THE DAILY CLIPS

April 4, 2008

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

The Greenville Daily Reflector
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

East Carolina University News Bureau
E-mail to durhamj@ecu.edu Web site at http://www.news.ecu.edu
252-328-6481 FAX: 252-328-6300
Odyssey at ECU is a test of mind

By Michael Abramowitz

Students, parents and educators from throughout the state will converge on the East Carolina University campus on Saturday to solve mind-boggling problems and prepare youngsters for future leadership roles, their adult leaders said.

The North Carolina Odyssey of the Mind Tournament will be an all-day competition beginning at 8 a.m. at various sites on the ECU campus and finishing at 4 p.m., followed by a grand awards ceremony at 5 p.m. at Williams Arena at Minges Coliseum.

Teams of students from K-12 will be challenged to find creative and imaginative solutions to a series of pre-selected problems, said Betsy Adams, regional director of the Coastal Division and co-director of the tournament.

"Odyssey of the Mind is such a unique program. The problems they solve, the skills they perform and all the props and costumes they use come from the students themselves," Adams said.

Student competitors may receive no direct help or ideas from adults, only stimulating questions and enthusiastic support, Adams said.

"It's a complete process, and if you participate in the process, you're a winner," she said.

Nevertheless, there will be competitive awards for solving problems in five distinct categories that range from building mechanical devices to presenting their own interpretations of literature, according to Carolyn Braly, the program's state director.

Students who become members of the Odyssey of the Mind organization form teams in their schools and begin to solve problems provided by the organization from its headquarters in New Jersey, Braly said.

They can enter regional competitions within each state and can advance, if successful, to world competition later in the year, Braly said.

In addition to the competitive events, there will be a special guest presentation from ECU alumni David D. Herrington, who now serves as Project Manager for Education and Public Outreach within the Earth Sciences Division at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland.

Herrington will bring his "E-Theater 2008" series to the Hendrix Theater in the Mendenhall Student Union on the ECU campus. Attendees will be able to "fly" from outer space to Greenville or any other location on the planet using data from NASA technology.

Shows will be at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 2 p.m. and 3 p.m., said Andrew Schmidt, chief marketing executive with the Green

See ODYSSEY, B3

ODYSSEY

Continued from B1

ville-Pitt County Convention and Visitors Bureau. Schmidt was excited about the opportunity the tournament offers for Greenville to show itself to the estimated 1,700 residents from elsewhere in North Carolina, many of whom will see it for the first time, he said.

"Everybody who participates in the Odyssey of the Mind weekend has a winning stake in it," said Schmidt.

Schmidt said that ECU will meet some of its future students at the tournament, who will, in turn, have an extra opportunity to get a look at the campus. The weekend is expected to generate $1 million for the local economy, Schmidt estimated.

"We look forward to having tomorrow's leaders with us for a weekend of terrific events and competition," Schmidt said.

The Odyssey of the Mind Tournament is sponsored by East Carolina University and RBC Centura Bank.

To learn more about the Odyssey of the Mind Tournament, visit www.ncom.org or contact Carolyn Braly at 249-7259.

Michael Abramowitz can be contacted at mabramowitz@coxnc.com and 329-9671.

"Everybody who participates in the Odyssey of the Mind weekend has a winning stake in it."

Andrew Schmidt

visitors bureau
N.C. media: State e-mail must be saved

By Mike Baker
The Associated Press

RALEIGH — Representatives of the state's media organizations said Thursday it's clear that North Carolina's public records law requires e-mail sent by state workers to be saved and made available for inspection.

Rick Thames, the editor of The Charlotte Observer and president-elect of the North Carolina Press Association, said all e-mails involving state employees and elected officials should be preserved.

"Any policy that allows the destruction of e-mails is in blatant violation of our state's open records law," Thames told a panel reviewing retention rules.

Gov. Mike Easley created the panel to review the state's e-mail rules after the fired spokeswoman for the state Department of Health and Human Services said state employees were told to delete e-mails they sent to the governor's office.

The panel is comprised of state officials, a city attorney, and at least two former journalists, Ferrel Guillory, once of The News & Observer of Raleigh, and Ned Cline, an ex-managing editor at the News & Record Of Greensboro.

The 62,100 e-mail users in North Carolina executive branch and cabinet-level agencies receive an estimated 284,000 incoming messages daily, and the number continues to grow. Panel members questioned the cost of archiving all those e-mails, but Thames said the state could purchase software for as little as $120,000 a year to accomplish the task.

"The point is: There are solutions," Thames said. "Technology can help you do this."

E-mails with short-term value — such as travel reservations or appointment confirmation — may be disposed of "when they no longer have reference value to the sender or receiver of the message," according to a Department of Cultural Resources policy approved in 2002.

But John Russo, an attorney for the press association, told the panel that policy also violates state law. He said workers shouldn't be

See E-MAIL, B3

E-MAIL
Continued from B1

making those judgments.

Debbie Crane, a former spokeswoman at the state health department, has said the Easley administration ordered state agency public information officers to delete e-mail correspondence with the governor's office. Notes released by the governor's office to the News & Observer of Raleigh show that two public information officers and others were told at a meeting on May 29, 2007, to destroy e-mails.

A third public information officer said he also recalled those instructions.

Easley said Thursday his legal team is interviewing all the public information officers. But he said the employees who wrote about deleting e-mails did not actually discard any messages, and the governor said it's not clear whether anyone actually instructed them to delete the files.
Lawyer says abuse complaints multiply

UNC pediatrician faces lawsuits

BY SAMUEL SPIES
STAFF WRITER

CHAPEL HILL — A lawyer who has filed five lawsuits accusing a UNC pediatrician of abuse said about 16 other people have contacted him with similar allegations since he called a news conference Monday.

"We have been overwhelmed with additional calls, both from Massachusetts and North Carolina, people who say they've had the same experience" with Dr. Melvin Levine, Carmen Durso said by telephone from Boston.

Durso, who planned to hold a second news conference Thursday afternoon, said that he referred the North Carolina callers to the N.C. Medical Board and that Raleigh lawyer Elizabeth Knuholm has agreed to help North Carolina residents who have legal questions or need help contacting the board.

Durso also said that he was calling for independent investigations at Children's Hospital in Boston and UNC-Chapel Hill.

The medical board's legal director, Thomas Mansfield, said the board can't say whether it is investigating a licensee.

Durso has filed lawsuits on behalf of five men who say Levine sexually abused them while they were in his care at Children's Hospital, beginning in the late 1960s. In court filings, Durso has cited two other allegations of abuse, one of them in a lawsuit that was dismissed. The other was a complaint to the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine.

Levine, 68, moved to North Carolina in the 1980s and was the director of UNCC's Clinical Center for the Study of Development and Learning. He retired, from full-time work in 2006 but continued to see patients twice a month, a university official said.

On Wednesday, a UNC School of Medicine spokesman said Levine has voluntarily decided to stop seeing patients because of the lawsuits against him.

Levine is an author of childhood development books who has appeared on "The Oprah Winfrey Show." Efforts to reach him at his home have been unsuccessful, but his attorney has said Levine is innocent.

"Dr. Levine is distressed about the distorted or misrepresented memories from decades past and questions the motivations," according to a statement from his attorney, Edward Mahoney. "He prefers not to participate further in counsel's efforts to obtain free advertising for his legal practice."

Bob Bolderson, a Fort Lauderdale, Fla., yacht builder, said that he has known the doctor since Levine was a college freshman and that he is "one of the finest human beings I've ever met."
E-mail must be kept, media tell state panel

Representatives of North Carolina's newspapers and broadcasters Thursday told a panel appointed by Gov. Mike Easley that state law requires government officials to retain copies of all e-mail messages pertaining to public business.

"Every single e-mail involving state employees and elected officials is a public record," said Rick Thames, editor of The Charlotte Observer and president-elect of the N.C. Press Association. "And because of that, all of these e-mails must be preserved. Any policy that allows the destruction of e-mails is in blatant violation of the state's open records law."

Easley created the committee, which held a public hearing Thursday. The hearing came in the wake of allegations from former Department of Health and Human Services spokeswoman Debbie Crane that officials in the governor's press office instructed employees to delete certain e-mail messages in an effort to subvert the state's public records law.

The law makes no distinction between electronic and paper documents. A policy enacted in 2002 gives individual state employees discretion to delete messages they deem to have no further "administrative value."

Dana Cope, executive director of the State Employees Association of North Carolina, said the policy is too vague and needs to provide workers with more clarity about how to follow the law.

"We do not wish to be put into a situation that would compromise the public's interest with information requests and potential political pressure from the administration that could result in termination of employment, as we all know with the recent dismissal of Ms. Debbie Crane at DHHS," Cope said.

He then suggested that Easley's press aides were not the only ones who should be answering questions about deleted e-mail.

"The employees association sued State Treasurer Richard Moore in February over access to records detailing who has been hired to manage the state retirement fund, which Moore oversees."

At the hearing Thursday, Cope held up a printed copy of an e-mail exchange in February 2007 between Sara Lang, Moore's communications director, and a reporter for Forbes magazine. The business publication was then working on an article about Moore's acceptance of campaign donations from people doing business with the retirement fund.

Lang's answers to the reporter's questions appear to be missing in one message. Cope said when the employees association asked whether messages had been deleted, Moore's lawyer responded in a letter, "The department provided all e-mails in its possession."

"No one can seem to find the e-mail with the answers," Cope said. "Were they destroyed? Were they misplaced? Or was it the proverbial animated dog that ate them? We don't know."

Lang, in an e-mail message, declined to comment because the matter is involved in litigation.

Members of the e-mail panel — composed of state officials, a city attorney and former journalists — questioned those who spoke about whether spam messages were public records and whether taxpayers should bear the cost of archiving the more than 1 million messages state employees send and receive each day.

Thames said the cost was likely not as high as some had suggested, and said the state should seek bids for a computer system to do the work. "There are solutions," Thames said.

Mark Prak, a lawyer for the N.C. Association of Broadcasters, urged the committee to have what he termed a "can-do attitude." He said it would likely be cheaper to automatically retain all e-mail messages than to train every state employee to properly interpret the law.

Last year, 610 state employees attended voluntary workshops on public records offered by the state Department of Cultural Resources. At that rate, it would take at least a century to educate the more than 62,000 executive branch employees with state e-mail accounts.