cross issues alert for ID theft

It put Social Security numbers on mailings

BY JEAN P. FISHER
STAFF WRITER

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina notified more than 600 members this week that their Social Security numbers were inadvertently disclosed, possibly putting them at risk for identity theft.

Blue Cross spokeswoman Rita Simonetta said the mistake affected 629 people who applied for a new health savings account insurance plan sold directly to individuals, Blue Options HSA.

Members' Social Security numbers were included in an 11-digit tracking number that appeared on an exterior mailing label and on a letter inside an information packet recently sent to the new members.

"It wasn't supposed to happen, but it did," Simonetta said. "We're very upset it happened, and we're very sorry."

Blue Cross has made changes to ensure that the error that caused personal information to be exposed does not happen again, officials said.

Blue Cross is the state's largest health insurer, with 3.2 million members. It was required to notify affected members under a state law that took effect Dec. 1. The measure was adopted because of rising concerns about identity theft, which occurs when thieves use a person's personal information to make purchases or obtain credit.

In 2005, U.S. consumers lost nearly $57 billion to identity theft, according to a study released this week by the Council of Better Business Bureaus and Javelin Strategy & Research.

A name and Social Security number give a thief plenty of opportunity to commit fraud, Bruce Cardiff, a research analyst with Javelin, said. Thieves frequently use such information to open credit accounts and make fraudulent purchases.

"Probably in the vast majority of these cases, it's not going to result in any fraud, but it's still a good idea for consumers to be vigilant," Cardiff said.

He recommended that consumers contact one of the three major credit reporting agencies to place an "alert" on their credit information. That causes banks or merchants to contact the person if their credit is checked for the purpose of opening a new account.

Consumers also could freeze their credit reports, which would stop unauthorized attempts to obtain credit.

Stephen Keoh of Cary, one of the Blue Cross members who was notified of the mailing error, said he never received the information packet with his Social Security number. That made him worry that the mailing might have fallen into someone else's hands.

Keoh said he called Blue Cross and asked the Chapel Hill-based company to pay for a credit-monitoring service to watch his accounts for unusual activity. The company turned him down, he said.

"The chances are probably not particularly great that [identity theft] will happen, but I think ... [credit monitoring] is the right thing to do," Keoh said.

In letters to affected members, Blue Cross recommended that they review their credit reports. As required by North Carolina's anti-identity theft law, the company explained how to get free copies.

Last year, to protect members from identity theft, Blue Cross stopped using Social Security numbers as member identification numbers. However, Blue Cross still uses Social Security numbers internally to track some member information, Simonetta said.

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Classmates mourned, celebrated

Derek Gaskins, 12, is selected as state’s Children’s Miracle Network ambassador

By Jennifer White
The Daily Reflector

Grifton School met with tragedy and triumph Thursday as students mourned the death of two classmates while celebrating the life of another.

The day after Timothy O’Shea, 8, and Jeremy Horne, 13, died in an automotive accident, Derek Gaskins, 12, another one of the school’s own, was named the 2006 N.C. ambassador for the Children’s Miracle Network.

Derek was accidentally shot two years ago, and after spending a month at Pitt County Memorial Hospital and undergoing five surgeries, he is thriving with no limitations.

The school held an assembly and safety fair for about 120 seventh- and eighth-grade students Thursday morning to announce Derek’s achievement.

“I just think it’s important to celebrate life, and as sad as this day is, it’s equally as joyful because Derek survived a very serious accident,” Pitt County Board of Education member Mary Grace Bright said. “I think it’s a reminder to us all that you are thankful for every minute, and you’re blessed by every minute. I just think it was a good life lesson.”

O’Shea and Horne were killed Thursday, along with their mother, when the van they were in collided with an empty log truck. The boys’ 11-year-old sister, Kaci Smith, also a Grifton School student, survived the wreck and was treated and released from PCMH.

The Children’s Miracle Network is a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising funds for and awareness of children’s hospitals across North America. There are 170 Children’s Miracle Network hospitals. Since its inception in 1983, the organization has become the largest television fund-raiser of its kind in the world, collecting more than $2.5 billion.

On Feb. 21, 2004, Derek was staying at his grandparents’ home when his brother, Timmy, 13 at the time, returned from a hunting trip. When Timmy went to put his gun away, it discharged, sending a bullet through Derek’s chest and out the left side of his body.

Timmy told his grandparents to call 911 while he applied pressure to Derek’s wounds and tried to keep his brother talking until the EastCare emergency medical team arrived via helicopter.

Dr. Scott Sagraves, director of trauma at PCMH and assistant professor of surgery at the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University, treated Derek when he arrived at Children’s Hospital.

“In my job, oftentimes you meet people in their toughest time,” Sagraves said. “Derek was dying, he was not long for this world.”

Derek underwent three surgeries in six days and was unconscious for nearly three weeks. During that time, Sagraves removed Derek’s spleen and one-third of his stomach, repaired his damaged liver, pancreas, small and large intestines, and a smashed rib.

Two years and five surgeries later, the only remaining signs of Derek’s injuries are the bracelet he wears indicating that his spleen is gone and a few remaining shotgun pellets that are working their way to the surface of his skin.

“His will to live never ceased to amaze me,” Sagraves said. “People in my line of work give up with overwhelming odds. He’s just full of life, and that’s why me and my team, why we all went into medicine.”

Locally, Children’s Miracle Network raises funds for University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina’s Children’s Hospital and is a program within the Pitt Memorial Hospital Foundation.

Rhonda James, local Children’s Miracle Network coordinator, said Gaskins was one of seven “miracle children” identified this year in the 15-county region.

He was selected as the N.C. ambassador among finalists from the Children’s Hospital at Carolinas Medical Center in Charlotte and Duke Children’s Hospital in Durham.

This is the second consecutive year the N.C. ambassador has come from Children’s Hospital. The 2005 ambassador was Davis Pugh, who overcame a rare form of cancer and made a
full recovery.

Derek, a seventh-grader, will go to Orlando, Fla., in March to meet the other 49 ambassadors at the national meeting. He'll make a television clip about his experience for the June telethon. He'll also make his first trip to Disney World.

"I've never been there, and that's where I've been wanting to go all my life," Derek said.

Later in the year, Derek will go to Washington, D.C., to meet the president and other government officials.

"That is to raise public awareness to the CMN program and the 170 affiliated hospitals," James said.

The theme of Derek's campaign is, "It takes a team to save a life." This theme will be incorporated into all activities throughout the coming year to teach youth about the importance of safety.

Derek's mom, Marie Garant, said she no longer allows guns in her house. Her son's accident and the recent death of his classmates, she said, taught her to seize every moment.

"That's why you get up in the morning and take each day as if it's your last, and that's what we do," she said. "I listen to every laugh, we do everything together."

Derek said his favorite things to do now are playing video games, being with his family, and "sitting down and just talking, like a normal little boy."

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U.S. professor returns ring from Lost Colony dig to university

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The retired head of East Carolina University's coastal archaeology office has returned a 16th-century ring he found while exploring ties between native people and the doomed English colonists who first tried to settle the Outer Bank islands off the North Carolina coast.

Experts believe the ring discovered in 1998 by former archaeologist David S. Phelps during his last dig before retiring may offer evidence of early contact between the Indians and the first English colony in the Americas.

Phelps had kept the ring at his Florida home since 2000 along with other artifacts found near Croatan, the only permanent Indian community on the Outer Banks.

Phelps said that he took the ring and other artifacts with him so he could conduct additional research on them. He said ill health and a hurricane that struck near his home delayed the return of the ring until Monday.

The 10-karat ring depicts a prancing lion, a symbol of authority probably worn by an English settler of high rank.

"Its real value is what it can tell us about the first contact between the Roanoke colonists and the native people," said Charles Ewen, director of ECU's archaeology laboratories in Greenville. "It's definitely a cool artifact."

In 1585, 22 years before the first permanent English colony in Jamestown, Virginia, Sir Walter Raleigh landed on Roanoke Island and established a settlement of 117 English men, women and children.

The settlers struggled with American Indian attacks, starvation and cold before they disappeared in the wilderness. The only clue left at the settlement site, dubbed the Lost Colony, was the word "CROATOAN" carved into a post.

Phelps found hearths, pipes, coins, beads and bone rings from the Croatan site during digs between 1993 and 1998.

Not long after Phelps found the ring, a researcher matched the ring's crest to the Kendall surname in England. Two Kendalls were known to have participated in the 1585-87 Roanoke voyages, suggesting early contact between American Indians and the English, Ewen said, reports AP.

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