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If I could get my hands on them, I'd force them to watch over and over, the scene from "On the Waterfront" in which Marlon Brando scolds his older brother. "You wuz my brudda, Charlie. You shudda looked out for me. ... I cudda hr a class. I cudda been a contenda."

The NCCU Eagles perhaps cudda been contenders in the CIAA or even the MEAC, but they left one and haven't yet been accepted into the other. Thus, they've become the basketball equivalent of those pro rasslin' dudes who you know are going to lose even before the bell rings.

Dickerson is a former professional player in the now-defunct American Basketball Association and thus is no stranger to lost causes. That's why he calls the season, despite the lopsided defeats, "an overwhelmingly positive experience" for his players, both culturally and educationally.

"It wouldn't be [a positive experience] if I were degrading them because they aren't winning. Our team motto is 'The greater the trial, the greater the glory,'" he said.

My question, then, is how come the players can't face those great trials in, say, San Diego instead of Akron, Ohio?

Ammons, when I talked to him near the end of 2005, said the move would attract top scholars to the school. He didn't even laugh when he said it.

Even though Coach Dickerson said the move is all good, I can't help feeling — as do some Eagles alums from whom I've heard — that NCCU appears to be sacrificing these young men at the altar of greed: The school agrees to play a larger, wealthier school that needs a cupcake to pad its schedule, and the school in turn agrees to pad NCCU's bank account.

That stinks.

What also stinks is that both Ammons and Hayes flew the coop to Florida A&M University — Stevie Wonder could've seen that coming — soon after consigning the next several years' of NCCU athletic recruits to humiliating defeats for the sake of a few coins. OK, for the sake of a lot of coins: at least $400,000.

If the school were scheduling games with the University of Hawaii, that would be one thing. Fargo, N.D., though, is way too far to go to get whipped 104-51.

At least I hear the North Dakota chapter of the NCCU Alumni Association honored the players as they came onto the court. I hear he gave them a standing ovation.
UNC-CH might not identify finalists

It says it's guarding its prospects' privacy as it seeks a successor for James Moeser.

By Eric Ferrer
STAFF WRITER

CHAPEL HILL - The committee searching for UNC-Chapel Hill's next chancellor most likely will not identify any finalists before making its selection.

Some universities announce top candidates and even hold public forums so the community can have a say in the process. Others treat the information as a closely guarded treasure, to be discussed only behind closed doors.

In Chapel Hill, the committee is leaning toward the latter approach, said Nelson Schwab, its chairman. His reasoning is common among universities that keep such information private: The promise of discretion makes many candidates more willing to apply.

"I can tell you several of the people we've talked to would not be involved if it were a public search," Schwab said Monday. "They have positions of respect elsewhere, and they're really happy in these positions."

Schwab would not discuss particular candidates or say how close the committee is to finding a successor for James Moeser, UNC-CH's chancellor since 2000. The search leading to Moeser's selection also was secretive, and few in Chapel Hill had ever heard his name before he was hired.

Last week, a consultant helping UNC-CH with the search said the applicant pool was stellar and included many sitting university presidents, provosts and deans. Often, sitting presidents or chancellors aren't seeking new jobs but are coaxed into applying by headhunters with the provision that their identities will remain hidden lest they burn a bridge with their current employers.

But Art Padilla, an N.C. State University management professor and author of "Portraits in Leadership," a study of college presidencies, said he hasn't found hard data suggesting that universities actually lose out by making the names of finalists public.

"Clearly, it's easier to have a closed decision process with only a couple people making decisions," he said. "I think you would have more information if you made it public."

UNC campuses have employed both models. Some, including UNC-CH and, more recently, N.C. Central University, have at least tried to keep the names private. Others, such as Appalachian State University in 2004, selected a chancellor after bringing in three finalists for campus forums.

UNC-CH's search committee next meets Feb. 28.

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Largest users cut consumption

CHAPEL HILL

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and UNC Hospitals are by far the biggest single user of Orange Water and Sewer Authority water — drawing nearly 2.2 million gallons a day, or 27 percent of the daily average in Chapel Hill and Carrboro.

In November, the students living on campus began a water conservation competition with N.C. State University that has resulted in a 12 percent drop in overall use in residence halls.

As part of an overall sustainability project, the university has been installing waterless urinals, dual-flush toilets, low-flow showerheads and other water-conserving technology in dormitories and other campus buildings.

On a larger scale, the university is partnering with OWASA, which provides water to southern Orange County, on the construction of a water reclamation and reuse system that administrators say will reduce water demand by 10 percent.

The campus has added 2.75 million square feet of buildings since 2003, and the number of students, staff and faculty members have increased 14 percent since 2000. Yet annual water consumption has remained below pre-2002 drought levels, according to university officials.

RALEIGH

Ajinomoto AminoScience manufacturers amino acids for pharmaceutical and food applications. The company says it implemented 15 conservation measures in 2007 in an effort to cut its water use by 18 million gallons a year, or about 10 percent.

In August, Ajinomoto began using non-potable water in more operations at its wastewater-treatment plant, saving an estimated 14.2 million gallons a year. In November, the company completed a water audit of its 18 bathrooms and lab sinks that identified 84,000 gallons a year in savings.

N.C. State University says it has cut water consumption on campus by 29 percent over the last five years even while expanding its physical campus and increasing the campus population.

N.C. State stopped all outside irrigation on Oct. 8 and implemented most of Raleigh’s Stage 2 restrictions at the end of October, four months before they were required. It is now pulling water from Lake Raleigh for any essential outside watering.

In recent weeks N.C. State has installed low-flow devices in most residence halls and nonresidential buildings. In the future, the university says it is looking at drilling wells to satisfy its need for non-potable water and increasing its use of drought-resistant plants and turf.
DURHAM

Duke University, counting the hospitals, is Durham's largest water user. But the institution has employed a combination of public relations efforts and new technology to cut its water use significantly.

Duke's water use is just above 1 million gallons per day now, down about 50 percent since August and about 23 percent from the same time last year, said Tavey McDaniel Capps, Duke's sustainability coordinator.

Duke uses disposable plates and utensils in its cafeteria and has installed 200 low-flow washing machines. The university has also switched to biodegradable underpads for hospital beds, saving 58,000 gallons a week, McDaniel Capps said.

Duke students, faculty and staff switched up 5,000 low-flow shower heads for use in their homes, and a giveaway of 5,000 more is planned soon.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's largest laboratory in the country is also one of Durham County's largest water users.

The EPA shares a campus with the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences in Research Triangle Park. Together they used 80.3 million gallons of water in 2006, the last year for which data were available, to rank seventh in the county.

Recent efforts dropped the December 2007 water use to about half of what was used in December 2006.

More than 3,000 employees and contractors work for the two agencies, said Alex Montilla, the EPA director of administrative services.

The EPA building, completed in 2001, already featured some conservation tools such as low-flow faucets. Since late summer, the chilled water plant has been made more efficient; it's responsible for about half the water used on the campus.

EPA officials started washing animal cages less frequently as well. (The EPA does animal research in RTP, but Montilla wouldn't say what kind or even what kind of animals there are.)

Officials have also stopped washing vehicles; started using disposable plates, utensils and trays in the cafeteria; and checked water lines for leaks. Waterless urinals will soon be installed in NIEHS facilities.

Water is integral to the operations of Cree, a light-emitting diode manufacturer in Research Triangle Park and one of Durham's top 10 water users.

Water is used to clean production equipment and cool and clean the tiny semiconductor chips after they're sliced and diced from a single "wafer," said Raiford Garrabrant, Cree's director of investor relations.

The company has cut its water use in half since late last year by installing a water recycling facility. Water use went from 400,000 gallons per day to about 200,000 gallons, Garrabrant said.

GlaxoSmithKline's Research Triangle Park campus used 29 million gallons of water in August, said spokesman Robert Sutton.

Monthly consumption dropped to 15.4 million gallons in November and was down to about 9 million gallons in December.

Some of the reduction can be attributed to the natural drop that occurs in winter months. But Sutton thinks the majority is due to a host of efforts.

The company:
• Ended all outside irrigation.
• Started using disposable plates and cutlery.
• Installed automatic faucets in 52 of its 314 restrooms and is putting in restrictors to slow faucet flow from 2.2 gallons per minute to half gallon per minute in the remainder.
• Captured condensation from air conditioning units and pumping it back into cooling towers.
• Installing new dishwashers that could save 10 million gallons per year.

COMPILED BY ANNE BLYTHE, MATT DCEES AND DAVID BRACKEN
It's one of three sanctuaries in Africa where Hare has worked where young apes are protected after their mothers have been killed by poachers as part of an illegal trade. Hare has also studied chimpanzees.

"Bonobos and chimpanzees are both our closest relatives," Hare says, "and we share more DNA in common with them than they share with gorillas. What I do that's different than what almost everybody else does, is I'm studying both species, comparing them to each other. And it's a very important comparison, because it's a big skew in our evolutionary history."

Hare describes chimpanzees as male-dominated and highly territorial.

"What's unusual about chimpanzees is that they have such intense territorial disputes that they'll kill each other, they'll kill each other's babies, they do all sorts of horrible things that you only think humans do," he says.

Bonobos, on the other hand, are female-dominated and relatively peaceful — some might even say, free-loving.

"What they normally do when they meet individuals they don't know, or that they're uncomfortable with, is have sex with them," he says. "They use sex as sort of a social lubricant, to decrease tension."

But don't think the program is going to be an hour's worth of primate sex and violence. Much of Hare's work involves psychological studies with chimpanzees and bonobos that are usually conducted on human children.

Hare works with developmental psychologists to compare the results of exercises done with chimpanzees and bonobos, to the same exercises done with young children. The apes may surprise you.

"There are cases, in some of the things we do, where we're outsmarted," Hare says, but he adds: "One of the great things about being human is that we get to take advantage of other people's knowledge. The question is: When did that develop in human development?"

"Nova" airs at 8 tonight on UNC-HD. (Those who don't have the channel can find extra footage at www.pbs.org and can preorder a DVD at shop.wgbh.org.)
VIDEO GAMES

Just Click the Mouse. Follow the Cursor. You Are Calm. You Feel Good.

By SETH SCHIESEI

GREENVILLE, N.C. — The Psychophysiology and Biofeedback Laboratory at East Carolina University here is in the subterranean bowels of a former gymnasium, just down the hall from an old locker room that still smells faintly of feet.

This is where Carmen V. Russoniello, the lab's director and a professor in the College of Health and Human Performance at the university, is trying to determine whether some video games can be good for you.

"I've always thought there's something special about the concept of fun; it's one of the most powerful words in the English language," Mr. Russoniello, a former president of the American Therapeutic Recreation Association, said here recently, just yards from a wall covered with diplomas, professional citations and the medals he earned as a marine in the Vietnam War.

"As scientists," he said, "we know there is a cascade of beneficial biochemical and hormonal effects in people when they are engaged in an activity they perceive of as fun. What we're seeing here is that some video games fit into that mold and that some games can have a positive health effect on people."

Formally, Mr. Russoniello's research project is called "A Randomized, Controlled Study of the Effectiveness of PopCap Video Games in Reducing Stress and Improving Mood." Informally, that means that the professor is in the process of bringing 120 test subjects in, wiring them up like Woody Allen in "Sleeper," sitting them in front of a computer and then measuring their brain waves and heartbeats as they play simple games like Bejeweled, Bookworm Adventures and Peggle. PopCap, the Seattle company that makes those games, is paying the $23,500 cost of the study. Mr. Russoniello intends to announce his results later this year.

PopCap's titles are the game-world equivalent of Nickelodeon or the light dramas on the Lifetime Network. The prime audiences for casual games like PopCap's are middle-aged women and office workers seeking diversion during interminable conference calls. So the play is meant to be thoroughly nonviolent, uncontroversial and simple. In that sense these games are the spiritual successors to Tetris and Minesweeper: intended to soothe and amuse, rather than to thrill and provoke. What Mr. Russoniello's study appears to be doing is merely backing up with empirical data what the subjective experience already conveys.

The results would almost certainly be much different if the test subjects played violent combat or horror-survival games like those in the Manhunt, Grand Theft Auto or Call of Duty series, just as you would expect film buffs to have different physiological responses while watching "Rambo" or "Saw III" as opposed to "The Little Mermaid." That's probably why you don't see makers of violent, M-rated games underwriting academic studies of their products.

In "Sleeper" one of the many recurrent jokes is that in the future scientists will finally figure out that all of the
things people thought were dangerous back in the benighted 20th century, like red meat, are actually good for you. Mr. Russoniello, however, is not a comedian. When he starts talking about serious physiological concepts like “heart rate variability” and “sympathetic and parasympathetic components of the autonomic nervous system,” it can be tough for a mere video game journalist to keep up.

Tami Maes, a 27-year-old recreational therapist from Raleigh, N.C., who was part of Mr. Russoniello’s study, put her experience a bit more colloquially.

“I’ll be honest, I don’t play video games,” she said after emerging from about half an hour in the test chamber. “If I was going to think of something relaxing, I’d think of sitting on the beach on a sunny day with a cold drink in my hand. But I understand how some people get into it.”

She said her boyfriend, for instance, liked to play Spider solitaire on the computer before and after work. “That’s his downtime,” she added. “For me, downtime is turning my mind off and watching something mindless on television where I don’t have to engage.”

But I was ready to engage. To cut through all the high-powered science jargon I agreed to sacrifice my body, and a small part of my dignity, for science. I became a test subject.

Naturally, before being wired up, I had to sign a consent form. It worried me a bit that as the form stated, “The policy of East Carolina University does not provide for the compensation or medical treatment for subjects because of the physical or other injury resulting from this research activity.” But I figured that since I’m probably already far down the road toward carpal tunnel syndrome, a few more mouse clicks wouldn’t hurt.

Next came the questionnaires. “How many hours have you spent playing video games in the last month?” Thankfully, this was not an open-ended question, and I was able to get away with circling the “75 or more hours” option. “On a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 representing no stress, and 10 representing extreme stress, how stressful do you become when playing video games?”

Once again I dodged a bullet because the question was not, “How stressful do you become when playing video games while a significant other berates you for ‘wasting your life?”

Then came the fun part. Mr. Russoniello’s assistant clipped a heart-rate monitor to my left ear and attached brain-wave wires to my scalp with some cool electrolytic gel. Then I settled in for a nice 20-minute session of Peggle, the hit new PopCap game that is a bit of a hybrid of Pachinko and the classic video game Breakout.

Peggle is a great game. It has a rhythmic, hypnotic quality not often found in other media. As I bounced my little ball around the screen, it hardly occurred to me to ask just why I was having fun.

Video games are no more monolithic in their content and message than films or books, and no one should interpret Mr. Russoniello’s initial results as any sort of sweeping judgment that video games are the next wonder drug. But he may be on to something when he says, “People think fun is frivolous, but it actually turns out that fun is healthy.”

Most gamers, or Woody Allen in “Sleeper,” couldn’t agree more.