THE DAILY CLIPS

February 9, 2009

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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS SPOTLIGHT

Ward receives national recognition as AAPA Distinguished Fellow

Deborah Ward of Greenville has been recognized as a Distinguished Fellow of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA). She practices obstetrics and gynecology at Greenville OB/GYN and has been a physician assistant for 22 years.

Ward earned the recognition due to her contributions to patient care and the profession during her years as a physician assistant (PA). She also demonstrated significant dedication and involvement in the community of Greenville and Pitt County.

Ward earned bachelor's degree in health science as well as a physician assistant certificate from Duke University. She is a member of the NCPA and the AAPA and has been certified by the North Carolina Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants.

Ward also served as preceptor for PA students at East Carolina University for five years. She calls herself a “soccer mom” who loves the beach and acts as team manager for the Pitt County Girls Soccer Association.

All Distinguished Fellows of AAPA have demonstrated exceptional contributions to their communities and a commitment to all aspects of health care.

Physician assistants are licensed health professionals who practice medicine as members of a team with their supervising physicians. PAs deliver a broad range of medical and surgical services to diverse populations in rural and urban settings. As part of their responsibilities, PAs conduct physical exams, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret tests, counsel on preventive health care, assist in surgery, and prescribe medications.

The AAPA is the only national organization representing physician assistants in all medical and surgical specialties and is one of the largest medical societies in the United States.

Founded in 1968, the AAPA works to promote quality, cost-effective health care and the professional and personal growth of physician assistants.

Greenville OB/GYN physicians and staff have served the women of eastern North Carolina for more than 40 years by providing a high level of respect and comprehensive individual care. The office is at 101 Bethesda Drive.
Editorial: In the ER - PCMH improves service in hard times

Monday, February 09, 2009

Waiting for hours to receive treatment at the emergency department can add insult to whatever illness or injury that landed the patient there. While many emergency departments are closing nationally and the volume of patient demand is rising, Pitt County Memorial Hospital deserves praise for its work to improve its emergency department services.

PCMH announced last week that average wait times were shaved last year by 14 minutes. While that may seem insignificant to a patient whose wait time exceeded the average, it represents a commitment to providing the best possible care under increasingly challenging circumstances.

Those circumstances include a rapidly growing population in the east now being affected by job and insurance losses as well as a growing senior population. Combine that with recent forecasts for deepening shortages in the critical health care workforce, and even modest improvements in PCMH’s emergency care become more significant.

Even before the economic downturn, the hospital’s emergency department experienced a 17 percent increase in patients between 2004 and 2006. The worsening economy promises to drive that upward trend even higher, meaning that PCMH and other hospitals must prepare to meet the demands of larger and larger numbers of people who must rely on emergency departments to receive treatment.

The increased demands placed on emergency care physicians contribute to job burnout within those ranks. The American College of Emergency Physicians announced last week that one-third of emergency physicians surveyed nationwide indicate signs of career burnout.

A major challenge emergency departments have always faced is serving the needs of uninsured patients who use the emergency department for basic treatments available to most people through primary care physicians. Correcting that trend is a component of President Obama’s desire to make health care more available to all Americans. But with other issues of financial rescue taking precedence, no one expects the president to fulfill his campaign promise of providing universal health care by the end of his first term.

That leaves hospitals to meet the increased challenges of providing health care under the worst economic conditions of our time. Making improvements in any category, such as PCMH’s lowered wait times for emergency care, is commendable.

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COX
Young musicians raise money for ECU pediatric reading program

ECU News Services

With the help of three young musician-philanthropists, children at the Brody Pediatric Outpatient Center at East Carolina University will have more books to read.

Sisters Anna and Mia Dietrich and friend Emily McLawhorn turned their violin talents into a fundraising effort that garnered $1,900 during the holidays for the national children's literacy program, Reach Out and Read. The money will be used to buy books for ECU pediatrics to give their young patients.

"We believe that early literacy will promote both academic success and build self esteem, much in the way that our early start in music (at age 3) has done for us," Anna said.

"It seemed like a perfect fit."

Anna, 16, and Emily, 18, began Project Harmony in 2005 as a way to raise money for music scholarships and other youth-oriented programs. Mia, 14, joined them the following year. Sometimes friends or siblings join them. They play with the ECU Eastern Youth Orchestra and at the local Suzuki Violin Institute. Their Project Harmony T-shirts read, "United by strings, motivated by love."

Playing at holiday parties and other gatherings, they raised several hundred dollars for projects such as Sadie Sauter Elementary School's fledgling violin program. But their efforts hit a high note late last year when they started playing for Reach Out and Read.

Their first event was a holiday party hosted by Dr. Dale Newton, an ECU pediatrician. From there, they played at five other events, raising money at each one. They performed chamber music and Christmas carols, Anna said.

Pitt County Memorial Hospital, nursing facilities and even those who are shut-in. All three have volunteered their time working with younger violin students in Pitt County and Greene County Schools.

Anna and Mia are students at J.H. Rose High School and the daughters of Julie and Robert Dietrich of Greenville. Emily is a student at Greene Central High School and the daughter of Ed and Annell McLawhorn of Snow Hill.

Physicians named to annual Best Doctors list

More than 30 physicians from the Brody School of Medicine have been chosen by their peers for inclusion in the 2007-08 "Best Doctors" list.

The annual list is compiled by Best Doctors Inc., a Boston-based group that surveys more than 30,000 physicians across the United States who previously have been included in the listing asking whom they would choose to treat themselves or their families. Approximately 5 percent of the physicians who practice in North Carolina make the annual list.

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The ECU physicians on the list are Dr. Joseph D. Babb, cardiovascular disease; Dr. Paul Bolin, nephrology; Dr. William A. Burke, dermatology; Dr. W. Randolph Chitwood, Jr.; thoracic surgery; Drs. David N. Collier, David Goft, Karin M. Hillenbrand, Thomas G. Irons, Dale Newton, Kathleen Previll, Charles Willson and Judy Wheat Wood, pediatrics; Drs. James J. Cummings, Irma Fiordalis, David Hannon, Glenn Harris, Kaye McGinty, Daniel Moore, Ronald M. Perkin, Michael Reichel, Charlie Sang Jr., Debra Tristam and John M. Diamond, pediatric specialists; Dr. Paul R. G. Cunningham, surgery; Drs. Raymond Dombroski, Howard Homesley and Edward Newton, obstetrics and gynecology; Drs. Yash P. Kataria and Mani S. Kavuru, pulmonary medicine; Drs. Robert J. Newman, Kenneth Steinweg and Ricky Watson, family medicine; Dr. Charles S. Powell, vascular surgery; and Dr. Keith M. Ramsey, infectious disease.


Boudreaux recognized for archaeology work

Tony Boudreaux, assistant professor of anthropology, was awarded the "C.B. Moore Award for Excellence in Southeastern Archaeology by a Young Scholar." The award is
given by the Lower Mississippi Survey, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University in memory of Clarence Bloomfield Moore (1852-1936).

Boudreau was presented with the award at the annual meeting of the Southeastern Archaeological Conference held November 2008 in Charlotte. Another ECU anthropology professor, Randy Daniel, received the award in 1999.

Youth arts fest seeks artists, performers

The fifth annual Youth Arts Festival at East Carolina University is seeking artists to participate in its annual show that will be held on the ECU campus on April 4 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The goal of the festival is to promote the visual and performing arts to the children of our region. Artists from the university community, Greenville area and other states will present their work to the youth of Pitt County and Eastern North Carolina.

Some artists showcase their talents and demonstrate the media they work in, while others work with the children doing hands-on projects. The festival is geared towards elementary and middle school children, but all residents of Pitt County and the surrounding area are welcome, free of charge. The festival strives to feature multi-cultural and multi-ethnic artists.

Artists are not charged booth fees and no commission is taken on any work that is sold. However, the festival is not focused on being a sales event; it is geared towards teaching children and their families about the wonderful-

ly diverse and creative possibilities available in our region.

Contact Dindy Reich, coordinator of the Youth Arts Festival, at reichd@ecu.edu or 328-5749 for more information or to sign up to participate at this event.

Darwin Day celebration planned for Thursday

The celebration of Charles Darwin will continue at ECU on Thursday.

From 4 to 6 p.m., ECU biology faculty members will offer workshops to elementary, middle and high school teachers on the topic of how to teach evolution in the classroom.

Tours of the Howell Science Complex on the ECU campus will begin at 6 p.m., outside Room B103. Participants will see and learn about spiders, fish embryos, bird behavior, exotic greenhouse plants, biotechnology and more.

At 7:30 p.m., in B103 Howell Science Complex, Biologist Jason Bond will present "Spiders, Biodiversity and the Future of Life," focusing on biology, the biodiversity crisis and the links between biodiversity and human welfare.

Events are free and open to the public.

For additional information, contact the Department of Biology at 328-6718 or biology@ecu.edu.

Upcoming ECU events:

Thursday — "N.C. Coasts in Crisis" lecture, 4 p.m., Mendenhall Great Rooms. "North Carolina Coasts in Crisis: A Vision for the Future" will be presented by Stan Riggs, distinguished research professor, ECU's Department of Geology. Free and open to the public.
Every so often, state Senate leader Marc Basnight casually throws out some idea that, at first blush, seems about as far fetched as walking on the sun.

When the Navy started eying eastern North Carolina for a touch-and-go jet landing strip, Basnight suggested that a concrete platform built several miles out in the ocean might be a better option. Once people stopped laughing, at least a few thought, well, it might not be much different than an oil platform.

The Navy still doesn’t think much of the idea.

Another Basnight gem was a budget provision last year that would have required the state to buy bottled water only if it came in biodegradable bottles. Only one company, based in Winston-Salem, makes such bottles, and retailers pretty much went ballistic. The provision was eventually dropped.

Maybe then it’s not surprising that another idea from the Basnight, mentioned as a new legislative session began, didn’t get a whole lot of attention.

The Democratic Duke of Dare tossed around the notion that perhaps the 16 schools in University of North Carolina system ought to charge tuition on sliding scale based on parental income. His legislative chamber may take a look at the idea, he said.

Basnight’s words come as the UNC Board of Governors considers another round of tuition increases requested by the individual universities.

Some schools want increases as high as 6.5 percent, the maximum allowed under a cap created by UNC system president Erskine Bowles. Bowles, though, wants the Board of Governors to cut the school’s requests by a third, citing the down economy.

Besides the economy, Bowles is also contending with earlier, higher tuition hikes.

Over the last eight years, student costs at UNC system schools have doubled. In the 2000-01 school year, average annual in-state tuition and fees stood at $2,134.

Today, tuition and fees average about $4,090 for the 16 schools.

Just like tuition, faculty pay hikes exceeded inflation during the period. At UNC-Chapel Hill, the average salary for a full professor rose 37 percent, from $100,900 to $138,500 from 2000 to 2007.

That pay put the school third highest among public universities across the country, according to a study released last year.

So, here comes Basnight with a wacky notion, right? No, not at all.

Several Ivy League schools — concerned that escalating tuition was turning their elite schools into elitist schools — last year began basing tuition on family income. Duke University does the same.

At Harvard, parents earning less than $180,000 a year now pay no more than 10 percent of their income for a child’s yearly tuition. For a family paying $15,000 in tuition, the change represents a $32,000 discount.

For families making less than $120,000, the discount is steeper.

These private schools may be much different than the public universities in North Carolina.

But rising tuition that squeezes middle-class and upper middle-class families has an effect no matter the schools their children attend.

Basnight’s idea would probably be welcome by a lot of those families.

Scott Mooneyham writes about North Carolina government and politics for the Capitol Press Association.

The Daily Reflector, Sunday, February 8, 2009
Parent: Alerts could protect ECU students from crimes

The daughter of an Apex resident was among several East Carolina University students who were victims of a robbery near a parking lot for freshmen.

BY GINGER LIVINGSTON
The Daily Reflector

A Jan. 27 armed robbery involving several East Carolina University students has one parent asking what city and university police are doing to protect and alert students who travel between the university and the freshman parking area.

The university has an 1,100-space parking lot for freshmen on Dickinson Avenue, about 2 miles from the main campus. Jan Armstrong of Apex was upset to learn last week that when her daughter and friends were recently robbed along the street, no campus alert went out warning students.

"I would like for the freshmen students to know this happened because this wasn't too far from campus," Armstrong said.

Armstrong's daughter, her two friends and another person were robbed after being involved in a rear-end collision on Dickinson Avenue. The incident happened shortly after 6 p.m. The drivers of the two vehicles pulled into the parking lot of a dry cleaner at 1500 Dickinson Ave. and waited for police assistance.

The occupants of the two vehicles were standing outside their cars when three or four males approached the group, some with guns, and demanded the students turn over their belongings by dropping them to the ground, Armstrong said.

Her daughter said when police cruisers approached the scene, the males scooped up the students' belongings and ran. The students drove away from the parking lot. One young woman kept her cell phone, and they alerted police to the robbery.

Greenville police spokesman Cpl. Kip Gaskins said an investigation of the robbery is ongoing.

Armstrong said she contacted campus police and was told they didn't know about the incident. She called campus police a second time to find out why an alert hadn't been put out warning freshmen a robbery had occurred 1 mile from the freshman parking lot.

ECU limits the alerts it sends out to incidents that occur on campus, in the immediate neighborhood or pose See PROTECT, B3
PROTECT
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an eminent danger, university spokesman John Durham said. The situation happened outside the jurisdiction of campus police, and the university didn't know the incident involved university students until several days later, he said.

“At this point I want to know if there is communication about these incidents between Greenville police and the campus police about incidents involving students,” Armstrong said.

Gaskins said the two departments work closely to patrol areas around campus.

About half the spaces in the Dickinson Avenue freshman parking lot are permitted at this time, Durham said.

“We constantly evaluate parking because it is constantly an issue of supply and demand,” he said.

The university started making permitted parking spaces available to freshmen at the Willis Building on First and Reade streets and College Hill last month, Durham said. The spaces are open to students on a first-come basis.

Contact Ginger Livingston at glivingston@coxnc.com or (252) 329-9573.
Challenging times call for leadership, speaker says

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

Saturday, February 07, 2009

The College of Human Ecology at East Carolina University is in the business of turning out leaders for the future.

The college hosted “Leadership for Solutions in a Changing World Symposium” Friday at ECU that focused on the UNC Tomorrow Initiative, an ever-changing plan for the future of the UNC System in North Carolina.

Norma Houston, executive director of the UNC Tomorrow Initiative, gave the keynote address at the symposium to about 170 faculty members, administrators, local leaders and students.

"In the challenging times that our state and nation faces, now is not the time for passive observation," Houston said. "Each of us has the ability to exercise leadership within the realm in which we work.

The initiative was created in 2007 by UNC System President Erskine Bowles.

It is a document that is used to guide the future of the UNC System based on the needs of the people in North Carolina. It also determines what the University of North Carolina can do to address the challenges facing the state in the 21st century global economy.

"At ECU, this is what you have been doing for the past 100 years," Houston said. "We are continually holding up examples from this university."

The UNC Tomorrow Initiative is an active document that changes as the needs of the state change, she said.

Each university is charged with addressing the changing needs of the state through the programs it offers. Funding for projects like new colleges or new institutes must be in line with the UNC Tomorrow plan to be considered for funding by the UNC System Board of Governors and ultimately the General Assembly.

ECU Provost Marilyn Sheerer said the university is committed to becoming known for its leadership development and the students from the College of Human Ecology, who were picked by the faculty to attend and serve as outstanding student leaders, prove ECU’s commitment to that goal.

"ECU is committed to developing leaders and hopefully many of them will stay in eastern North Carolina and continue our work" Sheerer said.

The attendees broke into small groups and discussed the impact of the UNC Tomorrow Initiative and how it ties into ECU Tomorrow, the university’s guiding plan for the future and any programs that may need funding in the future.

The College of Human Ecology includes the departments of child development and family relations, criminal justice, hospitality management, interior design and merchandising, merchandising, nutrition and dietetics and the School of Social Work.

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Leaders: Black community can rise above crime

By Michael Abramowitz
The Daily Reflector

Saturday, February 07, 2009

In the wake of Barack Obama's election as president, the time has come for black people to take responsibility for changing their own circumstances, especially when it leads to crime, community leaders said.

They pointed to the progress that has been achieved toward racial equality and enlightenment from the time of Martin Luther King Jr. to Obama's popular election. His election should help erase thoughts among young black people that they have to turn to gangs and crime because racism denies them opportunity, they said.

"It's past time to stop blaming racism for crime," said Bennie Rountree, Greenville businessman and vice president for the South Atlantic region of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Rountree and his son were robbed at gunpoint recently in his business office by two black men. The crime epitomizes the issue, he said. Black people who are turning to crime are targeting other black people and tearing themselves and their community down when they need to be building themselves up.

No social problem challenges African-Americans more than crime, said community and political leaders, law enforcement officials and ordinary citizens interviewed as part of a Black History Month series on issues facing the black community. They said the problem often is the end result of other ills disproportionately affecting black Americans, from single-parent families and dropping out of school to poverty and unemployment. They said the black community itself must attack the problem by addressing those root causes.

Calvin Henderson, Pitt County NAACP president, said he thinks people might not understand how critical the problem is for African-Americans.

"Crime in the black community is such a phenomenon, it's almost beyond imagination," Henderson said. "It has impacted all segments of our community and torn the very fiber of our society. I'm disturbed about it and I'm angry, really."

The incarceration ratio of young black males in Greenville is now slightly more than 2-to-1, said William Anderson, Greenville's first black police chief. Anderson has said often that the police are not the solution to crime in the community, although they have their place in the process.

"The biggest obstacle to changing the direction of youth away from a culture of crime is the family structure. You have kids growing up today in single-family homes with no positive male role model to discipline them and teach them the proper way to do things. Because of that breakdown in the family, you see their other family, gangs, welcoming them with open arms. So many of our kids, black, white and Latino, are turning to gangs for a sense of belonging," Anderson said last week.

Law enforcement agencies, city and county government, and many nonprofit and church-based efforts sponsor programs to steer youth away from gangs and other behaviors that lead to crime, hoping to set an example for parents and families.

The Police Athletic League, Citizens United Against Violence, Project Safe Neighborhoods, the Police A-Kid-Emy and Summer Significance are some of the projects that use positive role models to set positive goals and behavior standards for children.

None of those programs can replace a parent in the home or the fabric of a strong community, leaders said. But even in cases where the family structure has broken down, they said, individuals can avoid crime and
achieve success.

"I know plenty of preachers, teachers, lawyers and doctors who didn't have a father in the home. We have a black president who didn't have a father in the home," Rountree said. "That should say a lot to young black people."

Black Americans must change from a reactive mentality and be more proactive, said Henderson.

"We have sat back in our comfort zones and made excuses while the issue mushrooms," Henderson said. "This is not a police problem; it's a community problem. Unless we come together and rally as an entire community, including homes and churches, we are without answers," Henderson said.

There are some oases of involvement in Greenville. The Building Hope Community Life Center, on Ninth Street, and the Lucille Gorham Intergenerational Center, on Ward Street are two prominent examples, offering youth mentoring, after-school programs, adult education, financial counseling and recreational outlets.

"(The center) gives people the freedom to come out and express themselves," said Hazel Whitfield, who makes quilts with a group of women at the Gorham Center. "We older folks can sit back, enjoy our days now and keep our culture going. We'd like to keep this heritage alive and pass it to the youngsters in the community," Whitfield said.

Another quilter, Ruby Taylor, said it's a place where the residents map their own future and goals, following the ideals of the late Dr. Lessie Bass, who with East Carolina University colleague Deborah Moody have been the center's guides.

"We have GED classes, parenting classes and social security and financial management counseling. We want our young people to see what life is all about and what it has to offer besides crime," Taylor said.

West Greenville resident Cameron Best, 20, shared the same belief, and does not turn to the police for his answers, he said.

"I know the cops ... tell the kids that they understand, but they can't because they don't really live it. (The solution) needs to come from somewhere else, maybe ministers and pastors, and even Mr. Henderson from down the block there might work if he gets out here."

Best said he is proud of Barack Obama for showing what a black person can now achieve.

"Having a first black president is really big. Of course it inspires me, and it should inspire all people. The possibilities are limitless now," he said.

Many churches and non-government organizations work at the grass-roots level in the city and county, but often they do not coordinate their efforts, according to some pastors working to bring them together.

Rodney Coles is president of the Churches Outreach Network, a new organization whose goal is to bring resources and pastors together. Bringing the message to people's front porches is the key to change, he said.

"You'll see a lot of organizations out here talking a good fight, but they stay in the corner when the bell rings. They'll talk about all that needs to be done, but won't be out in the community," Coles said.

Coles said that the wider community must present opportunities for employment.

"If (youth) have a way to make a little money, they can stay out of trouble," he said.

Coles' outreach partner and fellow pastor, Donald Cherry, sees the potential for change in 2009.

"I'm meeting soon with Susanne Sartelle of the Pitt-Greenville Chamber of Commerce to see if we can find summer jobs for some of these kids," Coles said.

"We need more people involved and you'll see great things happening. You can't just depend on the police to tell kids and parents about the consequences of crime," Cherry said.

He said segregation between blacks and whites is not as much of a problem as separation within the black community.

"There's been a battle for decades, maybe centuries, between blacks who have achieved power and those who haven't. Too many men and organizations are doing their own thing. You'll see a lot of leaders in the
community during Black History Month, but what about all the other months?" Cherry said.

Coles also said he is pleased with improving white-black relations and the work of police.

"I think Chief Anderson and the Greenville police are doing a fantastic job to oppose crime, but a corrupted stereotype is being taught. If (black) adults say police are no good or white people are no good, their children will grow up believing that," he said.

Building a diverse law enforcement agency is critical to fighting crime within communities and neighborhoods, but is not easy to accomplish, Anderson said.

"We need to be more inclusive. The city has placed a lot of emphasis on minority hiring, but it's not easy to build a diverse pool of applicants to make the police force more reflective of the community it serves. We're working on it, though," Anderson said.

As of Dec. 31, 2008, 19 percent of the GPD's sworn positions are filled by blacks, 13 percent by females and 4 percent by other minorities, police records show.

While troubling, especially in regard to black males, crime is not spiraling out of control in Greenville, Anderson said.

"We struggle with a perception problem. There have been no major spikes or valleys in crime over the last 10 years. When you consider the growth of the city — Greenville is now the 10th largest city in North Carolina — and look at crime per capita, we're not doing too bad. One robbery or burglary victim is too many, but by managing a professional agency focused on the community, we can control it. It's a challenge," Anderson said.

A look at the inmate population of the Pitt County Detention center indicates the reality of the crime problem among young black males, according to Pitt County Sheriff Mac Manning.

"There is a higher arrest and incarceration ratio among black males, but there is nothing inherent in race or gender that makes a person turn to crime," Manning said.

Cultural, economic and social conditions are more influential factors, he said.

Anderson said he wants all black people in his community to be proud of their culture and history, but with a renewed sense of purpose.

"Most important, pass that pride and sense of responsibility to our youth. We need to take back our streets and teach our children how to be respectful, responsible people in the community.

"To the entire community, I say respect one another and our diverse cultures. So many times we see people being critical of other races, and it's disheartening. There so many good and hard-working people in west Greenville, for instance, just like there are in Brook Valley, and they are categorized and criticized. That's just discrimination, and I hate it."

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Darts, Laurels

Saturday, February 07, 2009

Laurels — To a drop in the number of students leaving school early in Pitt County. Keeping students in school most importantly means a more promising future for the students. Keeping the state funding that accompanies those students helps, too. Pitt County's dropout rate remains the state's 14th highest even with the 5.3 percent reduction. That ranking also needs to improve.

Sisters of the Poor Laurels — To the donation of 102 acres of undeveloped property by John and Nancy Bray to the North Carolina Coastal Land Trust. The easement, beside Contentnea Creek Estates between Ayden and Grifton, borders the Pitt County Environmental Education Center. The land holds tremendous promise as an ecological teaching tool and the Brays are to be commended for their vision and generosity.

Sisters of the Poor Laurels — To sisters Jessica Rosenberg and Katharine McGregor who used their military training to rescue three victims of a plane crash while vacationing in Hawaii just before Christmas. Thanks to their swift action, emergency responders came to the scene as they kept the victims calm and treated their injuries. These quick-thinking D.H. Conley alums have made the hometown crowd very proud.

Sisters of the Poor Laurels — To a four-month delay in the transition from analog to digital television signals. The government's failure to secure funding for coupons that will offset the cost of converter boxes means the switchover will likely occur during hurricane season. Hundreds of households in the east needing the converters depend on television for weather information. Any interruption in service would have been more acceptable in February.

Sisters of the Poor Laurels — To snow clouds that somehow missed Pitt County on Wednesday while blanketing many other areas of the state, including some of our closest neighbors. Kudos also to school administrators who did not allow the few flurries that materialized early Wednesday to delay the start of classes.

Sisters of the Poor Laurels — To the death of former N.C. Insurance Commissioner Jim Long, who passed away on Monday only weeks after leaving office. Long served 24 years in the insurance post, working to ensure that state residents enjoyed some of the lowest car insurance rates in the country. He was such an institution that the Department of Insurance phone number still bears his fingerprints. (It's 1-800-JIM-LONG.) His unblemished record of service is laudable and his passing is a loss for North Carolina.

Sisters of the Poor Laurels — To members of St. Timothy's Episcopal Church who packed more than 10,000 meals last Saturday to be shipped to war-torn Afghanistan. The effort was part of Operation Sharehouse, a volunteer-based program of Stop Hunger Now, a nonprofit international relief organization that coordinates the distribution of food and other life-saving aid to people around the world.

Compiled by Mark Rutledge, writer/columnist for The Daily Reflector. Contact him at 329-9575 or via e-mail at mrutledge@coxnc.com

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Free dental clinic provides care for 150 children

By Kim Grizzard
The Daily Reflector

Friday, February 06, 2009

After four filings and three sealants, 8-year-old Kyle Little left the dentist's office Friday with a big, toothy grin.

Maybe it was because of the clown, the cheerleaders or the balloon animals. Maybe it was the fact that his mom had promised him a treat when she got home from work. Or maybe it was because he knew he wouldn't have to worry anymore about getting food stuck in the cavity in one of his teeth.

The Wintergreen Primary second-grader was among 150 local children invited to take part in the seventh annual "Give Kids A Smile!" Day. The free dental clinic was among thousands held nationwide on Friday for children who do not receive dental care.

"These are people who fall through the cracks," Dr. Jasper Lewis, whose dental practice hosted the clinic, said. "These are people who truly need (dental care) but don't have access to it."

Two dozen area dentists who volunteered for "Give Kids A Smile!" Day worked alongside about 100 support staff members. During the eight-hour clinic, they examined patients, cleaned their teeth, applied sealants, filled cavities and performed extractions.

Kevin McEachern's three children, ages 8, 10 and 12, had a total of eight teeth pulled. If McEachern had paid cash, the work would have totaled more than $2,000.

"Financially, it was just tremendous," said McEachern, who is retired from the military. "It took that burden away."

When McEachern was in service, his children received dental checkups. But now the family has no dental insurance to cover the expense.

"I still have medical care ... but you have to pay into dental," McEachern said. "I made a choice."

Dr. Gregory Chadwick, associate dean for planning and extramural affairs at the School of Dentistry at East Carolina University, said that in tough economic times, more families may feel they have no choice but to cut corners in terms of dental care.

"Dentistry is sometimes viewed as an elective procedure," he said. "But without good oral health, you're just not healthy.

"I think the economy is going to have an impact," Chadwick said. "But that makes what we're doing here even more important."

The East Central Dental Society has provided more than $150,000 worth of dental care for free since the program began. Since "Give Kids A Smile!" began in North Carolina in 2003, care valued at more than $6.7 million has been provided for more than 85,000 children.

To identify children who most need the service, the North Carolina Oral Health Section screens kindergarten and fifth-grade students statewide. In Pitt County Schools, second-graders are also evaluated for signs of dental decay.

"If I see a child who has a suspicious area, then the parent gets a letter," public health hygienist Donna Smith, who serves Pitt County, said.
Families that indicate a need for free dental care may be treated at the Smile Safari Mobile Dental Clinic — which travels to Pitt County elementary schools to provide on-site dental care to children who receive Medicaid, Health Choice — or they can schedule an appointment at “Give Kids A Smile!” Day.

“This ‘Give Kids A Smile!’ is special,” Smith said. “They don’t just get checked. They get restorative care. They get preventive care. It is a tremendous gift.”

About 750,000 North Carolina children are eligible for Medicaid, and 100,000 others are enrolled in Health Choice. But only in five of these children receive dental care.

More than 80 percent of North Carolina children on Medicaid receive no preventive dental services in a given year.

“Kids that come from an underserved populations really don’t have an opportunity to access dental care,” Chadwick said. “There’s a tremendous need out there.

“Dentists want to do their part, but it’s going to take all of us getting together to really put a dent in the access to care problem.”

North Carolina ranks 47th in the nation in dentists to population ratio, and four eastern North Carolina counties have no dentist.

Seventy-nine counties in North Carolina are federally designated dental shortage areas.

While he called the local “Give Kids A Smile!” Day one of the leading events of its kind in the nation, “Volunteerism is really not a health care system,” Chadwick said. “We really need to ultimately find a dental home for all these kids.”

Dr. Randy Fussell agreed.

“You’re not going to solve the problem in one Friday,” he said.

Fussell, who has volunteered his time at “Give Kids A Smile!” Day since its inception, said teaching parents as well as children how to maintain good dental health is a key component of the program.

Friday’s event included information about topics ranging from baby bottle tooth decay to proper brushing and flossing techniques.

“A lot of folks do the best they can but they don’t know,” Fussell said. “That’s a big part is to try to educate them.”

Lewis said “Give Kids A Smile!” Day was also an opportunity to educate public officials about challenges in dental care. Policy-makers from county commissioners to congressmen were invited to the event.

“This is an opportunity for the leaders in our community and in our state to see what truly exists in dental need in North Carolina,” Lewis said. “You just don’t see it walking down the street, going into a store or restaurant or school. But when you see the mouths of some of these children, it tears your heart out.”

Those attending were provided pictures of children as young as 2 who were suffering from rampant dental caries and a 24-year-old woman whose only remaining option was false teeth.

“For years in history, eastern North Carolina dental care consisted of removing teeth and making false teeth for people,” Lewis said. “It was just automatically expected that when you reached a certain age, all your teeth were going to be gone. In fact it wasn’t necessary if they had access to preventive dental care and if they had access to restorative dental care when it was needed.”

Dr. James R. Hupp, dean of the ECU School of Dentistry, said that is why programs focusing on children are most effective.

“Preventive care, that’s probably the biggest benefit,” Hupp said. “It protects these kids not just for a few months. Sometimes if they participate in these kinds of programs, it can prevent them from getting dental disease for years and even decades.”
Speaker: Poverty, racism limit health care access

By Tom Marine
The Daily Reflector

Friday, February 06, 2009

Poverty and racism, two of the root problems inflicting minority groups, deserve the attention of everyone seeking to broaden the national health debate. Dr. Camara Jones said Friday.

As the keynote speaker of the fifth annual Jean Mills Health Symposium, Jones said racism and the social factors that lead to limited health care access for minorities must be added to the national agenda. Jones, who works as the research director on Social Determinants of Health and Equity at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, described how the different levels of racism weaken the United States, through the waste of human resources.

“It kills the strength of our whole society,” she said. “We need to address both the social determinants of health and the social determinants of equity to improve health outcomes, achieve social justice and eliminate health disparities.”

To help illustrate her point, Jones used an analogy of a gardener with two flower pots, two types of soil and two differently colored flowers.

She said if the gardener prefers one of the colored flowers and plants those seeds in the pot containing the rich soil, that will create a clear advantage over the other flowers. As a result, she said, the preferred flowers will grow and flourish more than the others, further validating the gardener's initial decision.

The solution to this perpetuating system is to break down the pot barriers and mix the soils together, Jones said at the Hilton Greenville. Translated, that means the walls of the levels of racism — institutionalized, personally mediated and internalized — must be broken.

Many members of the audience shared her view.

"We can do things differently, but it will require a new approach and a new way of thinking," said Barbara Pullen-Smith, director of the North Carolina Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities. "We can't continue to do the same thing and expect a different outcome."

Pullen-Smith, who attended the symposium with nearly 125 registered guests, said health administrators across the country must make tough decisions about investing in the populations experiencing these health disparities. She echoed Jones' remarks, saying both individuals and the systems that affect their behaviors are responsible for enhancing health.

"We want to work within these systems by looking at the policies and see which populations have been under served," she said. “Let's start addressing these health issues from the perspective of these people.”

Dr. John Morrow, Pitt County health director, said his staff regularly sees discrepancies in the health status of different minority groups, such as the black population experiencing higher rates of infant mortality, diabetes and prostate cancer.

Morrow said there are no clear answers to this problem, although some theories point to socioeconomic environments and genetics. He said the higher rates are probably a result of a combination of factors, which are still being determined.

As for the health system affecting individual behavior, Morrow said the government must take a leading role in discussing changes to national health care. If not, he said, the country will break both its health care system and budget.
"It's very doable and we're very behind in getting it down," Morrow said. "We continue to put ambulances at the bottom of the cliff instead of guard rails at the top. We can build a better system, but we have to start doing it instead of just talking about it.

"We can't afford to not be healthy anymore."

Contact Tom Marine at tmarine@coxnc.com or (252) 329-9567.
Kent Williams Jr., NCCU's student body president, completes a CNN interview about student attire that will be aired today. This spring, N.C. Central's student government will distribute information cards with fashion tips for college students.

Staff Photos by Chuck Liddy

NCCU's Kent Williams Jr., whose CNN interview was taped at a Duke University TV studio in Durham, was also featured in a Los Angeles Times story.

Buy Photo

**NCCU student leader pushes sharper attire**

**ERIC FERRERI, Staff Writer**

Comment on this story

DURHAM - Kent Williams Jr. doesn't expect his fellow N.C. Central University students to come to class each day decked out -- as he often is -- in a suit and tie.

But would it kill them to ditch the pajama bottoms and droopy drawers and maybe put on a belt?

Williams is NCCU's student body president, and he's sick of seeing students wearing baggy jeans, dressing too provocatively and being scolded by professors for their classroom attire. So he's doing something about it.

This spring, student government at NCCU will begin distributing information cards to students, a cheat sheet of sorts defining such terms as "business casual" and noting what sort of dress
is and is not acceptable. Williams stole the idea from the student government at
Winston-Salem State University, which already uses such cards on its campus.

The cards' advice will also be distributed on Facebook -- the popular online social networking
site -- and Williams is planning a campus fashion show in March, where student models will
show off the do's and don'ts of collegiate clothing.

"We're not trying to dictate to students how to dress," Williams said. "We just want to get
them thinking about what they wear."

Though NCCU is a historically black institution with a predominantly African-American student
body, Williams says he's targeting young men and women of all races. He'd like the
information cards to eventually find their way into middle and high schools, where young
people begin copying the behavior and dress of popular actors and hip-hop artists.

The cards haven't been made yet, but word of his project is already leaking out. Williams has
already heard from at least one school district -- in New Jersey -- interested in adopting the
idea.

His initiative has also brought him some celebrity. Williams was featured prominently in a
national story in the Los Angeles Times linking the NCCU project with President Barack
Obama, who recently said on MTV that "brothers should pull up their pants." On Friday,
Williams was interviewed by CNN for a segment that airs today.

"I believe we are professionals in training," he said. "If we reach [young people] before
college, teachers won't have to tell students to pull up their pants."

**Trendy discomfort**

Eric Jeffers was one of those kids. When he was young, he wore his jeans down near his
knees. He admits now how silly it was. He could barely walk.

"I know it's not comfortable having to pull your pants up every five steps," said Jeffers, a
sophomore at NCCU. "You don't have to be fancy with your clothes, but make it neat. You
wouldn't walk into an interview with your drawers showing."

Jaquan Peaks, also an NCCU sophomore, said that for a lot of young black men, baggy pants
and oversized shirts are a style that has run its course by the time many get to college.

"It's a maturity thing," he said. "You grow out of it."

Trends change. The low-slung, baggy jeans phenomenon is slowly petering out as young
African-Americans take their fashion cues from hip-hop moguls such as Jay-Z and Sean
Combs, each of whom is more often seen these days in a suit and tie than a baggy
sweatshirt, said Mark Anthony Neal, a Duke University professor who studies black popular
culture.

And there is recognition in the black community of the importance of looking good, Neal said.

"Black students feel an extra pressure to represent the best of the race," he said. "They're
sensitive about how they're viewed when they go off campus."

Williams, 22, is from Raleigh and graduated from East Wake High School. He has three
younger brothers, who, he says, he makes sure are dressing properly.

Though the NCCU initiative was in motion before Obama made his MTV remarks, Obama
certainly helped the cause. The new president is wildly popular among students on historically
black campuses, and Williams hopes college students will latch onto the new president's
fashion sense and style.
Peer pressure is best

Charlie Nelms, NCCU's chancellor, said the assault on sloppy dress is a fight better suited to students than to administration. Students are far more likely to listen to their peers than to professors or other university higher-ups, Nelms said.

Still, there's a fine line between sending a positive message and infringing on students' desire to express themselves, Nelms added.

"You want people to be able to express their identities," he said. "But you also want them to understand that's not the only way of doing things."

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THE STUDENT GUIDE FOR COLLEGE ATTIRE

Sartorial tips from a card handed out to students at Winston-Salem State University:

HATS and/or head coverings should not be worn in classrooms or offices.

SAGGING PANTS worn low on the hips that reveal underwear or skin are not appropriate.

MEN'S UNDERSHIRTS of any color are not appropriate outside the residence hall.

NO ATTIRE should display obscene, profane, lewd, illegal or offensive images or words

WINSTON-SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENT GOVERNMENT

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UNC warns of class and job cuts

Lawmakers play down predictions

BY JANE STANCILL, Staff Writer

North Carolina's universities could face the elimination of more than 1,600 jobs, the cancellation of hundreds of courses and scaled-back library hours as the recession worsens.

UNC system leaders said Friday that a 7 percent cut in their budget, which seems increasingly likely, would have painful consequences.

They warned that they would lose 1,679 jobs, including 660 faculty positions. One-third to one-half of those jobs are currently filled, UNC system officials estimate.

Students would feel the pain in the form of bigger classes, fewer available courses and less counseling and advising. More classes would be taught by part-time instructors rather than full-time professors. Building repairs would be put off and technology purchases delayed.

Such dire predictions are often deployed to drive home the importance of protecting education from budget cuts, legislators say. But UNC leaders say it will be impossible to avoid touching classrooms if they have to slice as much as 7 percent out of their budgets. They pointed out that 70 percent of the universities' state appropriations go to instruction, academic support and student services.

The UNC system this week sent to the state budget director three budget cut scenarios, based on reductions of 3 percent, 5 percent and 7 percent. Gov. Beverly Perdue has asked all agencies to prepare such reports as she deals with a $2 billion hole in the state's budget.

A deepening recession suggests the 7 percent level is likely, state budget analysts say.

Rob Nelson, the UNC system's vice president for finance, made a strong plea for any cuts to be temporary.

"President Bowles wants to make it as clear as possible to you, the Governor, and the legislature that imposing permanent cuts would be equivalent to sacrificing the future of North Carolina," Nelson said in a memo accompanying the report to the state budget director.

The cuts continue

UNC campuses have reduced their budgets by 6 percent already this year. UNC leaders say the system can sustain another 5 percent cut during the next two years. But, Nelson said in his memo, "cuts of this magnitude cannot continue permanently if we are to preserve the quality of education our students need and deserve."

UNC officials said a 7 percent cut would result in:

* A drop in the six-year graduation rate at N.C. State University from 70 percent to 65 percent.
* A loss of 232 teaching jobs at UNC-Chapel Hill, which could warrant an enrollment reduction of 3,426 students.

* A reduction of 340 course sections at N.C. Central University.

The UNC Board of Governors will vote next week on tuition increases. Bowles had directed campuses to limit the increases because of the recession, and last week, he said he would ask the legislature for permission to order furloughs, or unpaid time off, for employees.

"You can't say that anything is off the table," said Sen. Tony Rand, a Fayetteville Democrat. "This is unlike any other thing I've seen."

Rand said he would hate to see the state's universities turn away students.

"I really would not want to limit enrollment," Rand said.

The likely cuts come after a period of growth and prosperity for the system, including a huge construction boom financed through borrowing. The campuses have also worked to raise faculty salaries to be more competitive with other universities.

State appropriations for UNC campuses increased 8.1 percent in 2007-08 and 4.7 percent in 2008-09.

In this decade, state universities have absorbed about 6,500 additional students each year. Enrollment rose 18 percent from 2002 to 2007. Overall, UNC system enrollment climbed above 215,000 students in 2008.

Republican state Rep. Nelson Dollar of Cary, who last year was vice chairman of the House education subcommittee on universities, said the campuses may need to look for more cuts at the administrative level.

"Generally in those types of lists you don't see all the associate assistant chancellors or associate deans who might be in the cuts," Dollar said. "You're going to see agencies put forward worst-case scenarios, showing those cuts in a manner that would have the greatest effect on students, when you could make cuts that wouldn't as directly affect the ability of students to attend classes and get their courses."

**Bleeding conspicuously**

Sen. Vernon Malone, Raleigh Democrat and a co-chair of the Senate committee on higher education, said universities should offer more employees part-time status.

It's possible, Malone said, that university officials "picked the veins that were closer to the skin that would bleed more easily so it would be more dramatic."

Bowles and his staff have given campuses a list of guidelines for implementing budget reductions, including increasing faculty productivity, cutting administrative and public relations jobs, trimming centers and institutes that are not directly related to instruction and dumping academic programs that have low enrollment.

Earlier this week, UNC-CH Chancellor Holden Thorp said the university would do all it could to protect core academics and undergraduate education. But he said there will be harm.

"Class sizes will get bigger," Thorp said. "It will be harder to get the classes needed to graduate. The student-faculty ratio is going to go down."

"We're not happy about any of those things, but I think we can hold it together."

(Staff writer Mark Johnson contributed to this report.)

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Staff writer Mark Johnson contributed to this report.

DEEP CUTS

Here are some impacts of 7 percent budget cuts at area UNC system campuses:

N.C. CENTRAL UNIVERSITY
* Eliminate 30 full-time faculty positions (10 percent) and 110 adjunct professor jobs (33 percent)
* Eliminate two administrative positions and eight staff positions
* Reduce course sections by 340
* Reduce campus police staff

N.C. STATE UNIVERSITY
* Eliminate 274 jobs (5.8 percent of academic affairs work force), including 149 filled positions (24 faculty, 27 administrators, 98 staff)
* Eliminate 180 class sections (about 5 percent of annual classroom seats)
* Drop tutoring and advising programs, cut counseling by 25 percent
* Reduce library hours by 25 percent, cancel 1,200 journals and purchase 4,200 fewer books
* Lengthen cleaning and mowing cycles, eliminate flower plantings

UNC-CHAPEL HILL
* Cut more than 230 teaching positions, which could warrant enrollment reduction of 3,400 students, 55 staff and 11 administrators in academic departments
* Cut 198 staff positions across the university
* Reduce support for graduate students and teaching assistants
* Library cuts would take the library out of the "Top 20" in the country.

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Tilden Hagan, 25, becomes one with doughnuts as he prepares to take on 5,200 other runners in Saturday’s fifth annual Krispy Kreme Challenge. The event has put Raleigh on the national competitive eating map.

Staff Photos by Corey Lowenstein

Too tired from the first two miles and all those doughnuts, Rachel Glasser, top, gets a ride back to the NCSU Bell Tower from Seth Linder. They took the leftovers home.

Remains were marooned halfway through course.

Runners gorge, gut it out

Wolffing down Krispy Kremes, thousands run for children's hospital
BY JOE MILLER, Staff Writer

Comment on this story

RALEIGH - In the time it takes most people to drink a cup of coffee and eat a doughnut over the morning paper, 20-year-old Cameron Dorn of Greenwood, S.C., ran two miles, ate 12 doughnuts, then ran two more miles.

By completing the feat in 29 minutes and 57 seconds, he became the first of 5,200 doughnut-eating runners to cross the finish line at Saturday's fifth annual Krispy Kreme Challenge, a quirky event that's evolved from a lark among 10 students at N.C. State University into a major university event that raised $35,000 for the N.C. Children's Hospital and drew national television coverage.

Saturday's race attracted everyone from Elvis to Santa. Superman, Wonder Woman and one of the Ghostbusters ran as well, as did a man in a gorilla suit, several guys in business suits, two guys pushing a third with a broken foot in a grocery cart, and a man running with a three-legged boxer.

What motivates a person to mix the seemingly incongruous acts of running and eating doughnuts -- lots of doughnuts?

Jeff Peterson was poised at the front of pack before the 9:30 a.m. start, a position suggesting he had plans to win.

"I want to get the doughnuts while they're still hot," said the 49-year-old from Cary.

Clint Bollinger, an Olympic distance triathlete who drove from Charlotte for the race, stood wearing only a Speedo in the mid-30-degree pre-race chill. Was the Challenge part of his conditioning?

"I guess any time you torture yourself, it's part of training," said the 2003 State grad. "And anytime I get to dress in a Speedo, it's a good time."

"You never can tell what people will find interesting," university spokesman Keith Nichols said in trying to explain the race's popularity.

Many simply saw the challenge as a fun opportunity to help a good cause.

Last year, Mike Williams, a junior in biomedical engineering, ran with a group that shed their shirts and painted "K-r-i-s-p-y K-r-e-m-e C-h-a-l-l-e-n-g-e" across their bare chests. This year, they were back, baring the phrase, "D-o-o F-o-r T-h-e K-i-d-s."

"It's just such a great cause," he said, "such a good way for us to give back."

There was controversy.

NCSU Chancellor James Oblinger was the first to greet what appeared to be the first person across the finish, a fifth-year resource management major at State. Though more than half the runners who take the Challenge are State students, last year's race was won by a UNC Tar Heel.

"I am so glad you brought the banner back to the Pack," Oblinger said, pumping the apparent winner's hand. But the student was disqualified for reasons unclear and the title ended up going to Dorn, of little-known Lander University, enrollment 3,000.

In a post-race interview with ESPN, Dorn beamed over the winning prize, several dozen doughnuts. "My mom likes doughnuts," he said. "So does this girl I'm talking to."

After the race, some were already looking ahead to next year.

Mark Luckinbill was part of a group of associates at ING Financial Services who convened a
regional meeting around the Challenge. Before the race, the competitive marathon runner (personal record: 3 hours, 3 minutes) and ironman triathlete (PR: 10 hours, 27 minutes) was aiming for a top 20 finish.

"I didn't make it," he said afterward. "Those middle six doughnuts were tough."

He vowed to return. "It's tough psychologically. I'll need to try and get my head around eating 12 doughnuts."

Or at least his mouth.

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AT THE KRISPY KREME CHALLENGE

BEST T-SHIRT: "Donuts are the new Wheaties."

"WE RECYCLE": Inscribed on one of the trash cans at the finish line for runners unable to keep their doughnuts.

NO MORE TRANS FATS: Some speculated that the reason fewer runners "recycled" their doughnuts than in years' past is because Krispy Kreme has eliminated the trans fats, unsaturated fats that can be difficult to digest. MOST APPROPRIATE APPAREL: "Doughnut Boys Racing," worn by John Reese of Chapel Hill. It refers to a cycle racing team out of Chapel Hill.

FOR COMPLETE RACE RESULTS, GO TO: www.setupevents.com and click on "other events."

FOR MORE COVERAGE, GO TO: The News & Observer's Get Out! Get Fit! blog, blogs.newsobserver.com/joemiller

BY THE NUMBERS

62,400

Number of doughnuts that would have been consumed had all 5,200 runners consumed a dozen.

2,400

Number of calories in a dozen glazed doughnuts.

457

Number of calories, on average, a 175-pound person burns running four miles.

12.5 MILLION

Number of total calories that would have been consumed had all 5,200 runners each consumed a dozen doughnuts.

2-12-2-60

Requirements for meeting the Krispy Kreme Challenge: Run two miles, eat 12 doughnuts, run two miles, do it all in 60 minutes or less.