Members of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force search a tsunami damaged part of Ofunato, Japan, Tuesday, March 15, 2011. Two search and rescue teams from the U.S. and a team from the U.K. with combined numbers of around 220 personnel, searched damaged areas of the town of Ofunato for trapped survivors Tuesday in the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami. (AP Photo/Matt Dunham)

Japan’s suffering hits home
By K.j. Williams
The Daily Reflector
Wednesday, March 16, 2011

Chikako Massey is grieving in her Greenville home about the suffering in her native Japan.

She was born and grew up in the western part of Japan that wasn't directly affected, but the widespread devastation has affected all of Japan, Massey said.

“I'm very, very concerned about the whole country,” said the wife of Dennis Massey, president of Pitt Community College, about last Friday's earthquake and tsunami. Massey, who has lived in the United States since 1974, said her family in Japan is safe but are all worried.

“I've been calling them almost daily,” she said. “First of all, they are completely traumatized, and they are still concerned with aftershocks.”

On Friday, Japan recorded a magnitude-9.0 offshore quake that shook a 1,300-mile stretch of coast, the biggest recorded in the country since the late 1800s, when record-keeping began. It was following by a 23-foot tsunami along the northeastern coast. Aftershocks continue to shake the country.

Massey took a break Monday from near-constant monitoring of Japanese television. “I watched it all night, and it was really distressing me, so I decided not to watch it for a while because it was really so heartbreaking,” she said.
Massey said that she's saddened by the mounting death toll. Early Tuesday, officials confirmed about 3,300 people had been killed, but that number is expected to reach 10,000.

East Carolina University professors had their own perspectives on the disaster rooted in their areas of expertise.

Craig Landry, associate professor of economics and assistant director of ECU's Center for Natural Hazards Research, said Japan's preparation and financial investment mitigated some of the impact.

“Things would be much worse if this was a poorer country or a country that hadn't invested a lot of money in understanding earthquakes,” he said.

He compared it to the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 that killed about 230,000 people, a number that reflected the poverty in affected countries and the lack of preparation.

“Part of the reason we're seeing a really different power of impact is because Japan's a wealthy country, and they've invested a lot of money in preparation,” Landry said. Damage and death is extensive, however. Toxic pollution from flooding caused by the tsunami is another issue.

“Usually when you have these big flood events in an industrial area, the floodwaters pick up all kind of toxic pollutants,” Landry said.

Power in the country also has been disrupted due to problems with three nuclear reactors that can no longer cool down, worsening already dangerous conditions. In Fukushima, explosions at nuclear reactors have spewed radiation, prompting mass evacuations and warnings to residents farther away to stay inside. Officials told the Associated Press that radiation at 100 times the normal level was detected Tuesday south of the nuclear complex, levels that are dangerous with prolonged exposure but not fatal.

Dan Sprau, a retired associate professor of environmental health at ECU who still teaches part time, said Japan has more than 50 nuclear reactors, and problems at the three nuclear reactors are creating a hazardous situation.

“I can tell you right now that they're extremely busy at each one of these (three) nuclear facilities, trying to stabilize them, trying to make sure they don't melt down,” he said.

“They're very competent in the nuclear area, but it's just a very stressful time for them.” Landry said it's too soon to gauge all the effects.

“The immediate economic effects seem pretty devastating,” he said. “It looks like what's happening is that an environmental disaster is turning into a potential technological disaster.”

Contact K.J. Williams at kwilliams@reflector.com or (252) 329-9588.
Japanese plant poses little threat to US – for now

(AP) – 13 hours ago

It's a big ocean between northeastern Japan and the United States and thousands of miles from the crippled nuclear power plant to much of Asia. That means there's little chance — at least for now — that radiation from the shattered reactors could pose a serious threat to the wider world.

Experts say the amount of radioactivity emitted by the facility has been relatively minor and should dissipate quickly over the Pacific Ocean.

"Every mile of ocean it crosses, the more it disperses," said Peter Caracappa, a radiation safety officer and clinical assistant professor of nuclear engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y.

The only people at immediate risk are workers inside the plant and the people living closest to it. The danger of radiation exposure elsewhere is minuscule — unless the plant sustains a complete meltdown, which would sharply escalate the dangers.

Japanese officials told the International Atomic Energy Agency on Tuesday that a fire had broken out in a fuel storage pond where used nuclear fuel is kept cool and that radiation had been "released directly into the atmosphere."

If the water level in such storage ponds drops to the level of the fuel, a worker standing at the railing looking down on the pool would receive a lethal dose within seconds, according to a study by the Millstone nuclear plant in Connecticut.

Such intense radiation can prevent workers from approaching the reactor or turn their tasks "into suicide missions," said David Lochbaum, a nuclear engineer who heads the nuclear safety program of the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Next in the line of danger would be those who live within a 20-mile radius. Areas around the plant have been evacuated for that reason.
"The odds of someone outside the plant getting an acute injury — sick in the next couple of weeks — is close to zero," said John Moulder, a professor of radiation oncology at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee who studies the effects of radiation exposure.

The radioactive particles probably contain materials linked to cancer in high doses, including cesium and iodine. The long-term cancer risk for nearby residents will depend on exposure and cleanup efforts, Moulder said.

Radioactive cesium and iodine also can combine with the salt in sea water to become sodium iodide and cesium chloride, which are common elements that would readily dilute in the wide expanse of the Pacific, according to Steven Reese, director of the Radiation Center at Oregon State.

Winds in the area are currently blowing toward the coast because of a winter storm. But that will change to a brisk wind blowing out to sea at least through Wednesday, he said by telephone.

Still, the forecast offered little comfort to those living in the area — and in nearby countries such as Russia.

The Russian Emergencies Ministry said it was monitoring radiation levels and had recorded no increase.

Many Russians, however, distrust the reassurances, perhaps remembering the Chernobyl disaster 25 years ago and how long it took the Soviet government to reveal the true dangers of the radiation.

"The mass media tells us that the wind is blowing the other way, that radiation poses no threat. But people are a mess," Valentina Chupina, a nanny in Vladivostok, said in a comment posted on the website of the newspaper Delovoi Peterburg. "They don't believe that if something happens we'll be warned."

The news portal Lenta said that in addition to potassium iodide and instruments used to measure radiation, people in the Far East also were stocking up on red wine and seaweed, which they believed would offer protection from radiation.
Even so, many experts here say that this emergency is nowhere near the level of Chernobyl, the worst nuclear disaster in history.

For one, that reactor's core contained graphite that caught fire, which blasted radiation high into the air and into wind currents that carried it long distances. The Japanese core is metal and contains no graphite, experts said. The Chernobyl plant also lacked a heavy shell around the reactor core. And the incident there happened quickly, with little time to warn nearby residents.

So far, the radiation released in Japan has not reached high altitudes, said Kathryn Higley, director of the Oregon State University Department of Nuclear Engineering and Radiation Health Physics.

"In addition, radioactive material is sticky. It has a static charge," she said, so it will stick to the sides of buildings, and "rain is going to knock it down." As a precaution, the World Meteorological Organization has activated specialized weather centers to monitor the situation. Those centers, in Beijing, Tokyo and Obninsk, Russia, will track any contaminants.

Meanwhile, the International Atomic Energy Agency said a single reading at one location in the Japanese plant recorded levels of 400 millisieverts, or 40 rems, per hour.

"You start getting radiation sickness at around 100 rems" — nausea and vomiting. Damage to blood cells can show up two to four weeks later, said Dr. Fred Mettler, a University of New Mexico radiologist and adviser to the United Nations on radiation safety. He led an international study of health effects after the Chernobyl disaster.

Levels were much lower at a plant gate, and "if you get further away from that, the population got a very small dose if anything," said Kelly Classic, a radiation physicist at the Mayo Clinic and a representative for the Health Physics Society, an organization of radiation safety specialists.

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission says doses of less than 100 millisieverts, or 10 rems, over a year are not a health concern. By comparison, most people receive about three-tenths of a rem every year from natural background radiation, according the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. A chest X-ray delivers about .1 millisieverts, or .01 rem
of radiation; a CT scan of the abdomen and pelvis is about 14 millisieverts, or 1.4 rems.

If a full meltdown occurs at the Japanese plant, the health risks become much greater — with potential release of uranium and plutonium, said Dan Sprau, an environmental health professor and radiation safety expert at East Carolina University in Greenville, N.C.

"If that escapes," Sprau said, "you've got a whole new ball game there."

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Fire Wednesday ripped through a single-story duplex on Summit Street near East Carolina University.

No one was hurt in the early-morning blaze, reported at 7:42 a.m. at 403 S. Summit Street, near Fourth Street.

About 20 firefighters, including fire administration and crews on three engines, two EMS units and a rescue, arrived to the converted wood house to find fire pouring out a window on the southwest corner and at the midsection on the south side, fire officials said.

Firefighters received several reports from neighbors of a person trapped and worked quickly to find a victim inside the burning building, but the home empty.

The fire was out in about 10 minutes, Smart said. The home suffered greatly from heavy smoke and fire, fire officials said.

"There's significant damage," Greenville Fire-Rescue Battalion Chief Tony Smart said. "It's extensive."

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

Contact Jennifer Swartz at jswartz@reflector.com or (252) 329-9565.
Attorneys in the capital murder trial of James Richardson on Tuesday had seated eight of 14 jurors needed to hear the state's case against him.

Richardson, 33, is accused of shooting and killing Landon Blackley and Andrew Kirby outside a downtown nightclub on June 30, 2009. He could face the death penalty if convicted.

The seven women and one man were accepted after defense lawyers, prosecutors and Judge W. Russell Duke questioned nearly 30 people through the trial's second day.

By day's end, 20 had been excused, 10 at the request of defense attorneys Thomas Moore and Jeff Cutler, six at the request of the prosecutors Clark Everett and Kimberly Robb, and four by the judge.

In all, 29 prospective jurors have been dismissed from the jury box. Nine were dismissed Monday, not 12 as reported in Tuesday's edition of The Daily Reflector.

The defense and prosecution may use up to 14 peremptory challenges to dismiss prospects without cause. They may ask the judge to dismiss an unlimited number of jurors for reasons specified by state statute, such as opposition to the death penalty or strong ties to people involved in the case.

Jurors excused for cause Tuesday were opposed to the death penalty.

One was a woman who said she did not know if she could vote for the death penalty because she went to school with Richardson.

She said that she believes in the death penalty as a choice but could not carry it out in this case.

"I don't think I could.,” she said.

The man seated beside her said he simply could not support voting to take a person's life.

A juror is considered accepted if neither side requests he or she be excused for cause or uses a peremptory challenge. No formal announcement is made by the court until 12 seats have been filled, plus at least two alternates.
One man was accepted as a juror by both sides despite his experience as a law enforcement officer. Another woman was excused because being involved in a murder trial made her distraught. When she cried uncontrollably before being questioned, Robb asked that she be excused.

Attorneys screened jurors individually about their knowledge of the case, employment and vocation, and family structure.

When sufficient answers were gathered, each team consulted privately, then turned to the judge to request that he excuse one or more people.

Questioning proceeded in two phases, one to determine whether the prospect could reach an impartial verdict of guilt or innocence, and a second to determine the same about rendering the death penalty.

In the death penalty phase of questioning, attorneys asked about religious and personal beliefs. Moore asked one man, “Would you consider it the appropriate penalty for first-degree murder? Would you consider life in prison without parole?”

When the man gave ambiguous answers, Duke stepped in with legal clarifications and guidelines for questioning, saying Moore's style was confusing. Moore asked Duke to excuse the man. His request was counted as peremptory and not for a specific cause.

A third day of juror questioning begins at 9 a.m. today.

Contact Michael Abramowitz at mabramowitz@reflector.com and (252) 329-9572.
Hundreds of patrons pouring from the clubs and nightclubs in downtown Greenville on
Saturday night set a potent, bubbling brew on full boil. Law enforcement report that
verbal altercations escalated into several physical confrontations before ending in gunfire
that injured three people in a parking lot near the intersection of Reade Circle and Fourth
Street.

When a downtown shooting claimed two lives in 2009, the Greenville City Council and
Police Department deployed additional officers, changed traffic patterns and started a
training program for bouncers in an effort to restore confidence in public safety there.
This incident calls into question the effectiveness of those strategies and calls on the city
to reconsider its options.

Monday saw the curtain open on the trial of James Richardson, the man charged with the
deaths of two men in the downtown violence nearly two years ago. That case commanded
the public's attention. In its aftermath, the city blocked off vehicular access to Fifth Street
each weekend, started a training program for bouncers to identify signs of trouble,
imposed zoning restrictions on bars and nightclubs, and increased the deployment of law
officers at significant public expense.

The response to the deaths of Landon Blackley and Drew Kirby was swift and broad in
scope. It was meant to prevent further acts of violence downtown, to protect those late-
night customers of the bars and nightclubs that have become part of the Greenville
landscape.

Now the city must address another incident of violence one block from the Fifth Street
barricades. It has confirmed police officials' fears that the number of patrons downtown
on a given weekend exceeds officers' capacity to maintain order should the scene turn
violent. That concern is not lost on the City Council, whose recently approved separation
ordinances have the clear intent of reducing the number of bars and nightclubs
downtown.

This incident will give no comfort to the young men and women who frequent the
downtown establishments, who police cannot protect amid the late-night chaos. It raises
questions for city taxpayers now paying thousands in police overtime without the
promised results. And it should cause restless nights for public officials charged with
making a safer community, now expected to explain another act of violence.
The city must reconsider its downtown strategy, which, if judged by this incident, is
inadequate. Greenville should be thankful that the victims survived this shooting, but a
crime need not be deadly to necessitate action.
ECU festival celebrates new music

The Daily Reflector

The School of Music at East Carolina University will hold its 11th annual New Music Festival through Monday when renowned violinist Midori performs at Wright Auditorium. All the concerts are free and will be in A.J. Fletcher Recital Hall unless otherwise noted.

The main performance of the festival will be held at 3 p.m. Sunday at the Town Common when Marc Faris “Alternative Community” is performed.

Musicians will include members of Cantwell, Gomez & Jordan, DATAHATA, In the Year of the Pig, Le Weekend, Maple Stave, pulsational, and Savage Knights.

“Alternative Community” has several continuous movements, each one with a distinct compositional and orchestral approach. The early movements set the instruments and subgroups off from one another, with tentative steps toward unity. Finally, in the last two movements, the ensemble evolves from a group of scattered individuals into a powerful collective musical force.

“The piece is thus a reflection on an idealized notion of community: a group of people brought together by shared interests and convictions, working together toward a common vision, their collective accomplishments enriched by the individual strengths of the community’s members,” Faris said in his written statement about “Alternative Community.”

Concert schedule

7:30 p.m. today — Secret Messages: An Exhibition of Contemporary Art Music curated by Jon Nelson.

7:30 p.m. Thursday — Genkin Philharmonic, a Buffalo, N.Y.-based 10-piece electro-acoustic chamber ensemble. Music by Frank Zappa, Jimi Hendrix, King Crimson, Don Van Vliet, Radiohead and more.

7:30 p.m. Friday — Yukiko and Keiko Sekino, piano duo. Music by Peter Eotvos, Peteris Vasks, Conlon Nancarrow, Igor Stravinsky and the world premiere of Ross Bauer’s “Split Infinitives.”

3 p.m. Saturday — ECU NewMusic Camerata. The program will include music by Anthony Korf, Dwight Dockery, Luciano Berio, Frank Zappa and James Mobberly.

7:30 p.m. Saturday, Wright

See MUSIC, D2

MUSIC

Continued from D1

Auditorium — ECU Symphony Orchestra, Jorge Richter, conductor, and Tom McCaslin, tuba. Program includes Paul Siskind’s “The Gumption Trap,” winner of the 2011 Orchestra Composition Competition, the world premiere of Mark Richardson’s Concerto for Tuba and Krzysztof Penderecki’s Symphony No. 4.

3 p.m. Sunday on the Town Common at the Toy-Ampitheater — Marc Faris’ “An Alternative Community.”

7:30 p.m. Sunday, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 401 E. Fourth St. — Christopher Ullfers, bassoon, with Catherine Garner, piano, and Chris Nappi, percussion.

7:30 p.m. Monday, Wright Auditorium — Midori, violinist, with pianist Charles Abramovic. The concert is part of the S. Rudolph Alexander Performing Arts Series. Tickets are $10-$30. Call 328-4788 or visit www.ecuarts.com.
Tender parting for Lowe, N.C. State
BY J.P. GIGLIO - staff writer

RALEIGH—At one point during their meeting Tuesday, N.C. State athletic director Debbie Yow said Sidney Lowe was comforting her after the decision was made for Lowe to part ways with the Wolfpack basketball program.

Yow described Lowe, a popular former player, as a good man who is still beloved by Wolfpack fans but as a coach who didn't win enough games in five seasons.

"After five years, wins and losses matter and they matter a lot," Yow said. "They just do."

Officially, Lowe resigned Tuesday, ending his tenure at his alma mater with an 86-78 record, a 25-55 mark in ACC play and without an NCAA tournament appearance in five years.

Lowe spoke briefly with The News & Observer and The Charlotte Observer on Tuesday afternoon after his one-hour meeting on campus with Yow.
"I'm thankful for the opportunity," Lowe said in his only public comments.

Lowe, who was captain of the 1983 national title team, upgraded the program's talent - and posted impressive graduation and Academic Progress Rate numbers - but couldn't gain traction in conference play at a time when the league has been down.

Under terms of his contract, which has two years remaining, Lowe's buyout is worth about $900,000, and he will be paid "every penny of it," Yow said.

Yow's next step is to hire a consulting firm, she said, and form a four-person committee of university personnel to aid in her national search for Lowe's replacement.

Arizona coach Sean Miller, a former N.C. State assistant in the late 1990s, and Texas A&M coach Mark Turgeon, a former assistant for Roy Williams at Kansas, are expected to be among Yow's targets.

Yow said she has a list of candidates but she will have to wait to talk to potential candidates whose teams are currently in the NCAA tournament. She said there is no timetable for the hire but said it was "unrealistic" to think the search would go quickly.

"There will be an element of patience required to do this and do this right," Yow said.

The win-loss record led to Lowe's departure as did sagging attendance at the RBC Center. N.C. State averaged 13,779 per game this season, about 6,000 under capacity. Yow said those unsold seats add up to $3.5 million to $4 million in lost revenue.

The prolonged search that began in April 2006 that yielded Lowe took 34 days. It sputtered on for weeks after big-name college coaches, Rick Barnes and John Calipari, and two other candidates turned down the job.

N.C. State went to the NCAA tournament five straight years under Herb Sendek before Lowe's arrival, but Lowe inherited a program that struggled down the stretch of Sendek's last season and with only one returning starter.
Lowe's first team went 5-11 in ACC games and finished 10th in the conference, same as his fifth team. In the other three seasons that Lowe coached, the Wolfpack never won more than six games in a single ACC season.

The addition of a top-ranked recruiting class was supposed to push the Wolfpack back into the NCAA conversation, but an early injury to senior forward Tracy Smith and the learning curve for the team's most talented players stunted its best chance at building momentum for the ACC season.

'This is my school'
After Thursday's first-round loss to Maryland in the ACC tournament ended this season with a 15-16 record, Lowe spoke passionately about his love of the program and the hope for the program's future.

"This is my school, I love this school," Lowe said Thursday night in Greensboro. "It was my hope and dream to come back here and do something special again."

Assistant coach Monte Towe, who was on Lowe's staff for five years, is the interim coach and he attended Yow's news conference on Tuesday night, about five hours after Lowe had confirmed the news.

"This has not been a fun day," Towe said.

Levi Watkins has been retained as the director of basketball operations, Yow said, and assistant ADs David Horning and Chris Kingston have been designated as temporary assistant coaches to communicate with recruits.

Lowe leaves the program with a solid foundation of talent in the freshman and sophomore classes, and there are three recruits signed for the 2011 class and two more committed for 2012.

A longtime NBA coach, Lowe turned down an opportunity last spring to be an assistant for the Washington Wizards.

Asked what he would do next, Lowe answered: "I'm going to follow the path the Lord takes me on."

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Trial begins in UNC Charlotte student's 2008 slaying
Mystery surrounds the case of woman who might have gone to river to shoot photos.

By Franco Ordoñez
fordoñez@charlotteobserver.com
Posted: Wednesday, Mar. 16, 2011

GASTONIA Nearly three years after Irina Yarmolenko was found strangled along the banks of the Catawba River, a jury got its first look at the case that shocked the UNC Charlotte campus.

In opening statements Tuesday, Gaston Assistant District Attorney Stephanie Hamlin described the UNCC sophomore who went by "Ira" as a sweet, artistic young woman killed three days after her 20th birthday. She was found dead on a remote, overgrown embankment across the river from the U.S National Whitewater Center, an area Yarmolenko may have been visiting to shoot photos of kayakers and rafters.

Three items were found wrapped around her neck: a bungee cord, a ribbon and the drawstring from her sweatshirt.

The May 2008 killing has been shrouded in mystery: It took seven months to bring charges in the killing. No clear motive has been revealed. Two men were charged after authorities say their DNA was found on Yarmolenko's car, but their DNA was not on her body. And then, one suspect died on the eve of his trial.
Mark Bradley Carver, 42, of Gastonia is on trial for first-degree murder in Yarmolenko's death. If convicted, he would go to prison for life.

Carver was arrested in December 2008, along with his cousin Neal Leon Cassada Jr. of Mount Holly. Cassada, 54, died in October 2010 of apparent natural causes one day before trial.

Authorities say Carver has told them that he had been fishing with Cassada that morning near where Yarmolenko was found. But both men denied on four occasions they had seen Yarmolenko or her vehicle.

The State Bureau of Investigation said Carver's DNA was found in the back seat and Cassada's in the front passenger side on the door, glass and armrest.

"Despite being within earshot of the victim who was strangled to death, he didn't hear anything," prosecutor Hamlin told the jury Tuesday. "He didn't hear a struggle. He didn't hear splashing. He didn't hear an assault."

One of Carver's attorneys, David Phillips, countered that touching a car is not proof of murder.

"This case is not rocket science," Phillips said. "The state of North Carolina charged an innocent man."

Phillips told jurors they would likely hear from two DNA experts. Though they might say his client's DNA was on Yarmolenko's car, he said, they won't be able to show it was on other critical evidence.

"How can they explain that it's not on the body of Ms. Yarmolenko..." the defense attorney asked. "How can they explain away it's not on the bungee cord, drawstring or ribbon? There is no connection to Mr. Carver."

According to court documents, DNA found on the items around Yarmolenko's neck and scrapings from beneath her fingernails did not match either Carver or Cassada.

Carver's lawyers have also said previously that Carver takes medication for schizophrenia.
In the courtroom Tuesday, about a dozen family members and friends of Carver sat in rows behind him. Yarmolenko's parents and brother, Pavel, were also in the courtroom but declined to discuss the case.

Prosecutors did not tell jurors whether Yarmolenko was a random target or might have known the suspects. Hamlin did not describe any motive for the killing.

"This was a crime of opportunity," Hamlin said.

On the morning of the killing, Yarmolenko stopped by a credit union and then dropped off donations at a Goodwill store on Harris Houston Road in Charlotte, according to testimony from witnesses and surveillance video presented Tuesday.

At approximately 11:09 a.m., she pulled into the Stowe YMCA parking lot in Mount Holly near the river.

"Less than two hours later, she was found dead on the banks of the river by two jet skiers," Hamlin said.

Dennis Lovelace testified that he often skis along the river with his girlfriend, Brenda Pierce.

After crossing under the I-85 bridge, he told jurors they saw a blue sedan plunged down a steep, weed-covered embankment, and almost in the water.

He said he skied past the car and then turned back for a closer look. He noticed both driver's side doors were open. When he pulled up to the bank, he saw a woman's body lying next to the car. He said her skin looked bluish purple.

"I was about knee deep in water...," he said. "She had a rope around her neck. I was very scared and got back in the water."

He asked his girlfriend to call police.

Lovelace said he never saw Carver or Cassada.
Yarmolenko was killed during the last week of exams at UNC Charlotte. She was planning to transfer to UNC Chapel Hill.

Just days earlier, she had a conversation with a friend Diana Carlton about improving her photography portfolio.

Carlton, then photo editor at the school newspaper, testified that she and Yarmolenko talked about a story Carlton did on the 2008 Olympic trials for kayaking that were held at the U.S. National Whitewater Center.

Yarmolenko wanted to know more about the Whitewater Center so that she could possibly shoot photos for a class she was taking at the Light Factory, a photo and film museum in Charlotte.

"She was interested in getting action shots of kayakers or people floating down the river," Carlton said. "She thought it'd be good to add to her portfolio."

Staff writers Gary L. Wright and Joe DePriest contributed.
March 15, 2011

**Loan Study on Students Goes Beyond Default Rates**

By TAMAR LEWIN

For each student who defaults on a loan, at least two more fall behind in payments on their student debt, a new study has found.

The Institute for Higher Education Policy, a nonprofit organization, said in a report that two out of five student loan borrowers were delinquent at some point in the first five years after they started repaying their loans.

Almost a quarter of the borrowers used an option to postpone payments to avoid delinquency.

The institute said the goal of its study was to develop a fuller picture of the debt burden that students face by compiling data on students who have trouble repaying their loans, but do not default.

“We want to get beyond the dichotomy of people who default on their loans and everyone else,” Alisa Cunningham, the institute’s vice president for research and programs, said on Tuesday.

The study, based on data from five of the nation’s largest student-loan agencies, found that only 37 percent of student borrowers who started repaying their loans in 2005 were able to fully pay them back on time.

And that percentage is probably decreasing, given the high unemployment rate of recent years, Ms. Cunningham said.

With tuition rising more rapidly than inflation or family incomes, student borrowing has been growing. College seniors who graduated in 2009 had an average of $24,000 in student loan debt, up 6 percent from 2008, according to an annual report from the Project on Student Debt.

Mark Kantrowitz, the publisher of Finaid.org and Fastweb.com, estimates total student debt at about $896 billion — more than the nation’s credit-card debt.
Meanwhile, default rates have been rising, to 7 percent, for the 2008 fiscal year, the latest period for which data is available, from 5.2 percent in the 2006 fiscal year.

Students who did not graduate were more likely to become delinquent or default.

The new numbers are likely to be used in the Congressional debate over for-profit colleges. Those colleges’ students make up about 12 percent of the nation’s college enrollment, and get a quarter of all federal student aid — but they account for almost half of all students who default.

The Department of Education has proposed regulations that would cut off federal aid to programs whose students graduate with high debt-to-income ratios. But an intense lobbying effort is under way to prevent those regulations from being put into effect.

According to the new study, the majority of student borrowers at both two- and four-year for-profit schools went into delinquency or default. The majority of student borrowers at community colleges also went into delinquency or default. But because community college tuition is far lower than that of for-profit institutions, most community-college students do not take out loans.
Schools set up resources for students in recovery
By David Unze, USA TODAY

ST. CLOUD, Minn. — Jason Lindberg, 33, a second-year student at St. Cloud State University, is working on recovery from an alcohol addiction.

He lives off-campus and says that when he sees the "Thirsty Thursday and "Wet Wednesdays" or other promotions encouraging drinking, it's "frustrating."

He doesn't begrudge those who want to party but wants a space where he can be with others who understand recovery.

"I need an area on campus, or near it, that's a legitimately enforceable zone," he says. "An area that is reliable to be free from substance use and abuse."

Universities nationwide, including St. Cloud State, are moving to establish on-campus recovery programs, some including residences, for students who have gone through drug or alcohol treatment.

Plans are in the works for programs at Southern Methodist University in Texas and for a facility near New York University. Those schools would join Augsburg College in Minneapolis, Texas Tech and Rutgers University in New Jersey, which have established programs.

It's part of a trend of schools realizing they should provide resources for students with substance abuse problems, says Matt Russell, an associate director at Texas Tech's College for the Study of Addiction and Recovery.

"We're in the beginning of a movement," he says. "This is the trend. This is where it's going."

Program Director Patrice Salmeri, right, jokes with StepUP participant Hunter Berkelman, 24, of Bloomington, Minn. By Courtney Perry for USA TODAY
\'The space is important\'

Mark Mishek, president and chief executive of Hazelden, the Minnesota-based, private, not-for-profit alcohol and drug addiction treatment center, which has locations nationwide, says the organization closed on the purchase of a six-story building in Manhattan in December and expects to open a collegiate, sober-housing facility for students at NYU and any of the colleges in New York City who need post-treatment services next fall.

Russell says there are about 20 programs active across the country and as many that have taken significant steps toward starting.

Texas Tech, which started its recovery program more than 20 years ago, has literally written the book on starting such programs, recently publishing *Substance Abuse Recovery in College*.

Some programs have support services and shared spaces for students to meet and hold meetings, Russell says. Others, such as Augsburg College in Minneapolis, have residences designated only for students who have gone through treatment and are in recovery, he says.

Students who go through treatment and are housed in dorms or houses where roommates drink or use drugs say such a living arrangement "is like sending (them) back to the bar," says Patrice Salmieri, director of the StepUP program at Augsburg.

StepUP started in 1997 with 23 students and has about 75 this year, Salmieri says. Relapse studies show that about 87% of its members stay sober while they are in the program, she says.

"The space is important, to be able to work on your work and study the things you need to study without worrying about the triggers, the loud people," says Phillip Hernandez, coordinator of leadership programs and residential life conduct at St. Cloud State, where a program is being explored. Hernandez came to St. Cloud State after leading the residential life portion of Augsburg's StepUP.

**Other programs**

Southern Methodist University plans to start a recovery program and add a residential component, says John Sanger, director of alcohol and drug abuse prevention at the SMU Memorial Health Center.

Elsewhere:

• The University of Vermont started a residential recovery program last fall and will expand it next academic year, says Amy Boyd, director of health promotion services for the university's Center for Health and Wellbeing.
• Rutgers University has had an alcohol and drug recovery program for 27 years. Recovery housing on its New Brunswick campus will be able to accommodate 25 students this fall, while its Newark campus has space for eight, says Lisa Laitman, director of the Alcohol and Other Drug Assistance Program for Students at Rutgers.

Hazelden plans to use the Augsburg's StepUP as a model for programming it will offer in New York. "We consider it really successful," Mishek says. "We know we have a lot we can learn from them."

The Hazelden facility will house up to 30 students and offer treatment services and community meeting spaces. The Hazelden living space could be very helpful for students who are newly sober, says Zoe Ragouzeos, director of Counseling and Wellness Services at NYU.

Recovering college students can "navigate the stresses of college life while living with others who can encourage positive, and non-addictive, ways of coping with those stresses," she says.