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ECU notes: ECU boutique makes prom dreams a reality

ECU News Services

Sunday, March 08, 2009

The prom dreams of 28 girls attending area high schools were fulfilled during the second Fairytale Boutique held Feb. 27-28 through East Carolina University's Volunteer and Service-Learning Center.

The center established the Fairytale Boutique in 2008 to help young women in Pitt County attend their high school's prom regardless of their financial circumstances. Last year's boutique served 30 girls.

This year's boutique also provided girls who plan to attend the Special Populations Prom an opportunity to find a dress. In addition to gowns, shoes, accessories and jewelry were also donated, according to Jessica Gagne Cloutier, ECU's service-learning coordinator.

Cloutier said this year's event seemed to run a little smoother than last year's first one.

"We had more student volunteers to help pick out dresses and zip up dresses," she said. "Because we had the details nailed down, everyone came in and was helped and had that smile and sparkle in their eye. It was very gratifying for us, the ECU student volunteers and the girls who came in with their moms or grandmas."

"During that 45 minutes that they are in picking out their dresses, it's instant gratification for us because in the volunteer world we don't always see the result that quickly," Cloutier said.

To donate dresses for next year's Fairytale Boutique, contact Cloutier at 328-1554.

Seminars to promote dialogue on the humanities

A new program seeks to foster fellowship and collaboration among East Carolina University faculty members working in the humanities.

Sponsored by the Division of Research and Graduate Studies, "Downtown Dialogues on the Humanities" brings together ECU scholars from history, literature, languages, music, art, philosophy, religion and related fields to talk about their research in a relaxed setting.

"We feel that the humanities play an important role in fostering the intellectual community of a university," said Purificación Martínez, associate professor of Hispanic Studies at ECU and one of the series' organizers. "Our main objective is to create a community of researchers within the humanities."

Martínez said organizers modeled "Downtown Dialogues" after another successful ECU seminar series, "Science At Starlight," which showcases faculty research in the sciences.

Downtown Dialogues will be held twice a semester. An advisory board selects the speakers for each event, bringing together scholars from a variety of disciplines. "This way, people get to know each other and they get the opportunity to discuss their interests," Martínez said.

The first discussion will be held Tuesday, March 24, from 5-7 p.m. at the Starlight Café in Greenville. The topic is, "The Humanities in the Modern United States: Building Bridges from Research to Real Life."

Speakers will be Jelena Bogdanociv (Architectural History), Nicholas Georgalis (Philosophy), Joyce Irene
Middleton (English) and Mary Nyangweso Wangila (Religious Studies). Opening remarks will be made by Peter Green, Whichard Distinguished Visiting Professor, and Gerald Prokopowicz (History).

Panel members will discuss the value of humanities to society, Martinez said. "We have given them a set of questions to think about, such as, 'Is it true there is a dichotomy between humanities and science?' 'What kind of questions does your research answer, and why are those questions important to society,'" she said.

All faculty members are welcome to attend and participate in the dialogue over complimentary refreshments and hors d'oeuvres.

The next discussion will be held April 21, and will be titled, "Money, Markets and Migration." For more information about the seminar series, to propose future topics and presenters or to RSVP for the March 24 event, visit http://www.ecu.edu/downtown.

Smoking cessation program planned

Smokers wanting to improve their health for summer activities can get some help from ECU Physicians' four-week smoking cessation program. The class will cover smoking facts, ways to deal with cravings, healthy substitutions for cigarettes and other methods to help people quit smoking.

Classes are Wednesdays from 1:30-3 p.m. from March 11 through April 1 in the classroom of the ECU Family Medicine Center at 600 Moye Blvd.

ECU Physicians is the group practice of the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University. For more information or to sign up for the classes, call 744-4611.

Piano and organ competition set for pre-college students

The third annual ECU Piano and Organ Competition for Pre-College Students will be held on the ECU campus and at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in downtown Greenville March 13-14 and April 16-18.

To open the piano events, faculty artists Henry Doskey and Keiko Sekino will perform selections of Chopin, Schubert, Liszt and others in a concert at 7 p.m. on Friday in A. J. Fletcher Recital Hall. All performances are free and open to the public.

The pre-college competition will take place Saturday, beginning at 10 a.m. in the Fletcher Music Center. The Junior Piano Competition (through age 14) will be held in The Herbert Carter Room (Room 110), and the Senior Piano Competition (age 15-18) will take place in Fletcher Recital Hall.

In both divisions, contestants play three selections of their choice for a visiting judge.

More than $2,800 in prizes will be awarded. Businesses and individuals in the Greenville and Raleigh area have donated prizes, including Hopper Piano Company and Burrage Music Company, both of Raleigh; Green Mill Recordings and Jefferson's Florist, both of Greenville.

Contestants from North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia are slated to participate.

The organ competition will be held at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 400 East 4th St., Greenville, April 16-18 and includes a guest recital by visiting organist Maurice Clerc, organist at the Cathedral in Dijon, France.

Further information, including rules of the competition, and names of previous winners and their teachers, can be found on the ECU School of Music website www.ecu.edu/music.

Upcoming ECU events:

March 19 — New York Times best-selling author and combat veteran Jay Kopelman will speak at the opening of Psychophysiology Lab & Biofeedback Clinic, 5-9 p.m., Belk Building, Room 1503. For more information, call 328-0876.

See www.ecu.edu/cs-ecu/calendar.cfm for times, places and more information on these events and other ECU upcoming activities.
From the mountains to the sea

By Josh Humphries  
The Daily Reflector

Sunday, March 08, 2009

This week is spring break for East Carolina University and Pitt Community College.

For thousands of Pitt County college students, this week is typically devoted to traveling to places like Florida or Mexico to hit the beaches and relax before the end of the semester kicks in.

But this year the economy may be holding some students back from traveling so far.

Luckily for them, students don't have to drive for 15 hours to find a beach or even a mountain, said Wit Tuttell, director of public relations for the North Carolina Division of Tourism.

"There are a variety of beach experiences in North Carolina," Tuttell said.

"You can hit the Outer Banks and hang out in Nags Head. And if you really want to get away you can go to a place like Ocracoke."

For a little more excitement, Tuttell recommended Wilmington or Carolina Beach.

Tuttell said there are many advantages to planning spring break in North Carolina including location, variety and perhaps most importantly this year, cost.

"You can find a lot of deals this time of year," he said.

"This is a perfect place for spring break."

And if the water doesn't float your boat, you can head up to the mountains and hit the ski or hiking trails.

There are seven ski resorts in North Carolina and all of them stay open as late into the winter as they can, Tuttell said. Most offer deals in March.

There is a seemingly endless amount of hiking trails and places to camp along the Blue Ridge Parkway, at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, along the Appalachian Trail and in the Pisgah and Nantahala national forests.

It's never too late to plan a great vacation in North Carolina.

"Lot of people do their planning last minute," he said.

"They are looking for deals."

Tuttell said North Carolina has everything a vacationer would love from beaches and mountains to museums and historical sites around the Triangle.

"The great part about North Carolina is that we are ideally located and it's friendly," Tuttell said.

"There is a great variety from the mountains to the sea. You won't find that without driving halfway across the country, but you can do it while staying in your own state."

Contact Josh Humphries at jhumphries@coxnc.com.
Letter: East Carolina frat offers its thanks

Sunday, March 08, 2009

I am writing on behalf of the current and alumni brothers of the N.C. Kappa Chapter of Sigma Phi Epsilon at ECU. The events on Jan. 30 have shaped and touched both the university community and the public in Greenville. We extend a gracious thank you for your prayers and support as we rebuild our "back house."

Thank you to the numerous emergency response and public safety teams for their support and professionalism during the fire at 406 Summit St. Your quick response and efforts made during and after the event are very much appreciated.

We would also like to extend a great debt of gratitude to the Greek community, as well as administrative and support offices within East Carolina University for their prompt assistance in ensuring that the welfare of our brothers was immediately addressed.

We also would like to recognize our neighbor David Perry for his unheralded bravery and unselfish attitude towards human life. You are a great example to your students at J.H. Rose High School. Thank you again.

JOHN LONGLEY

president

Sigma Phi Epsilon alumni board

Greenville

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Hospital limiting visitations to help keep patients healthy

As we all look forward to spring, we need to remember that we are still in the peak of respiratory virus season. This includes viruses such as influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and the common cold. These common viruses out in our communities can cause very serious illness to those who are already sick, especially children.

Here at Pitt County Memorial Hospital, we owe it to our patients, families, visitors and employees to do all we can to limit the spread of infections. This is why we are temporarily limiting visitation in the PCMH Obstetrics Ward and Children’s Hospital to include immediate family only. This includes parents or primary caregivers and siblings. At this time, siblings must be 12 years old or older to visit.

In our neonatal intensive care unit, we are asking that only parents visit. We know this is disappointing to those other family members or friends who want to see the newborn baby or visit a loved one. We feel this is a necessary step to protect our youngest patients from respiratory viruses that cause them to become seriously ill.

We also ask that you be proactive at home and out in the community. Some tips for preventing the spread of viruses include: wash your hands frequently; keep your children home from school when they are sick; do not share cups or utensils. One other way to prevent the spread of illnesses is to keep your hands away from your face. Just rubbing your eye and touching a child can spread your virus to that child.

As the Children’s Hospital for eastern North Carolina, we typically see the smallest of infants and the sickest of children. Respiratory viruses may be innocently carried into the hospital by family members. We cannot risk having our smallest and sickest children become inadvertently exposed to visitors with respiratory infections; therefore we have had to implement an extra layer of protection for them. These restrictions will be lifted as soon as we feel the biggest threat of respiratory virus season is over. But the season can last well into the spring.

Please help us protect these patients and do everything possible to keep away viruses. While you might not exhibit any of the symptoms, you never know if you could have been exposed to one of these viruses. We know no one intentionally wants to make someone sick. These viruses, especially RSV, are easily spread by physical contact.

Touching, kissing and even shaking hands with an infected person can spread the virus. The viruses are also spread through the air by sneezing and coughing and can live for hours on countertops, bed rails and even on used tissue. As you might guess, infections like RSV spread rapidly in crowded households, day care centers, schools, churches and hospitals.

All of us at PCMH appreciate your help in keeping our hospital germ-free.

Dr. Ron Perkin is the medical director of University Health Systems Children’s Hospital and chairman of the Department of Pediatrics at East Carolina University’s Brody School of Medicine. Dr. Keith Ramsey is the medical director for infection control at PCMH and a professor of medicine at the Brody School of Medicine.
Editorial: Pressing on - United Way continues working for Pitt

Sunday, March 8, 2009

The United Way of Pitt County began its mission to help the lives of local citizens some 50 years ago, but it has never operated in a time as challenging as this. The nation’s economic downturn has slowed charitable giving, and the organization faces the likelihood of scaling back its fund-raising efforts for the coming year.

The need to provide for compassionate assistance may never be greater. And while local residents must act carefully to preserve their own economic solvency first, even a modest contribution can help the United Way’s local chapter to meet its goals.

Since its modest beginning half a century ago, the United Way of Pitt County has devoted its efforts to helping agencies provide assistance to this community. What began as a small fund-raising effort that funded 12 agencies successfully collected $1.9 million in 2007, helping 43,000 though 19 programs.

More recently, the organization began work through a community action plan designed to affect change in one particularly troublesome community problem. An East Carolina University needs assessment of the county has helped the group target the root causes of problems like youth violence, and the United Way then tries to facilitate cooperation across the community to address those issues.

However, the United Way faces a difficult task of generating charitable giving this year, at a time of rising unemployment and economic uncertainty. Its collections decreased by about $400,000 from 2007 to 2008, and this year’s fund-raising is expected to be worse. The diminished collections promises to severely complicate efforts to gain traction through the community action plan.

Pitt County citizens have long distinguished themselves by their generosity. United Way’s prodigious annual fund-raising is as much a testament to that organization’s determination as it is to this county’s unending charity. And while residents here must concern themselves with their own financial welfare and that of their families, they should also consider the tremendous power of collective action and the good achieved through the United Way.

This community, like the rest of the country, sees the gathering clouds and gloomy skies overhead thanks to this economic downturn. But it cannot afford to miss opportunities to make progress on pressing public issues. Those with the means to do so should consider contributing to the United Way and help that organization continue its noble work for this community.

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Hoop heroes

Laurels — To the Eastern Regional High School Basketball Tournament, held this week in Greenville. Minges Coliseum at East Carolina University hosted the boys tournament beginning Tuesday and J.H. Rose High School welcomed the girls, all leading up to today’s regional championship games. Local focus is on the South Central High School girls, who can advance to the state championship with a win against Greensboro Dudley.

With class

THE DAILY REFLECTOR

Laurels — To Kim Jessup, a third grade teacher at Wintergreen Intermediate School who was named Pitt County Teacher of the Year at a ceremony this week. A 24-year veteran of the county schools, Jessup has graced classrooms at Pactolus Elementary and G.R. Whitfield as well. She was selected from among 36 outstanding candidates, who all deserve this community’s unending appreciation.

Laurels — To an increased number of admission applications to East Carolina that should produce one of the most competitive classes in school history. The number of enrollment offers extended to applicants has remained steady, meaning those entering the school next year will have a higher average GPA and SAT score than before. The university received about 18,000 applications for admission.

Darts — To the loss of 13 farms and more than 14,000 acres of farmland in Pitt County over a five-year period ending in 2007. The decline of farming is this community comes as little surprise since it is readily evident throughout the county. The numbers indicate the average farm is 21 acres smaller. That change the identity of a place once defined by working the soil and the calendar of planting and harvesting.

Laurels — To warmer weather this weekend, which follows flurries only days before. Forecasters were predicting temperatures nearing 80 degrees, representing a remarkable reversal from Sunday night and Monday morning, when the area saw a slight dusting of snow. The weather in eastern North Carolina is rarely predictable, but it has been particularly haphazard this year.

Darts — To a classroom fire at C.M. Eppes Middle School that investigators concluded was deliberately set. The blaze began after school on Wednesday, when officials believe a coat was set alight. No one was hurt in the first-floor language arts room fire, but damage to the room will force the school to relocate classes until repairs can be made. Officials with the school and fire department will continue to investigate.

Compiled by Brian Colligan, editorial page editor of The Daily Reflector. Contact him at 329-9507 or via e-mail at bcolligan@coxnc.com
Lucky 13: UNC student makes ‘American Idol’ cut

BY BARBARA RODRIGUEZ
The Associated Press

RALEIGH — There’s one thing certain about “American Idol” finalist A noop Desai: The R&B crooner on the FOX television reality show really loves North Carolina.

“It’s who I am,” the 22-year-old said from Los Angeles on Friday, a day after his surprise leap into the finals as the show’s unprecedented 13th finalist. “Everyone knows that I love North Carolina and Chapel Hill.”

Desai, who competed alongside seven other contestants Thursday night during the show’s wild card round, convinced Idol judges to select him despite the show’s traditional 12-finalist group after his performance of “My Prerogative.”

The Bobby Brown hit was Desai’s “last-ditch effort” to impress the judges one final time.

It worked, and he’s planning to stick around. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill graduate student deferred his admission in folklore studies for the show, and he’s looking forward to competing and meeting performers like Kanye West, who will appear next week as a guest judge.

Desai, a soulful R&B singer who had performed with his school’s all male a cappella group The UNC Clef Hang- ers, thought his Idol days were over when he was not selected as a finalist during the show’s first round Feb. 18. In fact, Idol host Ryan Seacrest said Desai missed the cut by less than 20,000 votes — a sliver of a margin by Idol standards.

That disappointment grew Thursday night when Idol judge Simon Cowell said 23-year-old Matt Giraud from Kalamazoo, Mich., had taken the last open slot.

“It was the pits man,” Desai said of not making the Top 12, describing it as having his dreams dashed in an instant. But as a defeated Desai began to walk away, Cowell said the judges had decided to make the show a 13-finalist competition.

“It was shock,” Desai said. “It was genuine shock.”

For Desai, emotions ran high throughout the night.

After his performance near the end of the one-hour live show, Desai mentioned Chapel Hill and Eve Carson, the late student-body president who was killed in the college town last year. Thursday marked the one-year anniver- sary of her death.

Desai and his fellow final- ists will begin competing next Tuesday — with one singer voted off each Wednesday.
ECU stands to gain from stimulus package

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

Friday, March 06, 2009

East Carolina University stands to gain from the national stimulus package.

The university will be attempting to get grants from various federal agencies that received huge boosts in funding with the stimulus, said Deirdre Mageean, vice chancellor for research and graduate studies at ECU.

“All universities are watching this,” Mageean said. “Mainly in terms of money available at the federal level, but there will also be money from (the) state available.”

Part of state stabilization funding in the stimulus is for education. North Carolina will have $1.42 billion for education. UNC system administrators are working with ECU and other universities to determine how to distribute the funds, Mageean said.

She said the UNC system is estimating how much of the funding will go to the UNC system based on state budget shortfalls, but there has been no word from the governor.

But federal agencies such as the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, NOAH, NASA, the Department of Labor, the U.S. Geological Survey and the National Endowment for the Arts have grants specifically for universities and professors for research and infrastructure.

These agencies will be reviewing grants already received and funding some projects that were bypassed previously. Grants will be awarded to projects that are ready to begin because the stimulus funding must be used by September of 2010, according to Congress.

“There are significant opportunities in terms of funding research and improving infrastructure, training teachers and other key work force areas,” Mageean said.

“We can respond at a time when the university is experiencing budget shortfalls and it make sense to go after the money from a federal level to make up for that shortfall.”

Mageean said grants for updating facilities would have an effect on the region by creating work for people from eastern North Carolina.

The university would like to update areas in the Science and Technology Building on campus and at the East Carolina Heart Institute, where the fourth floor could be made into a research facility for cardiovascular and diabetes research with funding from federal agencies, Mageean said.

ECU has formed a stimulus task force that is working with UNC general administration to find funding for various projects on campus if possible.

Mageean said that ECU may also be able to extend or expand existing grants to professors and departments for various kinds of research.

It is still up in the air as to what ECU stands to gain from the stimulus, she said, but officials are working to get as much of the federal money to Greenville as possible.

Josh Humphries can be contacted at jhumphries@coxnc.com and 252-329-9565.
Jamesville family picked for Extreme Makeover

The Daily Reflector
Saturday, March 07, 2009

The family of a Gulf War veteran living in Martin County has been selected to have a new home built for them by the design staff of ABC's "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" and volunteers from the area.

Jeff Cooper and his wife and two children got a surprise Friday morning when Ty Pennington, star of the reality-TV series, knocked on the front door of their mobile home in Jamesville and announced they had been selected to be featured on the show.

According to a press release from Edenton Builders Inc., the construction firm that will help coordinate the rebuild of the Coopers' home, the Jamesville family fits the focus of this year's season on "Extreme Makeover": everyday people exhibiting heroism in the face of hardship.

Jeff Cooper, according to the press release, was a combat medic with the U.S. Army in the Gulf War in the early 1990s. Today, he suffers from Gulf War Syndrome, immune disorders and multiple sclerosis. He also is confined to a wheelchair.

Despite his physical setbacks, Cooper has been a strong advocate for both veterans and the disabled, the release states. He is a past president of the Pitt County Veterans Council.

According to the press release, the Coopers live in an aging doublewide mobile home with bad wiring, a sinking roof and a rotting ramp.

Pennington and fellow designers Michael Moloney, Paige Hemmis and Ed Sanders plan to replace the trailer with a custom-designed home built by Edenton Builders and a work force of a thousand volunteers, including many from East Carolina University.

— Cox News Service

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NC archaeologist involved in Hatteras dig dies

The Associated Press
Comment on this story

NAGS HEAD, N.C. - The archaeologist who unearthed a 16th-century gold signet ring while exploring ties between native people and the doomed English colonists who first tried to settle the Outer Banks has died.

David S. Phelps was professor emeritus of anthropology at East Carolina University in Greenville. The Virginian-Pilot in Norfolk reported he died Feb. 21 at Fort Pierce, Fla., at age 79.

The ring proved to have no apparent link to the 1587 English colony that vanished from Roanoke Island. But it was the first evidence that Sir Walter Raleigh's explorers had contacts with the Indians.

Phelps found the ring in 1998. He took the ring and other artifacts found near Croatan, now known as Buxton, with him. He returned the ring to ECU in 2006.

Information from: The Virginian-Pilot, http://www.pilotonline.com

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Carteret teacher leaves $1.5 million to ECU

JANETTE PIPPIN
March 6, 2009 - 6:49PM

BEAUFORT - A former Carteret County teacher never quit giving to education.

The late Geraldine "Gerry" Mayo Beveridge, who taught home economics for Carteret County Schools for 40 years, left $1.5 million to East Carolina University for scholarships for graduates of four area high schools.

One of the beneficiaries is East Carteret High School, where Beveridge was teaching before her retirement in the late 1970s.

East Carteret teacher Sue Way was pleased but not surprised to hear of the gift from the Beveridge estate.

"She was always helping people. If she knew of a way she could help, she would do it," Way recalled.

Way was a student teacher under Beveridge and now teaches in the same classroom where they worked side by side. The lessons she learned from Beveridge carry on in her own teaching.

"For me, it's about caring for all your students and seeing what I can teach them, what I can show them that they can carry with them throughout their lives," she said.

Beveridge, who was married to the late Capt. David L. Beveridge, died in May. The $1.5 million from their estate will establish the Captain David L. Beveridge and Geraldine Mayo Beveridge Scholarship at East Carolina University, according to a university news release on the gift.

The Beveridge Scholarship will be awarded to students from Ocracoke, New Bern, Pamlico and East Carteret high schools who attend or plan to attend East Carolina University.

Students receiving the award must have a minimum GPA of 2.5, and the awards will be handled by the Office of Financial Aid at ECU. Any applicant from these schools is eligible for this scholarship, which is available to students regardless of major.

"We are very honored and humbled at ECU to receive this generous award from Mrs. Beveridge," said Greg Abeyounis, ECU assistant vice chancellor for development. "As a retired teacher from eastern North Carolina she knew how important education was to this region and believed her alma mater was the best place for deserving students to receive a college education."
Beveridge, a native of Mesic, earned a bachelor's degree in home economics in 1939. She decided to attend what was then East Carolina Teacher's College in part because it provided a self-help program to help with the cost.

The ECU scholarships will go far in helping East Carteret High School graduates pursue a college education. And it's not the first time Beveridge has helped, said Sandy Treadway, who coordinates scholarships at East Carteret.

East Carteret graduates attending Carteret Community College can also benefit from scholarship funds she provided.

"She has just left a wonderful legacy," Treadway said.

Beveridge loved her students and her community and she showed her generosity in many ways, supporting her church, civic projects and area museums and historic preservation groups.

In 2000, Beveridge began providing direct funding each year to Carteret Community College for several scholarships. And before her death, she made the CCC Foundation the beneficiary of an annuity so that the funding could continue, said Louise Mathews, CCC's vice president of college advancement.

She also contributed funds to the Carteret County Retired School Personnel for its scholarship fund.

"She was very, very generous to education and a great lady as well," said Mathews.

Staff writer Jannette Pippin can be reached at jpippin@freedomenc.com or 910-382-2557.