THE DAILY CLIPS

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Contributed photollusionist Mike Super will perform at 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. Wednesday at Wright Auditorium.

Magician Mike Super, right, holds a copy of Wednesday's edition of The Daily Reflector at Greenville's Best Buy store as radio personality "Mick" confirms that Super's headline predictions were accurate. Mark Rutledge/The Daily Reflector
Magician probably predicted this headline weeks ago

By Mark Rutledge
The Daily Reflector
Wednesday, March 31, 2010

Young children of parents who work long nights at newspapers are easily convinced that mom or dad can magically predict the day’s headlines.

It’s a cheap way to get kids to retrieve the morning paper.

Grown-ups, however, would never fall for a stunt like that, even when the magician mails his predictions weeks in advance and has them hermetically sealed inside a glass case.

Knowing it’s a trick does not remove the wonder — as in “Wonder how he did that?”

A few hours before performing at East Carolina University on Wednesday night, magician Mike Super visited Greenville’s Best Buy electronics store to prove he had accurately predicted — weeks before — the day’s front-page headlines in The Daily Reflector.

To make it even more interesting, Super threw in a wager.

“If I’m wrong,” he said, “I will give a refund to anyone who bought an advance ticket to the show.”

The glass was broken, and a FedEx envelope marked “DO NOT OPEN” was opened. Inside was a cassette tape with a recording of Super making his predictions way back on Feb. 2 in Pittsburgh.

“For the kids out there,” he said while opening the envelope on the air with radio personality “Mick” of WXNR 99.5 the X, “a cassette is an archaic means for recording information.”

Super, who competed against nine other top illusionists to win NBC’s TV show “Phenomenon” in 2007, said he uses cassettes for the stunt because they cannot be easily altered in the same way that digital media can. A small crowd of interested onlookers seemed perfectly content with that explanation.

The cassette was slipped into an archaic electronic device designed for playing outdated media, the play button was pressed and, low and behold, there was the voice of Super reading off the very headlines that appear on the March 31 edition of The Daily Reflector.

Of course it was a trick. If he really could predict the news, Super would be far too busy preventing wars and airplane crashes to travel around performing magic for college students.

But it was a good trick. And it’s unlikely that anyone so skilled in the art of illusion will have to trudge out into his own yard to retrieve the morning paper.

Contact Mark Rutledge at mrutledge@reflector.com or (252) 329-9575
ECU student assaulted, robbed

East Carolina University police are investigating a report that a 19-year-old student was assaulted and robbed early Wednesday near Aycock Hall dormitory, Assistant Police Chief Dawn Tevepaugh said.

The student suffered some minor cuts and bruises during the incident at 1:28 a.m., the preliminary investigation indicated. Two men took the student's wallet with cash and credit cards, according to the police report.

"We're looking at video surveillance from cameras in the area to see if we can obtain any useful information," Tevepaugh said. "We're also asking anyone who might have information about the incident to contact us."

Sorority flags stolen

ECU police are investigating a report that an unknown person stole 11 sorority flags valued at $1,320 from the Mendenhall Student Center between midnight Friday and 2:24 p.m. Monday.

Bicycles stolen

Officers responded to two separate reports that cable locks securing bicycles were cut and the bikes valued at $700 were removed from a location at 100 Faculty Way. One incident was reported March
Workers hoist a cannon as they prepare to place it on a carriage at the North Carolina Estuarium on Monday. The cannon, several hundred years old, was discovered when the city renovated its waterfront in 2001-2002. It was taken to East Carolina University, where it was restored during a period of several years. The Washington Area Historic Foundation spent $1,600 for a new carriage for the cannon. WAHF plans to hold a reception sometime in April to mark the completion of the cannon-restoration project. (Contributed Photo/Dallas Congleton)
Wife of Democratic fundraiser for Perdue quits UNCW board

Husband's attorney promises cooperation

By Patrick Gannon
Patrick.Gannon@StarNewsOnline.com

Published: Wednesday, March 31, 2010 at 12:22 p.m.

The wife of a Democratic fundraiser for Gov. Beverly Perdue under investigation for possible violations of campaign finance laws has resigned from the University of North Carolina Wilmington Board of Trustees.

Susan Carter resigned from the board in a letter to UNCW Chancellor Rosemary DePaolo dated March 24. She gave no reason for her departure.

Perdue appointed Carter to the 13-member board in July 2009, UNCW spokeswoman Dana Fischetti said. Her term would have expired in 2013.

Carter is married to Rusty Carter, the owner of Atlantic Corp. of Wilmington, which sells industrial packaging products. The Bev Perdue Committee announced March 19 it was forfeiting $48,000 from contributors linked to Atlantic Corp. because her campaign was worried they may have been unlawfully reimbursed by the company.

Senate Leader Marc Basnight's campaign also received $44,500 from the same people.

The Associated Press reported Tuesday that New Hanover County District Attorney Ben David sealed records about donations from nine people who work for or are linked to Atlantic Corp. Board files are closed when possible criminal wrongdoing is being investigated.

State law prevents anyone from giving on behalf of someone else. Violations of that law are misdemeanors punishable by fines.

A spokeswoman for David's office said Wednesday that David was out of town and had no comment on the investigation.

Michael Murchison, a Wilmington attorney for Rusty Carter and Atlantic Corp., said Wednesday that when questions first were raised about contributions from Atlantic's management team, Carter reached out to the N.C. State Board of Elections and David.

"In some ways, we actually instigated it," Murchison said. "We promise full cooperation and full disclosure and that's what we've been about. ... It wasn't a situation where they came to us. We came to them."

Murchison said Susan Carter likely resigned from her UNCW position to avoid any distraction to the board of trustees or negative publicity stemming from her appointment.

Rusty Carter also was subpoenaed by the State Board of Elections for its hearing into unreported airplane flights by the campaign of former Gov. Mike Easley, but he wasn't called to testify.

This report contains material from The Associated Press.

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Duke settles with ex-lacrosse coach

BY ANNE BLYTHE
STAFF WRITER

DURHAM – Duke University has settled a lawsuit with Mike Pressler, the man at the helm of the men's lacrosse program when a stripper brought false rape accusations against three team members.

The terms of the settlement were not disclosed.

But Duke officials issued a statement praising Pressler for the program he built before being forced out in April 2006 amid a storm of criticism about the behavior of the team.

"Coach Michael Pressler is an excellent coach," Michael Schoenfeld, vice president for public affairs and government relations, said in a prepared statement issued Wednesday. "He did a great job building the Duke men's lacrosse program, while maintaining a 100 percent graduation rate in his sixteen years."

Pressler, who built a national powerhouse lacrosse team at Duke, was forced out in April 2006 shortly after escort service dancer Crystal Gail Mangum accused players of gang-raping her, allegations that turned out to be phony.

In 2007, Pressler and Duke reached a confidential settlement. But in January 2008, Pressler sued Duke, saying his former employer had reneged on terms of the settlement. He filed the lawsuit in Durham County Superior Court.

Pressler alleged that John Burness, Duke's former senior vice president of public affairs and government relations, made slanderous, libelous and defamatory remarks about him to the news media after the settlement was reached.

Burness, who retired in June 2008 after 30 years on the job, could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

Jay Trehy, a Raleigh lawyer representing Pressler, said neither he nor the former Duke coach could comment on the settlement.

Initially, Pressler argued that Duke had reneged on its settlement agreement, which had a clause prohibiting disparaging remarks. But in a legal maneuver to sidestep arbitration, Pressler dropped that claim and slimmed down his complaint to focus on Burness' comments.

In the suit, Pressler complains about an April 9, 2007, article in the New York newspaper Newsday quoting Burness as saying the difference between Pressler and current lacrosse coach John Danowski was "night and day."

In that article, the suit contends, Burness described Danowski as a "mensch," a Yiddish word for a person of great integrity and honor.

The second comment named in Pressler's complaint came in June, when The Associated Press quoted Burness as saying, "It was essential for the team to have a change of leadership in order to move forward."

"Duke University regrets any adverse consequences that the Newsday or AP article had on Coach Pressler or his family," Schoenfeld said in the prepared statement. "Duke wishes nothing but the best for Coach Pressler in his future endeavors, especially at Bryant University and as he leads Team USA in the World Lacrosse Championships."

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Duke scholar uncovers Haitian history

Document spells freedom

BY ERIC FERRERI
STAFF WRITER

DURHAM – When Julia Gaffield made her once-in-a-lifetime discovery, she couldn't scream, laugh or even pump her fists in triumph.

Visitors to the British National Archives just don't behave that way.

On Feb. 2, while thumbing through early 19th-century documents, the Duke University graduate student, 26, stumbled upon what is thought to be the only known, printed copy of Haiti's Declaration of Independence.

A document that had eluded historians for two centuries was at her fingertips, an eight-page pamphlet in French declaring the former slave colony's intentions to be free.

"It was an odd moment," said Gaffield, a doctoral student in history. "I'm smiling to myself and bursting with excitement but at the same time trying to keep my composure."

Julia Gaffield found a printed copy of Haiti's Declaration of Independence at the British National Archive.

DUKE PHOTOGRAPHY

Haiti has often lacked the infrastructure and political will to invest in historical documents, said Ted Widmer, who directs Brown University's John Carter Brown Library, a rare-books archive with an extensive Haiti collection.

"Haiti's tough country to direct a library in," he said. "You've got natural disasters all the time, and heat and humidity, which isn't good for paper. The challenges have been immense."

The contents of Haiti's declaration have long been known because of hand-written transcriptions. The value of Gaffield's discovery lies in the symbolism of a nation regaining an important artifact.

"The document is a very fiery denunciation of French rule on the island," said Laurent Dubois, Gaffield's adviser at Duke.

Gaffield's discovery, which Duke will announce formally today, has created a buzz among scholars of Haiti, the Caribbean and rare documents. The document, dated Jan. 1, 1804, is a strident statement of freedom from a new nation that would struggle for years for recognition from world powers.

Many copies were likely printed, but none was known to have survived until Gaffield's discovery while researching Haitian independence. It was an unlikely find;

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the document was in a book of correspondence between Jamaica and Great Britain. Jamaica was a British colony at the time, and when the Haitians printed the document, a copy was likely given to Jamaican authorities, who then sent it to Great Britain.

The discovery comes on the heels of the devastating earthquake in Haiti that focused worldwide interest on the island nation.

"I suspect there will be immense interest in this discovery," said Ian E. Wilson, president of the International Council on Archives. "To bring this document to light in Haiti's darkest hour may be seen as a symbol of renewal and rejuvenation, helping Haiti rebuild its national spirit following the recent earthquake."

AN EXCERPT

Haïti's Declaration of Independence is a forcefully written insistence that the island nation be taken seriously. Here's how it starts:

Citizens:

It is not enough to have expelled the barbarians who have bloodied our land for two centuries; it is not enough to have restrained those ever-evolving factions that one after another mocked the specter of liberty that France dangled before you. We must, with one last act of national authority, forever assure the empire of liberty in the country of our birth; we must take any hope of re-enslavement away from the inhuman government that for so long kept us in the most humiliating torpor. In the end we must live independent or die.

Independence or death ... let these sacred words unite us and be the signal of battle and of our re-union.

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March 31, 2010

Applications to Elite Universities Rise
By JACQUES STEINBERG

With many of the nation’s most selective colleges and universities scheduled to inform applicants of their decisions on Thursday, one trend already appears to be emerging: Applications to elite private colleges rose again this academic year, despite the economic constraints on many families.

As a result, admission rates often fell to record lows. Harvard, the University of Pennsylvania, Dartmouth, Cornell, Stanford, M.I.T. and Duke each reported sharp increases in applications this year compared with last year. Undergraduate applications to Harvard, for example, rose nearly 5 percent, to 30,489, said William R. Fitzsimmons, dean of admissions and financial aid. Only 6.9 percent of those applicants, or 2,110, were admitted, Mr. Fitzsimmons said, down from 7.5 percent in 2009.

The admission rate to Stanford, which received 32,022 applications this year, was nearly identical to that at Harvard: 7.2 percent. (Over all, applications to Stanford climbed 5 percent, and the admission rate fell from 7.6 percent a year earlier.) The University of Pennsylvania, which had an 18 percent rise in applications this year — for a total of nearly 27,000 — admitted 14 percent of its applicants compared with 17.6 percent in 2009. At M.I.T., applications rose 6 percent to 16,632, while the admission rate fell to 10 percent from 10.7 percent.

JACQUES STEINBERG
Earl Taylor honored by ECU
2010-03-31 17:10:26

Earl Taylor, who served as supervisor of arts education for Onslow County Schools, has been chosen by the East Carolina University School of Music Alumni Professional Society as the 2010 Distinguished Alumnus, according to an official announcement by ECU.

Taylor holds two degrees from the ECU School of Music, a bachelor of music education and a master of music in music education.

Taylor, now retired, also held several other positions during his years with Onslow County Schools including band director at White Oak High School-Tabernacle Middle School, interim principal of Parkwood Elementary and Thompson Elementary schools, director of middle schools and arts education and director of community affairs and arts education.

In addition, he served as president of the ECU School of Music Alumni Professional Society, president of the North Carolina Bandmaster Association-Eastern District, chair of the Arts Coordinators section of North Carolina Music Educators Association and president of NCMEA.

White Oak High School recently dedicated its new fine arts center to Taylor. In recognition of his achievements as band director there and as the arts director for Onslow County Schools, the faculty and staff chose to name the new facility the Earl Taylor Performing Arts Center.

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Four-laning funds halfway there

By GREG KATSKI
Community Editor
Published: Thursday, April 1, 2010 2:17 AM EDT

NEW BERN — The Highway 17 Association still has work to do.

During the association’s annual meeting Tuesday at the New Bern Riverfront Convention Center, Marc Finlayson, the association’s executive director, said the N.C. Department of Transportation has committed about half the funds needed to completely four-lane U.S. Highway 17 in North Carolina — from Virginia to South Carolina.

The highway weaves through 13 eastern North Carolina counties, including Beaufort County. Portions of the highway have just two lanes, including a 30-mile stretch between Washington and New Bern and a 20-mile stretch between Washington and Williamston.

According to its Web site, the association’s mission is to assure, through collective action and constancy of purpose, that the inclusion and funding of all unfunded portions of the U.S. 17 corridor shall be part of DOT’s Transportation Improvement Program.

State Highway Administrator Terry Gibson assured the association that DOT is committed to four-laning the highway, but he said, in doing so, there are challenges, economically and environmentally.

“Our needs far outweigh our ability to put things in place,” he said.

Among the environmental challenges are protecting the habitat of the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker, which finds its home in marshland along the corridor, and ensuring the safety of wildlife in the Croatan National Forest, which encompasses a stretch of the highway.

Gibson said Gov. Beverly Perdue’s new way of prioritizing DOT projects will not take funding away from eastern North Carolina or the U.S. 17 corridor.

“You’re not going to lose money in the process,” he told the crowd of several hundred. “The equity formula still applies.”
He said projects will be chosen based on crash statistics and pavement-condition ratings, among other variables. Projects with the highest needs will be put on DOT’s five-year TIP.

According to Gibson and Finlayson, DOT currently has an unprecedented five U.S. 17 projects under construction simultaneously. Gibson said DOT is working to move those projects forward, including the four-laning of the highway from Washington to Williamston and the construction of the New Bern bypass.

“We have a long way to go — that’s the bottom line,” he said.

Lt. Gov. Walter Dalton, who delivered the event’s keynote address, touched on the economic effects a four-laned U.S. 17 would have on eastern North Carolina. Four-laning the highway would improve trade routes to the area’s seaports and access to its military bases, including Camp Lejune and Cherry Point. It also would promote tourism to the region’s Crystal Coast, he said.

“It (U.S. 17) has always been a main artery for coastal tourists,” Dalton said.

That’s why, according to Dalton, DOT has designated the highway a “strategic road.” As chairman of the Governor’s Logistics Task Force, Dalton said he would be looking into ways to connect the state to the global economy, including use of the “Ocean Highway.”

The task force has been charged with examining the state’s roads, highways, ports, airports and railroads to find better ways to move people and goods efficiently so the state can be an attractive business location.

Dalton said U.S. 17 has helped drive the state’s economy in the past, and will continue to do so in the future. A study by East Carolina University on the economic effects of investment on U.S. 17 reaffirms this assessment.

The study’s executive summary states: on average, investment on U.S. 17 has generated significant effects. The short-term, quantifiable economic effects include increasing growth in output, earnings and employment.

The total output from investment in the highway was $5.5 million, total earnings were $1 million and 20,489 jobs were created. The study looked at the years from 1989 to 2007.

Dalton credited the association for its hard work in improving the highway, creating jobs and helping the economy of eastern North Carolina.

“You, in this room, are a model of cooperation and collaboration,” he told the audience.

Attending the meeting were Rep. Arthur Williams (D-Beaufort), Beaufort County commissioners Ed Booth and Robert Cayton, Beaufort County Manager Paul Spruill, Washington Mayor Archie Jennings, Washington councilmen Gil Davis, Ed Moultrie, Doug Mercer and Bobby Roberson and Washington City Manager James C. Smith. Cayton was named vice president of the association for the 2010-2011 term.

Association President Lionel Midgett, an Onslow County commissioner, said, "Driving from Jacksonville to Washington, I’m reminded how bad we need Highway 17 to improve. We will continue to press to make (the highway) four lanes from Virginia to South Carolina."

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