THE DAILY CLIPS

March 19, 2008

News, commentary, and opinion
compiled by the East Carolina University News Bureau from:

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The Raleigh News & Observer
The New York Times
The Wall Street Journal
USA Today
The Charlotte Observer
The Fayetteville Observer
The Greensboro News & Record
Newsweek
U.S. News & World Report
Business Week
Time

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PCMH's income is looking up

By Brock Letchworth
The Daily Reflector

For the second straight month, Pitt County Memorial Hospital's operational income exceeded projections, its Board of Trustees learned Tuesday.

Horace Tripp, chairman of the board's finance committee, told trustees the hospital's operational income for February was $3 million — $900,000 more than budgeted and $9 million more than February 2007.

The positive month increased the hospital's operational income for the current fiscal year, which began Oct. 1, to $6.3 million, Tripp said.

"The overall length of stay was below budget for the month by 2.5 percent. The hospital's outpatient revenues were $38.5 million, 2.1 percent more than the projection.

PCMH's operating expenses of $59.8 million were 1.1 percent below budgeted projections, and the expenses of $507 million for the current fiscal year were below budget by 1.4 percent.

In other news from Tuesday's meeting:
- The board adopted a resolution honoring Dr. Randolph Chitwood, East Carolina University Heart Institute director, for his election as president of the Society of Thoracic Surgeons.

    In May 2000, Chitwood performed the first total heart valve surgery using robotic technology in North America.

    "He is a great example of the kind of medical staff and leadership, and the kind of leadership across the board at PCMH we have," Steve Lawler, PCMH president, said.

- At the board's request, Michelle Brooks, assistant vice president for community benefits, provided updated details about PCMH's Community Benefits grants program.

The program is aimed at promoting health as a response to identified community needs, Brooks said. The report was in response to recent legislative concerns about nonprofit hospitals being worthy of their tax-exempt status, officials said.

"There have been certain health-care systems across the country that when you look at them, they look like for-profit organizations," said Joel Butler, University Health Systems community services officer. "I think our legislators are concerned because hospitals are big business, and they function like big business."

Brooks said the various aspects of community benefits, which includes grants the hospital provided and its absorbed debt, cost PCMH nearly $164 million in 2007.
University event features freebies, food and games

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

Finding a safe and convenient place to live in Greenville can be tough.

The East Carolina Housing Fair, held on campus Tuesday, was an effort to introduce students who live on campus to the available housing around town, said Luila Brannon, of the Center of Off-Campus and Community Living at ECU.

About 30 local management companies set up booths on the brickyard in front of the Mendenhall Student Center to entice students to move in.

Free shirts, cups and food brought students to the booths, where they could get information on housing that has been inspected for safety by the city of Greenville and ECU.

“We want students to be able to find safe places to live off-campus,” Brannon said.

Erin Flannery, an ECU sophomore, said the fair gave her a chance to see what is available in town.

Flannery lived on campus as a freshman and has since lived in a gated apartment complex, where she said she feels more comfortable. Being able to locate safe housing is very helpful to ECU students, she said.

Jesse Musick, of East Carolina Property Management, said the fair gives local housing managers a chance to introduce themselves to students on the students' turf.

The normal operating hours of a property management company can conflict with a student's class schedule, he said. The fair allowed students to get an idea of good places to live without leaving campus.

"It brings everyone together in one place and lets students see what is available," Musick said.

Hundreds of students stopped by during the four-hour event.

Both Greenville and ECU police were on hand to give information on safety in and around Greenville.

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Meetings begin for Holland, McCarthy

ECU coaching staff, AD holding discussions about men's basketball program.

The Daily Reflector

Mack McCarthy and his coaching staff have begun meetings with East Carolina Director of Athletics Terry Holland, but as of Tuesday, no decision had been made on who will coach the ECU men's basketball team next season.

McCarthy, who served as the Pirates' acting head coach last season, and Holland confirmed Tuesday they've met and plan on continuing to discuss the future of ECU's program.

"We have been meeting and will continue to have an ongoing dialogue with the basketball staff and other members of the department who can have an impact on our basketball programs' future success," Holland said in an e-mail.

Dave Odom's name has popped up as a possible successor to McCarthy. Odom, who coached at East Carolina from 1979-82, ended his career at South Carolina last week after coaching the Gamecocks for six years.

Holland wouldn't address any specific rumors, but did say, "There have been no discussions with anyone about employment here at ECU."
Memorial service for UNC student draws 10,000

By Mike Baker
The Associated Press

CHAPEL HILL — The father of the slain University of North Carolina student body president asked thousands of mourners gathered Tuesday to find solutions to the world's violence, prejudice and inequity.

The shooting death of 23-year-old Eve Carson, which police called a random act of violence, stunned the community this month; her body was found in a street about a mile from campus. Two people with a history of crime have been charged with murdering the popular student leader.

An estimated 10,000 people, including her family from Athens, Ga., attended a tearful memorial service at the campus basketball arena Tuesday. Her father, Bob Carson, did not speak but offered a statement challenging his daughter's peers to tackle the greatest needs of the world.

"In the midst of his grief, Mr. Carson finds hope — hope that Eve's generation will solve some of the most pressing problems of our time," Dean of Students Melissa Exum said.

Several of Carson's friends, wearing T-shirts that said, "The world is our dance floor" in memory of her love for dancing, spoke about her ability to excite and to mentor. Their description of her ranged from sleep-deprived to motivating.

"Eve was certainly more than a laundry list of superlatives," said Seth Dearmin, a friend and former student body president.

"Let us today shed our last moments of silence for Eve," Dearmin said. "For though she led her life fully, she was not able to lead a full life. From this point forward, we must speak loudly and act boldly. Eve's mantle has been passed to us."

Murder charges have been filed against 17-year-old Laurence Lovette and 21-year-old Demario Atwater, both of Durham. Lovette is also charged with murder in the death of a Duke University graduate student.

Carson was a prestigious Morehead-Cain scholar and a North Carolina Fellow who studied abroad.
10,000 pay tribute to Carson

Slain student leader remembered at UNC-CH, NCSU

BY ERIC FERRERI
STAFF WRITER

CHAPEL HILL — To hear her friends tell it, Eve Carson’s energy and effervescence were most evident in her text messages and e-mail messages — which she routinely overloaded with exclamation points.

“Sometimes she would punctuate her messages with 7, 8 or even 10 exclamation points,” Anna Lassiter, her roommate of two years, recounted Tuesday, “even before starting her actual message.”

To so many at UNC-Chapel Hill, Eve Marie Carson was a walking exclamation point, a lightning bolt of promise.

On Tuesday afternoon, more than 10,000 people — friends she knew and friends she hadn’t yet made — filled the Dean E. Smith Center to remember her fondly. Earlier Tuesday, about 200 gathered at N.C. State University’s brickyard to pay tribute to Carson, with some wearing light blue in her honor.

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CARSON
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

The 22-year-old Athens, Ga., native was shot dead in the early hours of March 5. The ghastly slaying received no mention at all during a 75-minute event almost entirely devoid of tears. Carson’s parents and brother attended but did not speak. Dean of Students Melissa Exum read excerpts of a message from Carson’s father, Bob, expressing his hopes for Eve’s classmates and praise for a generation of intelligent, collaborative and generous students.

Each person who spoke Tuesday had an Eve story to tell, from the university trustee Carson tricked into allowing far more time than allotted for students lobbying against tuition increases, to the roommate who joked about her penchant for eating all but the last bite of ice cream in the freezer.

“She was a bright spot in your day,” recalled Seth Deatman, UNC-CH’s student body president two years before Carson, “a thoughtful conversation, a warm hug.”

Students adorned in Carolina Blue, many wearing ribbons or stickers reading, simply, “Eve,” watched a digital photo collage playing on the big screens overhead. It suggested a young woman soaking up the quintessential college life. Eve at Kenan Stadium. Eve in her apartment. Eve at the bar. Eve hanging out with Oompa Loompas on Halloween. In most of the photos, she has an arm around someone. And she is always smiling.

A life lived ‘full-throttle’

In Chapel Hill, Carson lived, appropriately, on Friendly Lane. Her death caused a collective buckling around Chapel Hill, where people struggled on two fronts: The killing itself was alarming enough; that the victim was Carson — so well-known and popular — was tougher still.

“You can’t walk into this great big room and not see Eve Carson behind me, in the student section, with that terrific smile,” UNC President Erskine Bowles remembered.

Trustee Roger Perry spoke of a meeting on tuition last year. He gave students 20 minutes to plead their case. Carson, through a combination of planning, cunning and charm, kept her fellow students talking for more than an hour.

Peggy Jablonski, UNC-CH’s vice chancellor for student affairs, learned to schedule her meetings with Carson for late in the day. Carson simply had too much to say in a one-hour time slot.

“She lived life full-throttle,” Jablonski said.

Staff photographer Shaun Rocco contributed to this report.

Margaret Batts met Carson last summer as a new UNC-CH freshman. Carson was a freshman camp counselor but never pulled rank.

“I thought she was awesome,” the Kenansville native said. “She spoke to me every time she saw me, which was unusual because she was student body president and I was just a freshman.”

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Former Wright cohort
renews his ties to state

BY LYNN BONNER
STAFF WRITER

A former state employee whose false promise of government money is central to a criminal charge against state Rep. Thomas E. Wright is now working closely with the office that he left under a cloud.

Tolene L. "Tork" Wade retired as director of the state Office of Research, Demonstrations and Rural Health Development on June 30. He had been on administrative leave from the office, part of the state Department of Health and Human Services, since his role in the Wright case was disclosed during a State Board of Elections hearing in May.

The month after he retired, Wade started work as a consultant to the N.C. Foundation for Advanced Health Programs, an agency that works closely with the state's rural health office. Wade also worked for about a month as a consulting firm, Cansler Fuerquay Solutions, run by two former DHHS administrators.

Wright, a Wilmington Democrat, is facing criminal charges. His colleagues in the state House of Representatives are set to decide Thursday whether or not to force him out of office.

Wade became enmeshed in the case through a letter he wrote in 2002 promising $150,000 to a foundation that Wright controlled.

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Wade said his office was committing $150,000 to convert a Wilmington building into a community health center office and history museum, but Wade knew he couldn't back the letter with money. An indictment against Wright for obtaining property under false pretenses says Wade knew Wright would use the letter to get money from other sources, such as financial institutions or other organizations that give grants.

Wade used the letter to secure a $150,000 bank loan, according to indictments and hearing testimony. The bank foreclosed, and the family that sold Wright the building did not get its money.

Wade's expertise cited

Wade has close ties to the health foundation, having worked for the group part time at least twice since 2005, said its president and CEO, Allen Feezor. Wright was once a paid consultant to the health foundation. He was paid $35,000 for work in 2002 and 2003.

The foundation uses grant money to support health programs. Its work is intertwined with that of the state rural health office.

Wade is employed by a consulting firm, Managed Care Consulting Inc., which has a long history with the foundation, Feezor said. The foundation is in the middle of a one-year contract with the company. Feezor would not disclose financial details.

Wade did not return telephone calls this week or respond to an e-mail request for an interview. Feezor declined to have Wade back to work for the foundation in July and asked the foundation board to discuss it in August. Some board members were worried about the foundation's image, Feezor said, but members decided that Wade's expertise in rural health and his reputation with organizations that give grants was valuable.

"The board concluded it made sense from a business case," Feezor said. Board members who had worked with Wade decided that his part in the Wright loan "was an isolated case of not the best judgment."

In his role, Wade is working with the state Office of Rural Health and Community Care, is negotiating with federal officials on a way to have more poor and disabled people cared for in a network of primary care doctors and is seeking grant money to support health programs, Feezor said.

If charges had been brought against Wade, the board would likely have reconsidered having him work with the foundation, Feezor said.

Lanier Cansler, a former DHHS deputy secretary, hired Wade to work on a contract connected to the dental school under construction at East Carolina University. Wade is gathering information about where small training centers connected to the dental school could go, Cansler said.

Cansler said he did not work with Wade when they were DHHS employees but knew his reputation. Wade didn't start work for the firm until he was certain he would not be indicted, Cansler said.

"Despite that error in judgment, he had a wealth of knowledge," Cansler said. "He has done very positive things for the state."

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STRESSED BUT HOPEFUL

College kids may say they're lonely and depressed, but they still report enjoying life

BY ALAN FRAM AND TREVOR TOMPSON
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — College kids are so frazzled they can't sleep or eat. Or study. Good grief, they're even anxious about spring break.

Most students in U.S. colleges are just plain stressed out, from everyday worries about grades and relationships to darker thoughts of suicide, according to a poll of undergraduates. The survey was conducted for The Associated Press and mtvU, a television network available at many colleges and universities.

Four in 10 students say they endure stress often. Nearly one in five say they feel it all or most of the time.

But most are bearing it. Nearly two-thirds in the survey say they enjoy life.

Majorities cite classic stress symptoms including trouble concentrating, sleeping and finding motivation. Most say they have also been agitated, worried, too tired to work.

"Everything is being piled on at once," said Chris Curran, a junior at the Albany College of Pharmacy in Albany, N.Y. He said he has learned to cope better since starting school. "You just get really agitated and anxious. Then you start procrastinating, and it all piles up."

Many cite eating problems and say they have felt lonely, depressed, like they are failures. Many are even concerned about spring break, chiefly about not having enough money or not being in good shape.

One in five say they have felt too stressed to do schoolwork or be with friends. About the same number say things have been so bad in the past three months that they have considered dropping out of school.

Darker still, about one in six say they have friends who in the past year have discussed or attempted suicide, and about one in 10 say they have considered it themselves. Friends have actually attempted suicide in that time, one in 10 say.

According to the most recent figures from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, fewer than one of every 100 people age 18 to 24 tried to injure themselves in 2006. There were fewer than 3,500 suicides out of 29 million people of that age in 2005.

In this ocean of campus anxiety, 13 percent say they have been diagnosed with a mental health condition or an anxiety disorder.

But all is not doom and gloom for today's students. Six in 10 say they are usually hopeful and enjoy life. Half even concede they feel understood by their families.

COPING IN COLLEGE

During the past year...
...have you seriously thought about ending your life?

89
Yes

67
No

...have any of your friends made a suicide attempt?

82
...have any of your friends talked about wanting to end their life?

What they said

Gender Matters: Male students reported less stress than women by many measures. Of the students reporting that dating and relationships had a major impact on the stress in their daily lives, 55 percent were women and 45 percent men.

Families and Race: About 17 percent of whites said they seldom or never feel understood by their families; 8 percent of blacks, 29 percent of Asians and 31 percent of Hispanics said the same.

Lifelines: Most said they would turn to friends, parents or siblings, in that order, in emotional crisis. About a third said they would talk to a boyfriend or girlfriend.

Drink and Drugs: More than a quarter of students said they sometimes think they need to cut down on drinking or going out. A third said that at least sometimes they want to use drugs or alcohol to relax.

About the survey

The survey was conducted by Edison Media Research from Feb. 28 to March 6 by having 2,253 undergraduate students fill out confidential forms. The margin of sampling error was plus or minus 3 percentage points.

The Associated Press
Memories curl up in sweaters

BY SAMANTHA THOMPSON SMITH
STAFF WRITER

Mine has holes in the elbows. It's two sizes too big. There's a chocolate stain on it that's survived despite multiple dry cleanings. And it goes with nothing, except, perhaps my equally unflattering fleece pants.

But my favorite sweater? That ratty old wool V-neck has been with me through every cold and flu in the last dozen years. I wear it when I'm chilled, when I'm blue, when it rains or when I'm on a rare cleaning frenzy. I wear it in winter almost as often as I do in summer.

You probably have one, too. At least, that's what the group that runs the nonprofit foundation of "Mister Rogers" is counting on. It's asking everyone to pull out a favorite old sweater and wear it Thursday, in honor of what would have been Fred Rogers' 80th birthday.

It doesn't have to be Rogers' signature, the zipped-up cardigan. This is less about style and more about tapping into what the sweater means to each of us. It may keep you warm on a cold day, but it also might never fail to make you feel safe and secure - perhaps even loved - every time you slip it on.

On the PBS show "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood," the sweater Rogers put on was supposed to show children that it was a comfortable, neighborly place, says David Newell, Mr. McFeely on the show.

"It was a symbol of play clothes. It was a symbol for coziness," says Newell, now public relations director for Family Communications, Rogers' nonprofit group. "It was a sign to the children of 'Let's have a conversation. He was getting on the child's level.'"

The sweater was the idea of Rogers' mother. And for years before she died, she knitted all the sweaters Rogers wore on the show, including the red sweater now in the Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

As individual as its wearer

Knitters continue to keep that "made with love" sweater alive, especially as the world becomes more troubled and complicated. Mary Stowe, owner of the area's knitting supply stores Yarns Etc. and Great Yarns, says more knitters have been coming into the store recently, looking to make loved ones a snuggly legacy to leave behind or to create a new comforting "favorite" sweater.

She says it's also common for customers to come in the store looking to her to save a favorite sweater that's worn in the elbows.

"There are definitely memories tied to sweaters," Stowe says. "People want to put on a sweater that feels like a hug."

Jim Chesnutt, president of National Spinning Co., a Washington, N.C.-based company, says one reason the sweater is so enduring is because of its individuality.

Take his own favorite sweater, a warm purple one. He said he pulls it out for those rare cold Saturdays when his beloved East Carolina University Pirates are playing football.

"It's got of a lot of good memories," he says. "There just aren't enough days to wear it."

So won't you wear your favorite sweater? And tell us about it or even share a photo at share.triangle.com.

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