THE DAILY CLIPS

April 7, 2010

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Fire officials: Smoldering cigarette caused blaze
By Michael Abramowitz
The Daily Reflector
Tuesday, April 6, 2010
Smoke inhalation caused the accidental death of a Greenville woman in a house fire at her
Harding Street home Friday evening, Greenville Fire-Rescue officials said Tuesday.
Francee Perry Rees, 64, was found lying in a hallway between her bedroom and living room on
the second floor of her house at 116 S. Harding St. by fire-rescue personnel who arrived six
minutes after neighbors called 911, battalion chief Doug Branch said.
The fire was caused by misuse of a smoking material, Branch said. Rees was known to be a heavy
smoker, he said.
“The fire started in a stack of papers on the floor next to the love seat in the living room. It spread
to the love seat, which smoldered for a long time before building up enough heat to ignite, then
spread to the bookcase behind the seat,” Branch said.
Fire damage was contained to the living room, but the smoke was heavy throughout that floor and
spread into the bedroom where Rees appeared to have been, the chief said.
The smoke alarms in the house were inoperable, and one of the alarms had an open and
disconnected battery hatch, Branch said.
“Something woke her up and she exited the bedroom headed back toward the living room,
possibly trying to leave the house, but was unsuccessful and collapsed in the hallway,” Branch
said.
Rees’ neighbors saw smoke coming from her home and tried to get to her, but the thick black
smoke prevented their entry into the home, they said. Attempts by EMS personnel to revive Rees
were unsuccessful.
Rees worked at the East Carolina University News Bureau for many years before her retirement
in 2000, a spokesman for the university said. Her husband, Jim Rees, was a communication
professor at ECU until his death two years ago.
A memorial service for Rees was held Tuesday at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church on East Fourth
Street.
Branch shared cautionary words for all residents from the incident.
“Make sure you discard smoking materials correctly and have a working smoke detector in your
residence. Smoke detectors are early warning devices that give enough time for people to leave a
burning or smoke-filled area,” he said.
Contact Michael Abramowitz at mabramowitz@reflector.com or (252) 329-9571.
Woman's reaching out to those with dementia
By Jackie Drake
The Daily Reflector
Tuesday, April 6, 2010
Most people have misplaced their keys now and again, but usually remember where they are before too long and carry on.
But when Chris Weaver, 52, of Greenville, began noticing a pattern of more lasting forgetfulness, she never thought it would be any form of dementia.
“The symptoms started about four years ago,” Weaver said. “I couldn’t find where I wanted to go for work conferences. I didn’t know what was going on, but I knew something wasn’t right.”
At her age, doctors thought her symptoms could be due to any number of things: depression, a sleeping disorder, menopause or vitamin deficiency.
Weaver finally was diagnosed a year ago with Frontotemporal dementia, a type of dementia under which Alzheimer’s also falls. The diseases are similar, with some key differences. Neither has a cure.
“It was scary,” Weaver said of her diagnosis at 51 years old. “I thought, ‘Who else is like this?’ I didn’t think I had anyone I could talk to.”
Frontotemporal dementia affects the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain, causing them to shrink, affecting language and behavior as well as memory. It is more rare and tends to occur at a younger age than Alzheimer’s. Generally the first sign is affected speech patterns, with memory loss coming later, though it progresses like Alzheimer’s.
“I have good days and bad days,” Weaver said. “I remember a lot, it’s just not always available. It’s difficult to find the words, or sometimes I lose my train of thought.”
Weaver was working with computers as an instructional technologist at East Carolina University and working on her dissertation for a doctorate when her symptoms began.
“My co-workers were great. They helped a lot, but at some point you just have to stop,” she said.
Weaver stays at home now. Her husband still works and takes care of her with the help of an aide who comes twice a week to help Weaver with errands since she does not drive. Her parents and sister are in Missouri, where she is from, but visit often; her two grown children are in town.
“I like to cook but I can’t cook by myself now because I might leave the stove on,” she said.
“Once you do that once, that’s it. I also like to garden, and I can still do that pretty safely.”
She makes herself notes after phone calls. While she doesn’t like numbers or puzzles, she does like to practice Tai Chi, as the repetitive motions help memory and coordination.
“It’s so different now; I grew up helping others. Now I’m the one that needs so much help,” she said.
She said the most difficult thing is her loss of independence, but doesn’t dwell on what might have been.
“It’s just the way it is,” she said.
“I have the best family and friends, they have been a big help,” she said. Weaver now feels she has a new purpose.

“I want to reach out to other people with Alzheimer’s and dementia, especially the younger ones,” she said. “We’re all feeling the same thing. It would help to reach out.” Helping Weaver is Debbie Ryals, a retired social worker and volunteer with the Mid-East Commission on a project to raise awareness about Alzheimer’s and dementia.

Weaver will be a speaker at an event Saturday that Ryals has been helping to plan with the Pitt County Council on Aging. The two became friends after Weaver got involved with the project. “We’re trying to educate people about all kinds of dementia, especially younger-onset,” Ryals said. “People are often afraid to talk about it. We hope to get a community dialogue going.”

People often don’t realize that younger-onset dementia comes with its own set of issues, Ryals said. Patients often are still caring for teenage children or their own aging parents. Since it is unexpected, coworkers may not realize what is happening, and patients can lose jobs and professional contacts. The cost of treatment can drain savings for a child’s college education or retirement, especially since the disease often strikes in prime earning years. Benefits and resources like senior centers are often not available for those under 65.

“It’s been tough not working and it’s harder to get help, so I would love to form a coffee group to keep meeting after the event on Saturday, so we can make contacts and join resources,” Weaver said.

Anyone interested in joining Weaver’s group may call 412-0354 or attend Saturday’s event. Contact Jackie Drake at jdrake@reflector.com at (252) 329-9567.

If you go:
What: Alzheimer’s and Dementia Day, early stage and younger-onset awareness
Who: Patients, families, caregivers, physicians, community (care available on site for patients)
When: Saturday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Where: First Presbyterian Church, 1400 S. Elm St.
Cost: Free, call ahead to register, lunch will be served
More information: Debbie Ryals at (252) 946-3799
Environment

Sea level rise and people = "unique train wreck"

By Cory Nealon

247-4760

April 7, 2010

HAMPTON

— For those who think Hampton Roads and other East Coast communities can fight rising sea levels by rebuilding eroded beaches, John Rummel has a message for you.

"There's only so much sand to go around," said Rummel, director of the Institute for Coastal Science and Policy at East Carolina University.

Rummel, who met with the Daily Press on Tuesday before speaking at NASA Langley Research Center and the Virginia Air and Space Center, described sea-level rise and growing coastal populations as a "unique train wreck."

Millions of Virginians — about 1.7 million in Hampton Roads, according to the 2000 U.S. Census — live within 50 miles of the coast. As a result, there are more hotels, houses, roads and other infrastructure vulnerable to rising sea level than ever before, he said.

By way of example, Rummel focused on the Outer Banks, a popular vacation spot for many Virginians. Recent storms there made bridges and roads impassible, forcing government to either abandon the infrastructure or spend millions of dollars rebuilding it.

In most cases, government chose to rebuild. There is too much money invested in coastal properties, which are an important source of tax revenue, to retreat from them, he said.

It's the same scenario on the Peninsula, especially in the flood-prone areas of Gloucester, Poquoson and Hampton. Regional planners last year raised the idea of building levees to protect localities from a catastrophic storm, but the proposal gained little traction.
"It's going to take a couple of disasters to make people think about this," Rummel said.

Meanwhile, it's up to individual localities to determine how they deal with rising sea levels, he said. For many, this includes beach replenishment and break walls, which are OK as temporary solutions, he said.

In the future, he said, localities should consider low-impact uses, such as eco-tourism, as opposed to heavy infrastructure.

"We can't stop the sea but we can have it work for us," Rummel said.

For more science and environment news, visit The Deadrise blog, at www.dailypress.com/deadrise

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9 coastal wonders to see now

By Heather Hansen and Kimberly Lisagor

STORY HIGHLIGHTS
- Sea kayaking is a great way to experience North Carolina's Outer Banks
- Erosion is particularly acute on Oahu, Hawaii
- Puerto Rico's Mosquito Bay is one of the few bioluminescent bays worth seeing

(Coastal Living) -- Heather Hansen and Kimberly Lisagor, authors of "Disappearing Destinations," have traveled the world investigating coastal sites that are as stunning as they are endangered. Here, they share advice for planning an eco-sensitive trip -- and how you can help.

INSIDE PASSAGE, British Columbia

Why go? Much of the storied Inside Passage route between Washington and Alaska looks as it has for centuries. At water level, you're privy to evergreen forests on the shoreline, orcas blasting plumes of water into the air, and striated glaciers with jagged bluish peaks that crash at the melting edges.

Why care? Unfortunately, visiting cruise ships trail a hazardous mess in their wake. On a typical weeklong journey, passengers produce sewage, gray water, and many tons of trash -- and a disturbing amount of it is dumped at sea. The disposal laws are much stricter in the United States, which means Canadian waters likely bear the brunt of the toxic load.

CoastalLiving.com: 10 best coastal eco-resorts

Plan your trip: The B.C. coastline is at its sunniest May through September. With an eco-friendly, small ship company like AdventureSmith Explorations (adventuresmithexplorations.com), you'll have access to narrow nooks where the big ships can't fit.

How to help: Check out Friends of the Earth (foe.org) to learn about efforts to help regulation and enforcement.

OUTER BANKS, North Carolina

Why go? The Outer Banks includes vast beaches, salt marshes, and maritime forests of loblolly pines and live oaks. Waves sculpt the shoreline, and huge dunes migrate in the wind. Over time, says East Carolina University geologist Stan Riggs, the Outer Banks land has formed and collapsed and formed again. Humans try to preserve the roads, bridges, homes, and businesses from the unstable environment, but "protecting" the barrier islands with sandbags and jetties has worsened erosion and starved the shores of sediment.

CoastalLiving.com: 10 best road trips

Plan your trip: Sea kayaking is a great way to experience the wild and remote areas of the Outer Banks: Try Barrier Island Kayaks (barrierislandkayaks.com) and Kitty Hawk Kayaks (khkss.com). Cape Hatteras National Seashore (nps.gov/caha) is open year-round; summer is peak time for swimming and surfing, and spring and fall offer excellent fishing and birding.

How to help: The North Carolina Coastal Federation (nccost.org) advocates restoration and low-impact development, and offers summer tours of Cape Lookout National Seashore.

OAHU, Hawaii

Why go? Perfect weather, daydream-come-true beaches, and a vibrant culture make the Hawaiian Islands an exotic vacation destination,
9 coastal wonders to see now - CNN.com

no passport required.

Why care? Erosion is a common problem on developed coasts worldwide, but it is particularly acute on Oahu, where scientists estimate that sea walls have destroyed or significantly reduced 25 percent of the island's beaches over the past century. But there's hope, says Dolan Eversole, a coastal geologist at the University of Hawaii Sea Grant. Local governments have increased the minimum distance allowed between new buildings and the shoreline, and there is a trend toward public land acquisition.

CoastalLiving.com: 10 tips for responsible tide pooling

Plan your trip: You'll find the mildest weather and lowest rates in the spring and fall off-seasons. The Hawaii Ecotourism Association (www.hawaiiecotourism.org) is an excellent place to start your search for environmentally responsible accommodations and outfitters.

How to help: Surfrider Foundation maintains a beach health Web site (surfrider.org/stateofthebeach) with comprehensive background on Hawaiian beach erosion.

CASCO BAY, Maine

Why go? From the cockpit of a kayak plying the ripples between the 222 islands off Portland, Maine, you can watch gannets plunge their big blue beaks below the water's surface. Flocks of eider ducks soar overhead, and harbor seals play in the quiet coves of fern-draped, rocky island shorelines.

Why care? Population growth has had some unintended environmental consequences -- among them, nitrogen pollution. When contaminated runoff enters the bay, patches of slimy green muck cover previously healthy beaches. Nitrogen pollution has already ravaged other bays worldwide, but Casco Bay is just beginning to see the effects.

"We don't want to get to the point where we can't turn it around," says Portland native Joe Payne, the Casco Baykeeper with eco-group Friends of Casco Bay. Joe and his organization are working to make Maine the first East Coast state to implement a statewide nitrogen limit.

Plan your trip: Best time to go: July or August. Catch a ferry from Portland to Peaks Island to join a trip with the Maine Island Kayak Company (maineislandkayak.com). Stay at the Chebeague Island Inn (chebeagueislandinn.com); rooms start at $245.

How to help: Friends of Casco Bay (friendsofcascobay.org) relies on certified volunteers to collect data for its EPA-approved water quality monitoring program. The group is also a resource for ecological landscaping, a technique that aims to keep fertilizers and pesticides out of the bay.

MOSQUITO BAY, Puerto Rico

Why go? On a small, sheltered cove on Vieques, a 22-mile-long, 4-mile-wide island east of Puerto Rico, Mosquito Bay is one of the world's few remaining bioluminescent bays worth seeing. At night, dinoflagellates glow blue-green when agitated, like fireflies in the ocean. Neon ribbons trail kayaks and swimmers.

Why care? After U.S. Navy occupation of Vieques ended in 2003, word spread about the island's unspoiled scenery. "The main threat now is the big push to develop Vieques for tourism," says Mark Martin Bras of the Vieques Conservation and Historical Trust.

This has led to a boom in unregulated tour operators and too many swimmers bringing sunscreen and bug repellent that kill the delicate dinoflagellates. Construction and deforestation unleash light and sediment that are also dimming the waters.

Plan your trip: The biobay is accessible year-round and is best viewed during a new moon. A regular 90-minute ferry runs from Fajardo, on Puerto Rico's east coast, to Isabel Segunda on Vieques. (Cost: $4 round-trip.) Stay at Hix Island House (hixislandhouse.com); lofts start at $185 in summer.

How to help: The Vieques Conservation and Historical Trust (vcht.com) advocates for the protection of the biobay and lists licensed guides.

EVERGLADES, Florida

Why go? The Everglades is the largest subtropical wilderness in the United States, with 1.5 million acres of marshes, estuaries, and prairies, and shady stretches of pine, cypress, and mahogany. The great "River of Grass" flows from its northern headwaters at Lake Okeechobee southwest into the mangrove tangles at the southern tip of the Florida peninsula.

Why care? Decades ago, the Everglades' freshwater flow was altered to accommodate agriculture, growing cities, and safety concerns. The dams and diversions starved and polluted the delicate ecosystems and the species that relied on them.

Plan your trip: Everglades National Park (nps.gov/ever) is open year-round, but some facilities have limited hours during the wet summer season. Seven miles from the Flamingo Visitor Center, hikers can pick up the West Lake Trail, on which American crocodiles often make appearances. Search Green Lodging Florida (dep.state.fl.us/greenlodging) for a place to stay or check out Ivey House Bed & Breakfast (iveyhouse.com); rooms start at $70.

How to help: The Everglades Foundation (evergladesfoundation.org) leads the battle to protect and restore the River of Grass.
ROATÁN, Honduras

Why go? Divers and snorkelers rave about the majesty of Roatán's biodiverse waters and coral reef system. Psychedelic tube sponges grip the sea wall, and tropical fish dart in and out of nooks in the reef.

Why care? Warming oceans have triggered major bleaching events that have turned once-vibrant Caribbean coral systems into bleached skeletons. Coastal development, illegal fishing, and reckless divers have also taken a toll. Now the trend threatens Roatán. But the fragile reefs are also resilient. Experts now say, given time to heal and a healthier environment, the ecosystem could recover.

Plan your trip: Several U.S. airlines have direct flights to Roatán. You can also take a ferry (safewaymaritime.com) from mainland Honduras. Stay at the West Bay Lodge (westbaylodge.com); bungalows start at $105/night. Contact Karl Stanley (stanleysubmarines.com) to book a submarine dive.

How to help: Support the Coral Reef Alliance (coral.org) in its efforts to protect reefs worldwide.

HUDSON BAY, Canada

Why go? On the shores of Manitoba’s Hudson Bay, as sea ice breaks up, the region’s famous polar bears return to terra firma. Arctic foxes roam the coastline, and herds of caribou begin to migrate. Thousands of beluga whales congregate where the Churchill River empties into the inland sea.

Why care? On average, Hudson Bay’s ice is breaking up three to four weeks earlier than it did 30 years ago. One of the most visible signs of this shift is the sharp decline in the number of polar bears that live here. The early spring melt and later fall freeze destroy the ice platforms from which polar bears hunt ringed seals, their main food source.

Plan your trip: The town of Churchill is the starting point for trips into polar bear territory. The Churchill Northern Studies Center (churchillscience.ca) hosts "learning vacations" from February through November. Visit in fall to see the bears leave their summer lairs in search of newly frozen sea ice.

How to help: Check out Polar Bears International (polarbearsinternational.org/simple-steps) for smart advice on reducing our carbon footprints.

GALAPAGOS, Ecuador

Why go? The 19 islands retain 95 percent of their native species, including plants and animals that are found nowhere else in the world. Each island has its own phenomenal features, from smoking calderas (craters) and green-sand beaches to giant tortoises and prancing birds with powder-blue feet. Española Island is the most paradise-like.

Why care? Three years ago, UNESCO put the entire archipelago on its list of World Heritage sites "in danger." They cited the perils of illegal fishing, unsustainable tourism, and immigration, and the single greatest threat to the islands: non-native species.

Plan your trip: Peak months include mid-June through early September, and mid-December through mid-January. December through May is the rainy season, when air and water temps are warm and inviting. The rest of the year the water is cooled by the Humboldt Current, which also carries a vast array of marine life. All visitors to the islands must be accompanied by a certified naturalist guide. The Galápagos Conservancy (galapagos.org), which works closely with Galápagos National Park (galapagospark.org), maintains a list of travel partners that promote sustainable tourism.

How to help: Learn more from the Charles Darwin Foundation (darwinfoundation.org) about what's stressing the islands.

The destinations duo

Kimberly Lisagor and Heather Hanson are the co-authors of the award-winning "Disappearing Destinations."

Kim's home base: San Luis Obispo, California.
Her favorite coast: Hoi An, Vietnam.
Next great escape: Hawaii’s Big Island with surfboards, scuba gear, and two 2-year-olds.

Heather's home base: Boulder, Colorado.
Her favorite coast: Rincón, Puerto Rico.
Next great escape: A weeklong mother-daughter-sister trip along the southern coast of Ireland, from Dublin to Galway.

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Find this article at:
http://www.cnncom2010/TRADE/04/01/coastal.wonders
Slam-dunk graduation rates

As a Duke fan, I'm still on Cloud Nine since my beloved Blue Devils held off a tough Butler team Monday night to win the Big Dance, otherwise known as the NCAA Division 1 men's basketball championship tournament.

Truth is, as a citizen, I would have been just as happy had Butler won. That's because both schools score high where the numbers really count - graduation rates. According to the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport, Butler graduates 90 percent of its basketball athletes, while Duke hands a diploma to 92 percent of its hoops players. So in reality we were all watching winners Monday night. Duke just won a trophy.

As good as these two schools are at producing graduates who can play high-level basketball, six teams selected to the dance performed even better. Brigham Young, Marquette, Notre Dame, Utah State, Wake Forest and Wofford graduated every single player in their programs during the 2004 through 2008 academic years.

As they usually do, women players beat the men when it came to hitting the books. Nineteen programs, selected to the women's tournament - including UNC-Chapel Hill - achieved a 100 percent graduation rate. They include Stanford and Connecticut, the last two teams left standing. Both came close to perfection on the court as well. Before last night's championship game, the teams had just one loss between them, and that was when Connecticut beat Stanford in December.

Both tournaments were among the most exciting in memory. More importantly, they conclusively proved that a university doesn't need to sell its academic soul to field winning, exciting and profitable athletic programs.

In fact, collegiate basketball could become a laboratory of sorts on how to narrow the graduation gap between white and African-American students. Thanks in large part to reforms put in place by the late NCAA president Myles Brand, the days of a university failing to graduate a meaningful number of black athletes could be coming to a close.

No doubt, there are still significant white/African-American graduation disparities, particularly among the men. The average difference for programs in this year's tournament was 28 percentage points. In nine instances, the discrepancy was 60 points or better, and one of those schools was Clemson.

Just as embarrassing, Georgia Tech and Maryland's graduation rates for both races were among the worst in the tournament, a matter that should be addressed by the Atlantic Coast Conference, which supposedly prides itself on high academic standards.

But there are also men's programs in which African-Americans are on par or outperform their white teammates in graduation rates. They include Duke, Northern Iowa, Oakland and Xavier.

Greater lessons can be learned from the women's programs. This year, the graduation gap for programs
in the big dance narrowed to a mere 12 points. The graduation rate for white female players was up 1 point to 90 percent, while African-American players gained 3 points, to 78 percent.

The locals had an even more impressive performance. As noted, UNC-Chapel Hill had a 100 percent graduation rate among its black women players, while Duke came in at 86 percent and N.C. State at 82 percent. The men weren't too shabby either. Black Duke basketball players graduate at an 89 percent clip and in the 2009 study, the UNC men's program has an 80 percent graduation rate.

Hey, here's an idea.

Maybe the Wake County school board, the state NAACP and their allies could stop bickering over the diversity policy long enough to have Sylvia Hatchell and Roy Williams (UNC), Joanne P. McCallie and Mike Krzyzewski (Duke) and Kellie Harper (N.C. State) over for a chat. I realize they're just athletic coaches and not education experts. But as good as these folks are at winning basketball games, they're even better at graduating minority students from rigorous academic programs.

Contributing columnist Rick Martinez (rickjmartinez2@verizon.net) is news director at WPTF, NC News Network and StateGovernmentRadio.com.
Life is sweeter at the top for Duke Blue Devils

DURHAM -- As the sun rose over the world of college basketball Tuesday, bragging rights in the Triangle's break rooms and sports bars had shifted, at least for 12 months.

Since 2005, UNC fans have held the advantage, harassing Duke-loving co-workers with two recent national titles - in 2005 and again last year. But Duke scaled the mountain this season, while UNC fell to an inglorious second-place finish in the NIT.

For Duke fans, their moment on the high end of the 15-501 seesaw was intoxicating.

Students, staff and alums snapped photos in front of Cameron Indoor Stadium, where the school held a victory party. They ransacked the student bookstore, buying up commemorative T-shirts three and four at a time. Many gawked at the residue from Monday night's post-game bonfire on the residential quad.

"It's definitely a little sweeter, especially that UNC was the runner-up in the NIT," said Alex Putterman, a 2007 Duke graduate who lives in New York City but drove to Durham to watch the championship game among friends. "We were kind of hoping UNC would win the NIT so we could be co-champions."

On Tuesday, Duke emerged on top of a rivalry of basketball titans that have combined for four of the last 10 national titles. Overall, Duke has four titles to UNC's five. UNC has been to the Final Four 18 times, Duke 15, including one remarkable stretch starting in 1986 when at least one of the two teams made the Final Four in eight of nine consecutive years.

"The fact that we've won two in the last six years makes it a little easier," said UNC fan Dan Broun of Chapel Hill, one of many Tar Heel faithful who became big Butler fans for Monday night's game. "What makes it even worse was the fact that it was so close. Duke basically toyed with our emotions, making us think that Butler could actually win."

UNC dominated in recent years under new Coach Roy Williams, winning the national title in 2005 and then again a year ago. Duke's win Monday night was its first since 2001.

Alums return to campus

Betsy Fricklas was a senior then. Nine years later, she returned to Cameron on Tuesday to celebrate this title with her two daughters in tow, one of dozens of young parents who parked their strollers at the edge of the arena and reminisced about their college days as their kids played on the arena floor.

"My 3-year-old says she's going to be a Duke cheerleader," Fricklas said.

The team was about an hour late leaving Indianapolis on Tuesday, delaying the Cameron event. That gave Duke officials the chance to replay the second half of Duke's win on the arena's overhead scoreboard.

For the many Duke fans who suffered through the tense final moments Monday night, it was far easier
the second time watching Butler's Gordon Hayward's last-second heave. It missed, of course, and the 9,000 or so fans packed into Cameron exploded in a well-timed, full-throated, confident roar.

Moments later, the team filed in, waving and smiling, and stood on stage.

Coach Mike Krzyzewski, hoarse after a weekend of exhortation, told the fans to look at the banners hanging from the rafters.

"We want you to understand they're your banners," Krzyzewski said. "I really believe we won together this year."

Melynn Glusman, a 1994 Duke graduate now enrolled at UNC's law school, skipped two classes at UNC to attend the homecoming at Duke. Glusman had worn a Blue Devils T-shirt to class earlier Tuesday and had some good-natured banter with a classmate who wore his 2009 UNC champions shirt.

"I razzed him," she said. "That was last year."

And there's always next year. In this rivalry, you never know.

"An NCAA championship is a lot better than NIT runner-up," said Max Milliken, a 2007 Duke grad. "You have to savor it now, because they'll be back."

eric.ferreri@newsobserver.com or 919-932-2008
UNC wins grant to unite research facilities

CHAPEL HILL -- UNC-Chapel Hill has won $14.5 million in federal stimulus money to expand a rural research center where dogs and hogs will be used to study hemophilia, heart disease and muscular dystrophy.

The money from the National Institutes of Health will fund two new buildings to house animals at the Bingham Facility in western Orange County. UNC-CH will find an additional $5 million to $8 million from other sources to complete a third new building for research.

The facility, which houses about 85 dogs and was built in the 1970s, has had multiple leaks in its wastewater treatment system. The state is considering a fine for treated wastewater that leaked into Collins Creek, an already polluted tributary of Jordan Lake.

The university is hauling its wastewater to a treatment plant in Chapel Hill while studying new methods of handling waste at the site.

"I think the grant offers the opportunity to do Bingham right," the associate vice chancellor for research, Bob Lowman, said Tuesday. "It allows us to plan for a long-term sustainable operation at minimal impact to the neighborhood."

Chancellor Holden Thorp put Lowman in charge after apologizing to neighbors in rural Bingham Township for the spills.

The NIH money will allow the university to close the 50-year-old Francis Owen Blood Research Laboratory near University Lake in Carrboro. The laboratory, whose researchers will move with their animals to the Bingham Facility, does research on bleeding disorders and high cholesterol linked to heart disease.

The new, expanded campus will also house golden retrievers bred to study Duchenne muscular dystrophy, which affects one in 5,000 male babies. Most patients are in wheelchairs by their teens and die in their 20s, according to lead researcher Joe Kornegay, a veterinarian and professor of pathology.

With dogs now housed in Bingham, in Hillsborough and at the Francis Owen lab, where pigs are also studied, the grant lets UNC-CH consolidate, saving money and time.

"Our vets are spending hours every day driving back and forth between the three facilities," Lowman said. "That's very valuable time."

Putting all the animals and research in one place will also allow the university to centralize its heating and cooling instead of running separate systems for each building on the Bingham campus as it does now, he said.

Excluding this most recent award, UNC-CH researchers have received nearly $110 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grants or awards since March 2009. About $129 million in total ARRA
funding is expected.

"To receive a construction award in such an extremely competitive grant program is an achievement that reflects the extraordinary quality of work by our faculty researchers," said Tony Waldrop, vice chancellor for research and economic development.

"The researchers whose work will be supported by the Bingham Facility are national leaders in discovering new gene therapy for hemophilia, muscular dystrophy and cardiovascular disease," he said in a statement. "They give new hope daily to patients with these diseases."

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