THE DAILY CLIPS

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The Greenville Daily Reflector
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No word from ECU on coach

Mack McCarthy said Thursday it was inappropriate at this time for him to talk about his future as the men's basketball coach at East Carolina.

ECU Director of Athletics Terry Holland is out of town and could not be reached Thursday.

It doesn't appear there will be a resolution to the Pirates' coaching situation by week's end.

A person at Holland's office said he wouldn't return to Greenville until today and probably wouldn't be back in the office until Monday.

McCarthy didn't want to comment on the situation until he's had a conversation with the powers that be at East Carolina. The Pirate coach said he didn't know when that conversation would take place.

ECU's season ended at 11:19 Wednesday after a 66-49 loss to Tulsa in the first round of Conference USA tournaments.
Suspects in death familiar to police

The two men arrested in connection with the death of a college student have long criminal histories.

By Mike Baker
The Associated Press

DURHAM — Laurence Alvin Lovette Jr. turned 17 last November. Within weeks, he was on probation. Within months, authorities allege, he embarked on a crime spree that started with the slaying of a graduate student at Duke University and ended with the fatal shooting of the University of North Carolina's student body president.

Police charged Lovette with first-degree murder Thursday in the January death of Abhijit Mahato, just hours after Lovette surrendered in last week's death of North Carolina student body president Eve Carson. In between, court records show, the teenager from Durham was arrested several times and charged with felonies ranging from burglary to car theft to resisting arrest.

Trials were pending on nine charges. He paid a fine for a traffic violation. And the whole time, he was on probation for a pair of crimes committed ten days before his 17th birthday: misdemeanor larceny and breaking and entering, pleaded down from felonies.

"Everybody's entitled to a bond in pretty much every matter we have, except for murder, in North Carolina," said Woody Vann, a longtime Durham criminal defense attorney. "You run a gray area here because there are allegations."

Carson, 22, of Athens, Ga., was found last week lying on a street, having been shot several times, about a mile from the North Carolina campus in nearby Chapel Hill. Police have not said whether Lovette or the second man charged in...
ARREST

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her death, 21-year-old Demario James Atwater, pulled the trigger.

Atwater was also on probation at the time of Carson's death. His criminal record includes convictions for larceny, drug possession, breaking and entering and felony possession of a firearm.

Keith Acree, a spokesman for the state Department of Correction, said officials were in the process of revoking Atwater's probation.

He was not aware of such an effort for Lovette, who was placed on probation in January. Acree said Robert Lee Guy, the state's top probation and parole official, has ordered an investigation.

"He's asking some of his people to look into the overall supervision of both of the cases," Acree said. "He wants to know everything he can about how the cases were supervised."

The director of the state's probation system, Robert Lee Guy, told the News & Observer of Raleigh he had ordered an investigation.

Tracey Cline, an assistant district attorney in Durham, declined to comment Thursday when asked about Lovette and Atwater's criminal history, including if either had a juvenile record. In North Carolina, a person's criminal history prior to age 16 is typically sealed.

But Vann said there is no provision under North Carolina law that would have allowed a judge to keep either in custody simply because they were arrested and charged in a series of cases.

"The best they could have done is attempted to give him higher bonds than he got," Vann said of Lovette. "It's a very fine line. It's a tough decision between the rights of the accused and the safety of the community."

Authorities are holding Lovette in Durham, where he is scheduled to make his first appearance in Mahato's slaying Friday morning. He surrendered peacefully at 4:16 a.m. Thursday after police surrounded a home where he was hiding. He declined a request for an interview and has not yet been assigned a public defender.

Atwater is at Raleigh's Central Prison following his initial court appearance Wednesday in the Carson case. His attorney did not return a call Thursday seeking comment.

Mahato, 29, originally of Tatangan, India, was a doctoral student in computational mechanics. He was found in January, shot to death inside his apartment a few blocks south of Duke's campus. His wallet, cell phone and iPod were taken.

Police later charged Stephen Lavance Oates, 19, of Durham, with murder in his death. Oates is being held without bond on charges that also include robbery of 18 people, including Mahato.

Durham Police Chief Jose Lopez said Thursday that detectives didn't consider Lovette a suspect in Mahato's death until recently, after Chapel Hill police began investigating Carson's slaying. Lopez said community tips led detectives to witnesses that tied Lovette to the case, although he wouldn't discuss the specific evidence.

Lopez said he doesn't foresee any more arrests in either case.

Police were led to Lovette and Atwater by tips generated by several ATM and convenience store surveillance photos, which show Lovette driving Carson's Toyota Highlander while Atwater is in the back seat.

Police also believe Atwater was the suspect shown trying to use Carson's ATM card inside a convenience store.

Police have declined to say if any money was successfully withdrawn from Carson's account.
Kidney disease is silent, but treatable

By Brock Letchworth
The Daily Reflector

More than 100 people turned out Thursday for a kidney screening at the Pitt County Senior Center, and officials hope more will follow their lead.

The county’s Council on Aging, Pitt County Memorial Hospital, the Brody School of Medicine and the National Kidney Foundation of North Carolina offered the screening to adults at no cost as part of World Kidney Day.

The goal was awareness and prevention of an issue that is more prevalent in today’s society than some might realize, said Dr. Susan Gerkin, nephrologist from Brody’s division of nephrology and hypertension.

More than 26 million Americans have documented kidney damage, Gerkin said, and there are millions more at risk.

“We’re talking about numbers that are really staggering when you think about it,” Gerkin said.

According to the National Kidney Foundation, chronic kidney disease includes conditions that damage kidneys and decrease their ability to keep a person healthy by cleaning wastes from the body. Wastes increase as the disease worsens, and individuals develop complications such as high blood pressure, anemia, weak bones, poor nutritional health and nerve damage. Kidney disease also increases someone’s risk of having heart and blood vessel disease, the foundation says.

LAKEISHA MOORE, a registered nurse, left, discusses the results of a blood pressure test with Louise Page during the kidney screening.

Gerkin said risk factors associated with kidney disease are high blood pressure, diabetes and a family history of kidney problems. Other risk factors could be cholesterol problems and obesity.

The symptoms are not easily recognizable, she said, so screenings like Thursday’s are crucial for early detection.

“You don’t feel it,” Gerkin said. “People who have problems with their kidneys don’t know. They usually don’t know until enough damage has been done that it is almost too late to do anything. This screen can protect, possibly prevent and certainly slow down the progression to end-stage kidney disease.”

End-stage kidney disease requires dialysis or a kidney transplant, Gerkin said.

Thursday’s screening included blood tests, blood pressure checks, urinalysis, waist measurements and a review of the individual’s family medical history.

While Thursday’s spots filled up quickly, Gerkin and Maureen McNamara, program coordinator with the Pitt County Council on Aging, said the sponsors are hoping to offer at least three or four more screenings this year.

“As with many types of health screenings, it is so vital to be screened early,” McNamara said. “Prevention and early detection are truly the best medicine.”

Anyone wishing to get on the waiting list for the kidney screenings can contact Maria Locklear, nephrology nurse, at 847-5512, or contact their primary care physician.

“If we can catch this and prevent it early on, I would love to put myself out of a job,” Gerkin said.

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THE RISKS

Dr. Susan Gerkin, nephrologist with the Brody School of Medicine, says the following risk factors are associated with kidney disease:

- high blood pressure
- diabetes
- cholesterol problems
- obesity
- family history of kidney problems

Anyone interested in having their kidney’s screened should contact Maria Locklear at 847-5519 or contact their primary care physician.
OUR VIEWS

Break in a case

Two fine students won't come back, and their communities still hurt. But police did their jobs in two homicide investigations.

Brutal, senseless killings are a community tragedy. There is no way to reverse the loss, but when law enforcement responds swiftly and efficiently, that at least can be something of an antidote to people's grief, fear and anger.

The slaying last week of Eve Carson, student body president at UNC-Chapel Hill, elicited just such a response, which now has resulted in the arrest of two suspects. This took good, cooperative work by police departments in Chapel Hill and Durham. The arrests were prompt and no one was hurt. It will fall to the courts to determine whether the two young Durham men who were arrested — both presumed innocent — are in fact guilty as charged, but this is the path that must be followed for justice to be done.

Demario James Atwater, 21, was being held in the Orange County jail following his arrest in Durham early Wednesday in connection with Carson's death. The second suspect, Laurence Lovette, 17, was arrested in Durham yesterday. Unexpectedly, he also was charged in the January slaying of Duke University graduate student Abhijit Mahto and was being held by Durham authorities. (Police agencies have provided different spellings of Lovette's first and last names.) He is the second person arrested in the the Mahto case.

Police were helped significantly in the Carson case by the ubiquity these days of security cameras. Images were captured by cameras at an ATM machine and a convenience store, where two men tried to use Carson’s bank card. Those images, promptly released, and an alert public may have made the difference in this investigation. Carson had been found shot to death at a Chapel Hill intersection about a mile from the university. It’s possible that she was carjacked.

Still, the arrests do little to ease the crushing loss felt in Chapel Hill and on Duke’s campus — indeed, among all who knew and admired the slain students. The funeral for Carson, 22, was Sunday, in her home town of Athens, Ga., where she had excelled and won a top scholarship to UNC-Ch. The university will hold a second memorial service for her when students return from spring break next week. The magnitude of the response to her death, both on campus and in Athens, is a testament to her life fully lived.

Similarly, here's how Duke Professor Tod Laursen, Mahto’s adviser, described the 29-year-old computer engineering student, who was shot to death in an apparent robbery in his apartment: “He made friends very easily and always had a smile on his face. Our research team was particularly close to Abhijit.”

Inevitably, the arrests raise questions about how young men who have broken the law are handled in the court system. Atwater was put on probation in Wake County in 2005 for stealing two guns in a house break-in. He was convicted in Granville County last year of possession of a gun by a felon. Yet he was still on the streets. A hearing to revoke his probation was set for March 31, but that is too long of a wait for crimes involving guns.

How many other people with a similar potential for violence are roaming free across the Triangle and elsewhere in North Carolina? Lovette's past is less clear, due to the different spellings of his name, but he also appears to have had a criminal record, involving lower-level offenses.

Wisely taking into account the hard upbringing of many who enter the justice system shouldn't translate into letting gun-wielding felons stalk neighborhoods (and not just African-Americans, who are disproportionately represented in crime statistics but are by no means alone). North Carolina courts need to reassess their policies to make sure that mercy and useful treatment programs are dispensed in the right amounts, but also to the right people.
Killing jolts NCSU, Duke

Campuses set rivalries aside

By Eric Ferreri

At N.C. State University next week, students will wear baby blue — not generally a popular color in Raleigh — as a tribute to Eve Carson, the UNC-Chapel Hill student body president killed last week.

"Everybody knows that N.C. State fans hate Carolina Blue," said Zach Adams, NCSU's senior class president. "So the idea is to really show support by looking beyond our rivalry to something much bigger."

NCSU students will be urged to attend the memorial Tuesday at UNC-CH as well. It is scheduled for 4 p.m. at the Dean E. Smith Center.

A tribute for Carson also was held prior to the recent Duke-UNC-CH men's basketball game at Duke's Cameron Indoor Stadium.

Carson's violent death was a jolt of reality not only in Chapel Hill, but around the Triangle, where college students generally don't think so much about their safety. At NCSU, where police are investigating two robberies reported earlier this week, Adams said students see incidents such as Carson's murder as isolated events.

Carson was killed less than two months after Duke graduate student Abhijit Mahato was found shot dead in his off-campus apartment in Durham. The disclosure Thursday that those two murders may have a link caught many by surprise.

Laurence Lovette, 17, one of two men charged Wednesday with Carson's murder, was charged a day later with Mahato's murder. At Duke, the Mahato killing and two armed robberies near campus already had people on edge.

"It automatically sends an institution into a tizzy," said John Burness, a Duke spokesman. "We tend to be very open communities. It shakes an institution."

Durham police already had charged Stephen Lavance Oates, 19, with Mahato's murder, and Burness said he was unaware that anyone else might have been involved.

That link also surprised Madhu Majumder, a friend of Mahato and a fellow native of the Indian state of Bengal. Mahato's killing shocked the local Bengali community, Majumder said. News that one of his killers may have struck again was similarly devastating, she said.

"I wish this guy had been caught after Abhijit was killed so that poor girl, Eve Carson, would be alive today," Majumder said.

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Parents of dead teen plan to sue UNC-W

WILMINGTON STAR-NEWS

DURHAM — The parents of a teenager fatally shot by a sheriff's deputy plan to sue the police department at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

The Star-News of Wilmington reported Thursday that Donald and Kathleen Strickland of Durham have filed court documents in Durham County saying they intend to file a wrongful death claim. The documents release New Hanover County from liability.

Their 18-year-old son, Peyton, and two friends were accused of beating a UNC-Wilmington student and stealing PlayStation 3 video game systems in December 2006.

During a raid of his house in Wilmington, a sheriff's deputy shot Peyton through the front door.

Authorities have said Peyton was unarméd.

Campus police asked for the sheriff's assistance after finding Internet photos of another suspect, Peyton's friend Ryan Mills, posing with guns.
Neighbors unite against parking deck

Rezoning pushed to help Stanhope Ave. fend off four-story deck near NCSU

BY SARAH OVASKA
STAFF WRITER

RALEIGH — A group of residents in a tucked-away neighborhood are trying to fight off plans to put a parking deck next to a student dorm planned near N.C. State University's campus.

"It may not look like a lot, but to us it's the world," Mary Hensness said about her home on Stanhope Avenue, near the campus's western edge and south of Hillsborough Street.

Hensness and others in the small neighborhood of mostly one-story, unassuming bungalows don't have issues with the planned dormitory, Capstone Development, an Alabama company, wants to raze six boarded-up houses that sit on the eastern end of Stanhope Avenue and, in their place, build a 10-story private student dormitory, according to court documents and news reports.

But neighbors don't want a four-story concrete parking deck that is part of the $88.5 million project.

"It'll put a lot of the houses in the shade," said Janet Clarke, another neighbor. "It'll look ridiculous."

To oppose the structured parking deck, several of Hensness's neighbors informed the city that they would like to have the area rezoned as a residential area from the industrial zoning it has had since the 1950s.

Hillsborough Ventures, the company that owns the land and plans to lease it to Capstone, also tried to have the property rezoned, but as a conditional industrial zone, knowing that city ordinances allow for only one zoning request for a property to be heard at a time.

Greg Hallam, a senior planner with the city, suggested a coin toss to settle the dispute, a solution neither side wanted.

Hillsborough Ventures then filed a lawsuit Feb. 27 against the city and unsuccessfully asked a judge to step in and stop the city from moving ahead with the rezoning petitions. The suit is pending.

City staff, in the meantime, have asked the council to consider changing the text of the ordinances to allow more than one zoning request for a property to be heard at the same time. A third request concerning the zoning issue is pending at the Raleigh Board of Adjustments.

For some neighbors of the Stanhope Avenue development, the issue has morphed into a struggle that illustrates the difficulty small communities have protecting themselves from encroaching growth. The area around the neighborhood is blighted, with empty warehouses and lawns serving as parking lots for NCSU students and employees. But the city is taking a stab at revitalizing an area to the east of Stanhope. Late last year, it announced plans to install roundabouts along the Hillsborough Street corridor as part of an $8 million streetscape plan stretching from Gardner Street to Oberlin Road.

Residents are hoping that the city sides with their request to be designated as a residential zone.

"We are inside the Beltline, we are an old neighborhood," Clarke said. "It's a shame that we're forgotten."

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Suspects in Carson slaying were both on probation

STATE AND WAKE COUNTY BEGIN INTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS

Police arrest the second suspect in the slaying of the UNC-CH student body president.

BY ANNE BLYTHE
AND SAMUEL SPIES
STAFF WRITERS

DURHAM — Two days before Eve Carson was shot, a man now charged in her killing showed up at a Wake County court for a probation violation hearing that could have landed him in jail, officials said Thursday.

The hearing for Demario James Atwater never happened because of a paperwork mistake, said Robert Lee Guy, director of the state Division of Community Corrections.

Officials have begun two internal investigations, one in the state Department of Correction and another in the Wake County courts.

The other suspect in the shooting, Laurence Alvin Lovette, 17, also was on probation. Law officers arrested him before dawn Thursday in Durham and charged him with first-degree murder in the death of Carson, the UNC-CH student body president. She was gunned down near campus March 5.

They charged Lovette also with first-degree murder in the slaying Jan. 18 of a Duke University graduate student. The student, Abhijit Mahato, was found dead in his Durham apartment during what police described as a citywide robbery spree. Durham investigators would not say why Lovette was charged in a case that seemed to have been resolved weeks earlier with the arrest of four people.

Efforts to reach Lovette's relatives were unsuccessful Thursday. It was unclear whether he has an attorney.

Both suspects had significant legal trouble before Carson's death.

SEE SUSPECTS, PAGE 14A
Lovette, who dropped out of Jordan High School last year, was convicted Jan. 16 in Durham County of breaking into a house and stealing credit cards. He was put on 24 months of probation and would have had to check in with his probation officer every three months or so, said Keith Acree, spokesman for the Department of Correction.

Atwater, 21, a 2002 Jordan High dropout, was on probation stemming from a 2005 conviction in Wake County for misdemeanor breaking and entering and larceny. For the next three years Atwater was to check in with a probation officer, Acree said.

Acree would not divulge the names of the correction officers assigned to the two cases, nor would he say when the last check-ins were.

However, Lovette was arrested during his probation, and Atwater was convicted.

Atwater's crime was serious enough that he should have been back in court immediately, Correction Department officials said.

'There's no hiding this'

In June 2006, a Butner officer responded to a report of a burglary and, according to police reports, found Atwater with a .40-caliber semiautomatic handgun.

In June 2007, Atwater pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm by a felon for that incident and again was sentenced to probation.

Not until November did a Wake County-based probation officer draw up paperwork to have Atwater's probation revoked, according to Guy.

Colin Willoughby, Wake County district attorney, said Thursday that court computers do not show a probation violation for Atwater and he is trying to find out why.

Atwater was not served with a violation warrant until Feb. 20, when he came to a probation office, Guy said. He was arrested and freed after he posted a $10,000 bond.

Guy said his department's review indicates that Atwater and a probation officer went to a Wake County courtroom March 3, but the case had been assigned to the wrong courtroom. It had been sent to a district courtroom, but should have been in superior court, Willoughby said.

The hearing was reset for March 31.

Guy said his main concern was not what happened earlier this month, but why it took so long to arrest Atwater on the probation violation in the first place.

Guy characterized Atwater as "high risk" and said officers did not see him often enough.

"It should have been more than one time a month," Guy said. "I've got concerns for the entire period of supervision."

Guy said the initial automatic review of Atwater's supervision showed a "lack of doing things timely, lack of quality supervision, all of the above. That's why I'm ordering this internal investigation. ... There's no hiding this. We have not done quality supervision of Mr. Atwater."

The department also will investigate Lovette's supervision, he said.

Tips were a big help

Lovette's peaceful surrender at 4:16 a.m. Thursday at a south Durham home closed a search in which heavily armed officers descended on at least three houses. They began hours after Atwater's arrest early Wednesday morning.

Durham Police Chief Jose Lopez said tips played a big role in leading officers to the suspects, who had been shown in convenience store and bank machine surveillance photos.

Chapel Hill police have gone behind closed doors now to review evidence. Police say they can't answer questions about where, when and how Carson encountered the suspects.

In Durham, City Council members once again found themselves talking about crime.

"We've had ... a lot of bad crimes," Councilman Eugene Brown said.

"This one and the fact that both of these guys were on probation, that tells us something about how Durham should not operate. This system is not protecting the public."

Contributing to this report were staff writers Stanley B. Chambers Jr., Jesse James DeConto, Matt Dees, Eric Ferreri, Samiha Khanna and Joseph Neff, and researcher Brooke Cain.

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The suspect is Laurence Lovette in state records, instead of Lawrence Lovett.

Suspect's name varies in spelling

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Police reports have provided a variety of spellings of the name of the suspect arrested Thursday morning in the murder of Eve Carson.

Laurence Lovette is the way his name is listed in the databases of the state Division of Motor Vehicles and Department of Correction. In both cases, those records match the suspect's date of birth and address as provided by police.

A 2003 obituary placed by the family for Lovette's father, also named Laurence, listed among the survivors his son, Laurence Alvin Lovette.
N.C. needs doctors

In the nearly four decades since North Carolina last expanded its system of public medical education, Charlotte has become the largest city in the nation without a campus that trains doctors.

That should change, and it could change as soon as 2009, providing the N.C. General Assembly goes along with bold plans to expand enrollment at the state's two public medical campuses. That would be an important step for the Charlotte region and a sensible way to meet the state's increasing need for physicians.

Last week the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina approved an expansion of its two public medical schools along with the Area Health Education Centers and local teaching hospitals affiliated with them.

Part of the plan involves growing the UNC Chapel Hill School of Medicine by 70 students. Fifty of them would study their first two years in Chapel Hill, then complete their third and fourth year clinical rotations in Charlotte, in collaboration with Carolinas Medical Center. UNC Charlotte and Chapel Hill would also partner on research and examine ways to expand medical education in Charlotte.

Why expand? North Carolina is one of a handful of states where growth in population, an increase in the number of retirees and an aging cadre of practicing physicians will result in an urgent shortage of doctors. A 2005 report by the American Association of Colleges uncovered the need. In 2007, the UNC system verified it.

The numbers make a persuasive argument:

- The state's population is expected to grow by 52 percent by 2030.
- The number of residents over age 65 is projected to increase by 59 percent by 2020.
- At present 38 percent of N.C. doctors are age 50 or older; by 2030, half of them will be 50 or older.

Even now, 11 counties and parts of 40 other counties in the rural East and West have doctor shortages. The crisis remains in primary care.

Expanding Chapel Hill's enrollment in Charlotte is a shrewd strategy for North Carolina. It would tap into the resources of the state's largest health-care complex and its most populous region in order to address an urgent state need.

It won't be inexpensive. Chapel Hill's budget will require $40 million in recurring money and $239 million in one-time expenses. Another proposal, for expanding the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University concurrently, as proposed, will require $31.5 million in recurring money and $150 million in one-time spending.

Still, this is a cost-effective way to meet a documented need. Collaboration costs much less than starting a new campus from scratch. Lawmakers must know what the state can expect from the investment. UNC must demonstrate how it will increase the numbers of primary physicians — and the numbers that will practice in rural areas.

It's an exciting prospect, for both a region that needs medical education and a state that needs more doctors. Lawmakers ought to examine it closely, then get started on making it happen.